

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Sarah Zelazny**  
**February 20, 2007**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Sarah Zelazny, conducted on February 20, 2007 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.

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**SARAH ZELAZNY**  
**February 20, 2007**

Beginning Tape One

Question: Good morning, Sarah.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: It's lovely to see you.

A: I'm very happy to see you too. You're very lovely people I'm -- first time I met you and I feel like you're my family.

Q: Oh, that's good.

A: And we're friends, and I am very grateful to have an opportunity to tell you my story. I'm very happy about it.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: And I try my best to tell it.

Q: Okay.

A: I'm a little bit nervous, but it's normal.

Q: It's all right, you -- it's absolutely normal.

A: It's normal.

Q: What was your name at birth?

A: I was born Sala Szlinger.

Q: Is it Sala?

A: Sala -- Sala Szlinger. S -- in Polish they write it S-z-l-i-n-g-e-r and English different spelling, S-c-h or S-h as Shlinger. But in Poland s-z is a sh --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- pronounced sh. So it's Szlinger. And I was born in 1934.

Q: What month? [indecipherable]

A: October 30, 1934 in Warsaw, Poland. It's called Warszawa in Polish.

Q: Right.

A: It's a beautiful city, big city. We lived -- my parents, my father, me, and Mom. My mother's name is Perla -- was Perla Szlinger Vishnyav. Vishnyav was maiden name -- wa -- her name.

Her -- my father's name is Moishe, Moses, they call him Moishe in Yiddish, of course, Szlinger.

Q: Right.

A: They were like six, seven -- six brothers and one sister, Reisl, and we lived on Pawia 82, number 82 on Pawia Street in Warsaw. That was a suburb, a Jewish suburb of people -- Jewish people mostly lived there. There was like -- they called it later a ghetto, Jewish ghetto, but that was where all the Jew then lived in this area.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: There was a -- a Pawiak jail still standing there, on the same street. It's still standing --

Q: Really?

A: -- it's still a jail there. And there was not far a cemetery. My father was not educated, he hardly could sign his name. He was very handsome, you will see the picture, tall, lovely, and my mother was not too high, she was a little bit shorter than I am, with dark hair, dark eyes, was a pretty, very good looking woman. She loved to sing and my father, they were singing Jewish songs from Jewish theater that they used to go in Warsaw, and I as a child loved to sing and dance, and I know the songs what they were singing, you know?

Q: Do you remember any of them?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Which -- what ones were they singing?

A: In Jewish -- [Ms. Zelazny sings in Yiddish]. That was nostalgia that they were far away from their home, and there was no friendship around them, so they want to come back home. [Yiddish phrase]. And many other things from Jewish theater. They remember Molly Picken -- Molly Picken's movies.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And she was playing Yidl with the fiddle.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: There was a song [sings in Yiddish]. Molly Picken was a young woman then, and they remember, they were theater goers, my family, my mom and dad, they danced very nice. And later on in the days, I also danced and my father likes me to dance kozaczuk, a Russian dance, you know, very happy. He was a hard working man.

Q: What did he do?

A: He was working at a factory that they were pickling cabbage, and pickling pickles. And they used to wear their dis -- rubbers, boots in -- go into the barrels and you know, stamp on that -- on the kraut, you know, to make it juicy. That's what he used to tell, and he worked there in Warsaw. He was dressed to kill, always beautiful.

Q: Yeah?

A: The hair was nice combed. Beautiful suits. If you could see the man was tall, over six feet tall. He was very, very handsome man.

Q: Did you -- do you remember that?

A: Yeah.

Q: A fra -- as a little -- because you were --

A: Always he dressed nice, even after the war he dressed nice. He had this suit --

Q: Did they -- did they take you to the theater?

A: Yeah.

Q: When you were a baby?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: When you were a young kid?

A: To movies, they were Jewish movies, and musicals. They always took me to the theater and to the movies.

Q: So you were close with both of them?

A: Very, very. I loved my parents, and my mom especially. She was very smart woman, down to earth. She was a mother with a full heart. Sometime -- when my brother was born two years later, he was born in December 14, 19 fi -- '36, two years later, and I was jealous of the attention.

Q: Yeah.

A: So -- a -- we lived in one room in Warsaw, a big room with a kitchen stove and this. When my mom was cooking dinner, all of a sudden she hear a baby crying. And I was nowhere to be found. So she said, [speaks Yiddish] in Yiddish, what happened? I didn't say anything, then I came out very much ashamed, and I say, "I scratched my brother, I don't want him." My mom say, "Why? He is your brother, you have to love him." I said, "I don't want him," so I scratch a little bit his eye, and with something -- there was something, a fork or something, I don't know, I took from the kitchen, from my mom's and I did it. I was very mischievous and -- but later I love my brother, we were inseparable. And during the war, everything, we worked together. He was very handsome. He had curly, beautiful brown hair like a cherub.

Q: Really?

A: A full face, like -- like a bubele. I loved him very much like a -- a doll, you know, when he was little. And he ate good, and -- but always looked up to me to take him, to go with him, so I took care. And my mom was happy. We had a lot of family living in the same corridor in Warsaw. Different apartments, but my Buba Chana, that was my mom -- my father's mom, she was little, she was wearing a sheitel, a wig, you know, because in those days they were very religious. And Chanaleh, Buba Chanaleh was little and she was widowed when very young, and the kids were little. She had siv -- seven kids, six boys, and a daughter Reisl. Beautiful, she was a seamstress with very curly hair, and she loved when I touched her hair and I did like with the hands, I did her curls up, brown hair. And she was singing and dancing, she had four children, married, her husband was Herman. And they all lived one next to another, the same corridor, different apartments in Warsaw.

Q: And -- and -- and you were a kind of favorite child amongst all these? You --

A: I was very outgoing always. I liked to sing, I liked to dance with them, and they -- and I used to come -- I'm very friendly with everybody, children or adults, and young or old. So I used to be there always, eating together, playing together with the children. And I didn't feel anything special, they were also. And there was an-another -- there was another younger brother, my father's brother that his name was Schloime, and he married a nice woman and they had one daughter, Sabina, very chubby, very beautiful girl, younger than me, and we were playing together, we were hide and seek from one apartment to another, running, you know, everything was open like one big family.

Q: So you were very free as a young girl --

A: Free, very free.

Q: -- i-in this -- in this neighborhood.

A: Yeah, yeah. And then the water was never in the house, we don't have water, running water in the house, it was in a corridor farther up, sometimes there was no water supply, so we went with my mom, there was, not far from our house were Pawia Street, and -- and we live on Pawia 82, it was not far so we took two buckets, I had a small pail, and brought water home. And everything was nice and good. I have -- I had cousins also. My father's older brother, Yukel, he almost survived the war. He had two children, Luba, my cousin Luba and Mordechai. All the males from my father's side, because he -- his father died young, and his name was Mordechai, so all the -- all those male and each of the brothers was named Mordechai Szlinger.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Hm.

A: So I have a Mordechai Szlinger in Kibbutz Dafna in Israel. He is older than me. And they run to Russia during the war, but the mother died in Russia and my Uncle Yukel died in Poland coming back from Russia.

Q: After the war.

A: After the war. And we came a month later and we didn't find him alive any more.

Q: I see, uh-huh.

A: He died before we came. But he is buried in Wroclaw and I visited on the Jewish cemetery, I visited the grave of my Uncle Yukel. His wife Geitel died in Russia. She was a very sick person before, and she died. So, when the war started --

Q: Can -- can -- can we go back a little bit?

A: Yeah.

Q: Just -- just so I can --



A: Ask questions.

Q: -- a little bit before --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- before the war.

A: Okay.

Q: You're not going to school, right? You haven't been --

A: I was --

Q: -- you were just going to start if --

A: -- at -- at six there would be a school --

Q: Right --

A: -- but I was --

Q: -- but the war came.

A: -- yeah.

Q: Right.

A: But I didn't.

Q: You said something about your mother, that she had a very warm heart.

A: Yeah.

Q: What did you mean by that?

A: She was always -- I was a little mis-mischievous. I hit my brother, I beat the other children of the --

Q: You beat children up?

A: Yeah.

Q: Really?

A: I was a tomboy, and everything had to be my way. We play games, I ha -- I always disagreed with them. I say no, it has to be this, but not -- the children didn't want that. So I did something, you know? Like I did -- my scratch my father's -- my brother's eye, and things like that. I didn't want to have a brother, I told my mom. So -- but she always was explaining, she never yelled. My mom died in '97.

Q: Really?

A: She was 97 years old.

Q: Oh my.

A: I was my mom's favorite, and I -- my mom was my best friend. I could tell my mother everything and anything, she understood, and I miss her very much. When I moved to America and she was in Israel, always sent tickets for her to come. She was three times in New York visiting us for months, and we took -- and she was very excited, we took her to Niagara Falls, and [Ms. Zelazny quotes her mother, speaking in Yiddish.], she say, "Is this true? I'm here, I'm here?" I say, "Yes Mom, here is the [indecipherable], this is New York, the big buildings." [Ms. Zelazny quotes her mother, speaking in Yiddish.] She never saw them -- this is so beautiful. I am so happy to be -- and I took her to museums. She -- she was very -- she didn't study, they didn't have the right, Jews, to study a lot. Two, three grades. She knew to read and write Yiddish and Polish. My grandfather, her father, Todres Weinstein came from Kiev. He was a young man, came to -- you know, to peddle, he was a peddler. He was selling shoelaces, [indecipherable] material for -- for sewing. And he knew Russian, Yiddish, and then he learned Polish, and he was a very, very interesting man, and he taught my mom. My mom was talented, there were many sisters and brothers on my mother's side, there was seven. My grandfather met this young woman with a child on the ca -- market. And he was selling ribbons and all kind of things,

accessories. And she came, and he looked at her and he said, buy this, buy that. So she say, "I don't have enough money, I'll come another day." He said, no, "I'll give you this and then when you come another time, you pay me." And he ask a question, "Where's your husband?" Think she say, I'm a widow with a child. Her son's name was Natan, Nute in Yiddish. And they fell in love. He was a bachelor and he married her, and he raised his chi -- my -- my Uncle Nute was a big man, tall. And the Polish people were very prejudiced against Jews, and if something happened, they say oh, dirty Jew, in Polish, or they beat up, or they bothered the girls, the Jewish girls. So my Uncle Nute beat them all up. And when he was coming, they yelled, Natan is coming, Natan is coming, so they knew to run away.

Q: Right.

A: He was like a fighter, he protected every girl, everybody. Was tall, I remember him. And then they have seven more children, my buba alte. They call her alte, in Yiddish alte is too old. Why they gave the name, I ask. Alte means old, and she should grow old --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: To live and grow old. I don't know the names why they gave, but this was this. And they lived in a different suburb in Praga. Poland had -- Warsaw had a few suburbs. We lived in the Warsaw area and they lived in Praga, be -- a little bit farther by tramway or bu -- to go. So they visited once in awhile, and I remember Zaide Todres, he was the only zaide I had, grandparent -- grandfather, because the other one died young, my father's side. So I had two bubas, granddau -- ba -- mothers, they were wonderful, the family was wonderful and we were all living together, and happy. And Chanukah or other holidays, Jewish holidays, they gave us a lot of gifts and sweets, and we were happy.

Q: Were you -- bef -- by the time you were five years old, were you very conscious of yourself as a Jewish child?

A: No.

Q: You were not.

A: No.

Q: So there's --

A: There was no difference, we never discuss that we are different, or whatever. They spoke Polish, we spoke Jewish, but I was home. I never went to a kindergarten there.

Q: Right.

A: Because they decided we don't have money, they poor people, they raise the children in the house, and there was a buba to -- to look after us, and there was an uncle [indecipherable] who lived together in the same area, so I never went then.

Q: And it was there that people became much more conscious of the religious differences?

A: Yeah, when I became conscious, when Germany invaded Poland, and they bombed Warsaw.

Q: Do you remember that time?

A: Yes.

Q: What -- what -- what do you remember as a -- if you can describe it as [indecipherable]

A: I -- I -- I remember many things. First of all I remember fire, burning houses, burning trees.

Glass, broken glass, and people running and yelling and shooting. German, with the big German shepherd, the dogs --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- with their uniform. Big, tall men with the German uniform with the hats, and the -- the boots, they had the high --

Q: Boots.

A: -- leather boots, and holding the dog next to. And we -- when Warsaw was bombed, we didn't have electricity, didn't have water in the apartment. So we were going -- first of all, my father was very active in a Jewish Bund. they call it, the organization, that he was always being arrested before the first of May or whatever, because they made riots. It was very political organization, used to wear a Jewish uniform. And he knew what's going to happen, and said to the family, "We have to leave Warsaw, we have to go away, they're going to kill all Jews, because Germans kill -- Germans do all that atrocity, I see and we know it." But nobody was expecting anything. My grandmother Chana and the other brother says to my father, du meshugener, Moishe. "You crazy. Why you going away, why you want to run away?" He says, "I have to." So my grandmother says, "But we have the war before," 1914, the far -- first war, World War, "nothing happened, they da -- we were hungry, we didn't have food, but nothing happened to us, nobody killed us. Just people who were on the front, in the line, they were killed sometime, but nothing will happen to us, why to run away?" He said, "I am going away. I take my wife and the children. Who wants to come with me? I'm going to hire a buggy with a horse, and we'll run away from Warsaw." Nobody listened.

Q: Did you hear these conversations, Sarah?

A: What?

Q: Did you hear these conversa --

A: Yeah --

Q: You did.

A: -- they talking --

Q: They talking in front of you?

A: They were talking in front of me, and I was asking later questions when I understood more, why, and this and my father came -- well, first I want to tell you how I got encountered with the German, with the atrocity.

Q: Mm.

A: Since there was no water in the house, we had to go with pails and get water on the cemetery, not far, they call it Powanski, the cemetery in Warsaw. So we have to get water, there was a pump, and water running. So people stood on line and got water in pails. So I had a little pail also I was carrying and my mother had two. We brought water, whatever we could we gave to the buba, to everybody. They also went to get water. So what I seen, young German soldiers with the dogs, with the shepherds, with the big stick wi -- you know, like a big pole and a rubber, very heavy rubber. They put a Jewish man that was walking, with a beard, you can see it's a Chassidic Jew. They grabbed him, and the Germans said [speaks foreign language here] you dirty Jew. And took a knife out from his boot, and cut it with -- not just the beard, with the -- it was running blood, he touch his flesh, and pushed him aside, he fell. So many things that they stepped with the dogs, you know, like very vicious. And my father saw that, and I was crying and my mom said, Surele -- I was holding her dress because she -- her hands were busy with the two pi -- pails of water, I was holding her dress, and she said to me in Yiddish Surele [speaks Yiddish here], close your eyes, my child. Surele she called me all the time, and I loved that name. And she said, Surele [Yiddish], don't look. Please let's go fast home. And I saw that horses lying, electric poles, because they bombed Warsaw. So whatever there was bombing, houses destroyed, sa -- the streets, there was a chaos. People didn't know where to go, what to do. So one evening my father decided to bring a carriage with a horse, and he said to my mom [speaks Yiddish], take whatever you can, but not [indecipherable]. They sew in, because they had nice jewelry, nice

clothe -- my father was dressed very elegant, in suit. I used to shine his shoes, it has to be like a mirror. In Poland still as a big girl I did that. He taught me.

Q: He taught you to do that.

A: He was so pedantic, so meticulous.

Q: But you were not a wealthy family.

A: No.

