

Cecylia Ziobro Thibault

July 17, 2014

RG-50.030*0759

Abstract

This interview is about Cecylia Ziobro and her mother's experiences in a Nazi labor camp in World War II. The reason for the interview and for her book, "Trapped in a Nightmare." is to counter the former Iranian President who announced that the Holocaust is a myth. Cecylia Ziobro was born June 1, 1934 in Ropezyce, Poland near Krakow to Marie Ziobro, born in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania on March 12, 1916 and to Adolbertos or Voyceck (?) Ziobro, born in July 1900. Cecylia's grandmother was in her 20s when she went by ship to Pennsylvania where she found work and married and had five children, with Marie being her third. The grandparents separated when the grandmother returned to Poland and the grandfather remained in the US where he died from diabetes in '44. The grandmother bought a farm in Granitza (?), a remote farm community where she worked the land herself as she could not afford a horse or machinery. The grandmother took a lover and had 3 children. The lover left her when the grandfather stopped sending money. For income, the children were rented out to work for others. The oldest child, Walter was sent to the US where he resided in Niagara Falls but did not have sufficient funds to bring over the others. When she was 17 in 1933, marriage was arranged for Marie with the next-door neighbor, Adolbertos) or Boychick who was 33 and Cecylia was born the following year. A few years later her father died from kidney inflammation. Cecylia was usually hungry as they only had bread, water and milk from the one cow they owned. In 1940, her mother got a notice from the German Occupation Government to get ready to be shipped to Germany. Cecilia was six in the fall of '40 when she and her mother was shipped to the Dubrecks (?) farm in Puznek (?) which had no heat or water. Her mother had to report to the courtyard at 6 AM to receive her work assignment and worked until 6, 7 or 8 PM. Cecylia was left alone in their small room and was fed soup and bread once or twice a day. The German children would bully her. After two years her mother got sick and they were transferred to a smaller farm where the work was not as demanding. Cecylia's mother had befriended a Pole, Josef Brodowski (?), at the first farm and they had lived like husband and wife. They were given a pass to go to Poland where her mother gave birth to a son, Leon. Since her mother was an American citizen, she was treated differently from the Polish people. After six months, they returned with her new brother as there was no food available in Poland. Now Cecylia had to clean the stables and feed the animals besides caring for her little brother. She had inflammation of the kidneys and was treated with medication. By 1945 her mother was getting sicker and they were shipped to a factory. In April '45 they were liberated by American soldiers. After the war, Josef was placed in a German hospital and

Cecylia, her mother and Josef's son, Leon, visited him for the last time. The three went through eight displaced persons (DP) camps and her mother married Leon Nemochintze, a Polish officer, in a Polish DP camp in Germany where they met. Cecylia has three sisters (Grace, Elizabeth and Barbara) and a brother, Wesley, from that family. Cecylia went to the US with her mother and stepbrother and settled in an apartment in Niagara Falls near her Uncle Walter. Soon the stepfather secured a janitorial position in Manhattan so they joined him. Cecylia graduated from high school and attended secretarial school and became a receptionist/bookkeeper and later retired as head bookkeeper. She met her future husband, Bob, the singer at a dance hall and they married on April 8'61 so they are married 53 years. Cecylia shows a photo of Tante Lotte, the farmer from the small farm.

Summary

- 00:00 Prior the interview, Cecylia makes a statement that she is grateful that we are interested in hearing about her and her mother's experiences in a Nazi labor camp in World War II. She is speaking in memory of Polish people, priests and nuns. Cecylia is grateful to the American soldiers who gave up their lives to save them. Some people deny Hitler's brutality and existence. The Atlantic Museum of Reading, Pennsylvania magazine states, "A world gone mad" but the former Iranian President says the Holocaust is a myth. From '38 to '45 millions were killed. This is the reason for the book that she wrote and shows the front cover. Cecylia Ziobro was born June 1, 1934 in Ropezyce, Poland near Krakow, about 215 miles from the Ukraine, in Eastern Poland. Thibault is her married name. She had many nicknames and Celinka is the most common.
- 05:00 Her mother was Maria Regina Requisa (?) and was born in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania on March 12, 1916 and her father was Adolbertos or Voyceck (?) who was born in July 1900. He was a World War I veteran and served when he was 15 or 16. There was a famine in Europe and her grandmother wanted to go to America as her brother had gone. Her grandmother was in her 20s and went by ship. She was single and went to Pennsylvania where she found work and married and had five children. Her mother was the third child. Cecylia does not know the exact date of her grandmother's arrival in the US. Cecylia never met her grandfather. They went back and forth three times between the US and Poland as her grandmother desired to live in Poland. Her mother loved her father who asked her to remain in the US but Cecylia's grandmother did not permit it. Cecylia's grandfather worked at a coalmine and her grandmother cleaned houses as they were not educated.
- 10:00 When they returned to Poland, the grandmother bought a farm and worked the land herself as she could not afford a horse or machinery. They lived in Granitza (?), a farm community up a hill, removed from the town which had a school, church and library. Granitza was a spread-out farm community. The farmers had horses. Her grandmother

