

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Rubin Pizem**

**December 16, 2011**

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## PREFACE

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Transcribed by Gene Jennings, National Court Reporters Association.

**RUBIN PIZEM**

**December 16, 2011**

Question: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Rubin Pizem, conducted by Casey Bayless (ph) on December 16, 2011, in New York City. And again, good morning, Mr. Pizem, we're delighted to have you. Can you first tell me when and where you were born?

Answer: I was born November 29, '30, in Primishlana.

Q: And where is that located, where at the time?

A: Presently, it's located in the Ukraine. Before the war, it was a Polish city, belonged to Poland.

Q: And can you tell me about your life growing up there? Can you describe your parents, to begin?

A: My life was a very pleasant life. I grew up in a very bourgeois family, to say. We live comfortable, until the war started.

Q: What did your parents do as a profession?

A: They had real estate, land. They were welloff. My father didn't work. He was a religiousoriented man; he was a rabbi but he never practiced. So, this was my home. I had a sister, Esther, and I have a sister, Ida Biesenkarcher (ph). She's alive. I survived the war with my sister and my mother.

Q: What languages did you speak at home?

A: At home? Polish, Yiddish, combination of both.

Q: And was your home a lively environment?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did your parents have friends over?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: And what did they do?

A: We lived in a big house, a lot of friends. I was a child so I was not familiar with their social life, but yes, people used to come to us. Very often my parents took me with them up to some neighbors, friends, relatives. You know, typical Jewish life in the prewar shtatle, I would say it is.

Q: So you had relatives in the area?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I have two uncles in the city, I have distant relatives there, had an aunt in another city, but not far. The city was Gleanyani (ph). Sometimes we

went to visit them, they came to visit us. What can I tell? I have a very happy childhood until the war. I had friends, we play, you know.

Q: And did you go to school?

A: Yes. I went to a Polish school and started the first grade, then the war started, so I went the Russians came. Fortunately, they otherwise the Germans would be there in '39. Later, I went to Ukrainian school.

Q: Uhu. And it was a shtetle school?

A: Yes.

Q: Not a Jewish school.

A: No, no, no, no, no.

Q: And there were boys and girls in your school?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And were they treated differently in terms of expectations of work or home responsibilities?

A: No. It was just no, no. What do you mean by treating differently?

Q: Were boys expected to work and girls expected to be home?

A: No, no, no. No, no, this is not this is your this is probably those more religious houses. No, we were a traditional home. So, no, no.

Q: Did you have non-Jewish friends?

A: Yes, a lot of them. It was a very good, pleasant life. Of course, later I would think but we will come to it.

Q: We will. And you spoke you mentioned your two sisters.

A: Uhu.

Q: Can you describe them a little bit more? Were they older or younger?

A: Oh, yes, Esther was older. She was already graduated from the gymnasium. And Ida, my sister, was younger. They have a lot of friends. I mean by "they," I mean my older sister. She used to take me out, certain concerts in the city. I would say a rich social life.

I didn't notice that my children have this here. You know, maybe we took in retrospect, things look differently but life was very pleasant. We had everything, so we were

properly spoiled because of that, but this until '39 and the war, the Pole German war started. So

Q: How religious was your family?

A: Oh, my father was very religious, very religious. It was a very kosher home. Yes, my father was very religious.

Q: If we could just go back. You did bring the picture of your sister.

A: Yes.

Q: Can we talk a little bit about that?

A: Oh, as far as I remember I don't remember my mother she was killed in '43.

Q: Your sister.

A: Yes.

Q: Esther.

A: Yes.

Oh, she went to gymnasium, which not many could afford, so she

Q: And that was a private institute, sir?

A: Yes, it was in Primishlana. It's Emryten (ph).

Q: So this is her can you tell us what this is, which card this is? This is her gymnasium picture?

A: Yes. The name was \_\_\_\_\_ + Polish gymnasium. The name of Kveenyaveega (ph) in Primishlana.

Q: I see.

A: And those teachers which I don't know nobody.

Q: Do you know how old she was when this was taken?

A: I cannot tell if this is my brother, because I couldn't understand the whole '33, '43. She was \_\_\_\_\_ +, but in '43, Jews couldn't go anywhere. I couldn't go to school, so this must be somewhere in between, or maybe something ten year or something. But this was done by Vadel, a Jewish photographer. I knew him. I remember him very well because I used to go to him with my mother, my parents' pictures. But he was killed in '41 so I couldn't understand how this was made this was probably made between '33 and but not maybe in '43. This is hard for me to describe.

Q: Uhu.

A: And I don't think this was a religious teacher. He was Jewish. Yes, he was Jewish (ph); he's not alive. It seems to me that this gentleman is also Jewish. Is he?

Q: So there were both Jewish and non-Jewish students at the gymnasium as well?

A: Yes, yes. Oh my God, and more Jewish. She, too, had the Jewish two other Jewish girls. I don't know. They got a picture from a Gentile and probably this is how they indicate the Jews who are not alive probably. \_\_\_\_\_ + not been some during the gymnasium was not this couldn't be of them. Or maybe when this was done, maybe there's just indication of Jews. So for me, it's, you know

I asked my mother and she told me of course, she knew she knew the other one. She knew all the Jews there.

Q: Your mother knew all the Jews?

A: She knew them. She knew the teacher. She knew also I remember she mentioned this: Her name was Flusay Lord (ph). She was a Polish woman, a Polish teacher. But this but one thing is for sure, that Vadel couldn't have made this in '43. Was killed. And my sister, if this was in '43, she wouldn't be. Not only, all the Jews wouldn't be so it must be done, the picture, but the occasion, they couldn't come, in the sense.

Q: Uhu.

A: And being in Russia after the war first of all, we got about two, three years after we were liberated and then we find somebody who made a picture of my sister based on this one. So we have it at home, a big picture. That's what I can't tell about this picture and what her story. She was a very bright girl. She spoke English, she was planning to study medicine somewhere overseas in the West, not in Poland. She had a lot of friends. She helped us a lot from '41 to '43. She worked; life was very difficult. And after our ghetto was liquidated, we were hiding immediately, and she was walking in the city, in the camp. It was not a concentration camp per se but it was a working camp. Jews and Poles work there. You ask me why she was there? She could have escaped with us but she was trying to retrieve some things for us to be able to continue hiding and living, etcetera. Me and my mother and my sister were hiding at that time in by Poles, outside the city, and I used to go to visit her. I remember I visited her twice or three times. She couldn't visit us. And when I visit her the next time, I don't the third or the fourth one, she wasn't there, and I remember I was surrounded by Polish girls and Jewish girls. And I said, "Where is Esther?" And they said they didn't tell me that she was taken away, of course, and killed probably immediately there. Said, "She went to another place to work." And then I asked, "Can I come tomorrow and see her?" And I remember they told me, "No. If she come back, she'll come and visit you." Of course, in retrospect this

was a prelude. It was painful for them, and I was beginning to cry  
\_\_\_\_\_+ something.

Q: Do you remember when the war began?

A: Oh, yes, remember September 1, '39. Yeah, how well I remember it.

Q: And how did other people react? How did your parents react when the war began?

A: They act scared they were scared, normally. We knew that we didn't know I couldn't understand that they would know what the Germans are doing; they would probably run to Russia, from one part. For the other part, we were well off, and the Russians sent many to Siberia. My aunt my aunt from Gleenyana (ph) they were owners of a factory so they were her husband was arrested, and my aunt and her daughter Arella was taken to Siberia. Unfortunately for them, they didn't survive there no, unfortunately for them, they survived but they came back in '41. They came back because my parents, many people around spoke about them very highly, positively, and they wrote to the Russian government that they were not for Bourgeois who exploit other people. Can you imagine that? In '41, they let she came back, and her husband came out from the jail because of intervention. Couldn't understand how this and of course he very, very happy when she came back but in two months later in two or three months later the German Russian war started. If they would stay there, maybe they would survive. Maybe he would her husband, Mosha, would have gone to see them, but those \_\_\_\_\_+ she came back, unfortunately, for them. In '41, my father was killed, and my two uncles were killed, in November. The Germans came to our town in July.