Q: But -- but there were some things that --

A: Some things that -- yeah. My mother had a few rings, a wedding band, and a few rings, my father too. They sew it into the clothing, you know? They had dresses, a coat in winter. It was September, November already, it was cold and raining, so we gathered all the warm clothes. My mom had a few small suitcases with food for us. So my fa -- my si -- brother was dressed very nice, he had a -- a gray coat, a small, with a little heart, you know, you g -- pull it, close it here. He was so cute. And shoes, and they put us -- everybody cried, and nobody wanted to come with us.

Q: Were you frightened?

A: Yes. I cried, too, and my mom held my eyes so that I should not see. It was nighttime and they were running and the city of Warsaw was burning. And people running and noises all over. I never forget that. And I ask a question once, my mom and dad -- we spoke mostly Yiddish at home --

Q: Yes [indcipherable]

A: -- but we knew Polish, too. I say [speaks foreign language here], "Why is this happening? Why?" So my father say, "Because we are Jews. Because Germans hate us, they want to destroy us." I said, "But why? What did we do different. We are living here, you were born here, your

father was born in -- everybody was living, they have roots. Why?" He said, "I cannot explain why, that's what happens." And we run, we run out of Warsaw, burning Warsaw.

Q: Sarah, we have to stop the -- we have to stop the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: If you can remember where you are --

A: Of course.

Q: -- as you're running away.

A: Yeah, we run away.

End of Tape One



Beginning Tape Two

Q: Okay, Surele.

A: Yeah?

Q: Did you know that your father was a Bundist member? Did you understand what they meant really?

A: I didn't understand then. I knew that he had a uniform and thing, and he used to disappear for days, you know, they used to arrest him, and th-the whole bunch. And I didn't know that. Mom used to say, oh, your father went away, he'll come home soon, he has some business, this and that. But at those days I -- I didn't comprehend --

Q: You didn't know.

A: -- what it is, what Bund is, nothing.

Q: Right.

A: But he was a long, long, time member, and they were fighting against the Nazis --

Q: Right.

A: -- and everything.

Q: So some Bund members stayed in Warsaw and others left, I'm sure.

A: I don't know if some left, I know that -- I know a few who just died. Meed was his name, Benjamin Meed.

Q: Right.

A: He was also in the same organizati-zation --

Q: As your father.

A: -- as my father, yeah, and he has this ghetto si -- Warsaw ghetto survivor organization --

Q: Right.

A: -- that he was running it. I used to attend.

Q: You describe after the Nazis attacked that there was no running water. But you also said that prior to the Nazis there was no wa -- running water in your home, or is that not true?

A: No.

Q: No. There was?

A: There was, in the corridor -- li-lived in apartments and there was like a hallway.

Q: Right.

A: And in the hallway there was pump with water. So it was not running water in your kitchen or [indecipherable] we have to carry the water in pails, bring it to the apartment to kitchen, and use it. Or washing whatever you have to wash -- we didn't have showers.

Q: Right.

A: Not even a bathroom in the room, we had to go outdoors.

Q: You have to go outdoors for the bathroom.

A: Yes, yes. And a -- a funny story.

Q: Yeah?

A: The bathroom thing that they used, my grandmother Chana used to take a pail of all the dirty stuff, that we peed, or other things and throw it out at night somewhere on a corner that doesn't touch nobody or will not smell some in the middle of the street. So I -- she was very superstition. So, she took me with her sometime and sometime my mom. I didn't understand then, but I will tell you what she did. They were so superstitious then that they believed that dead bodies, dead people walk at night around us, but we don't see them. So she used to say, before she spilled that dirt, she used to say, "Scheidem, scheidem," -- scheidem is like dead bodies, "Scheidem, gay avek, gay avek."

Q: Go away.

A: Go away. We have things to do, go away, don't stay in front of us. On all four sides. East, west, south, no-north, wherever. Four sides she turned, and she say the same thing --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- scheidem, scheidem [indecipherable], please excuse me, go away. And then, after she went to all the four sides, she did the business, she threw it away. And I was standing, and I was really afraid. I didn't know exactly what scheidem is, but she explained like dead bodies and this. I didn't associate with d-dead bodies then, I didn't see too many. So I couldn't understand, but when I got older, I know the superstitious, you know, people had in the old days, everybody is superstitious. So I understood the way they treated the dead bodies with respect, that they might be hurt by her. This is a very funny thing.

Q: Right.

A: There are many things. I used to -- my Aunt Reisl, which is like a -- a rose, yeah? She was the only sister of six brothers. She was beautiful, she was a seamstress with her husband also, Herman.

Q: This is the sister of your father?

A: Of my father. They had four children. Two of the names I remember. One, the name -- the first born by everybody in the family Szlinger was Mordechai, Mijatek. Okay, in Polish, Mijatek. Like a translation from Yiddish Mordechai. And the baby girl was Bronia, Bronka they call. And the two others, younger, I don't remember. They were all redheads. We were a family of redheads and I had a lot of freckles. I still have -- that hair, it's colored, I'm not red originally, I have gray, and then my hair become very dark, after they were cutting my hair in Russia a lot, so it becomes black, really changed the color. But it was a very happy family. They were not rich,

but happy together and singing and dancing, all the movies they saw they were singing the songs.

That's what I talked about Molitik -- and how do I know Molly Pickens? From them.

Q: Right.

A: And then I saw her movies. I saw her in Yentl in "Fiddler on the Roof."

Q: You did, yes, in New York?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: When -- when you -- you and your brother and your mother and father get on this horse and buggy, yes? And there's no other family members, those --

A: They didn't want to.

Q: They wou -- they wouldn't go.

A: No. My father came at night, and he prepared us before, told my mom to do some gathering things, clothing, food for the children, everything. It was fall, November was already cold and raining. And he asks the brothers and the sisters, also he can get some horses and buggies, renting for money, and run away. So my grandmother Chanaleh -- Chana and others say that my bro -- my father's a meshugener, a crazy. Where you taking young children in such a cold bitterness, you running away, why? He says, "It's going to be worse. Germany is going to kill every Jew, and they going to make camps." So my buba Chana say, "You crazy. Before, in the 14's, there was a war, nothing happened, we were only hungry. But nothing happened to Jews." So he said, "Who wants to come with us?" He has a premonition or he knew something from the organization what's going on -- to happen. And seeing dead body in the streets, and dead horses, and German running with German Shepherds, and beating every old man or young man, or

taking Jewish beards and cut them with blood running. He saw that it's not good, so he brought that at night, the horse, and my mom was ready. We did not understand anything then, I didn't know what's going on. I cried, my brother cried, we were -- you know, hushed up by my mom, my father, and we left. We left Warsaw burning, Warsaw was burning.

Q: Do you re --

A: I remember the fire.

Q: You do?

A: Like, do you see, "Gone With the Wind", the burning of Atlanta?

Q: Mm-hm, yeah.

A: That's how --

Q: That's how it looked?

A: -- I remember that, too.

Q: And the smell.

A: And the smell and everything and the danger. And the smell of dead bodies, and Germans standing all this, and Polacks standing, you know, they think that never happen to them, and they were happy, smiling, they showing like this. Like they going to be slaughtered like this, you know? They were happy.

Q: Did you see --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- Polish gentiles doing that --

A: Yeah, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Q: -- around the neck? Uh-huh.

A: Yes. So, at night we didn't know where we running. We're running and running a few days. We went -- my father told my mom in Jewish that we're going to a border between Poland and Russia. There's many borders. We went to a place called Zaremby-Koscielne. It's a Polish -- it's a -- Koscielne means churches, a place of churches. There were probably a lot of churches in that, that's why it's called Zaremby-Koscielne in Polish. Kosciel is me -- is Polish, a church. So we went to Zaremby-Koscielne. It was raining, cold. We had some clothes, some this, but it was wet, we were soaked wet. They -- the horse and buggy -- the buggy wa -- the carriage was open, we didn't have any cover, only a -- the blankets which were soaked already, and we came to that place. It was woods and a big field, raining, dark and -- and gray, very bitter cold, and we stopped there. The German -- that was a border between Russia and Polish. I don't know exactly the geography, but it's -- was somewhere in the south, it's -- was -- bete -- we were supposed to go to Bialystok. It was Russian border then, now Bialystok is back Polish.

Q: Right.

A: Bialystok means a white mountain, Bialystok. And we stood in Zaremby-Koscielne, Germans were around us with dogs, of course, and from the trees, the pine trees, my father made like a chalash, like the Indian live in this. But the rain penetrated anywhere, so we were wet there, the bedding that they brought, everything was soaked, we were cold, my feet were frozen, and my brother cried, my brother cried, he was always hungry. He was a baby, he didn't understand. One day they took everybody out on the field, like gathering together. My father was holding my brother on his ha -- in his hand. I was holding my mother's hand, nothing else, and the Germans came like making an ins-inspection. Who this and this and my brother cried, Mordechai cried, so my father held him like this and said, shh. So the German came over with this stick, the rubber stick, slashed my father's face with it, and with such a rage. I don't know why, there was no

reason. He just beat him with that and cr -- and here was open and blood was running his -- over the -- his face, so my -- we all cried. I cried, my mom cried and my brother cried very much. So the German, zai schtul, mas schtul, be quite. And we stopped. So the German came, one German had a piece of salami like the [indecipherable] thing, he gave it to my brother.

Q: Gave him a piece, or gave him the whole thing? A -- a little piece.

A: Like -- like this length, yeah --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- a narrow piece of good wurst, salami. And my father took and shared with all four of us, we ate. And he says to him, you have very nice children, but don't stay here. That means he was human. He had to do his job, the German, but he told us, my father especially not to be here, because Germany is taking young men to the country and they started already, they prepared for concentration camps. We didn't know that then, but now, after this, you know the history, they prepared that in Poland, the railroads and the barracks, they were built before the concentration -- years before, they prepared. And I don't understand one thing. Did they not realize what is it for? Nobody spoke about it, nobody knew about it? That's a puzzle to me, because it was done before, years before. All the barracks, all the railroads to go from all -- it was a big, big project to do, from all over Europe to bring trains to this place. To Treblinka, to Auschwitz.

Q: You think they made new tracks? Uh-huh.

A: They prepared long time before they started to do it. And I think the Polish government knew too, but it was not a Communist government there, it was other. So, when --

Q: So he warned your father to go away.

A: -- when -- when the German gave us salami and everything, where everybody was happy, they say go to your places, my father said to my mom -- I knew later, I didn't know as a child

what happened, that you stay with the children, try to break the border. Go to Russia, and I am running to Bialystok and I will wait for you in the synagogue. There was a big Jewish synagogue in Bialystok. And over there we will meet. I don't know when we will come. My father disappeared the next day. We didn't know anything, we cried. My mom said, shh to me. My brother didn't understand, he was little. But she told me, "Surele, don't cry. Your father will come. We will meet with Father. Just be good girl." We didn't have food, but the German didn't bother then so much, so my mom went -- she left us alone with some other older people to watch, and she went to work. There were a lot of Jewish Polish families living there in Zaremby-Koscielne, and she went to look for work, whatever. She could cook, she could clean, she could do anything, watch children, and she found a little job by very rich family that they came from Russia pal -- they -- they send them to this place like, you know, a punishment, something, the Communists or whatever. And she cleaned there, she cooked and she brought some food for us, whatever leftover, potatoes, a little bit chicken, whatever, bread. We were happy to have that.

Q: Where are you staying? Are you outside?

A: On the field.

Q: On the field, are there other --

A: On the field as a -- for long.

Q: -- refugees there?

A: Refugee -- like a refugee place. It was not wired, nothing. It was [indecipherable] from all the sides surrounded. It was like a field, open field between woods.

Q: And you're outside, you have no shelter?

A: No, nothing.

Q: Nothing.



A: Nothing, that -- the pine trees my father cut that they put together like in a V --

Q: In the V.

A: That was all.

Q: That was all.

A: Everything. When was nice weather my mother took out the -- the goosefeathers, you know, the blanket from goosefeather, very heavy. They call it a perine in Yiddish. It's like a goosefeather blanket, very heavy. I still have one. It's good for the winter, it's light.

Q: And what did she do, put it outside so it would dry?

A: To dry, yeah, and then to cover us at night that we don't feel cold. My feet were swollen from cold, I couldn't walk. My toes, still today when it's bad weather --

Q: You feel it.

A: -- I have my big toes swollen bigger, and they itch. Before, I had blisters, it was swollen from the cold and I had blisters, I couldn't even walk. But there was no medication to -- to heal it, just time did it, but I still feel when it's very cold I feel they bother me like needles coming through, and -- and psychological -- psychologically I will always remember this thing what happened, because it was a tremendous impact on my life as a child, to go through this and not understanding why. Now I know why. I know the politics, I know what happened, now I know why. But then, what the German did to children and later on with the camps, that was terrible what they did. That was the worst part. These were intelligent, educated people. Germany was a very advanced -- with everything, technologically, and a -- and how could a nation do that to every people in the world, and not just Jews, to Russian, [indecipherable] and Gypsies.

Q: How do you --

A: Exterminating millions and millions and the whole world stood still. Why? Nobody cared. Nobody said anything. So when we tried to smuggle the border, my mother tried every evening to -- there were the booths, and there was a Polish soldier on this side, Russian soldier -- you know, they like -- on the border they had a booth, yes, one Polish flag and one side the Russian flag, and soldiers in their uniforms. The Russians stood with the rifles, and the Polish with the rifles. So my mother took us every day, sometime in the evening, sometime in the afternoon, but not at dark, and she spoke Russian and she spoke Polish to the other. I remember the Russian soldier got upset, he took the rifle and say in Russian, "Davai na zad." Go back. My mother didn't want to move back, and she started to beg and cry. He pushed her with the carabine -- with the rifle, with the other side, with the wooden side, pushed her in here and my mother fell, and she didn't move. And we thought my -- the mother is dead. Me and my brother started to cry. Momma, Momma, we spoke Polish. Momma stine, Momma styoff in Yiddish. Get up, get up Momma. You not dead, you not dead. And the -- my mother was like fainted or whatever, she didn't move. So the soldier came over, the Russian, yelling at us, davai na zad, but we didn't know what davai na zad is. Go back, go back. But s -- I cry, I say Momma, Momma. And they spoke Polish on the border, the Russian spoke Polish. I said to him in Polish, "My mom is dead? My mom is not living?" So he say, "Your mom is going to be fine." He went down, I don't know what he said to her. She later told me. When she came to herself, sh -- he picked her up, he -- her -- she was all in mud, it was muddy, rainy, and we went back to our place. And she tried again. With the Polish soldier nothing, they -- they were very rude, they couldn't do it. One day -- she kept separ -- now I understand she kept secrets from me or brother -- my brother was little. She couldn't tell me. And she said one day to me, "Surele, gather everything what we have the little bundles, put everything together and we go for a walk in the evening." It was a nice evening, it

was not raining and it wasn't cold, it was dry. And we walked. I was holding my mom by the skirt because she was holding my brother, he couldn't walk too much. And Mordechai, my brother, the chubby guy, always was hungry, always. He liked food and was hungry. He was crying because he was hungry. And whenever I had a piece of bread she gave us the same ration, I cut a piece for him later. I knew he will cry, so I gave him my share. One evening we went to the woods, didn't tell us anything. She say we going here, maybe we'll find something to eat, some grass growing or mushrooms, you know, wild mushrooms, wild grass, and we'll find. And it was dark, it was twilight, you know, it wasn't light any more. But we could still see, and we were walking along the line and there was a wire, you know, there were -- it was wired, the whole thing. And all of a sudden my mom says, "Sit here, let's sit here." We sat on the grass, my mother went to the wire to the gate, and underneath she pushed it up, there was like a hole. Later I find out that the soldier, when he beat her and she was laying like that, he told her, at night you go here, and there is a open wire. And you go to the woods. And he told her what to expect. She didn't say anything to us, nothing, we were too little, and we could tell. So what happened? She digged a little bit, she pushed my brother underneath, fine, she pushed me, and then she made a little higher, I was holding up the wire a little bit, lifted it as much as I could for five years old.