Q: What was it like when they occupied the town?

A: It was very, very scary. The Jews were taken immediately, in a very arrogant way. On November 5th, my father and my two uncles were ordered they got ordered November the 4th by the Jewish Judenrat, the Jewish came to the same place where my sister went.

Q: Which is the gymnasium?

A: The gymnasium, yes. Of course, at that time there was not any there wasn't a gymnasium. I don't remember was I don't remember what. And from there, the same day, they took them to the woods and shot them. So this was the connection with the same place. Oh, of course I remember very well the Judenrat asked everybody to bring whatever they possessed, gold things, in order to buy them out. We were very naive, naive people, thought everything would \_\_\_\_\_+ but around 3:00 o'clock I was trying to run to see them but the streets were empty and around 3:00, 4:00 o'clock they began to take groups to the woods in our city, Snutwasfada (ph). It was a very beautiful place. But the shooting was already going on, we can hear this. And around 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock, women were crying Roma, Romas and I remember that I was I got told

my parents and my sister that I'm going to the place of them, and I went. As a child, I well remember I had the Aryan look at that time, and two or three people more went to this place. It was already night. The Ukrainian police and the Germans mostly Ukrainian were they went to the city to eat, to drink, and then they came back to bury them. Not they, probably, it was But then I went to the woods I went close to the place where they were shot, and I remember that there were some cries of probably many people who were wounded, and I was scared and I run back, and I told the story to my parents, to other people there. So other people, mostly, of course, Roman they followed, they run to this place, and they didn't come back. They were shot also there. So I was lucky that didn't so this was but prior to this my father \_\_\_\_\_+. My uncles were taken to jobs to work.

Q: They were taken by the

A: By the Germans, the Ukrainians, or by the Jewish police. They told them where to come and to do work. This was prior to November 5th. Then they were killed.

Q: How else do you remember your life changing before November, when they went into your town?

A: Oh, changed immediately. First of all, I didn't go to school. My Polish friends, still some of them were we met, we play. Also, they went to school, so we have to meet after school. We didn't go to school. So and we lived in the same building until I don't remember and then our building was converted to a Jewish hospital. Was a big one. So they moved to another place, of course, in a crowded apartment, not like our own.

Q: So you were evicted from your home.

A: Yes.

And then in '42 was I remember aktion, one of them and my grandmother was with us, and she was she disappeared. I don't remember, there were conditions, how they survived. She was all sick, and she lived in a house in a Gentile it wasn't the typical Jewish neighborhood. And there was a garden there and I remember you \_\_\_\_\_+ my mother, she went to the garden some. But we came back, she wasn't there. So, they took her.

Q: Do you know what

A: In '42 I don't remember the month was a big aktion, many Jews were taken. But after a few hours my mother and my sister came back from somewhere. I was hiding in another place.

Q: Where did you hide, do you remember?



A: In a Polish neighbor place. They took me in.

Q: Your neighbors took you?

A: Yes.

Q: Is that what you said?

A: Because I \_\_\_\_\_ + up to them. And I don't remember where my mother was hiding. She told me. It was the same, somewhere in a Polish place, by Poles. And they came back, of course. Life was already not typical, because my grandmother disappeared. My mother cried, I cried, we all cried.

Q: Do you recall any other antiSemitic actions carried out by the forces at that time?

A: Oh, there were you mean which forces you have in mind? There was the killer group that they were called Einzergroppen. They killed my parents no, I'm sorry, my father, my two uncles, and they left \_\_\_\_\_. and from time to time there were small aktion, and they came, they took Jews to work, the camps, etcetera, the camps that were around our city. This didn't apply to my uncles, to my father; they were not ready to life at that time, in '41, in '42. Then in '42 there was a ghetto. So they moved from this place to the ghetto. Our house was in the ghetto.

Q: Which house?

A: Where the hospital was.

Q: Where you were moved.

A: Yes.

Q: Was located in the ghetto.

A: This was located in the ghetto and this why they they made a Jewish hospital there. It was a big house. Because I remember once \_\_\_\_\_ + they took the patients from the ghetto from our house and they shoot them \_\_\_\_\_. I remember I saw some pictures not pictures I saw, but then the dead were removed and this happened. This house was still considered the Jewish hospital.

Q: So you lived in the hospital?

A: No, I lived in the ghetto, another place already. First, we moved to a there was no ghetto immediately but when the ghetto was created, I moved from other house to the ghetto.

Q: And where in the ghetto did you live?

A: In the ghetto we lived in another house, we crowded with other people. There were aktions sometimes so we run away. And the final life in the ghetto was until May the 20th.

Q: What was

A: There were rumors that there will be aktions, but there were very often the rumors. We had connections before, but from the ghetto we couldn't get out. But we had some hiding place where we lived, and when the aktion started I remember very well there was a kitchen. You opened the kitchen and through the kitchen we went down to a something, and from there I remember I didn't participate in it but they built something inside, lower, and thank for this sorry we survived because the Germans discovered the entry but nothing was there. Now they discovered but nothing was there, we were below.

I remember it was crowded because all the people from the building went down. And I remember my sister, we are sitting there, a wall of us on some soft things, and this was and at night we went out, at nighttime, after being there one day one day or two days, I don't remember. I don't remember; I lost conscious there, but my sister put some soft things on me, with my mother.

Q: Which sister?

A: What? Esther, because Ida was smaller.

Q: She was younger than you, right.

A: And we came out. Was nighttime, the ghetto was burning, and some way we went out to a neighbor's \_\_\_\_\_, in Spirtka (ph), and they took us in for one day. But they were afraid to keep us, and I understand.

Q: And these did you know them before the war?

A: Oh, yes. Even during the war, when there were rumors of an aktion, and we came to them, they let us sleep over, me and my sister. My mother went to another place.

Q: And how did you get how did you get there at night, you said? When you were in the ghetto at this time, how did you get out?

A: The ghetto was not surrounded already.

Q: Okay.

A: I assume. I assume it was surrounded before.

Q: Uhu.

A: But they did everything. They killed many people in the streets. I remember when we came out at night we saw someI saw some dead bodies, but this was at night. And from there we went to another place, through some connections, and they took us in for a few days.

Q: And do you remember their names or where they lived?

A: No, their names I don't remember. Now the first name I remember: Bispertka (ph). But the other people who took us in for a few days only, I don't remember. And from there we went to another place, Sokolik, in Borochoff (ph). It's a village. They kept us for three months.

Q: And do you recall their names?

A: What?

Q: Do you remember their names?

A: Yes, Sokolik.

Q: Sokolik.

A: Yes. The grandchildren, they are there in Jerusalem, yes, for saving us. Not saving completely but worse time, not of them, we wouldn't be alive, we wouldn't be ablebut being there, very often we were afraid because the Ukrainian police. And I remember one evening they told us to get out, because there were big gardens there, and sit there, because they were afraid, because the Ukraine police, they're looking for Jews there. Not immediately, because they had a lot of work to do in the city, but after being there probably a month, at night they took us out and they suggest us to go into the corncorn, a lot of corn there, just sitting there.

Q: In the cornfield.

A: Yes, in the cornfield, me and my mother and my sister.

Q: And at this point who was in hiding with you?

A: What?

Q: Who was in hiding with you at this point? It was your mother

A: My mother.

Q: And Ida.

A: Ida, and Esther.

Q: And Esther.

A: Yes. After the ghetto was liquidated, when we run to those neighbors on the farm, my sister went to there was a walking Kinder underway.

Q: Do you remember the name of the camp?