Q: Right.

A: So we went through, and we had a little thing, my mother was holding my brother, I was her skirt, because she needed two hands, always with her skirt, she was wearing a long skirt, warm. And we're walking, and it's dark and I used to hear stories about wolves and -- and wild animals, that they going to eat us up, and my mom said, "Don't worry, nobody is going to eat us, there's nobody, it's too cold." All of a sudden -- we walk, we walk maybe an hour or more, I see some light. I had very good vision, I see some light far away like a little light. I said, Mama, Mama

[speaks Yiddish] in Yiddish, I said to her, "Look, there's some light." She says, "Shh, don't say." She knew where we going. We came closer, there's a little wooden shack, like, and lights. We came in, we knocked into the door, a older woman opened the door. And there was a man -- I feel chills when I tell that, because I remember that story well. And the woman said to her, to my mother, in Polish, "Who are you?" Kto ty jest? So my mom says, "I'm running from Warsaw, the Germans killed my f -- husband, he is not alive. I have two sick children, please help me." So she say, "Come in." Inside there was that woman, an older man, probably her husband and a young woman, maybe the daughter. They gave us food, they washed us, and they put us on the hay, there was hay on the floor. And she give us covers to cover ourself for night, and she says, in Polish she said to my mom, "Don't say anything who let you through. This is the border between this -- we live here many years, we speak Polish and Russian. This is our home, but this is the border between Poland and Russia."

Q: We need -- we need to change the tape, so we'll continue this story on the [indecipherable]

A: Okay.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Okay. Sarah, you were in this little house?

A: Hut, hut.

Q: Hut, it was really a hut.

A: It's a wooden hut.

Q: And -- and they put you on hay, and gave you some blankets.

A: Yeah. That was th --

Q: And is your mother laying there as well?

A: Yeah.

Q: The three of you were laying there?

A: The three. We were not -- never separated. I clinged to my mother, my mother took care of the brother, the little baby boy.

Q: Boy.

A: And because he always cried, he was not like I. I don't understand myself how I was patient at this age of five, five and something, that I never cried and I never ask for anything, I always held my mother's skirt. Be -- I -- I was afraid to be separated because people used to run and losing one another and yelling and not finding one another. That was terrible show. But I remember. So we slept, they gave us food in that little shack.

Q: So they were nice to you?

A: Yes. And they gave us dry clothes, you know, like a big rubashka, she will ask what it is, like a nightgown --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but made of cotton, rough cotton, you know, with long sleeve and long -- it was too long for me, for my age, but I kept warm. I was so warm, it was so good and dry, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: And she dried our clothes, and the next day she said to my mom -- my mother's name was Perele in Yiddish, but the Russian call her Perla. Perla like a -- a -- a d -- no, Pearl.

Q: Right.

A: A pearl.

Q: Right.

A: So she said to my mom, "Perla, you can not stay here. This is a border gathering. The Russian sold -- soldiers come here to warm up, to drink something, to eat, and they leave. In the morning you will have to leave." So my mom cried, she said, "Where would I go with the little sick children? My child's legs are frozen, Sarah's legs." So she say -- she gave me some bandages to cover the wounds and she gave us food and my mom took out her wedding band and gave it to them because we didn't have money to pay. She didn't want to tell -- take it, as -- and Momma says, "Take it. Maybe one days you will help somebody also. You need that." In the morning we were sleeping very comfortable then all of a sudden we woke up to light. There was like a flashlight coming down [indecipherable] on the floor, flashlight came to our face. I opened my eyes and got scared. And my mom say vynish, vynish, don't cry. And the Russian ask my mom, "You a Russian?" Because her father came from Kiev, he taught her Russian, Yiddish, write and speak. My grandfather Todres from Kiev, he was an educated man. And she spoke to them in Russian, they spoke Russian and he ask her [indecipherable] and I remember he ask where are you from, why are you running, where is your husband? Fast. She say, "My husband is dead, the German killed him." And I looked, I -- I didn't say a word. And he ask me [speaks Russian

here], in Russian. "Girl, come here, come here, we'll give you some candies," and this, and one of the soldier took me and he hugged me. He say that I have nice long hair, curly hair. I'm a nice looking girl, and my brother, he was holding us, gave us something to eat. And he say in Russian, "Where is your father?" I said, "I don't know my father." I started to cry, "I don't know, the German took him." So he says, "Okay. We came with the wagon, with the horse and we're going to tel -- take you to the border. Whatever you have, gather. In a half an hour we're going to take you away from here. You cannot stay here." So the woman, that Polish woman told Mom in Polish that -- don't be afraid, these Russian soldiers they don't want any spies in the border because Russia was not at war then --

Q: Right.

A: -- with Germany. But they were very careful. So they took us on a horse and buggy, and -- over the woods, it was still twilight -- it was like not yet day, you know, like four o'clock, five o'clock in the morning. And my mother was sitting in the wagon, also spread with the hay, and the horse took us and the soldiers in front with the carabine, you know, with the rifle, and we went. How long I don't remember, it was long enough, over the woods, then we came on the sk - - on the skirts of the woods. There was a city. I see a city because I remember Warsaw was a big city, big houses and people running, this and that, and he brought us to the synagogue in Bialystok.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. We came with the Russian soldiers, with this, to Bialystok. In Bialystok it was a big shul. I remember many, many people, children, men, women. Everybody yelling, screaming, rushing, ri -- calling names, looking for names, Moishe, Chaim, all kind of Jewish names. Chani, [indecipherable]. People were looking for one another. It was a big, big place with benches, you

know, and -- and they were looking. And my mom started to yell my father's name, Moishe, Moishe, you know, his name. And all of a sudden somebody came to my mom and say, "Who do you looking for?" [speaks foreign language here], who you looking for? She say, "Moishe Szlinger," she said. "Oh, Moishe Szlinger, I know, I saw him yesterday. A tall man, skinny man with dark brown hair?" "Yes, yes, that's my husband." "I saw him." He called another man, and he says, "Do you know where Moishe Szlinger is? That's his wife and children." He said, "Moishe, yeah, he has to come. He went somewhere, but he has to come." Anyway, my father appeared after awhile, and we were all crazy crying. I hugged him by the feet because he was a tall man. And he -- he held my brother in his arm, and my mother, crying, everybody hugging, happy that we are alive. And he said, okay, now we going to stay here, we'll find a place. After two days my mom find a job. There was a lot of Polish and Jewish rich people in Bialystok. They spoke Yiddish, Polish and Russian because it was on the border. To tell you the truth, the -- Bi-Bialystok Jews, according to my mom and father's story, were not pleasant to us. They call us in Russian the runner ise -- the runner ups, the runners. They call it biezency in Russian. Biezency is people who are running. Biezency. So my mom find a job in a very good family. She was cooking, cleaning, washing, and we were staying with them. My father left --

Q: Again?

A: -- again. My father was involved with politics, he knew what was going on, that the German are still looking, you know. Bialystok is still Polish, but any day it can become either Russian, or Germany comes there. So --

Q: So the Russians had not occupied it yet, nor the Germans.

A: No, the Russians, no. The Russians were in between, you know? So it was like already end of 1939, winter. We stood there a few months and then they -- there was rumors, there was writings



that if Jews from Poland want to go to Russia to work for a year, they have to sign out papers that they going to be in Russia working, and after a year if they want to stay, they become Russian citizens.

Q: Excuse me. Uh-huh.

A: My father came to my mom and say, "Perla, what do you mean? To go or not?" She say, "I'm going. I don't want to come to Warsaw because I don't know if they are alive. Let's sign." So they signed. There were people around us, Polish, Russian speaking, and they signed like an affidavit to become Russian citizens and work in Russia. So they took --

Q: So this means that the Russians are actually in Bialystok?

A: In Bialystok, yeah. There was a border between Poland, and it was like a neutral city. Everybody was there. So, there was a big gathering and my father discussed it with the mom.

Q: And did you hear that conversation?

A: I hear --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- but I didn't comprehend what is -- I -- later, when I became older, I ask all the question and we talked about it.

Q: Right.

A: How we came, why we came. So my father said to me, we came and we saved our lives.

Q: Right.

A: And all my brothers and sister went to the ghetto. But that's later, I will tell you --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- how we found out. So we signed and they send us to a border town, it's called Ufa. It was -- I don't know what kind -- because they have the oldest countries in Russia separated by this.

Ufa, you ca -- spell it U-f-a.

Q: Right.

A: It's [speaks foreign language here]. Because there were many ethnic people in Russia then, after the revolution.

Q: Right.

A: They each had their own like, unity. So we went to Ufa for a year. They signed to work. We came there, it was bitter cold, winter, snow up to -- over the head. They took me and my brother to like a kindergarten. They c -- it's a center for children, it's for six days a week. The seventh day they could take the children to their homes and return them the next day. We had food and clothing, whatever. There were many orphans there. They call it Yasly, Yasly like a kindergarten for younger children, you know, not -- there is another word for that, too, but it's for little kids, you know?

Q: So how did your mother and father explain to you, because you've not -- you're not used to being away from them at all.

A: I said, we cried.

Q: You cried.

A: We cried.

Q: Yeah.

A: They had to work.

Q: Right.

A: My mom was working like a factory, they were making bricks, from all kind of material and she used to carry this heavy stuff to put it away. And my father worked also with fire there, they were making all kind of ironwork.

Q: So --

A: Probably it was military, I think.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It was a secret, but I assumed when we were talking, there was then a secret, my mom was carrying bricks, and this, and once the brick fell on her leg and she couldn't walk, she was in a cast. And that was for one year. And I remember on Saturday night they used to pick us up. Saturday afternoon after work, and the road was full of snow, and there was a railroad in the middle, we were walking on the railroad.

Q: On the tracks?

A: Another railro -- road, regular railroad, and on [indecipherable] side the snow was so high, mountains of snow all over, that -- my father was tall, he couldn't reach the top of it, you know? And they used to carry us, my mom, and my brother and I was holding their hands. And all of a sudden you hear [indecipherable] was the -- the locomotive, toot too, like a long -- they knew that people walking on it. So, when my father saw from far away the locomotive coming, he threw me on the slope of the -- of the snow, and my brother --

Q: On the other.

A: -- to the other side, and they were standing each one like squeezing themselves between that -- the railroad and --

Q: And the snow.

A: -- the train that came in the snow. We don't know how long it lasted til the train went slowly through, the wagons, everything. We were freezing. My brother cried, always crying. He was such a prince. He -- he was always uncomfortable, always hungry. He could not take anything different, you know, that's it's discomfoting. Always crying. So when this is -- we were used to it already because it happen all the time, they threw us over, you know, on the snow. And they lived in a little room with a kitchen, so we had food, and this, and the next day they took us when they were going to work, they took us back to that kindergarten where all the children were.

Q: So what did you do with your parents on the day that you stayed with them? Did they play with you? Did -- do you remember?

A: We didn't have toys.

Q: Right.

A: They fed us. We -- we -- they told stories, we were singing. My father liked to sing and dance and my mom had a won -- beautiful voice. And I s -- we sang all the Yiddish Polish songs with them. Me, I loved them. And the next day they went to work, they brought us back. Th-The -- think the first time when they saw me, they didn't recognize me. And I yelled, "Mama, Mama, Tata." And they look at me, I have no hair. They shaved our hair, because people had lice, children too. There was no soap, no nothing.

Q: So you were bald?

A: I -- I was shaved and a little like sprigs of hair coming, I had dark hair. Shaved and I have like a kerchief. You see that picture in that album? This is my first picture when I came from Russia and every -- I did not have long hair, only shaved here in the back, and here a little like -- I don't know how to --

Q: Like bangs?

A: Yeah. That's --

Q: So like a bowl cut.

A: Yeah.

Q: Like from a bowl.

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I'd -- I didn't --

Q: And she didn't recognize you?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Did they get -- cut Mordechai's hair too?

A: Yeah, everybody's, everybody's hair, ev-everybody was bald, all the children.

Q: What -- what was it like with being with all these children in this daycare center, was it awful?

A: We didn't feel it that way because first of all we had food to eat and a bed to sleep.

Q: Mm.

A: And mostly we slept in two -- two people in one narrow bed, children, and my brother didn't want to get separated --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- from me, so I slept with him. He was a little boy, he peed at night on the bed, and all of a sudden I feel a warm liquid.

Q: Right.

A: And then cold. He peed, and that was life. I couldn't change it. If I could put something under there, but we -- we got used to it. And we lived for a year like that. And that was 1940, s --

Q: 1940?

A: '39 - '40.

Q: Are you growing up fast in a funny way? You're becoming a kind of adult child?

A: Yeah.

Q: Cause you're taking care of your brother, you have to take care of him --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- all week long.

A: I always took care of him.

Q: So you can't be much of a child yourself.

A: I was not. I -- I didn't have a childhood at all. I was too fast a -- an adult, grown-up child. I was small and short and skinny, but my mind, I didn't have toys to play.

Q: Right.

A: I lost my childhood. That's why today I try to compensate my lost years to be happy to have toys. I have dolls now. I never had a doll.

Q: When you were a child, yeah.

A: I -- my doll is sitting in my living room with nice brown hair, with big, nice, beautiful crinoline dress. I have a doll, Gone With the Wind, which sh -- Vivian Leigh doll image.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Dressed nice, with the green thing. And I have a Polish girl, a Krakowianka, you know, the Krakowianka from the region of Kraków.

Q: Right.

A: They have this Polish costume with colored skirt, like flowered red, and she has a flowered thing on her head with white braids, with ribbons and corals here. And you know, like a Polish country girl. She's in my bedroom, sitting on the chair and I call her Karolinka. That's a Polish country girl.

Q: Right.

A: Like Caroline. And -- and I say good morning to her all the time. I'm a child.

Q: Do your friends understand this? Do you tell them [indecipherable]

A: They laugh, they laugh.

Q: They laugh. Do they -- but do you explain where this comes from?

A: Mm-mm. No.

Q: You don't. Do they -- they don't ask you.

A: No, they don't ask.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It's a -- they say, oh that's nice decoration.

Q: Right.

A: But actually it's not decoration.

Q: Right, this is --

A: This is my dolls that I never had.

Q: Do you have other toys? As a --

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: It's the dolls that matter the most.

A: No, the dolls, yeah, the dolls. I don't --

Q: Did any of the other children have toys there, or do -- or none of the -- nobody had toys --

A: Nobody had toys.

Q: -- nobody had anything to play with.

A: We -- we hardly had food to eat.

Q: Yeah.

A: No toys, no. But we had some, later years. We had our entertainment like we were singing, dancing. That was later --

Q: In the daycare?

A: Yeah. And after the year, they gave us another location. They transfer us, the family, to Ukraine. The city was called Donbass. It was a coal mine city. My father and mother worked. We were very happy there. First of all, in Ukraine, was warm.

Q: Really?

A: Very warm. And the woman that she rented us a room was a Ukraine older woman, we call her Babushka, means grandmother, Babushka.

Q: Right.

A: And she was a very good person. She had an orchard. We had fruits like pears and apples to eat. She always gave me -- she called me in Russian Szurka. Szurka, like Surele Mama called me, she called me Szurka, now, take an apple, take a pear. And my brother always by me. And we ate, and it was warm. My parents worked.

Q: Why was it warm there, is it the southern part of the Ukraine?

A: Yeah, mm-hm.

Q: C-Can we go back a little bit wi --



A: Yeah.