A: No, I cannot remember the name. Someno, just people were walking there, Poles. And my sister's intention was to go over there, which she did, to go over there to find some hiding place for us, because we were lost and, you know she know where we were but she couldn't go there.

Q: How old was she at this time?

A: I think probably 20, I don't know.

Q: Around 20, yes.

A: And I used to visit her from and after two, three visits

Q: When you visited her at?

A: At the working place.

Q: And where were you at this time?

A: Already hiding.

Q: Okay.

A: In another place. Not in the city, already; outside the city with my mother. And she I think once she came to visit at night also, once or twice. And that's it. I used to visit her a few times.

Q: What was she working on at the camp?

A: What?

Q: What type of labor did she do?

A: I don't know. They did some agricultural labor. Some of them went to work to the ghetto, to do some work in the ghetto, cleaning. And the assumption was to help she told us she would go back to the ghetto so maybe she would be able to take some things from our place where we lived. We had some valuable things. Not many, because the most the Germans took or the Jewish Judenrat took them. And my father and my uncles there, we thought that they would be able to take them out because of the to buy them out.

Q: But she went back to see if there was anything after? Had it been liquidated?

A: No. She if she went to walk to the ghetto, she could have. If not, \_\_\_\_\_+

Q: Uhu.

A: But she never went back to our place, she told me, and I believed her. I met her a few times. And then one thing, when she went she scratched her leg somewhere, unfortunately, and she had to bend it, and the Ukrainian police and the German came and they look they saw, and because of that, they took her out. I assume, but they maybe thought that she couldn't work, that she couldn't be so productive or maybe maybe they took a few people and they shot them. That's how my sister's end was.

Q: That's how she died?

Yes. But at that time we were already at Sokolik's place, in Borochoff (ph).

Q: Can you spell Sokolik? Do you remember?

A: Spell you?

Q: Yes.

A: I spell it in Latin and then in Ukrainian this was like this. {Writing} This is the Latin name, Sokllyk [sic]. Michael.

Q: So that's SOKLLYK [sic].

A: Yes.

Q: And his first name was Michael.

A: Yes. We were already in his place, and I remember they shoot when I came back, shooting there all the time. At night then we can listen. And probably when I came back, when they said to me I told \_\_\_\_\_, Sorry, I've tried this, what can we do?

And then my mother was a very energetic woman and she immediately, I remember, she said, All right, we have to live, I have to hope I believe you will survive, we will survive, and this and that, and she was very we lived at Sokllyk's place three months. After three months, they were afraid. I don't blame them.

Q: Did they hide anybody else with you?

A: No, no, just us. And they suspected the neighbors something I don't know, because they used to feed us, they bring food to the \_\_\_\_\_+ the cows be there and

Q: So you were in their where were you hiding at their home?

A: Not at their home, at their barn.

Q: In the barn.

A: Yes.

Q: And then at night

A: At night they bring the food, and even daytime sometimes they come in, because they were they were all there, just a big barn. They were also rich peasants.

Q: Where in the barn did you bide? Up or down?

A: It were full of straw, of hay, and we were in them. It was uncomfortable. So, it was so uncomfortable that after three months, when we came out, I couldn't walk because I was sitting all the time there, most of the time. My mother went the evening to their house to do some helping them and cooking and other things, \_\_\_\_\_ them. The same my sister. But I and when we have to leave their place, because it was a very they were very uncomfortable to tell us this; I remember very well. They were very nice people. And they took us at nighttime, their son

Q: Their son is

A: There son is Ivan was his name.

Q: Ivan.

A: And my gosh, we were crying at Ivan. And because it wasn't so simple to get out from the village, in the middle of night he took us out to some woods. It took a few hours. And he \_\_\_\_\_ he left us there. He said my mother's intention was to go to the village, where we had a lot of land. This was about 18, 20 kilometers, because she had acquaintances there. And she told that somebody will help her there. And he left us, and he told us, Stay overnight here, because we were and from there he gave us the direction

Q: And he left you where did he leave you exactly? In the woods or

A: Yes, in the woods, yes. And he gave Mommie the direction, but my mother know how to go to our place where we had we had a lot of our land there.

Q: Before the war. \_\_\_\_\_+

A: Yes. And so Mommie was expecting that she will find some assistance there. And I remember we were walking usually it was a walk for a few hours, but we walked two or three days.

Q: What was it like, the temperature and

A: No, this was somewhere in September, October, so this wasn't the main problem. The main problem was food, hunger, water, and scared. We don't know and he left us in the woods, and he went away. Suddenly, we saw some people there, those Ukrainian I know who they \_\_\_\_\_+. And they said to each other in Ukraine, People are walking here.

Q: You understood?

A: Oh, yes, I understood Ukraine well. And my God and they were looking for us. And then they disappeared. But you see, I'm jumping, I'm disorganized. When we were hiding in the cornfield

Q: Just to step back.

A: I go too far.

Q: The cornfield, was that the who did the cornfields belong to?

A: To Sokolik, to them.

Q: To them, okay. So this is where you were for three months. {Overtalking}

A: Yes, it was a lot of

Q: Okay. And where did you go? After that, you went to the woods?

A: No, no, after that we came back to the Sokoliks. My God, after they were \_\_\_\_\_+. This is one of the examples which I gave you of our life at their place. Sometimes when they felt something, they took us out at night there. We could even stay there during the daytimes because it was so And I remember oh, yes, the most important thing. During the daytime, the Ukrainian police was looking for people there, because from the ghetto, displaced, and they came to the corns and they said, They were here. But my mother, being in the corn, some feeling or God know what, she said, Let's we move to another place. I said, No, \_\_\_\_\_+ what's the difference? And we moved to poppie fields. But they are \_\_\_\_\_. And she was right, my mother.

And we move into the poppie fields, and it's a better place for hiding. It was farther from them. And at this was in the daytime, when the police was and we hear the police talking also: There are Jews here, because they saw it.

Q: So you were where were you when you heard them speaking?

A: In the poppie fields.

Q: Which was that near the cornfields?

A: Yes, near the cornfields but a little bit but it was very it's different. Was a better, much better place. Didn't notice \_\_\_\_\_, fortunately. Or I don't want to say unfortunately. And in the evening she came out. They look for us because the cornfield was completely destroyed. They were looking. And she was and she was supposedly calling chickens, etcetera.

Q: This is

A: Thehis wife. And he came out and we came and she kissed us and she was so happy that we are alive. And then I remember Mommie \_\_\_\_\_, she thought \_\_\_\_\_ see, the corn wasn't there. You weren't there and we thought that you are gone, that they took you. Because they took other people, and they were crying, other people, and we hear crying, and they heard us.

Q: And how did you know the Sokoliks before the war?

A: Oh, Mommie know them before the war.

Q: Were they friends of your parents?

A: Yes. My parents were rich. They had someI remember agricultural things. Parents used to buy \_\_\_\_\_ and they gave them credit. You knowso in that respect, even though being in ghetto, they helped us often. They, other people. But since the ghetto was liquidated, this was the lastthe last connection with the city, never came back to the city. And we told them that wethat in our place that there were some things Mommie \_\_\_\_\_, I don't remember what, and she gave them the direction where he should go, and he went, and there was some silver Mommie told \_\_\_\_\_ and Jewish things. So a lot of that. Small things we had with us. And he couldn't find us, but we tried some way to give him something. And he know that he \_\_\_\_\_+. After the ghetto, we came out with nothing. But not himhis son went, and I remember his father said, No, don't \_\_\_\_\_, stay, stay, I hope you will survive. Because if the war would end in a little bit maybe you will survive even there. But you see, my sisterthis was later. We had some ill (ph) feelings. God know what, I couldn't understand how we didn't discourage (ph) her. I don't know what happened, why she went to this place. But she could have run away from this place to us also, to Sokolik. I don't know. And then in the woods

Q: So you werethis is after you left the Sokoliks.

A: Yes.

Q: You were in the woods and you were, you saidhow long you were at the Sokoliks?