Q: -- ha -- in this daycare center, how were the kids together? Was there aggression, was there fighting, or --

A: No.

Q: No, there wasn't.

A: We were all subdued, we were all hungry.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We were all shaved. We looked miserable and we felt miserable.

Q: Miserable.

A: The only thing they gave us is a little bit food and where to sleep. I don't even remember having a toy there.

Q: And were there --

A: There were so many of us.

Q: How many do you think there were? Do you have any recollection? A hundred, 50?

A: There was like a big hall with tables to eat, long tables with benches. I really cannot tell you how many. It's a lot and a lot of noise. People, children crying --

Q: [indecipherable] noise, yeah, sure.

A: -- and nobody take care of you even you make in your pants or whatever, there was no diapers. You make, you made, they took it off and they washed it, you know, with chlorine, with everything. And since sanitary conditions were not good, that's why they shaved our hairs.

Q: Right. So, were there --

A: Not to have lice.

Q: -- were there a few people taking care of you, or you don't even --

A: There were quite a few women, and men I remember bringing food and -- and doing -- like cleaning a little bit.

Q: Right.

A: But mostly women.

Q: Right.

A: Mostly women, not --

Q: So was it -- your memories are not terrible, they're just not good. [indecipherable]

A: No, not terrible. The terrible thing is that we were separated for a whole week.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: Because they had to work.

Q: Right.

A: That we were separated, little, nobody to take. But in Ukraine, in Donbass, they worked, my mom and father, also in the factory.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know what they were doing, carrying something. My father was lo -- worked with -- with iron, like they were melting iron, it's heavy work, so he get more -- e-everything was Russian there, food and everything, you need a -- like a card to -- coupons. But we had bread and we had vegetables there and that lady took good care, and fruit.

Q: Right.

A: We were very happy there. It was warm, and --

Q: Sh -- was she taking care of you during the day?

A: No --

Q: No.

A: -- not completely. We were running around in her orchard, free, and there were animals, she had a goat and she used to give me milk from the goat, and that particular goat I liked. And she milked -- I was holding the glass and she was milking from the goat into my glass. The milk was warm.

Q: Right.

A: And I didn't drink it before it on top was creating a foam, that the glass was not flat, like a foam over.

Q: Right.

A: And I took my nose into it and I had a white foam --

Q: Yes.

A: -- on my lips, on my nose, all over. And I -- I licked it. I loved that. And this goat, particular goat, I liked the goat, she was very gentle, she stood there not kicking.

Q: Right.

A: And I was holding the glass, and she was pulling th-the thing -- the -- milking it.

Q: Did Mordechai like this wi -- milk too?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yes, I bet.

A: Mordechai liked everything, he -- just give him food and bread and thing.

Q: And he was fine.

A: He was chubby then, he was very good. Our hair started to grow, you know --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- they were very good, it was a nice warm climate. The only thing, it was hard that my parents had to work and we both got malaria.

Q: The kids? You too?

A: Me and my brother. And when you have malaria, all of sudden you have chills, or all of a sudden you will get hot, you know? When you have high temperature, you getting chills --

Q: Right.

A: -- if you cold.

Q: Right.

A: So we were shivering like -- like this and my mom had to work and we were locked in the room by ourselves, me and my brother. You see, today, they would put you in a hospital.

Q: Hospital, I suppose, yeah.

A: But we had to survive, and we did.

Q: And you did.

A: And it was a hard time. And -- but, was a good year, and then was a terrible thing what happened. Russia was going to war in June.

Q: Of 1941.

A: 1941.

Q: Right.

A: They took my father to the army. Stopping?

Q: We're going to stop the tape, yes, it's a -- I suppose a sort of perfect time.

A: Oh my, you will have a lot of tape.

End of Tape Three

### Beginning Tape Four

Q: Sarah, before we get to where we actually ended on the last tape, I wanted to ask you about malaria. You said that you kids were locked in a room, and you were just alone?

A: Yes.

Q: How in heaven's name was that --

A: Well, my -- we were -- it was in Ukraine, in Donbass, and we lived at this little room from the Russian old lady who rented to us, and me and my brother got sick. And all of a sudden -- malaria is like you have the chills, and you start shivering, and you shaking, your body's shaking and then you cannot even say a word. Your teeth are teetering. And all -- when the temperature goes away, you feel cold, normal. It's only when you have the high fever you start shivering. And my mom didn't have a choice, she had to leave us alone. Actually, I didn't start from the beginning. It was 1941 in Ukraine when my father was taken to the Russian army, to the front. Mom and us two children were left in Ukraine, and she worked and we got sick.

Q: Oh, you got sick after your father left.

A: Yes, yes --

Q: I see.

A: -- yes. We got sick, and she had to work. So the babushka, the woman, the older lady that we called Babushka, it's like grandma, she was very good to us. She used to bring water, or whatever she could give us, a little bit soup to eat. But we actually stayed by ourselves in the room. And I cover -- when I was sick and shivering, my brother covered me, and I covered him when he needed to be pampered. And we stayed alone. We stayed alone.

Q: How long did it take before you got better? Do you remember? Weeks?

A: Maybe a -- weeks -- maybe weeks, yeah. When we got better, the temperature broke, we were very weak, and tired, and sick. We couldn't walk. It was very hard, and we didn't have medication. They should give us canine -- caneen?

Q: Quinine.

A: Quinine.

Q: Quinine, right.

A: Qanina they call it in Russian. Once my mother got a dose of that from a doctor they gave us, but that was all, we -- we just had to recover by ourselves. Drinking water, or crying and that was all.

Q: So how long did it take before you could walk again, and you weren't so weak? Do you re --

A: It tooks week -- weeks. Slowly we made step by step in the house holding by the furniture, like this, holding on, standing up, walking. And my brother was always holding me by my clothes, or I hold his hand. He never was separated, never. And since his death, I miss him very much. We were very close. We had a lot of good memories, and he called me Mama.

Q: He did.

A: He called --

Q: As a -- as a child, too?

A: As a child. And I beat him up. I say, I'm not your mama.

Q: You beat him up?

A: Yeah. I say, "Mordechai, don't call me mama, I'm not your mama." You know, I was seven, eight years old --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- how can I be your mama? You called me mama. So I was angry, and as a child, I -- I wanted to defend myself to be more mature. I don't want you to call me mama, I'm not your mama. I'm your sister, Sarah. We spoke Russian then. We -- with my mom we spoke Yiddish and Polish and with him, he was little, he didn't know Yiddish or Polish then, spoke Russian to me. So we spoke Russian.

Q: So did he change? Did he call you sister? Or did he always call you mama?

A: Oh yeah, later on, yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: He -- you saw the pictures, a very big man, very caring, very lovely, good looking man. He has -- I -- I miss him very much. My brother died of cancer of the liver, and he had diabetes. And the last time I visited Israel in November, and I si -- I took him to the Dead Sea, to -- I knew he is sick, to give him some good time together, because my younger sister, who was so spoiled by us, we were taking care of her as a child, has no feelings. And she doesn't even talk to -- she didn't talk to my brother, and doesn't talk to me.

Q: Mm.

A: I don't understand. We are from the same parents, and everybody has a different attitude. Maybe because me and my brother were always attached to the hip because of the war, because of being by ourselves. We didn't have any trauma, no -- no problems to be with one another, always looked for me. Even when I was 14 - 15 in Poland, used to go out with boys, and have friends and he always wanted to come to me. I chased him away. I said, "Go home." "I will tell Mom that you're going out with boys." I said, "All right. I'm going out with boys, these are my friends, you go home." It was very hard to separate him from me.

Q: Right.

A: But we were very close all the time, even though I went to America, and he in Israel, we always kept in touch.

Q: Right.

A: He married twice, he had the first wife, that's -- you saw the picture, Tamara, she's from Morocco Jews, Moroccan Jews, a nice family. They have two children, a daughter, Anat, she's now 46 or something, and named a son, Moishe, after my father, Mojes -- Moishe in Hebrew. And Moishe has two beautiful daughters. And now it was born on my brother's birthday, December 14, 2006, a boy was born, looks exactly like my brother.

Q: Really?

A: And they call him Mordechai Eli, and I spoke to them, they say that he is a copy of Mordechai. I hope to see them.

Q: I hope so too.

A: I hope to see them. Very lovely, I love them very much, and I am a very family oriented person. I love my fa-family, I like my children, my grandchildren, everybody. I don't have grudges against nobody because my life was hard and I now will not concentrate on being angry at somebody or being against somebody or hating somebody. I always find love in my heart for other people to be helpful. And I miss my brother.

Q: Right, I bet you do.

A: I miss him very much.

Q: Do y -- do you remember the day your father left to go to the Russian army?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What was that like?

A: We didn't understand too much. My mom cried.



Q: You were six.

A: Yeah.

Q: 1941, right? So you --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- were six years old. Or five.

A: He was a tall, nice looking man, slim. And he said to us not to cry. He hugged me, my brother, my mom, he said it wou -- "The war will not last long, and I will be back. You just be good to one another, help your mom, and be good to your brother." I say, "Yes, I will, but I want you to come back." He say, "I will." So, when he left for the army, we didn't know anything where he is, what he is doing, no letters, nothing. We did not receive. So, when my -- the war started in '41, we stayed a few months with the -- in the Ukraine with that woman, Babushka we call her, grandma. She was a very nice person, but my mom say, "I'm not going to stay in Ukraine." I -- she say, "Why Perlina?" Perlina -- she was Perla in Yiddish, but in Russian they call her Perlina. And -- "Why? Stay here. We'll take care of the children, you will work." My mom say, I have -- she told me later, "I have memory from my father, born in Kiev, and telling me stories about anti-Semitism in Ukraine, how much they were against Jews." And they collaborated with the Germans, Ukraines, a lot of them. So my mother remembered that, her father's story, and she evacuated. There was like a Jewish Polish organization that they provided. So we were staying in a different place, and I don't remember exactly, not long. And then we find out -- oh, my father's brother, Yukel, and his wife, and daughter and son were living in Magnito Gorsk. It's in Ural.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They found that my father was wounded, and he was living in Shchyokino, two -- near the forest --

Q: Near Tula.

A: Tula.

Q: Right.

A: So, somehow he -- he tried, my mother tried to write and there was like a Polish organization. There was a Polish writer woman, was named Wanda Waszylewska. You call it with a W, Wanda Waszylewska. She was a writer and very active for Jews and Polish people to come together to live like a Polish society. And through her we find where my father is and through my -- my uncle that they were keeping track of Jewish people and Polish people from Poland. And we traveled, and my mom, my -- me, my -- my brother in trains, it was very far away.

Q: Yes, I imagine, from --

A: Yes. We traveled all over Russia. They were not elegant trains, it was like cattle trains. Hay in the middle, and there was a little stove, not to keep -- to keep warm, not cold. So one day we had bread that was like put in the oven, and like toasted. Dry bread toasted in a sack. And we were transferred from one train to another, and Mom gave me the sack to hold on my back, that sack with bread. It was not that heavy because it was dry, it was not heavy. And pef -- people were running and pushing to go into the trains, and -- cattle train actually, it was very high up, there was no steps down, nothing. They did not provide any luxury for the refugees. And I remember somebody pulled me up to the train and my mom was behind and pushing my brother up. So I held my brother's hand and in one hand I had the sack. All of a sudden I feel light, there is no sack. Somebody took it away, we never find it. We cried. We didn't have our chlebushka, you know, like my brother cried, Mama, chlebushka? Mama, give me bread. He was always hungry

and he always cried. Chlebushka. I call him chlebushka always, you know? That -- that was the Russian word for bread, but in a very nickname like -- like endearing. It's called chleb in Russian.

Q: Bread.

A: But chlebushka is something like -- like somebody you love, you call babushka, like this, you know, they --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- add. So that was chlebushka for him, and we didn't have it. Imagine in such a situation, people running, hungry, somebody steals from a child, that sack with the -- we call it suchary, suchary, that dry bread. And we didn't have what to eat, and the train was going and going with no stop. We didn't know where we going.

Q: Oh, you weren't sure where you were going?

A: Mm-mm, we didn't know. And when it stopped, everybody run out, because people -- excuse, were relieving themselves on the hay there.

Q: Right.

A: On the straw. So when there's a train stop, we have to get -- jump down and go pee or do some other things. And sometime the train all of a sudden start moving.

Q: Right.

A: So my mom threw me to one wagon, my brother too, and somebody grabbed her by the hand to pull her to another wagon.

Q: Into another wagon.

A: And the train goes and goes, how long we don't know, and we cry, Mama, Mama, we both cry. And finally, after a few hours it stops, so my mom came running to us, hugged us. We cried,

because we were happy to see. So my mom say, never again we go, we always keep hands together. Whatever happen, happen. And the trains, at the station, they had hot water. They call it in Russian kipiatak, kipiatak it's like boiling water. And we get the hot water and whoever had a piece of bread put it in that water so we have something warm to -- to have for the stomach, you know? So --

Q: But you didn't have any food?

A: No. But they gave us some, Russians.

Q: They did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: A piece of bread a day, or whatever, they gave us some, so we save for the next day. I always saved bread. I cut like a small piece and put under the pillow, it was not a pillow like here, soft and comfortable. Something that you put under your head, and I always kept a piece of bread hidden. And when my brother cried for chlebushka, to get bread, I always got a piece and gave it to him, and he was satisfied and happy. We were very attached to one another. And then we come, after months of traveling, we come to Tula. That's the city not far from Moscow, that city Tula, and from Tula the organizat-zation, a Polish organization brought us together and they transfer us to Shchyokino, where my father was, you know?

Q: So your father was not in Tula --

A: No.

Q: -- he was in Shchyokino.

A: It was cold in the Russian Gora Shchyokino, the city of Shchyokino, and Tuls kaya Obles, Tula like -- like Washington [indecipherable] Maryland, yeah? That was the region.

Q: Right.

A: Tuls kaya Obles, the -- the suburbs or whatever, of Tula. Tula was not far away, but it was a nice, big city, because later we went there. And my father lived in a place called in Russian obszy zycie, it's communal life, communal life like a community in barracks. Everybody had a bed like two, four or five people in one room, with a small petition like in the hospital, you know, they have this curtain --

Q: Curtain.

A: -- on the bed, and -- and we didn't see our father for a long time, I didn't recognize him. He got -- he was wounded in the -- in his leg, so he limped a little bit. But he got skinny and not the father I remember. And we were also children that grew a little bit and got skinny, without hair.

Q: So you --

A: So we all cried. We cried. It was like kind of frightened of him, the way he looked. And he cried to find us and my mom. And life started. So, as a family, we got a little room, separate from the place where he stayed single. We got a little room, a long, little co -- like the same width, but longer, with one window, two beds with straw mattresses and a stove in the middle, like they call it [speaks Russian here], the Russian stove that you burn on coal or wood, and no gas. And no running water, never in the house, not --

Q: You haven't had running water for a very long time.

A: No.

Q: No.

A: We used to carry, my mom -- in the Russia, if you see Russian old movies, you have like a -- a wooden [indecipherable] like it's half round and it has two hooks, one hook for one pail, and the other, and you carry it on your shoulder like this, with the -- I used to carry that.

Q: Really?

A: Mm-hm. But smaller buckets, you know?

Q: Right, because you were smaller.

A: I used to sit down, kneel it -- kneel, and then pick it up with my shoulder, and stand up. And of course the water was -- because I was shaking, not steady on my legs, so this was spilling, you know, spill. But I run, barefoot, and was summertime, and we didn't have clothes enough and my mom, from whatever she could do over her clothes she sew for me like a sarafan, you know, like with no sleeves underneath, you wear a blouse and whatever. And that's what -- and barefoot all summer long we run barefoot, and I had a glass splinters in my legs, and wood in my legs, and you ask he -- I looked like a tomboy. I was very active. My hair was shaven, still cor -- short, didn't have hair.