A: In the woods there, almost a year.

Q: In the woods.

A: Yes.

Q: And where were the woods exactly?

A: The woods were in the Chemerenchi (ph). I'm starting withthis is a Polish name. The Ukrainian name isI will spell it in English because you won'tGJMRG (ph). Chemerenchi.

Q: Can you just spell that for the



A: In Ukrainian, yes?

Q: Well, can you just can you read that out loud, just read the letters so we can have a record?

A: This is CZ is Ukrainian, "cher" (ph). Er like "er" (ph). M like "er" (ph). AR, Chemerenchi (ph). I will give it in Ukrainian maybe. Chem (ph) this Ukraine there Chemerenchi. Ukrainian. Oh, my God.

Q: That's okay. That first one, that's helpful.

A: Chemerenchi. Ukrainian C, Ukrainian E, is like a Polish E, Chemerenchi.

Q: So before you I just want to make sure that

A: So we left Sokolik brought us to some woods and from during the day we stayed there because Ukrainians came during the day looking for us there. They saw \_\_\_\_\_+ there were some people but they didn't notice us.

And from there we began to walk to Chemerenchi.

Q: And when do you remember when this was that you entered the woods?

A: No. The wood this was familiar, Sokolik, I think because we were about three months there. May, June, July, maybe August, September, I can't and we walk to Chemerenchi probably two, three days. We were afraid to walk through the street; we walked through the woods. My mother know at night, I remember we could make it shorter but we saw peasants. The peasants at night have they used to take out their horses to feed them, and they were so we were afraid to cross them. So my mother find other ways. It took us three days to come to Chemerenchi, to the woods in Chemerenchi, which my mother knew them. And my mother told us, You sit here in a place and I'll go to the village. Was a very risky thing but she we never \_\_\_\_\_. Of course at that time, didn't think those terms. And as soon as she left us, we hear, Hello, hello? So somebody approached her, and this was fortunately a Jew who was in the woods already, who knew my mother. Of course, he saw a woman walking so he said, Hello, of course.

And he told her that my mother's aunt is in the woods with her children and that my mother shouldn't go, she should stay here, she should wait, he will come back and he'll take us to the woods where they all are hiding. Because this was the woods was just close to the village. And my mother came back, and \_\_\_\_\_ I was scared very much. I thought maybe that somebody picked up my mother, took her maybe, who knows. But then she told me of ?Malka?. He's alive now and in Canada, in Winnipeg.

Q: This gentleman.

A: Yes. He's still alive, thank God. And they brought us to my aunther name was ?Malka?. She was there with two sons and one daughter.

Q: And what was the gentleman's name who brought you there?

A: Zimmer. I will give his name. I give his phone number and contact him. And so we live immediately with my aunt. We lived with them. Of course, they were always aktion and we run this, you know.

Q: And you livedwhere were you living with them?

A: In the woods \_\_\_\_\_+.

Q: How did you live in the woods?

A: This is a question which all Americans cannot understand, will probably not understand. In the summertime, it's all right. In the wintertime \_\_\_\_\_, how can I tell it? They call it \_\_\_\_\_+. A big yard, we cover this and we lived there.

Q: You coveredsorry, what did you cover?

A: We covered this with earth, the top, becausewe covered this \_\_\_\_\_+ not to look like a place where people are living. \_\_\_\_\_+ live there.

Q: It waswas it underground?

A: Yes, this was underground butof course it was underground, otherwise couldn'tand I think my mother's cousins, they did it for us. And we lived not far from each other. And I remember sometimeonce there was aktion. Shooting. The Germans, I don'tUkrainian. I run away, disorganized. My mother was different places. My sister Ida was with Bronyah (ph). I was by myself somewhere. I was so close to the German, I remember he passed by, he almosthe could have hit me. And I always think about this. I said for my

Q: Where were you hiding when he

A: In the woods, yes. This was all the aktion in the woods, he passed by. I remember he was breathing, and maybe he saw me and maybe he doesn't want toI don't know. I don't, but this was I remember. And my sister Ida was with Bronyah. They catch some people there but fortunately, nobody from our family. And in the evening whenever they came back, and of course we were happy to see Bronyah, my mother's cousin, and they're all alive, and Ida, and I was soit happened a few times, where aktionas, as they call this in German, aktionyou know this. In Polish, oblava; in Russianthey're looking for people, for Jews. Jew hunting is another word.

Q: Who else were you in hiding with, aside from your cousins?

A: There was some other family from Primishlana. I don't know them; I don't remember them. But we were hiding not together. Everybody separate because we were afraid. Sometimes you come to each other. There was another question of food, because in the summertime immediately they told us what we can find in the woods.

Q: Who told you what you can find in the woods?

A: Oh, my cousins. Said, Well, go you find \_\_\_\_\_ in the woods or you have to go outside, steal potatoes, because outside the woods. And of course they went to the village because they friends and some Poles, Ukraine but mostly Poles gave us food, gave food to Mommie, but you cannot go Mommie went once a week, twice once a week, maybe once in two weeks, I don't remember, because it was dangerous to go to the woods to the villages.

Q: And did your mom receive food from former neighbors or friends, or did she she know everybody?

A: No, she yes, she got food from \_\_\_\_\_, who used to work for us. Because we had a lot of land there and they were working the land; they had a nice life on this. So Mommie know some of them, she went to them, but she was afraid to go to we never know. See, their way of thinking was probably maybe we'll take over their lands, I don't know. So sometimes, you know, very often my mother went to and bought some food, some potatoes, some bread. I remember one very unpleasant thing where my mother went out and she came back. The dog she was bitten by dogs, her legs very blood and this and this. But she brought food. And this was happen during the wintertime, and when we came was already probably September, October, so we began to accommodate for the winter. Mushrooms we used to in the woods so lots of \_\_\_\_\_. I learned to distinguish good mushrooms and bad. We make the fire. The mushrooms were very tasty; I will never forget the taste. The hunger properly combined with taste with something to eat would create a good taste. And this was the life in the woods. Always afraid, always half naked.

Q: How did you stay warm in the winter?

A: In the winter?

Q: Uhu.

A: Inside and \_\_\_\_\_+ got no water. It wasn't warm. In the winter we had some not a cooking facility but something was made to warm with. And also, we had in the winter some I don't know how it was combined. My cousins did it. So we can \_\_\_\_\_ some water. Not cook with, something it's unbelievable. We are hungry always, and there the lice. And the lice. How we survived, I don't know. But then spring came so it was little bit better, easier. I remember the winter, I went out some

break some food because we were making some fire inside this almost \_\_\_\_\_ just like \_\_\_\_\_ + I went out and came back. The same day my mother did, my sister did the same, Ida, was a small child but the three of us were lying, covering each other, and this took a few months until June or July of '44, and the Russians came in.

Q: So you had been in the woods

A: Almost a year.

Q: before that.

A: Yes. All time in the woods that couldn't get out. And we had also my aunt who came back from Siberia, I told you, she was with us also in the woods, a separate place, and with her husband. I don't know why and what happened. She became sick or her daughter became sick and they find their hiding place in the village. Some Poles, they took them in, also the Bairns (ph). And shortly after they took them in the Ukrainian police or I don't know who came, this what we were told discovered him, took them out and beat him to death, even didn't kill them. They beat her, her daughter, and her husband to death. They were then they were buried somewhere not far from the place in the woods, I don't know where. We were looking with my cousins to find out their places. Yes, and during hiding in the woods there, we had other events with my cousin Menda was his name. I don't remember for water, because we didn't have water. And suddenly we heard something: Rachela, Rachela. I will never forget his name. Somebody was calling Rachela. It's a Jewish name. And I don't know it was a \_\_\_\_\_ as a child but I was already and adult, everything that life make you. And I said to Menda, Who is Rachela? He said, No, this is not Rachela, it's proper they called the Jewish name, they want to come out some Jews, and we run back to our place. And later the next day we find out that there was a Jew hunting on the other part of the wood and they caught a few Jews. This is their tactic: When they catch the Jew they always say, Call call other Jews, if they found a name. But this was for they didn't call she didn't call our name or other names. She called Rachela, I remember. And Rachela was not among the hiding places with us. So they went away and didn't come out. But were many such things which

Q: Did you did you constantly hear the German and/or Ukrainian forces around you? Was it almost how often did you hear them in the woods while you were in hiding?

A: Oh, very often.

Q: And was it both did you see them?

A: No. No, if I saw them it wouldn't be the best thing for me. Yes, from a distance I remember I was the woods \_\_\_\_\_ and sometimes I want to go out. Not from the woods per se, but as I'm \_\_\_\_\_ in the woods, just to walk like to run. And I

know and then we notice somebody is coming, two or three people, far away, so we run away. I don't know. They were probably maybe looking for Jews or maybe for \_\_\_\_\_. Yes, very be often, uhu.

Q: How did you find water?

A: There were places where we go after rains, dirty water. This was very often because there was no water close to this place \_\_\_\_\_. In the wintertime we used the snow and melt the snow, it was no problem, but in the summertime water was a big problem.

Q: What was it like when the Soviet soldiers liberated you in 19in July of '44?

It was we had shooting all over. We had rumors that artillery shooting from far distance and we thought we always hoped that it will come closer, because the Russians made a big move in somewhere in January, and they stopped in March not far from us, about 200 kilometer. It was another German line of defense. This was in \_\_\_\_\_. And if they would go a little bit further, my aunt would be alive, other people would be alive, but it didn't happen this way. And when the Russians came in we didn't know, realize, shooting \_\_\_\_\_. Then some Poles then contact with us, came and said, The Russians are here, we can go out. We were afraid, we didn't trust, we didn't know.

Q: Who told you, which Poles?

A: A Pole from the village, he know that we there, somebody that used to come to us. And we came to the village and we saw Russian soldiers around you, and in \_\_\_\_\_ we want to be closer to the soldiers. You know, my mother said I cannot remember it was a Jewish officer. She thought they were Jews.

Q: In the Russian Army.

A: Yes. Not only one, but a few of them. And of course they were very good to us and they asked us about and immediately they feed us because we are hungry and we are dirty.

Q: How did you know how did your mom know they were Jewish, the soldiers?

A: They know that we are Jewish.

Q: They knew that

A: Yes, we told them.

Q: Okay.

A: And then I remember a Jewish doctor came, and there were many Jewish there were a few of them there. Of course they immediately I don't remember. They settled us and

two peasants not far from the place where they were stationed, and they thought the peasants would take care of us. Of course, we were not afraid, we thought that the Russian are here, that the Germans are not here, but we were deeply mistaken. The Ukrainian killed many Jews, those who survived, immediately, for differentfor certain reasons. First, for maybe they \_\_\_\_\_+ but we survived, and we were surrounded by the Russians. They gave us some clothing, they gave us food, they told us not to eat a lot, I remember; they gave us very small portions because some of us died immediately after one or two days: It was swollenI was swollen likemy mother was swollen. So the doctors immediately, I remember, they checked us, they told usand they gave us a bath, some \_\_\_\_\_ clothes and there were awe were a few days there.

And we ask, How about Primishlana, can we go back to our city? They said, No, the city is still not taking baths. A few days later

Q: Did youdid you speak Russian?

A: Yes, we spoke Russian but because we lived under the Russians two years already.

Q: Uhu.

A: \_\_\_\_\_. And they told us that the city will be taken by us, \_\_\_\_\_ to the city, you cannotthey told me, Don't walk to the city. That was good advice, otherwise we would be killed. But because the village which we were consist of twos parts; one part was typical Polish and the other part was Polish, mostly Ukrainian. The Ukrainian part was very dangerous; we didn't go there. But after the war, many Poles were killed by Ukrainian there. During the Germans, and even after the Russians came in. So when the Soviet army began to move further, so they took us to the city in their car.

Q: The

A: The Russians.

Q: They took you.

A: The officer, the soldiers. And of course they was fightingwas fighting but I don't know, fighting wasn'tfor me, I was happy to see the fighting. I remember when the Russians were close, I went in the woods with another guy, boy like me. We saw the fighting, shooting. Fortunately, the Germans didn't went to our woods when they were beaten, but the Russians did. So they went in different streets, in different ways, the Germans. But we saw them from the woods.

Q: I just want to make sure we're on the same track.

A: Disorganize everything. \_\_\_\_\_+

Q: We're good. No, that's okay. Do you remember

A: Do you think questions could be more precise? It would be easier for

Q: When you were in the when you were in the woods and you were in hiding, do you how aware were you of the war and what was going on?

A: Just by rumor sometimes, from the Poles, and my mother went to the village. Nothing, no, nothing. We became very more when the front was closing.

Q: When the Russians were coming in.

A: Yes. And was artillery shooting, flying this was otherwise, nothing. Like wild animals without because we always hoping that the Russians would break this, this, we listen to their shooting from \_\_\_\_\_ you know, the \_\_\_\_\_ house.

Q: Do you remember seeing you said you saw some of the shooting when you were after you were liberated.

A: No. Me shooting the war between the Russians and Germans

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, sure, mutual shooting, yes. The artillery shooting we can see from there it was a pleasant vision.

Q: And then after you were

A: When we came to the city, because we had to have house, couldn't go back. I remember I saw the dead bodies and my and they were shooting in the hospital. Blood on the but there were many empty apartments.

Q: And this was the hospital that you saw with all the dead bodies, which house that was your

A: This was our house. But we didn't go back there to live, no, no.

Q: But you saw it.

A: This was there. And the Ukrainians were already living there, people were living. It didn't bother them. So we find an apartment in another a Jewish apartment in another place and begin to look around. I remember the city was the ghetto was destroyed. The city was completely different, the people were many people from the villages came to the city so never knew them. A few of my school friends, neighbor friends with whom I used to play, they find the life good. And then immediately the city calls for \_\_\_\_\_ not to take care of us but we didn't have any papers, nothing. We could went to neighbors' places to find something, pictures, nothing. This picture was

given to me later to us. We didn't have documents so we have to establish birth certificates, who we are, what we are, school. And I rememberoh, yes, when I was in the wood, I remember my mother taught me \_\_\_\_\_ I can write and read, but I didn't have what to read. But math a little bit, soand of course I missed four years, three years of school. So I came backso they gave us tests.

Q: This isthis is after the war?

A: Liberation, yes, after liberation.

Q: After liberation

A: In Primishana, yes.

Q: And before you reentered school would you sayhow manywho did you know else that had survived? You said some of your school mates.

A: No, not many survived. I know we met, like I told you, my aunt, thosesome other people, another Jewish \_\_\_\_\_. About 20 people there in the city, I would say. Not families per se. A family consists of one person, two persons.

We were the only one family which survived three people of us.

Q: Your family.

A: Yes. Oh, and another family from the village, from the same village, survived probably five, six people, which probably they survived from the Booth (ph) family. But from the city some people came, began coming back from Russia, one, two people. No, no, the city consists probably at that time from 20, 30 Jews.

Q: And so then youyou movedwhere did you and your mother and sister go exactly?

A: We got apartment. My mother began to work immediately somewhere, I don't remember where, because she has to make it to live for \_\_\_\_\_. Some neighbors gave us something. Nobody gave us back any clothing becauseI don't remember. But we got some clothing from people, otherwisewe couldn't buy, we didn't have money for what to buy it. And I remember I was very eager to start school, to see \_\_\_\_\_+.

And there was a Jewish teacher in '41, Leekman (ph). He wroteso he survived the war. He was teaching me after the war immediately, because he gave me some privatenot private \_\_\_\_\_+. He said, Rubin, you have to go to one or two classes higher; you will make it. And I don't remember which grade he put me in, fourth or third, I don't remember. School was difficult. I was very often hungry in school.