Q: Right.

A: Just a little bit in front, like here, and straight, with freckles. I still have freckles, I cover them with --

Q: Not too many. You cover them up.

A: -- with make-up a little bit. With freckles, my brother also had freckles. I even have on my hands freckles. But -- and then we were happy to be together with my father.

Q: How long did it take you to get used to your father again?

A: Oh, it took awhile, months.

Q: It did?

A: I -- yeah. And he --

Q: Were you frightened of him in some way?

A: No, we were not frightened. It just -- he was not the same person like we remember, warm and loving. He was like keeping distance from the army, from being wounded, and he start drinking, and the -- they taught him how to drink alcohol. He started to drink, so -- he worked very hard, he worked with iron. They were melting iron in a big factory, and making like all kind of -- I don't know, ammunition or whatever, parts or whatever. He worked very hard, and they were rationing us with bread. So while he was working very hard, a physical job, he got a ration of bread daily, a kilo bread. Kilo bread is like two -- two and something pounds. A kilo bread. My mom had a half of it, half a kilo bread, and we got together, me and my brother, half a kilo. So we had two kilo breads, which you will think it's a lot, yeah, it's like a loaf of bread for four people. But except bread, we didn't have anything to eat. We didn't have butter, we didn't have marmalade, we didn't have any butter or whatever. And my mom used to say, in Yiddish she say, "God, when I am going to eat a piece of white bread with butter?" I looked at her, "Mama, what is butter?" [speaks foreign language here]. You know it? That's what she wanted. White bread --

Q: Bread with butter.

A: -- with butter. Then I went to school --

Q: Tell me something. Were you sick at all, you and -- besides the malaria --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- because of not getting proper nutrition?

A: That's right. At this place, we got sick with the eyes. My a -- my eyes and my brother's eyes, when it come evening, we didn't see anything. Why -- and his eyes got swollen with a lot of pus coming out, like -- like this, like balloons. My -- we didn't see, we were walking like blind, like this, you know?

Q: At night?

A: In the evening, yes.

Q: Evening.

A: Stretching my brother behind me, holding me like this, and I was walking like --

Q: What was [indecipherable]

A: -- like a zombie. We didn't know. Later I find out. My mother took us to the doctors there, to a clinic and they used to put very strong drops into our eyes. It was burning like hell. We cried just that when she touched us. They put drops and she washed our eyes with some lukewarm water, with the nice cleaning, you know, ma -- fabric. So she wiped our eyes. During the day it was fine, we could see. When evening came -- they call it in Russian -- I will say and then translate kurina slepota. Kurina means chicken blindness. That's how they call it. It was not a professional medical name.

Q: Right.

A: But that was the symptoms that a lot of people, usually children, had because we didn't have vitamins, we didn't have proper food and hygiene, nothing.

Q: Right.

A: So that's -- children were dying like flies there.

Q: Of that?

A: Yeah. Not just from that.

Q: From other things.

A: They had brain sickness. They were swollen.

Q: They had what sickness? Whe --

A: Brain.



Q: Brain.

A: The brain -- was attacking the children's brain, they died like flies. We -- remember that every other day we lived in a barrack, it was -- each one had their own, like 30 families and we knew one another. Every other day there was a -- a funeral for the children. And one family, two, three kids died. They got swollen and this and brain damage or whatever, fever, and they died. And you know, out of this sadness, we run to the cemetery because there was a tradition that when they buried somebody, they gave you a little bit -- a small piece of bread with honey. And this for us, it's irony, it's sad, was like a holiday to get a piece of bread with honey, we never saw honey.

Q: Right.

A: And that was a tradition. And they were buried, a lot of friends I remember, in particular one little girl with blue eyes, her name was Nina. And then her brother, younger brother died, too. But life must go on. We had -- I went to school -- I went to second grade, third grade. I learned very fast Russian, to write in Russian and read. We didn't have books, or didn't have paper to write, like you have nice paper. My father cut up from the newspaper the white side, sewed it up with the needle and thread and I used to write on this my homework and everything. I-It's not a fairy tale --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- it's the truth, I remember that. And --

Q: So he sewed these strips of paper together so --

A: Yeah, this -- the white strips from the newspaper.

Q: -- so that you would have a whole --

A: Yeah, that I could write, you know? It was clean, narrow and long --

Q: Right.

A: -- so I could -- and we had not a pen that you have ink inside. We had a inker, a little thing and we put the pen into the ink --

Q: Right, so you write.

A: -- and write til it end. And we put spots on it, you know, they were spreading li --

Q: Right.

A: We call it clocks

Q: Especially on the newspaper it would spread.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

A: Okay. Oh my God.

End of Tape Four

Beginning Tape Five

Q: We ended where you were going to school, but I want to go back to all of these sicknesses and the children dying.

A: Okay.

Q: Was this very hard on you --

A: Very.

Q: -- to see all these children?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you --

A: We were actually very scared.

Q: Yeah.

A: And especially my parents. You couldn't help it, what's -- was happening, it was like an epidemic.

Q: Right.

A: And young children were dying. Nobody could explain why and how it comes, they just got swollen, got high fever, like a brain fever or whatever, and then the next day or two they were gone. And was --

Q: So it was really fast, also?

A: It was fast, it was fast and there were too many children age six, seven, like that, died. And out of that tragedy that I understand today, we were happy to run to the cemetery to get this piece of bread with honey.

Q: Yes. So it was --

A: Can you imagine --

Q: Yes, I can imagine --

A: -- that survival --

Q: -- what survival does.

A: -- that survival does. We were crying. I remember that Ninotchka -- her name was Ninotchka with blue eyes, blonde hair, Russian child, was beautiful, always playing, she was chubby. And I was the skinny one and the mother sometime brought me a piece of potato, like baked in the oven. They call it kartoshka in Russian. And they were very nice people, Russian people, the peasants or whatever. They were very hospitable.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Very nice people. And we live like brothers and sisters, we played.

Q: Then she died.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: A lot. And then her little brother died, too [indecipherable]. I remem --

Q: Were you scared?

A: Of course.

Q: You were scared.

A: But we didn't understand about dead too much, because they said -- they were very religious, the people, the Russian and they said that they go to heaven. I ask my mom what is heaven because we were not religious at all. We knew Jewish, we knew we Jewish, and my mom say, "In heaven it's a place of like beautiful trees, beautiful green flowers and nice weather and all the people are happy and playing together, children, so she went to heaven." So one day I cry, I say, "I don't want to go to heaven." She say, "Why?" I say, "Because she's not around here. I miss

her and if I go to heaven I will not see you or my brother.” I already started to think about things like that. I say, “I don’t want to go to heaven, I want to be here with you.” And my mom hugged me, she say, “Okay Surele, you’re not going to heaven. You’re growing old here, and this is the hell.” So we live -- we are in hell now.

Q: Did you get sick again, or was it the eye sickness, maybe --

A: No, after the eye sickness, we were eating better, because my mom worked and my father worked, and they had a lot of -- we didn’t have enough bread probably, but there was on the market always, potatoes, or a carrot to buy and this, and she cooked soup, you know?

Q: Mm.

A: She cooked a lot of soup with bread, if you can. And so we put a piece of bread like this, in the spoon like that, it was dripping --

Q: Dripping onto the bread

A: -- so we don’t lose the liquid, so it went on the bread, and then the bread was, you know, e-eaten.

Q: Right.

A: It was very dear, like a commodity. If you give me today gold, I will not cherish that like that piece of bread and soup. Then my sister came. We did not know that Mom is pregnant and I did not understand. I was already nine years old.

Q: Right.

A: It was ’45, ni -- April of ’45, and my mom got sick. We thought that my mom is going to die, me and my brother, we cried. We didn’t know, they didn’t tell us what sh -- what is -- I saw my mom a little bit rounded like she is gaining weight. Looks good, and she worked, and that was all, you know? In the meantime, in the summer, I was running with the girls, dancing, they had

music or they play and dance, you know the Russian folks dances, they -- they sing chastushki, chastushki means like the -- the couplets, like the words that -- the folk songs about girls and boys loving one another and this and singing. I remember the songs.

Q: [indecipherable] can you sing one of them?

A: Yeah.

Q: All right.

A: [sings in Russian]

Q: So what does that mean?

A: Oh, that's what -- like pay attention to that song, put your ears on top of your head so you hear better, because they going to sing that folk song chastushki -- there is no explanation what chastushki is, so it will be -- you will be very happy about that. And then you make ee-ee noises and dance and you're like this, like that, you know, the Russian folks dancer, have you seen sometime Russian folk dancers --

Q: Really [indecipherable]

A: -- or th-they're -- they're very like country songs.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Right, like square dancers? That's -- that's what, very nice, and I was an expert in that with the girls. Always Szurka, Szurka, they call me Szurka, [indecipherable] go dance. I say no, I was shy in the beginning. But then I -- I dance and sang. Barefoot, of course.

Q: Always barefoot.

A: We didn't have shoes. So, it was very happy, and there were bigger girls, and in summertime they had woods, beautiful woods -- forest. They used to go summertime to the forest, the girls, like they were maybe 12 - 14 or older. Nice Russian girls, only girls, going to the woods to pick

berries, they had white berries, wild. Wild nuts growing, with the green things. And sometimes we had, like in the spring, on the fields, some potatoes leftover from the previous years, so they were frozen from the winter, we picked. So I told my mom, make a sack. From a sack, make like a -- a -- like a rucksack, to have strings here --

Q: So you can put them in a bag.

A: -- so put it together, string it, and I have it on my bag, whatever I pick. And then she gave me a big container with the close-up, you know, and a mu -- a long one, like a pail, and [indecipherable] in the summer, four -- four o'clock in the summer, the girls didn't want to take me with them. They were older and they were afraid that I will start crying, I will be tired, so they always when they saw me, Szurka, go home. You not coming with us to the woods. We're not going to take, there is a bridge to cross, there is water, you can fall in. We don't want you. But I will pick for you. I will help you pick berries, everything. Please take me. I will not cry. No, you go home. So what I do? I told my mom, I was crying, I say "They don't want to take me." And she say, "They're right. You a little girl and you don't go there, we don't need that." I say, "Mom, I am going." So what I did, I woke up earlier, like two o'clock in the morning. I didn't sleep probably a whole night, and it was like grayish outside, in the summer, i-it's like April, May, something, I was going. I went by myself.

Q: Through the woods.

A: Through the woods. I knew the way and I was far away ahead of them, and when they saw me, they chased me with -- with rocks. I said, do whatever, I am on my own, not going with you. I am going by myself. This is my woods too. You know, I was then not letting do anything to me. So I picked -- first what I did, I ate the berries, whatever they grow. The toot -- the blueberries, and all kind of berries, the raspberries, everything. First what I did, I ate. I stuffed

my face with it, I was all red around, I didn't care, it was good. Then I picked the -- from the trees the nuts with the green covers.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Put in the sack, and put mushrooms. I pick mushroom. I knew each mushroom by name and which mushroom is poisonous. I learned from them. So I put the mushrooms in this. And there was also wild, like -- it was like -- no, green -- no, how you call it, the green chives?

Q: Oh, chives, yeah.

A: The green chives?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But that was wild. But it looks the same. I pulled it out with the roots.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It has a little head, white head, I put it in the sack. Everything, I brought home, whatever the - and the mushrooms and everything. I even learned to eat raw mushrooms then. I ate. I picked up everything, I helped them to pick, there -- there was a river, they went swimming in the river, washing up, washing the mushrooms, everything. And we had a picnic. We were singing and dancing together. I never was behind them, I never let them be, you know, letting me down. And I -- I -- that was good memories for me.

Q: So you did -- so you went with them?

A: Later they accepted me, yes.

Q: They did?

A: They accepted, they were waiting for me, I was waiting before them. They accepted me. And then they didn't know about who we are, Jewish, they call us we are Polacks. We are Polish refugee. There was no anti-Semitism there then. They didn't know. Maybe it's because of a



small place, they didn't know that we are Jews or that -- they call me Szurka, that's -- that was a Russian name. Surele my mom called me, and Szurka in Russian. So it's -- it's a short name from Alexandra in Russian.

Q: Yeah.

A: Alexandra means they called Szura as a nickname, you know? So I was Szurka. And when I came home, my mom saw all this [indecipherable] so she say in Yiddish -- my mom was very frighten about poisonous things, so she say, [speaks Yiddish here]. "What happened? Like a disease, she's going to poison us all with all this stuff she brought. You know, who is going to do? I said, "I know how to do." I cleaned it, the mushrooms. We cut the mushrooms. If we had the -- the sibilus, the yel -- the green thing.

Q: The chives?

A: Chives, we call it sibilus in Yiddish, cebula in Polish. And wi -- my mom washed it, she chopped it and put water and put the mushrooms. We didn't have any grease or butter, whatever. It was a good soup with bread, and we all ate. And that was summer, we were not hungry, and happy. And I had a good time with them, they -- they learned to respect me, to dance and sing gu -- together. And they were going out with boys of course, they were older than me and then was one man -- wa -- young boy, Pyeta was his name, he liked me to be his girlfriend. I didn't understand that.

Q: But you were 10 years old [indecipherable]

A: Yes, I said -- they started young then.

Q: I see.

A: Some of them even were pregnant, the girls, they didn't care if there was a husband, and --

Q: What were they, 13 - 14 years old? 15 years old?

A: Mm-hm, yeah. They have kids. And a lot of tragedies --

Q: Yes.

A: -- you know, but that was life.

Q: Yo-You didn't have shoes? This was [indecipherable]

A: No, barefoot, barefoot. All summer barefoot.

Q: And in the winter, what?

A: In the winter I was wearing my mom's shoes. I'll tell you what happened in April when my sister was supposed to get born. My mom was pregnant and my father used to work night shifts. It was like 24 hours, from time when he went to work, it was like 24 hours, then he came home. He was earning good money, and bread, you know. There was rations, bread. So one night in the morning, it was like two o'clock in the morning, my s -- mother started to -- I don't know how you say in English, is [Yiddish word] like in Yiddish, oy, oy, she was moaning. I said, "Mama, what happen?" I slept with -- there was one bed here, was single bed, my mom slept with my father here. There was a little table in the middle, a window, and me and my brother in one bed on straw, no mattress, nothing. And we cover with a cover, with a ma -- coat, or whatever. And my mom start to moan and she woke me up, Surele, Surele. When there was something wrong, she spoke to me in Yiddish, not in Russian, you know? So I woke up, I say, "Mama, what happen?" I cried. She said, oy, like this. She say, "Go and bring that babushka." There was an old lady. It was like from our place to go through a railroad that was a slope going up -- up, and there was a railroad and then you go down to the village, and I knew where she lived, the babushka. So, it was almost three in the morning, I run, and it was April. It was raining before, it was mud all over because the roads were not paved, there were no roads in the village. And I put my mother's shoes, of course, her size was, I think, 39 then, and I was little. I put my mother's

shoes, and I'm running. I put something on myself, I don't remember what I put, something, and I running and crying, running and crying. And that -- my mother should not die, my mother should not die, my mother is sick. I go fast to -- to get babushka, she will help her. So, the babushka lived in a small hut also, nobody had a hou -- tall houses, nobody. It was a barrack, one room and that's it. No luxuries. So I knocked in the window, in the babushka's window. M -- she was prepared. She told my mother, if something happened to you, send Szuritska -- send Szura to call me, and I will come. So, I knocked in the window a few times, nobody answer, and I start screaming, "Babushka, Babushka, come, my mom is dying." In Russian [speaks Russian]. I -- I thought my mom is dying. So she say, Szurka, like this, she was an old woman -- I don't know, maybe she was not old then. She was wearing that scarf on the head. A short woman, blue eyes, I remember her. We call her babushka, we didn't know the name. And the babushka came out, she said to me, "Relax, what happened?" I say, "Mama is dying, Mama is in pain, Mama is dying. She send me to you to come." Okay. So we're running, running, and there is water, dark, and my mother's shoes were stuck in the mud, and I left it there. I didn't have time to go back to ge-get it, so I took the other shoe off, I'm barefoot, I run, and I remember where that shoe is, you know? So, my mom's shoes, and she came to the room, she saw my mother, she took me and my brother out, pushed us out of the door. And she said, "Stay here, don't come in." We don't know what happened to Mom, we crying. My brother even more than me, he was crying. He say, "What happened to mom, she is going to die." I said, "Don't worry Mordechai. Stay put quiet, be quiet. We won't -- we don't know, maybe she will not die. The babushka will help." We -- I don't know how long we stayed, a few hours.