Q: What did you do for food? Your mother was working.



A: Yes, Mother cooked. \_\_\_\_\_+ But still, other people, I remember they came to school with sandwiches that \_\_\_\_\_+. I didn't have this.

Q: So, were there Jews and nonJews again?

A: What?

Q: Your school had both Jewish and nonJewish students again?

A: No. Most nonJewish

Q: Or there weren't many left.

A: Jewish students were me, my sister, one other. I would say seven, eight Jewish kids.

Q: And how were you treated by the nonJewish kids?

A: Not so friendly. Not so you see, they saw what had been done to Jews so everything came out from this. Of course, I played with them, played soccer, but they don't invited us to their homes, nothing. In the beginning. Later, two, three years later when we grow when the senior class, a little bit closer, but you felt some coolness. Because the biggest mistake was that we didn't left immediately for Poland. And now I will tell you why. When the Russians liberated us we became so I thought I'm a human being, I thought I'm a normal person. Some of our people, even my aunt, she left for run away because her sons were taken to the Russian Army. And those who had people in the age you could be taken to the Army, they run away to Poland. This was officially legally, we have to apply for permit to go to Poland, which my mother did. I remember she filled out some papers. And the post office wasn't working so well but I don't and we were told that we should send this to Schworchoff (ph). We send it, to get the permit to return to Poland. Because at that time we knew already that this would be a Russian Ukraine and Poland would be Poland. Of course, we feel more comfortable in Poland. But we never got the reply, never. But my mother could have tried to go without some papers, which was she was scared probably. And then some rumors came that in Poland, their pogroms, which was through, and so my mother called up, said, Here there are no pogroms here because the Russians are here. And this was when but then we went to school and I don't know we were happy with the minimum that we have. But if we would go to Poland first of all, life in Poland for Jews was much better. I'm sorry. And from Poland, as we learned later, we could be trying to go to Czechoslovakia, to Vienna, to Israel, because Russia was close. Poland was and besides, the Poles closed their eyes when Jews left also from Poland. My aunt, with her two sons, left for Poland in order for them to avoid the Army. In Poland, they were \_\_\_\_\_+ because they were of draft age. So they left for Czechoslovakia, and from there to Germany. I don't know if it you know the story, that this was probably the Israelis arranged those things for them, I don't know. But they left Poland after one year of being in Poland. It was a pogrom in

Krakow, too, so Poland was also not the best place to be. But compared to Russia, was a wonderful place. And we lived in Russia until '57.

Q: And you how did you begin rebuilding your life there?

A: Rebuilding my life, I graduate from high school, applied to law school in Lewolf (ph). I was not accepted to law school. I worked a year in a law office in my town because I was interested in law. Not based on some readings about it but, you know, inside I felt so much hate and I was thinking maybe I'll be able \_\_\_\_\_. I liked law but in school, I got I wasn't accepted. The next year I applied for it again. I had worked one year in a law office, in the District Attorney office, and I did some good job for there, I think. I was District Attorney was \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know what he didn't have higher education. At that time the Russians, they were but I remember I learned to prepare \_\_\_\_\_+. Later, I learned to prepare, how to prepare materials to the Court. \_\_\_\_\_+ prepared the material we have to send to the Court. And I liked it. Besides, I didn't I wouldn't feel so comfortable if I would do it for a Jewish prisoner, but for them \_\_\_\_\_+ said, I hate him. As a revenge but and \_\_\_\_\_+ in order to be accepted you have five exams, and I did them in. But I from you need 45 bowelsis (ph). You are theoretically, you are accepted. I remember I had 24 I had 23. I had to be excellent. In Russia, when you are accepted they don't inform you. They send out, the university, a list of students who are accepted. And the other student who went with me, Ukrainian, he got \_\_\_\_\_+. For me, to go \_\_\_\_\_ was expensive. And I say, Could you look if I'm in the list there? I will sure that I will look there. He came back and he said, No, you're not there. And, How about you? And he said, I am. I said, How come? I had better grades than you. He said, You're not there. I said, Couldn't be. The next day Mommie gave me money, I bought a ticket with a bus. It was a few ruble, but for me it was a and I went to \_\_\_\_\_ university, and I don't find myself in the students, in the group who was accepted. I went down to the official, and I said, How come I'm not in the list? What's your name? And I said, My name shitle. You're not in the list of the university. Why I'm not there? Come back in a half an hour, or an hour, I don't remember now, I'll tell you. I come back, shitle, you are accepted to the German department. Look there. I went and looked philology department, German, English, French in French and German. It was the Russian department was philology. And I'm there. And then I came in and I said, I didn't apply there. I say, It's a mistake. And he said, No, it's not a mistake. You know there are not many places there so that we somethis. It didn't occur to me immediately no, I already felt anti-Semitism there. And then I remember something: Oh, of course, of course, you are Jewish. But thank God that they accepted you there, because they didn't accept many at all \_\_\_\_\_ they're not obliged to accept everybody who applies, and they are not obliged to accept everybody who passed exams. Of course, if

you a similar story happened with my sister Ida. She applied later to Lew Wolf (ph) University, in the department of journalism. Smart girl. She got 44 bowels (ph) and in the last bowel of German they gave her a 3. She was rejected, and she wasn't even accepted to another \_\_\_\_\_. This was of course, this was she \_\_\_\_\_. Then she applied for Moscow, and in Moscow she was accepted. She was very smart. And when she took the grades, the guy in law said, Oh, it's you have such good grades and the last grade was unfortunately for you. She didn't say anything. And in Moscow she was accepted and but she came home and she has to work, we cannot make a living with my mother. And she worked in the newspaper.

Q: So she

A: She was accepted but there was it's called you don't have those things here, volkenyensadig (ph); you have this, yes, yes with the hope that in a year later, two I was \_\_\_\_\_ so I had to go to work, to regular, normal school. But then the doors opened to Poland, Galukadendich (ph), were changes in '55, '56 \_\_\_\_\_+. So in Poland, was willing to bring back their citizenship their citizens to Poland Poles, because for Poles were \_\_\_\_\_+, like for us. And for Jews. And we were included as Polish citizens, so we applied. It took some time, but this took years \_\_\_\_\_+. I graduate I couldn't stand German. I was studying one year and I said, I will leave if I do not \_\_\_\_\_. And I tried again to apply to law. No. Then someone suggested, Apply to history department, there is a Jewish Dekon Broffski (ph) go see him, talk to him. And I went to him and see him, and I told him the story, and he immediately understood what's going on. And I said, can you can you can you can I be transferred to your department, to history? And he said but this was during the first year in my study at the German department. And he said, I will see. You will give me \_\_\_\_\_+. I left. I did what he told me to do. I don't remember \_\_\_\_\_+. And then I brought my grades from the German department very good. It was easy to transfer when you are already in.

Q: How did you feel about being in the German department?

A: Very very uncomfortable. But I wasn't the only Jew. There was six Jews of us. Only two of them applied for German, because one was a daughter of a Russian officer who was in Germany. The other was something. Me and some were outsiders. I didn't feel comfortable. Can you imagine? But in history department I feel much better.

But then when I was there I noted that there are no Jews there in the university. A very limited, especial in those so called government type departments like law. After law after law here, you become a lawyer, you can \_\_\_\_\_+ Here, I'll get you in. There, after law you became a policeman, interrogator, a lawyer, a notary. But

interrogation was my aim. I said, All right. This didn't bother me. But I was \_\_\_\_\_+ So I probably, I don't know, maybe for the better, I don't know. And then in Poland I was teaching

Q: So you graduated and then you

A: And I left to Poland, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And then I taught in a teacher college in Stretchen (ph)no, first I taught in a Jewish school in Stretchen, one year. We got apartment there.

Q: Where was yourwhere were your mother and sister at this time?