Q: And your brother is about --

A: And out --

Q: -- seven or eight years old, isn't he?

A: -- yeah, yeah. I was 10.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. It's was April fifth, 1945, that's when my sister was born, Rosa. Now her name is in Hebrew Shoshana. Means rose. All of a sudden the door is open, you can come in, you have a sistreechka, a sister, in Russian.

Q: And you're in shock.

A: I don't know what she's talking. I don't know what she's talking at all. My brother's holding me like this. He always was, you know, attached to me. And we see the baby. My mom, I never forget that picture, and I couldn't understand what it is then, but now I know, gave birth on straw, no mattress, covered -- when we saw her she was all bloody, she didn't have time to wash, she wanted us to -- in. And there's a little bundle laying, covered with my brother's coat, a gray coat. Covered, we only see the face. Is meowing like a kitten. Meow-ow. Sh-she was born very little, very weak. My mom didn't have what to eat. So she said, the babushka, "This is your little sister." Now we -- we were happy that Mom didn't die, but there was a sister, we didn't know how it comes, why? So, we went in -- I went with babushka back, I got that shoe, I didn't forget -  
- forget my shoe --

Q: Right.

A: -- that was Mom's shoe, with -- with mud, everything, I brought it back, I was barefoot. I brought that shoe. My father came in the morning from work, and of course he was happy, a bubeleh, a bubeleh, he call her bubeleh like a little doll, in Yiddish, bubeleh. And what we have to do, my Mom said to me, Sarah -- "Surele, go and register your sister to the registry," there was an office.

Q: Right.

A: It was like maybe one kilometer, I don't know how in miles how much is a kilometer. Two, three -- two miles, I think.

Q: A mile and a half, or something. [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, a mile and a half, yeah. I am 10 years old, a lot of women standing on a line, I am standing a line. When my line came, my time came, I hold a piece of paper the babushka gave me that a female this was born, named Rosa Szlinger [indecipherable] she -- she was registered lady that she brought children to the world, she knew what to write. And I cannot get through, that window was higher than me, and I -- he sees that piece of paper only, on the desk

Q:[indecipherable]

A: Not the person, he sees a piece of hand and that piece of paper. And I said -- my voice, that's what he told me later, h-he went out to look, who's that. And I said, "This is my sister," in Russian, "Rosa, who was born, and you write down -- and give me a piece of paper that she was born this day, my mother told me." He looked at me, everybody was laughing that I, a little child 10 years old, go register my sister.

Q: Right.

A: You know? She still has that paper --

Q: Yes?

A: -- later was translated, yes. A female girl named Rosa Szlinger was born at this date, April for -- in town of Shchyokino Tulaskaya Obles. That's the certificate of birth. When sometime my sister said something, I say, if not me, you wouldn't be born.

Q: Right. Certainly not registered.

A: Not registered.

Q: Tell me, when you're in this small town, do you hear anything about the war? Do you hear anything that's going on?

A: We did hear about the war.

Q: What -- what -- what did --

A: There was a radio for everybody in the barrack, like a plate, a radio.

Q: Like a loudspeaker or [indecipherable]

A: And a loudspeaker that we heard that our armies did this, they -- they killed German, they occupied this city, in Russian. When there was, in the middle of the night, if there was special announcement, good things, in middle of the night everybody came out in the barrack of the rooms to hear what the speaker is say. I never forget that night that was -- I'm getting chills. Ni -- May fifth, 1945, and the speaker is dead already, his name is Leviyatan, he was a Jewish speaker. But he announced during the war and after, all the news, what's happening on the front. So he -- all of a sudden is quiet in the morning, like four o'clock in the morning, and we hear doooo, like something moving, like -- like a wa -- noise. And then, three times, Gavorit Moskva. Rut -- rush -- Moskva is speaking. Gavorit Moskva, three times. And Sivodnya -- I remember like today, in Russian. Today our Red Army beat the Germans and they capitulated and it's our victory. [speaks Russian here]. Today is our victory. You have no idea -- I ha -- can cry now. Everybody jumped out of the rooms and there was such a holiday. Music was playing, people hugging one another, people dancing in the street, there was nobody discriminated, like one family happy that the war ended, because everybody suffered. The Russian people, the Jewish people, everybody suffered. And that was a great day, and the music, the loudspeaker and everybody dancing in the street and hugging. And I remember this day we got white bread. That was my mother dream [speaks Yiddish here], and that was the piece of white bread, everybody got white bread.

Q: With butter?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: There was none.

Q: That's still okay.

A: Butter came later.

Q: Right.

A: Butter came later, and --

Q: Why white bread? Is there --

A: Because there was a shortage of everything.

Q: Right [inaudible]

A: They -- th-they didn't have wheat, everything went to the front, everything went to the hospitals, and we people, si -- not sick, we had this muddy bread, like -- like -- I call it glue, you could glue it to the wall, you know. It was hard, and it was some kind of, I don't know what, straw in it, or whatever. But it was bread.

Q: Right.

A: And I was very happy that the war ended, and then Wanda Waszylewska, the same writer, Polish, organized that people, Polish people, even though my father and mother signed to become citizen of Russia, they registered to go back to Poland.

Q: Hold that thought, because we have to change the tape.

A: Okay. So short.

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

A: Where we -- where were we?

Q: Did you -- I understand that -- that when you were -- the last couple of years of the war and you're a little bit older, you're eight, nine years old, and you hear about the war, do you also hear about camps, do you hear about death factories?

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: You do? In -- in Russia, you do?

A: Yeah, yes. People actually came before the war ended, wounded men without legs, invalids, without an arm, without an eye. So people ask, what happened to you? And since it was an open community that we lived, and I was going to school, and there were also Russian propaganda, and they were telling about concentration camps, I knew about Auschwitz, Dachau --

Q: Really?

A: -- Treblinka, yeah. But I did not understand exactly, as a child, what it is the atrocity.

Q: But you -- but you knew the names.

A: I knew.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And when we came back to Poland after that, and we came in July of '45, we came to Poland, it took a few months after the war, not too long, because of the organization and w-we came to the city, not to Warsaw where my -- my father and mom was born, we came to Wroclaw, it was before Germany --

Q: Breslau.

A: Breslau.

Q: Right.



A: Th-They call it [speaks foreign language here] taking over land. It used to belong to Silesia. In Silesia they call it Shlonsk in Poland. There's upper Silesia and middle Silesia in German, there's a higher and lower Silesia. It still now belonged to Poland. That's why we came. We came to Wroclaw, a torn down, burned down city, huge city in ruins. We came because my father's brother Yukel with his family was there. They met us, Luba, my cousin, his daughter, Yukel's daughter, and the boy, Mordechai met us. So my father ask, where is my brother, Yukel? So she burst into tears and she said that he is no more. He died a month ago. He had tuberculosis, he was very sick and his wife Gitl died in Russia before that. So he came to Poland with the two children. Luba was a lot older than me, 10 years older, and Mordechai, my cousin is two years older than me. So we came and the two, girl and boy had an apartment where they live and -- with the father. We came to their apartment, the four of us, how many -- five of us.

Q: Five of you now.

A: Yeah, my sister was there, the baby, a few months old. She was born in April, that was July something, so she was a few months old, and we came to live with them. We didn't have anything, no clothes, no nothing, no shoes.

Q: So you came very quickly after the war --

A: Yes.

Q: -- you didn't wait in Russia.

A: My father didn't want to stay one single day longer and my mom. They wanted to come home and seek if somebody is still alive, because we corresponded with them. They got letters in Russia from Warsaw up to 1943. They were writing -- that's what my mom told me in Yiddish, that they have to leave their apartments, and they going to give them another apartments, all Jews together, it's -- it was a ghetto creating in Warsaw, but they didn't know any better what will

happen to them. So don't worry about us, the apartment that you left with the things is intact. We closed the doors and everything is being checked, and nobody touched anything. That was so important to them, the apartment with the furniture.

Q: Right.

A: To us it was not relevant then. What we went through, running away and leaving things -- while running you leave the heavy stuff because you cannot carry it. So -- and that was the end and we did not see one of them, nobody was alive. They all perished in the Warsaw ghetto.

Q: Did you go to war -- did your parents and you go to Warsaw first --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and then -- and then brat --

A: No. First we came from Russia to Wroclaw to live with his brother, and we didn't find my -- my uncle alive, so we took another apartment next door, to live separate, and my cousin Luba, his -- Yukel's daughter --

Q: Right.

A: -- was older, she was 18 or something, she was working. A beautiful girl. And Mordechai, my cousin, was 14, and then they were creating kibbutz's -- kibbutz for young Jewish people to emigrate to Israel. Since he didn't have a father and mother, at age of 14, when we came we met Mordechai, my cousin, very lovely, he was in a kibbutz already, Shomer Hatzair, they called the kibbutz, and he was on his way to emigrate to Israel. The sister, Luba was older, she didn't want him to go, but he didn't want to stay in Poland and he emigrated to Israel, is still til today, he lives all his life in a kibbutz. He married there, he has a daughter, and he lives now in Golan Heights, Kibbutz Dafna.

Q: And did he go before the State of Israel was formed, or after? Do you know

A: In '48.

Q: Uh-huh. So it may have been after.

A: After.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Almost.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. In four -- they were [indecipherable] they were -- they very politically inclined, th-they were maybe brainwashed to go, young children --

Q: Right.

A: -- didn't know any better what Israel is.

Q: Right.

A: But they were fighting, and I know a lot of boys that volunteered to go to Israel to fight, and they nev -- I've never met them again. They di -- they were not alive.

Q: By the time you came, mm-hm.

A: They all perished there. But they were heroes. They fought for the Eretz -- Eretz Israel, for their country. They were very patriotic, young people. We settled in -- in Wroclaw. I went to a Polish school nearby because I didn't know to write and to read in Polish, only in Russian.

Q: And you had gone t -- up to what grade in --

A: Three. Third.

Q: Three?

A: Mm-hm, third grade.

Q: Third grade, and you were now 10 years old?

A: 10 --

Q: 11 -- 11 years old.

A: -- 11, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Thir -- I went to Polish school, I didn't know Polish, only Russian and Yiddish. And that was nearby, like second street from our house, and my mom sent us to school because it was close, and that she didn't have to take us far away because she was working and my father. So we live in one room apartment with a kitchen, but there was running water in the house, and electricity.

Q: Oh, really, running water -- really?

A: Yes.

Q: Ever after the -- even right after the war?

A: Yeah, after the war, it was -- Wroclaw was a very beautiful German city. After the war was taking over, and I saw German people being thrown out from the apartments, took whatever they could with them. It was a long, long walk. And I stood with tears in my eyes, although Germans did a lot of atrocity to us, but they were children and old people, mostly, because young Germans were killed in the front or whatever. They were orphans with grandparents, walking and pushing the pushcarts in a long line. As a child that went through a lot, I felt very sorry. Some Polacks threw rocks at them. Farflucta ju -- Deutsche, they called them dirty Deutsch like they called farflucta Juden to us, the Germans.

Q: Right.

A: And at school, in the Polish school, I felt terrible. First of all the Polacks are all blonde mostly, blue eyes. I had dark hair. They pulled my hair all the time. Oh, look at that Jewess. [speaks Polish here]. You know in Polish [Polish] in a nice way, that Jewess has dark hair. Where did you come from? You killed our Jesus. I didn't know what Jesus is, what religion,

nothing then. In Russia there was no religion, nobody talked about anything. I came home crying, dirty Jew, dirty Jew [Polish] like in Polish the parshiva like somebody has a disease, you know, uncurable disease. I never seen such hatreds during the war with the Russian like I encountered in Poland. They were so against everything and everybody, especially Jews. Jews killed Jesus, Jews are bad, we have to kill the Jews. I said to my mom, I'm not going to that school. My mom said, where would you go? It's far away, this is close. I said, I'm not going to that school, they call me names and I don't know even why. One day she went there and there was a priest, a young priest and she spoke to that priest. He was teaching religion. I approached that priest, I said in Polish -- I learned fast, I said [speaks Polish] you -- like your highness, priests, in Polish there's an expression, "Can I stay on the lesson when you teaching religion?" He say, "Why? You not Catholic." I says, "What's the difference? I want to know why they call me dirty Jew, can you explain that to me? Am I dirty? I have dark hair, but I went through the war, and I am surviving, and now I came to free Poland, and I am a dirty Jew." He said, "Well, I'll give you a book about the New Testament, and if you don't understand something, you ask." I read that New Testament, about how the world was created, and about Jesus, where he was born and the Holy Mary. I see they are Jewish too, you know, they came from Israel, from Nazareth, from the -- Jesus Christ came from the dynasty of David the King. King David. I started to analyze, I said, "Why am I a dirty Jew? You also Jewish." I asked the priest -- I started to -- to be more political. You also Jewish, because Jesus Christ and Holy Mary was Jewish. And I read the New Testament, but I don't know the Old Testament. I don't know anything about religion because in my house they told us we are Jewish and that was it. We didn't go to synagogue, my parents didn't go nowhere. There was later, a Jewish synagogue, beautiful, built 800 years ago by German Jews in that city, and Hitler used to come to Wroclaw and had

speeches in a big hall, which is still there. It's a beautiful city. I started bec -- I became very conscious of ma -- about my past, and who am I. I ask question, Mama -- in Polish then -- who are we? We Jewish, you say. Why don't we go to pray? Why the Polacks have churches, and they call us dirty Jew, why? Always why. M-My mom said, "I cannot answer you all this. They don't like us and that's all, because they claim we killed Jesus Christ." I say, "But that's not true. He was Jewish." And then there were the Romans. You know, I know very well the history, and I just pushed them like this. Nobody can win with me. I said, "I am who I am and you are who you are." You have to be human. And I found out that there is opening a Jewish school, but it's very far away from us, where we live. And I said to Mom, "Mama, I'm going to Jewish school." She started [speaks foreign language here] "Where are you running?" I said, "I'm going to a Jewish school." And while we going to a Jewish school, they will not call us dirty Jew, and no anti-Semites, and I don't want to see them. And beside, they going to feed us there. Food is very important. They going to give us lunch at school. What I did, like I am a organizer that they call me always, commander, my friends, I'm a very organizer, so I said to my friends at the street, Jewish chi-children, "You know what? Let's go register." That was summertime. We go to register to a Jewish school, and it's very far away, we have to take two tramways, there was electric s --

Q: Right.