A: All this together with me, in Stretchen (ph). My sister was transferred to Warsaw University, in journalism. This what she couldn't achieve in this, \_\_\_\_\_; they accepted her immediately and they saidand soand so she studied there, she got scholarship. Life was much better in Poland. I mean, economically better. And beside, three other newspapers, Jewish newspapers, there was some contact with the west. You can write to somebody, if you have somebody.

Q: Did you live in an area where there were other Jews that had returned?

A: Oh, yes. In Stretchen there are a lot of Jews at that time. But many Jews, they're leaving for Israel. We couldn't leave immediately. The Polish \_\_\_\_\_ were there for 10, 15 yearsnot all of themwere difficult. They leftsome of them left for Israel; therefore, we got their apartments. Otherwise, would be have to buy apartment, would be impossible. So they probably left, especially \_\_\_\_\_+ the other came from Russia. Was a mishmash. And I got the job and I made a living. I could live, could pay my rent and mymy mother didn't work, but she was broken. She \_\_\_\_\_ with a stroke in Russia, then she \_\_\_\_\_+. Then from Poland she got a pension. And so I got the normal life in Poland. If I would leave Poland I could A friend of mine became Minister Foreign Affairs in Poland. Rotford, maybe you heard the name. You heard name, Daniel Rotford. He survived \_\_\_\_\_+. But he went to Poland because he had some relatives, and they took him out.

Q: He was a friend of yours before the war or

A: Yeah, a Chinese (ph) and after the war we know each other \_\_\_\_\_, and now we are in contact. Whenever he came to the States, he comes to see me, and when I went to Poland, he saw me. His wife died, unfortunatelyhis sister died. He survived but his sister, also from Poland. So \_\_\_\_\_+ her life was \_\_\_\_\_+. And then we appliedbeing in Poland, wasn't so easy to

get out to the States. We applied for \_\_\_\_\_, but Israel stayed the same. Summer, \_\_\_\_\_ to be applied to the United States.

Q: Wait, what do you mean by Israel? What happened when you applied to Israel?

A: We wait. We never got the reply. Always got always a negative. And we know the reason: I was young, I was in a teacher position, and my sister was also young. They didn't let out the young people so easily from Poland. They let them out easily in '67 and '68, but this was I left before this. I wouldn't wait so long. But

\_\_\_\_\_+ they were most left oriented Jews. We were not, my mother was. We were rich in Poland. We thought maybe I don't know, I cannot consider myself this group. Fortunately. I didn't wait for this. In '65 or '66 we got we begin to get some correspondence with American embassy. No, it wasn't so simple.

Q: Why did you decide to leave Poland at all?

A: No, my mother Poland was a cemetery for me, and my mother my mother different. She was right, in retrospect. I had a good life in Poland, social life, working with different friends, adults, and Poland was free, can listen to the Voice of America in Poland, and it was a different life. And besides, when I was in Poland my aunt \_\_\_\_\_+ in Israel.

Q: Uhu.

A: I'm sorry, in America. And one of my friends was also in America because he had he had his mother has a brother in America. So they immediately came to Poland, and then from Poland they went to Germany, and they left immediately to America immediately not in a year, two later. So my aunt, they used to send us money to Poland. Not to Russia. Medication for my mother. And so Poland was a good life for me. To give you idea, in Poland, when we came for \_\_\_\_\_+ a month you can live comfortable. I made \$30 a month in college, 40, I made because I worked at a fulltime job, and then I worked with correspondence students at twice a year they came \_\_\_\_\_+. Yes, from time to time my mother got from her this. And then later when we applied to Israel, suddenly not suddenly probably we became some assistance from I don't know from who, from the \_\_\_\_\_. Every two or three months they send us \$40. Well, this was \_\_\_\_\_. But beside this, I had the apartment and I could have lived without this also, but this gave me a more comfortable life. My sister could I guess better for this reason and this and that. She is such a short, tragic life. Disorganized, presented to you. I couldn't make it enough \_\_\_\_\_. I was jumping from place to place.

Q: No, it didn't not at all. This has been great. You will have to

Q: Well, I want to know what happened, though, when you came to the U.S. What happened?

A: Oh, yes. The U.S. I came to the U.S., and, we lived in The Bronxno, first I came from Poland. My mothermy mother was in Israel. See, hermy mother got the permit to live Israel two years before I got. Because she was an invalid the Polish government paid her pension, and of course I tell herI told her, Mother, do youand my sister left for Sweden a different way, not legally but forand from Sweden she came to Israel.

So my motherso my mother went to Israel. And II couldn't leave law the school year, so my mother, I remember, left \_\_\_\_\_+. And I had to wait then till the school year. But I didn't have a permit, permission to live Israel. I was hoping that with my mother left now, she got her passport so able tobut in the meantime, the American embassy invited also me, my motheryes, we wentyes, we went with my mother to American embassy. But still, we didn't get to a reply. So my mother didn't want to wait, she went to Israel, because the Poles gave her a passport to Israel. If they would gave me, I would also go to Israel but in the meantime, coincided with America, somy mother, when she came to Israel, she said it was very nice, this and that. But she said, I don't want you to come to Israel, I don't want you to go to the Army, and God know what can happen with you, and I gave enough away; don't go, stay and go to America.

I understand her this. Was she right? I don't know. II don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ but very often I wouldI would be much better off in Israelin Israel.

Q: Who came to the U.S. with you? Did anybody come with you?

A: Alone I came to the U.S.

Q: And you came

A: My sister and my mother were already in Israel.

Uhu.

A: But because we had \_\_\_\_\_+ in Warsaw, so they came to America about a year later, or two. Not immediately. I was working here for Berlitz, in Berlitz School, but wasn't easy for me here in beginning, no.

Q: And when youdid you marry?

A: Not so easy, not so simple. I was waiting a long timeI know, for what. I know for what. The first thing, with my sister, and I

Q: Your sister?

A: Ida.

Q: Did she come to

A: No, she came to Israel.

Q: Right.

A: And then she came \_\_\_\_\_ but she wasn't married, either.

Q: Okay.

A: And, of course, a marriage is not such a simple thing. I decide I will not marry until she will not marry, because of the Jewish \_\_\_\_\_. Oldfashioned but not \_\_\_\_\_+. I don't blame this. And I've worked here from Niyana (ph). You're familiar with Niyana?

Q: No.

A: With Hyess (ph)? Hyess, you are familiar.

Q: Uhu.

A: But Niyana, we dealt with the Russian immigrants. So first of all, for there for department, then I work for Niyana, and then I worked forthat's it. Niyana was my end road. My sister then get marriedshe married then some, and working Niyana, I met my wife now. She was from Hungary. I went out many times with many girls but I feel more comfortable with Polish girls. American, nicelooking girl is very different. And besides, I couldn't afford to take them out so often and, you know, now I realize that the Americans, they don't think I \_\_\_\_\_+ I take her out for dinner, for this, to the movies. And my sister met a nice man from Hungary also, the architect. They metafter she married, then I married later. I could have married much earlier in Poland also, but in Poland I was notwhen you plan to go to America, no, I want to be a free man.

Q: Did your wife alsowas she also in the war?

A: She's from Hungary. She wasshethey left for Israel and she came to the States and I met her in the States. Somebody introduced me there. We worked out about a year, not immediately, notmarriage \_\_\_\_\_. I have a European outlook of marriage, should know each other better. I consider my marriage good, and my sister's. I have two beautiful children. Regretfully, my mother didn't live to see anything of it.