A: -- streetcars, and then the communication of buses. It took like an hour to get each way. I got all my friends, my Jewish friends from this street, from the other street, we went in the summer, we registered. And now is a problem. The school starts. All of the children speak Russian, they came from Russia, different ages, nobody knows to write or read Polish or Russian, and we s -- all speak rush -- Polish or Yiddish, and we speak Russian. It's like [indecipherable]. So, the

teachers were some of them older, some of them -- and they had a dilemma with different ages, how to place the children in classes, according to their brain and intelligence, everything. They put older children, like 10 - 11, because we're -- I was in the first grade. I was a big girl, and they were little kids. I was embarrassed. I was taller than them. I said, "I'm not going to that class." So what they did, very good thing, they gather all the older children that they don't belong to the first grade, 10 - 11 - 12 even, and we got into one class, it was intensive study, because we had background in Russian, we already knew how to read.

Q: Right.

A: To study Yiddish and Polish. And it to -- they call it a chong. Chong means to pull, you know, pull everybody out.

Q: Right.

A: And they call it the chong, and we studied for a year, very intensely. I knew mathematic better than everybody because I was there in third grade, in Russia.

Q: Right.

A: And I knew how to multiply and this, they didn't know how to put one and one together. So, I was good, and then we studied Polish and Yiddish to write alphabet and everything for a whole year. And then, according to ages, they placed us in different classes. I went to the fourth grade, so I didn't lose too much.

Q: Right.

A: So I studied history, Jewish history, I still have -- it was then in Polish history [Polish] I have that book, the history of Jews.

Q: Of Jews, yeah.

A: Yes. I have that book. I brought it with me always. And -- and we were very happy there.

First of all, they gave us lunch in the Jewish school. We studied Russian, Polish, Yiddish, history, geography, whatever other gr -- in the same grade. Mathematics, and I knew mathematics good because from Russia. And we were very happy.

Q: Did you sign up Mordechai as well?

A: Yeah.

Q: So he went too? W-With you?

A: Of course.

Q: Course.

A: Mordechai was like glued to my hip.

Q: But he couldn't be in your class.

A: No.

Q: No.

A: He was not.

Q: Right. But that was okay.

A: But he went -- he was, accordingly to his age --

Q: Right.

A: -- he learned Yiddish and Polish [indecipherable]

Q: So how did you get there, it was so far away? By tram?

A: By tram.

Q: By tram.

A: Two tramways we took, and you know, switched? It took like an hour and a half to get each way, but we didn't mind. We walked home, back, if we wanted to save money to see a movie.



Q: Right.

A: Mama couldn't give us money to go see a movie. It was not that expensive, but for them it was, so we always sneaked in without money.

Q: But you also told me off camera that you snuck into all sorts of things.

A: Yeah.

Q: Opera --

A: Opera.

Q: -- concerts --

A: Yes.

Q: -- the theater.

A: Yes.

Q: For nothing.

A: For nothing.

Q: And how did that happen?

A: I don't know, I just looked at them, all the cashiers or whatever, people were standing in the door, and I was looking at them like with some expression like for longing.

Q: Mm.

A: So they knew me, I was coming all the time.

Q: And they'd let you in.

A: And the guy saw me th -- th -- when they started, he just made with the hand, a gesture with the hand like come in. And I was happy.

Q: That was great.

A: And my mom used to say, you bring a bed and stay there --

Q: Right.

A: -- in the theater.

Q: Right.

A: I say, no I'm very happy. I used to go to concert, I used to go to Jewish organization. They taught us Hebrew, you know, the songs and dances. They want us to belong to kibbutz, but my mom didn't let us go to kibbutz because she said they will brainwash you and all the children will go to Israel. I don't want to lose you. I went through the war with you and Mordechai, you're not going to a kibbutz.

Q: Going away. Was your father political after the war? Did he --

A: Yes and no. He still belonged to the Bund.

Q: Mm.

A: But he worked and he got disinterested because my father started to drink after Russia and he drank.

Q: He kept drinking.

A: Mm-hm. And my mom had a hard life to hold us together. Didn't want to leave him and my father sometime got violent with me.

Q: Really?

A: Because I answered him, he beat me up. He used --

Q: Often? Really?

A: Not too often because I tried to learn not to get into his way.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He used to come home drunk, sometime went to sleep, didn't bother with us. He was not interested what we do, how we learn, how we -- never. Only my mom. And my sister was very

small, sickly, so my mom was working. I used to take her to the doctors to give her injections, to take care of her, to take her to a movie, for a matinee for children's shows. She called me mama.

Q: Right.

A: When I was 14 - 15, she called me mama. I smacked her. I was very angry, I say, Ruja -- Rosa in Polish, Ruja, I'm not your mama, I'm your sister, I'm your older sister. Don't ever call me mama. You embarrassing me.

Q: Right.

A: But wi -- I took her to a doctor, I say you're going to get an injection, squeeze your hands like this if one hurts you too much. She listened.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I bathe her, we went to movies together, me and my brother. We were always together.

Q: Right.

A: Always.

Q: So your father -- I mean, your father changed a great deal after the war.

A: Yes, yes. It --

Q: Do you think it was also fighting? Being in the army?

A: Yes. Russia they were giving them -- he said, before they going to the -- fight.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They used to give them vodka to drink, in order not to get, you know, scary or whatever, they became alcoholics. So my father drank. But my mom started to control him. She say, you drink at home, I'll prepare [indecipherable] you and you drink a little bit, like a small glass of vodka and don't drink more, and that's it. And tomorrow you'll have another. That's --

Q: And he did that?

A: He did that, but sometime he had money, he went with friends and believe it or not, Jewish men from our streets. We, when we meet with my friends in Israel, my best friend Miriam, we joke about it, but we laughing with tears, that all of them were drunks. All the Jewish men that came from army after the war were alcoholics. And you couldn't help it. That's how they were. In Israel, he was not too much drinking, because it was hot, the climate was hot. He worked with a horse and buggy. He had to deliver goods to stores and this, so he drank a little bit. My mom prepared for him dinner, and he was sitting at home. There was no television in those days, in Kiryat Shimona we lived --

Q: Yes.

A: -- on the border in Galilee on Golan Heights. And we saw the Katyushas running, the Russian Katyushas at us from Syria, '67 --

Q: Right.

A: -- when there was a war, and I brought my father to burial from Haifa at this day, June fifth, 1967, he died in the hospit --

Q: In '67?

A: Mm-hm. That the war started in Israel with Syria and Lebanon and Egypt.

Q: So he died quite young.

A: Yes. He was 66 and he had cancer.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah. He died in Rambam in Haifa. Very hard. He suffered. They lived in Kiryat Shimona, that was quite a way --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- from Haifa, and -- and that was a stupid system, I still don't understand. If you died in this hospital, and you live in a different city, you have to be buried according to the district of that city you lived. Unbelievable. That's a story I never forget.

Q: Mm.

A: Me and my cousin Luba took him out, the body, from the hospital, it was six o'clock in the morning, June fifth, '67. We are going for an hour and a half, and all of a sudden there's sirens, all over tanks and soldiers, Israeli soldiers, heading the same direction toward the Golan Heights. They stopped the van, and the man from Hevra Kadisha, the religious man, wants to go home. He said, "What -- what's going on?" We heard in the radio, eight o'clock that there is a war. That Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, and others attacked Israel. And the soldiers came, he say, "What are you doing here?" I say, "Well, we bringing my father to burial." He looked at the back, he see the body. I say, "What can we do? We -- he lived in Kiryat Shimona and that's where he had to be buried." So he says, "Okay, you follow us, you come in the middle. We will protect the van." The driver was a religious Jew with a beard. He says, "I'm going back." I said to him in Hebrew, "This is [speaks Hebrew here]. You cannot leave a dead body unburied. You have to follow and bring him to rest. And beside the army is protecting us, you have nothing to fear."

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I was a young woman telling the religious man what to do.

Q: Yes, you were 23, or 24? 23 years old, I guess.

A: Oh, you know to count.

Q: Well, a little bit. It's 24. I think we have to stop the tape.

A: Stop.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: So I think that --

End of Tape Six

Beginning Tape Seven

Q: Sarah, when did you start dating?

A: Oh.

Q: In Poland, you started dating, were you young?

A: Of course, of course. I had a love of my life when I was 14.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. That was -- my parents and his parents were friends in Warsaw before the war.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: After the war, they met and they survived, the parents, and they lived in a small town in Poland after the war, and we lived in a big city, in Wroclaw.

Q: Right.

A: Which was a Jewish population. They had Jewish theaters, Jewish club and Jewish library and school, everything. He was two years older than me, his name is -- still is Joseph Holtzman. He was good looking, he doesn't look even Jewish. He had blonde hair and blue eyes, and very handsome and tall. At the beginning I didn't like him when he used to come to us because I was more cultured girl from a big city --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- going to theaters, behaving nice, talking quiet. He came from this small town and [indecipherable] yelling, screaming, gesticulating with the hands, and this, running. And I was embarrassed to go out with him. Then -- he used to come, not too often in the summer, to stay with us with his father because his father and mother and my parents were the best friend in Warsaw, Poland.

Q: Right.

A: We kind of grew up together, but I did not remember. After the war he used to come to Wroclaw, I used to take him to movie, we went together. We used to sit in the park and kiss and hug. And of course we didn't do anything, we were very naïve children in those days. But he called me my sweetheart, and my sunshine, and I was embarrassed to hear that, you know? So --

Q: That was too open for you, or something?

A: Too open --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- too open. I was very naïve.

Q: Mm.

A: I liked him, but I never showed that before. So one time in summertime, my father, me, went to their town, that -- called Jawor -- Jawor. It by train like two and a half hours from Wroclaw. They lived there in a beautiful apartment, there were a lot of green. It's different, i -- like a country --

Q: Mm.

A: -- place. And he had a lot of friends, Jewish children, girls and boys. And we went swimming and I didn't know how to swim, he started to teach me swimming. And then, in the evening we used to sing together, all boys and girls and he called me my dove. In Polish, it was golabek, like a white dove.

Q: Yes.

A: I was embarrassed.

Q: It's very sweet.

A: But I was very shy then, and he say, oh, when we grow up, we get married together. I say, we still have time to think about it. And all the time he used to come to Wroclaw when he had



vacation, and I finished sixth grade, eighth grade, you know. And he came to visit me. I took him around in Wroclaw to show theaters, movies, and we went to parks. We were sitting, hugging and my mom always sent my sister with us.

Q: She -- she was your chaperone?

A: A chaperone -- yes. And my sister was a big mouth. A terrible gossip. She was little.

Q: She was very little.

A: Yes. But he liked her, he used to put her on his knees, and he liked her, he carry her because she didn't have too much strength to walk with us.

Q: Right.

A: And --

Q: What was she, three years old, or four years old?

A: No, if I was 14, and she was 10 -- she was four or five, like this.

Q: Yes, okay.

A: Five. And she used to say, I don't have strength to walk. She pulled out her hands. He picked her up, you know? But she has a mind of a maybe ten -- more than 10 year olds. When we came home --

Q: Yes?

A: -- she used to tell my neighbors and my mom and dad --

Q: That you were kissing.

A: -- that Joseph was kissing Sarah, and he -- and he was holding her and hugging her, and she didn't say anything. I used to beat her up.

Q: Yeah?

A: I'd say, I'm not going to take you anywhere with me.

Q: Right.

A: Don't tell anybody, this is embarrassing.

Q: Right.

A: He likes me, I like him, he is my boyfriend, but that's it, we are friends. She used to tell everybody what -- we didn't do anything, of course, in those days there was no sex around or nothing, we were very innocent.

Q: Right.

A: And I was studying and he had a friend in Wroclaw, and -- a male friend and this friend had a sister, and they grabbed him, because the sister is -- was not so good looking, but they had money, or whatever. So the friend grabbed, and then her mother grabbed him in, you know, like a child, so he used to come, and I got very hurt.

Q: Mm.

A: I was very hurt, and I was very stubborn and I'm vicious. If somebody hurts me, I will go away quietly without a scene, but never again see that person. He went to the army at the age 19. I was going out with other boys, I was performing in Jewish theater in Wroclaw, and he wrote to me, my mom read all the letters before me, of course, she was very curious. You couldn't teach her anything. And she say, why are you not talking to -- why are you doing this? He said he loves you, this -- I say no, "He hurt me, I don't want anything to do with him." And sometime being stubborn, I still til today regret that.

Q: Mm.

A: But I did it my way.

Q: Right.

A: So --

Q: So you never answer him?

A: He lives in Brazil.

Q: Yeah.

A: He married that girl that I know very well. We went to Israel, I married in 1957. I -- we went to Israel, I had my Isaac, and that was the end of the story, we worked hard in Israel. They had a store, a grocery store. We lived in Kiryat Shimona. But my heart always belonged there, and I was thinking there. And his wife once called, she came to New York in '83 or something. And she called, she found some friend that they knew where we are. We received her, my husband and I went to Brooklyn to pick her up, her name is Marla. And I took two days off from work, I took her around to Manhattan, show her, she wanted shopping because she had already two children. One was studying to be a doctor, and she say, come to Brazil, to Rio de Janeiro, they have nice -- I say in the meantime, I don't know. And then my friend from Los Angeles came, and she's going to Brazil with her husband, to Argentina and Brazil. I gave them his telephone, their telephone, I said, "Call up and see if they want to see you, a friend of mine, you know, just say." She did. And they met her at the hotel where she stayed, and I got a beautiful letter [indecipherable] a gift from them -- from him, them. She brought it to me, I was wearing -- my husband didn't know that's a gift from her, we were like conspiracy between me and Nina. And she say that cost 80 dollars, my husband gave her the money, she gave it to me back. That was the first time I lied to my husband. Maybe it's not nice, but I didn't want a scene or scandal because he was very jealous of him, he knew him.

Q: Right.

A: And when my husband passed away in '86 -- '89 -- '89, my husband passed away of lung cancer, he was 52 or three, I wrote a letter to them, and pictures, and I would like to visit Brazil,

but I don't know the -- and I heard that the woman alone should not travel. The travel agent told me about it. You should not go to Brazil, it's very violent there. If you have somebody, so go. I said, I will write, I have friends. I wrote, I send picture, I would like to -- I will stay in a hotel, and I would like to meet you. There was no answer. I don't know if he got the letter or not, there was never an answer.

Q: So you didn't go?

A: Probably. And I didn't write and didn't call. I still have the telephone number in Rio de Janeiro. It's written in my little book of telephones. I never called. I have my pride. And it's late, you know?

Q: Right.

A: I'm a widow already 16 years. How long? Seven -- 18. It will be 18 years.

Q: That's a long time.

A: My husband died young, and --

Q: So, how long after you decided you weren't going to see this boy when you were 14 or 15, I don't know when you stopped, did you meet your husband to be? How did that --

A: I knew my husband before that, but we were never friends. He had a different group of people. He was three years older, but he acted much older than me. I have my crowd of people, he didn't study in the Jewish school, only in the beginning. I knew his younger brother who was singing, my husband was playing piano, he was a student, he was very talented man, musician, he played beautiful the piano, the accordion, but I never was in the same company with him.

Q: Oh.

A: He actually was going around with non-Jewish girl, I used to meet him on the street sometime, you know? But he never paid attention to me. Then, I was performing in Jewish

theater, and he probably saw me on the stage, and one day in my house, it was a Sunday, I was washing my hair, everything. There is a knock on the door, my sister says, some man is looking for you. And my mom opened the door, yes [indecipherable] Sarah is home, I want -- my name is Henry Zelazny. I -- I -- I -- I s -- I knew him from [indecipherable] but we never, you know, really were in the same company. So I say, "Yes, come in, how did you know my place where I live?" This we never communicated. He say, "I found out and I would like to talk to you, maybe you want to go to a movie?" And my sister was already in middle, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: She already sat on his lap and telling him stories, that I go out with this friend, I [indecipherable] many. She was a gossip.