Q: When you first came to the U.S., did youin the first few years, did you seek out other survivors as well, or did you

A: No, I was so busy working. I workedtwo years I work at Berlitz School for 12 hours a day. I came homemy home was in my aunt'sa dead man. I went outI had survivors

that not many survivors from my town survived \_\_\_\_\_. One was in South Carolina. He's still alive. No, \_\_\_\_\_ no, no, no, there were no clubs. I used to go to dance clubs. I used to dance. I like dancing, but wasn't \_\_\_\_\_. No, no. I used as soon as I made my first savings, I had my first savings, I went to Israel. I was very eager to see Israel. This was my first trip. I \_\_\_\_\_+ in schools in America, in Allendale. I taught Russian and German there for two years, and then I work for Niyana. And I like this girl. I had no friends in Israel.

Q: What did you do just to jump back a little, what did you do for Niyana when you worked there?

A: I was a case worker there. I was a case worker for Niyana. Because prior to this I was a case worker for Welfare Department, so I had knowledge of the field. And I noticed it wasn't special, to do case work with the Russian immigrants.

Q: How did you feel about the war in the first 10 to 20 years after its conclusion?

A: The first year were much easier than now.

Q: Can you elaborate a little on that?

A: Yes. I was younger and I was appreciating being free, not being afraid to be killed, and I was expecting some future, this and that. And of course, I was painful like hell, especially in school, in college. I notice in school everybody had parents, fathers. No, I was the only not I was the only Jew without a father no \_\_\_\_\_ also without a father. Was a year without a father. But at \_\_\_\_\_ everybody had parents, fully. And this was in the school year, your father's name, what is he doing, you know, these questions always, you know Then when I was in \_\_\_\_\_ University I had some Jewish Russian friends. They invited me to their houses, their girlfriends \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know, life went by so fast \_\_\_\_\_+. What are you interested more? Ask me, please.

Q: Now I'm just thinking a moment. How do you think you might have been a different person had you not experienced the Holocaust?

A: Oh, I would be a different person.

Q: And how so?

A: I was I grew up in a rich family. I would study somewhere overseas. I remember \_\_\_\_\_+ my parents \_\_\_\_\_ with my sister because there was anti-Semitism in Poland. No, my life would be completely different.

Q: Did you remain you mentioned that you grew up in a religious home.

A: Yes.



Q: Did you remain religious at all?

A: No. After the war my mother first of all, this was impossible to continue a religious way of life in Russia, in my time. Was not nothing, not a schul, nothing. Nothing. I remember when I came bar mitzva, that my mother took me to Limberg, to the \_\_\_\_\_, to a rabbi who lives there. Nothing, nothing. Food was not kosher. I remember my mother was avoiding this. But later, I remember she for me was not kosher, nonkosher, but I so immediately after the war I became skeptical about religion immediately. I said, How could God think allow such things happen? But, you know, in order to deny something, you have to know it. I wasn't familiar with but in Poland, I began to read Jewish books, Yiddish, history books, and this and that. But my if my father would be alive, of course I'm sure my life would be completely mixed up in a different way.

But my mother, she was broken \_\_\_\_\_. Imagine, she couldn't make a living for us, I have to work, be in school \_\_\_\_\_. So I came to America, so now I became more tradition because of my wife. She came from Hungary, Hungarian. Her parents were religious. Her mother lost everybody in Auschwitz, but her father had a family before the war. He lost also his wife, his child, but him her father is religious, her mother was religious, and she grew up in a religious atmosphere. I grew up in a free thinker, agnostic, I don't know what, how to describe it. But even after they I remember my mother my mother used to send me to schul, \_\_\_\_\_+ and I did it mostly for her. I wasn't so convinced of this but she was happy when I came back from the schul, this and that. And became, you know to be open with you, I know what I am. If I would be in Poland, I would be the same Jew. Poland, there were schuls you can go. I would succeed probably much more than here, definitely.

Q: Have you gone back to your town?

A: Oh, I've been back to Poland many times, because I used to work in America for a company who dealt with overseas trading with Poland. I used to go back to Russia a few times. But to Poland, I've been very often. My friends \_\_\_\_\_ my friends in Poland you cannot imagine. You cannot imagine. Their homes are often, oh, this and this, and I joke sometimes \_\_\_\_\_+ Helena, if I would be in Poland, you would have to hide me. You shouldn't doubt for a moment that I wouldn't hide you.

Q: And these are your nonJewish friends who used to live in Poland?

A: Yes. And it's sincerely. Ah, you cannot imagine. The same my sister. Not many can count of five, ten fingers, but those Poles are the majority Poles are you have in Poland the majority which is anti-Semitic I don't want to describe them. But we have a group of intelligent Poles. They are real important. They are very they're completely different. Some of them are very anti-Semitic for different reasons but they behave, they're civilized,

they're cultural. In Poland I went to Poland \_\_\_\_\_ movies, I couldn't afford to have such a life here if I would like to go three, four times a month \_\_\_\_\_+ to describe the life there. If I would be a Pole, I would never live for anything. And when I go back I see how they live. Of course, economically some of them are not so they think that I but, no, this is for me, the Holocaust was the Holocaust destroyed my life so I shouldn't call myself a Holocaust survivor. I think I'm a Holocaust destructor, whatever, a different \_\_\_\_\_ you cannot I never was completely happy with being in the movie theater seeing something, this and that. It's not what \_\_\_\_\_+.

Q: One just one final question and then

A: Oh, I'm sorry.

Q: No, this is good.

A: I'm sorry.

Q: No, please, this is perfect.

A: I'm sorry.

Q: I really loved listening to you.

A: I wouldn't I couldn't say that I enjoy telling you a \_\_\_\_\_ story.

Q: No, it's not.

A: But I told you in a very disorganized way, in a broken way. I'm depressed always.

Q: Can you tell me what this experience has what the Holocaust and your experience has taught you about the world?

A: \_\_\_\_\_+ You cannot rely on nobody in the world. You have to be you have to be more careful, more realistic. I cannot understand why my parents I read Mein Kampf in the West, and I said, How could my father or mother, after reading Mein Kampf, having so much well, not leave but and I asked my mommie, my mother, and she said my grandfather, her father, died in '37. He was the he was the engine of the family and everything. And she said, if he \_\_\_\_\_ he didn't believe. My father was in the Austrian Army of World War I; he was wounded. When he went in the German expect the Jewish to come to the he had a German medal, he was sure that he will not be taken to war. It's hard to this was I cannot understand. This was I for God's sake, I can blame the rest. Israel had didn't have visas for its Jews, America wasn't so friendly, Roosevelt wasn't such a \_\_\_\_\_, he could have saved much, much more Jews. He didn't save \_\_\_\_\_. So, you see what I have learned. I am cynical. That's it, what can I tell you? And I would the only thing which kept me after the war is my

children, my family. My sister, also. For years you cannot but I never I didn't consider myself a happy man, even with my family with my children. This I'm telling you, hoping I wouldn't say this to my children. I don't want them to feel of course, the biggest thing, the more happiest moment was my marriage, my children. This was now they have my parents have their names. My father was Haim, my mother was Sophie, like she is. I shouldn't complain, this, this. They're not settled privately, which I worry about, seeing the American things, the American atmosphere; I am worried about this. I am sure that in Europe my children wouldn't have any problem getting any \_\_\_\_\_. In Poland, I mean. I worry about this. I'm telling you this. So, if you have a nice boy for my a nice boy for a nice girl for my boy, marry him. If you are single, marry him. It's not on the tape, I hope. Well, see, what can I tell you? All this goes back to my mother had a very tough life of \_\_\_\_\_. I try to think for a moment if I would have to hide now with my children, I would have gave up the next day. My mother was a very strong woman, very, and thank to her we survived. Maybe somebody else helped out, too, I don't know. We always say thank to her and to God, which I'm saying. But to survive can you imagine before the war, and our town was about 300 Jewish children. From the town, I survived, my sister not from the surrounding places and Daniel, who was the Minister Foreign Affairs in Poland, and that's it.

Q: Nobody else.

A: Nobody else.

Okay, if you have \_\_\_\_\_ + please, then here.

Q: Well, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Rubin Pizem on December 16, 2011. Thank you so much.

#### Conclusion of Interview