Q: Your sister's a troublemaker [indecipherable]

A: Oh, ho, no. Til today, she tells me that I'm bad, you know?

Q: I see, right.

A: I say okay, so we took her with us. Of course she was ma -- ou -- my chaperone, my sister always.

Q: Right.

A: If I didn't know a boy, or ni -- I -- I took her with me.

Q: It's a good idea, sure.

A: Yes. And we went to a park, he bought her ice cream, bought me ice cream, and started -- and then he wants to date me, and then I broke up with Joseph, with my ex, and I say yes, okay, we will meet. And he was very -- he was a architect, and he was very interested in architecture. And in Wroclaw there's only one hanging bridge, you know, like suspended -- suspension bridge?

Q: Mm.

A: Like in George Washington bridge, and this, but it was little. They call it Most Grunwaldzki of the Grunwald, you know, bridge. And he t-told me stories how it's connected and how many screws. And I am not mechanical at all.

Q: Right.

A: And I'm not interested in how it was built. I know it's a nice bridge, but that was all. He told me this and then we started to go out dancing, he was a great dancer. I loved the music he play, and I was singing and then, I don't know what, he propose, he say, let's get married. I say okay, and we were supposed to live to Israel, so we got married and that was all.

Q: And that was it.

A: And then I had my children, one was born a baby in Poland still, '57, Isaac. February 10 was his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, five - oh.

Q: Wow.

A: My son.

Q: Right.

A: Was a beautiful boy with blonde, curly hair. And then Jonathan was born in Israel, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1961.

Q: Mm.

A: He was handsome, tall and no luck, and was studying, was very smart, and he had -- summertime he had worked in the Catskills like delivering things for a boss and turned -- the car turned over, but he lived and he was paralyzed from the waist down, a young boy of 22.

Q: Oh. And he lived for how long after that?

A: He lived for 10 years --

Q: For 10 years.

A: -- paralyzed, in hospitals, operation. And my husband died before, in '89, and Jonathan died in '95.

Q: Wow.

A: I had to bury my son, and my husband.

Q: Right.

A: And I don't want any more to marry nobody, not because I'm not interested. I just don't want to be in pain again. I am meeting with this man who is a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz. He has two daughters, one is married, one divorced, and his wife died. She was from Riga. And they are na -- my neighbors, I know them for a long time, belonged to the same synagogue, but he never paid attention to me, he never knew me. And we went at the Jewish organization in New York, it's called Hidden Children. There was a Hanukkah party in December three years ago. And some friend brought him over to our table. I looked up, I say, "I know you, sir." He say, "You know me?" I say yes. You live on this and this street, you go to this synagogue where I belong, and my name is Sarah. Then he left. I didn't give him my telephone, nothing, you know, no address.

Q: Right.

A: And three months later he called me up. He found out from the synagogue that knows Sarah, who lives not far and they gave him telephone number. And well, we are good friends.

Q: Right.

A: We travel together, we go out things together. He is very good man, and I showed him how to live, where to go, he never traveled, only worked, worked, worked. He's an electrician, very efficient, very talented man, and good man.

Q: Mm.

A: No grandchildren, so I said, my grandchildren will be, so my children invited us last year of Hanukkah.

Q: Right.

A: We were there. And I'm happy. I have my children, grandchildren. My younger grandchild, 18, Gabriel is going to college in Ohio. He was accepted to a good college, I forgot, and June is going to be his graduation, we're going to go. And June fifth is my son's and daughter-in-law 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, wedding anniversary. So we going to celebrate that.

Q: So how do you put together this difficult childhood, in a way no childhood. A childhood of trying to escape and not be murdered, with this person who enjoys life a great deal, that it did not see to enf -- o-or is it mixed up in some way?

A: It's a good question and it's hard to answer, because it's probably because of my attitude toward life. What I went through, all the hardships and suffering, I still have a thirst for life.

Q: Mm.

A: I enjoying life, I enjoy people, I am outspoken, outgoing, loving culture, reading a lot, and that's why I'm looking forward for good things to happen. And bad things that happen to me I remember. I don't want to bury them. I remember the day of my son's death, I put candles, and my husband's Yortseit, the commemoration of the dead, and what I went through, I cherish life, and I am still looking forward to be around and enjoy and travel and see people, met people.

Maybe of my curiosity of other people's life, and I'm a very open-minded and curious person, so that's why I am coping. It's very hard. Sometime at night I cry for no reason. There is reason, but all of a sudden I get moody, or whatever, I start crying by myself, I cry alone. And after that, I think there is still life and still hope and good life ahead. And I want to enjoy my children's life,



my son and my grandsons. See to their weddings and graduations, Bar Mitzvahs already went.

So I'm looking forward to new things.

Q: Do you think you got some of this from your mother?

A: Yeah. A lot.

Q: You're quick to answer that, aren't you?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Yeah.

A: My mom was my best friend. We both suffer our father's decline and being an alcoholic after the war. He was good man before, but he probably couldn't help it. My mother stood with him to the rest of her life.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we too. We spoke to my father, but he couldn't help it. I always protected my mom.

Q: Mm.

A: She died at 91.

Q: Right.

A: She lived a long life, very good. She remarried, and my fa --

Q: Oh she did?

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: At the beginning my sister and my brother were very skeptical about it, and I said, Mom should not be alone. It's good, he is a good man, he is a Polish Jew who [indecipherable] and very good children and grandchildren, good family and he loved my mother. He died -- he had heart problems, and they had a good life together. And she was living nice. And then my brother

got divorced twice, he had two wives. The first one he loved very much. Her name was Tamara, she's from Moroccan descendant. They have two beautiful children, Anat, the girl, is 40 something, and Moishe, after my father, Moishe, the -- the man -- the son, had two beautiful girls -- has, and a nice wife, and now they have a baby boy named after my brother. My brother's year is March seven, that's it will be a year since he died. He was sick, he had cancer. In November I went to see him in Israel, I took him to the Dead Sea. We enjoyed together. To my friends and things like that, I knew that he is very sick. I have many friends in Israel that -- from school days, and one of them is a doctor, so she happened to know about him, and they called me and told me about my f -- brother. So I right away bought the tickets and I came. And I called my friends to order tickets and to stay in the Dead Sea for six days with my brother. My sister doesn't want to see me. My little sister, Shoshana, she probably doesn't remember the days that we were there for her. She was not good to my mom. She was not good to my brother, and now she doesn't talk to me. I don't know why.

Q: It's difficult.

A: It's very painful. I love them all. She has two children, divorced. A daughter with a child, and a son. And I happen to be a good friend with her ex-daughter-in-law and the mother of the daughter-in-law. They're good friends from Israel and I -- a very intelligent girl. She remarried after the divorce, and I'm friends with them. Nice man. And they have a little baby girl now. So it's beautiful. I send them a gift with a card, and they call me Safta number three, grandmother number three, because they have two grandmothers.

Q: Right. And you're the third one.

A: And I'm the third one and I'm very happy. Her name is Gayle. Gayle in Hebrew means happiness. And I'm happy for them, they just called me that they going to send pictures.

Q: That's great.

A: So I am trying to make peace. Peace in the world --

Q: Right.

A: -- peace with my family, peace with people. That's how I am. I don't like any fightings because we had enough in our life. And I will look forward for better and happy days.

Q: Right.

A: And I am going to look for it.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much for being willing to come --

A: And thank you for having me.

Q: -- and speak with us. It's been very [indecipherable]

A: It was a pleasure to know you all. The men behind the cameras, they're great. Thank you --

Q: Thank you.

A: -- and thank you, thank you Elizabeth.

Q: Absolutely.

A: She's not here. She's downstairs, watching. I love you. I don't know why I -- first I heard the voice, I just -- it -- it -- the chemistry probably, the chemistry got into me. So right away, I did not hesitate, I say yes, I will come and tell my story.

Q: That's great, that's great.

A: And thank you for listen.

Q: So -- and thank Elizabeth. [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, Elizabeth, thank you very much.

Q: And thank you.

A: And oh -- and I hope other people will learn something from my story about life. There was a lot of suffering, but always there is hope in life, don't lose it.

Q: Okay.

A: Thank you.

Q: It's a good word. Thank you. Okay.

End of Tape Seven

Beginning Tape Eight

Q: And what's this picture, Sarah?

A: This is me in Poland in 1947, when we came from Russia and it was -- my hair started to grow. I was embarrassed that I was without hair and I put a beret on my head. I still understood that a girl should have long hair. So that was it.

Q: And when did you come to Poland, in for --

A: In '46.

Q: In '46?

A: S -- beginning, yeah, '45 was the end of the war --

Q: Uh-huh, '46. Okay.

A: -- in '46.

Q: Okay, and who is this?

A: My father, Moishe Szlinger in 1936, something like that, and --

Q: '26. It says '26.

A: '26?

Q: Yeah.

A: Maybe. Before he married? I could not --

Q: I don't know, it says '26.

A: -- I don't know, maybe I'm wrong. In Warsaw, Poland. He was very handsome, he was over six feet tall, and dressed to kill. Always nicely dressed.

Q: And Sarah, the picture on the left.

A: This is me, Sarah, in 1950, and I was 16, and I had beautiful dark hair and I made like Shirley Temple locks, like bottle. They call it shir -- Shirley Temple locks. And the dress was borrowed by -- from a friend. I didn't have such a beautiful dress then.

Q: And the other picture?

A: The little picture, one is me on the right side with --

Q: This one?

A: No.

Q: No, this one.

A: This one. That's me again, with a friend, Sarah. Her name also Sarah Grynszpan, she lives now in Toronto, she is my childhood friend. We lived on the same street in Poland after the war.

Q: And this picture?

A: This -- standing up is my father, Moishe Szlinger in the Polish army before the war. He was a good looking, handsome soldier. And next to him some friend, I don't know, sitting up, who it is, but probably was somebody very close to him. It was a Polish uniform before the war.

Q: And who is this good looking lady?

A: I don't know, it's me, Sarah, in 1953. That was, in our days, that was called a bikini. We are laughing now. It was then daring, very daring that I wore it at the beach, and I wanted to show off. I liked to pose.

Q: And this picture, Sarah?

A: My husband, my late husband, Henry Zelazny in 1954.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: On the balcony of his apart -- his parent's apartment in Wroclaw in Poland. That's when we met, but not yet married.

Q: That's a great shot. And when was this picture taken?

A: 1954 in Poland. It was a studio picture, not -- I was posing, very serious. But I think I looked normal.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is Sarah Szlinger, me, performing in Jewish theater in Wroclaw, Poland. And this is a show of Shalom Aleichim, Jewish writer, [indecipherable]. It's called [indecipherable] the name of the title of the father's -- the son of a [indecipherable]. I was playing Goldalay, that's the title role.

Q: And what's happening here?

A: It's also a-another show in Jewish theater, me sitting, the woman. It's called [indecipherable] by Shalom Aleichim and standing next was my future husband Henry Zelazny. He fell in love with me when he saw me on the stage, and joined the theater. But he was talented.

Q: Okay Sarah, this picture?

A: This is my wedding picture, in July of '55. And the picture was taken at my husband's balcony in the apartment the day after, because we didn't have a photographer, we couldn't afford, so my husband was the photographer. So we don't have a picture together, married picture, no.

Q: So, tell us about these two pictures.

A: Two pictures of the wedding. I am, at the day of the wedding in the apartment. My husband took the picture and since there was no photographer, so I put my husband's picture next to me like a couple together, married couple, Henry and me.

Q: And this shot? Go ahead. Go ahead, now you [indecipherable]

A: This a picture taken of me and my husband after the wedding in July of '55, and we were posing at a friend's apartment, he took our picture together, finally.

Q: Okay Sarah, who is this?

A: Two little girls, beautiful friends. One is Antoinette, my French girl who lives in Poland and crochet my sweater, and this is me next to her, in front of her house. We are still good friends since childhood, until today. And I love her. Zei gezunt.

Q: And what is this, Sarah?

A: This is a picture of me taken in Poland for a passport. We were going to Israel in 1957, sh -- since you ask me for evidence that I am from Poland, it's written everything in Polish, Russian and that's it. That's my picture. The -- it's asking about the color of my hair, the color of my eyes, and that's it.

Q: And you just say -- this is your passport?

A: That was my passport to -- yeah, Polish passport.

Q: And these two pictures?

A: Two pictures of me, Sarah Zelazny then, I was married, I had my son in 1957, we were leaving for Israel from Poland. And this is the boat named Pace, Italian boat. We were in the port of Genoa. And my husband took those pictures.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is me again with my two sons. The little baby I'm holding is the younger one, Jonathan. And standing next to me, unseparable, is my son, Isaac. And I was the storyteller, since we didn't have Hebrew books then, I told them stories from Polish books. Telling them and they were listening. There was no electricity in Israel then, no -- no television, nothing. So I was the storyteller. Hard life.



Q: And when is this picture taken, Sarah?

A: This picture is taken in 1964 in Israel, Kiryat Shimona we lived then there, by a professional photographer. I loved to pose to pictures to today. It's funny, but it is true. My memorabilia. You never get back to those years.

Q: And who is that couple there?

A: The couple is my mom, Perla Szlinger Wainsztain. And this is my father, Moishe Szlinger, taken in Israel in 1964. My mom was a beautiful woman.

Q: And your dad passed in '67.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Yeah. And what about these three good looking ladies?

A: Three Graces, by Botticelli. Okay, me, Sarah, my mom and my younger sister Shoshana, she was not married there. It's in Kiryat Ata, 1965. We moved to Kiryat Ata in '64 from Kiryat Shimona.

Q: Okay, and this picture?

A: Picture, standing is my brother, Mordechai Szlinger in Kiryat Ata, married 1965 with his lovely wife Tamara Bitton. They have two beautiful children, Anat and Moishe. And my brother passed away, in November it will be a year. No, I'm sorry, in March, March seven is going to be a year since he passed away. I loved him very much. What a handsome man.

Q: And this picture?

A: This is me with my sister Shoshana, the younger sister, in Kiryat Ata, in my backyard in 1967 or eight, or something like that. I don't re-remember, but we were very close.

Q: This picture here?

A: Which one, that --

Q: Jonathan?

A: -- the -- ant -- Jonathan, my son, my late son was in the Navy on the U.S.S. Nimitz in 1977, and next to him is my lovely daughter-in-law Cindy, my older son's -- Isaac's wife. She was then 16 years old. And next to it is also her, with the braid, was bu -- she's a beautiful girl.

Q: What, this?

A: Yeah, that's her.

Q: That's her?

A: Cindy, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She came to us since she was 16. I was buying her clothes and she say, Oh Sarah, I like that blouse. I say, have it, here. She cu -- practically gr-grew up.

Q: Okay, and this picture?

A: This is a picture with my husband Henry in 1971 in March. We arrived from Israel to United State, to New York, taken in his parent's place in the Bronx, New York.

Q: And when was this picture taken?

A: This picture was taken 1977, in September. We bought a house in the Bronx and this -- I'm standing in the backyard. The -- the window down there is from the basement, we were fixing it. That was the happiest moment in my life.

Q: Why?

A: Because we had a house for ourselves. We never lived by ourselves, always my parents or his parents. And we were independent there.

Q: And this picture?

A: This my two sons. The first one is Isaac Zelazny, his lovely so -- son, Ariel, the firstborn. And Cindy, my daughter-in-law, and my late son, Jonathan Zelazny. Was a handsome boy.

Q: And Cindy is Isaac's wife?

A: Wife, mm-hm.

Q: And this is Jonathan?

A: Yeah. And Ariel was blonde with blue eyes. Beautiful. I -- still is.

End of Tape Eight

Conclusion of Interview