had cows and worked the land to produce food. The grandparents split up as they did not get along. The grandpa said he would return to Poland when he earned enough money. He got diabetic and they wanted to amputate his legs and he refused and he died in '44. The grandparents seldom wrote as they were uneducated. The grandmother had a lover and they had three children. The lover abandoned them when he found out there would be no money coming from America. Someone had notified the grandfather that the grandmother had a lover so he stopped sending money. The children born in America were not required to attend school so were rented out to work for others. Only one child, Helen, was born in Poland, was required to attend school. Now she is in a nursing home in Washington, New Jersey. The oldest was Walter, then Genevieve, then Maria (Cecylia's mother), then Julia, then the twins (Joe and Genevieve) and Helen.

15:00 The second oldest died as an infant. All except for Aunt Helen were hired out but when she was older, she was hired out. The children were not educated except they were taught to read and write at home. Cecylia's mother had gone to school until she was 12 in the US and Uncle Walter did, too. Genevieve went a little and the others could hardly sign their name. The children only spoke Polish. They forgot English by the time they were teenagers. Her mother spoke broken English. Her mother loved the US and wanted to return. Before the war, the grandmother thought Walter should go first as a man could earn more money and bring over the rest later. Her grandmother sold her calves and paid for his trip but the Depression came. He could not find work so could not bring them over. Walter went to Niagara Falls as the grandfather had moved there for work, perhaps mining. The grandfather had stopped sending money to the grandmother, Maria Lis. Her mother had died when she was nine and her stepmother would beat her up and was not kind to the children. Uncle John was bitter towards the mother. The others resented her as they never hugged or kissed her. They just argued as she beat them up. Cecylia's mother did not talk about the grandmother but just accepted it. When she was 12 in 1928 she returned to Poland and was hired out to provide food for the family. When she was 17 in 1933, marriage was arranged for her with the next-door neighbor, Adolbertos (Latin name for a saint) or Boychick who was 33.

20:00 Cecylia was born a year later. Her grandmother liked her more than her own children. She was never mean to her. In '42, she kicked the children out of her house as her mother would not let her milk her cows. Cecylia's father was sickly from World War I trenches where he got a kidney inflammation from a cold. There was no medicine so he was in pain. When he married, he tried to build a new home for the family as they lived with his parents. They gathered wood in the fields but his sickness prevented him from finishing the home and he died in '37. The grandmother asked the mother to return to her home and they dismantled the new home. They had been living with the in-laws. Their home was made from a stable. It was not warm in the winter so the father started building a new home. Cecylia remembers when her father was laying on a feather comforter under

a tree and everyone was at work in the fields. She thought she would be helpful in getting the father to walk by giving him strawberries. She was 2 and ½ and gave him green strawberries.

- 25:00 She said, "Tatus, this will make you feel better." He saw the green strawberries and asked for a stick. He beat her up severely so she found out that strawberries must be red before they are picked. Cecylia ran to the field and cried and complained to her mother. She was not afraid of her father before this. From then on he was in bed, moaning in pain, uncommunicative and could not find a good position. It was an arranged marriage but her mother spoke fondly of him. He had been a shoemaker and repaired or made new shoes for the entire village so they had plenty of shoes. Cecylia would roam the fields barefoot. She never saw her parents interact, hug or kiss. Her mother was outgoing and loved fun such as dancing and singing. After Cecylia's father died, after work her mother would visit a friend with a harmonica and they played songs and danced. Cecylia would beg her mother not to leave which created friction as she would scream so loud that her mother could hear her after she closed the door. Her mother had long hair and her husband would not let her cut it but she did and put the braid in the closet. Cecylia would take it out and twirl it around and told her grandmother that her mother's head is jumping. Her grandmother laughed and consoled her.
- 30:00 Her grandmother's house had boards on the floor, a straw roof and wooden floors which was unusual in that village. There was a stable for cows in the next room. They had beds for the eight children with two to four to a bed. There were windows on the north and one window on the side and a closet on the side. They had little furniture – one table, a few chairs, and a wooden stove to cook on. There was no heat in the winter, no water with a well down the hill, no electricity so no radio or phone and just sticks and stones to play with. Her mother had a cow and a calf and her grandmother had a cow. They sold the calf for food. They had chickens but no goats or horses. Her grandmother had three acres and her mother had 1 and ½ acres across the street. The father's family wanted this 1 and ½ acres back as it belonged to them so they fought over it. Her mother was afraid to sow any wheat on it as was afraid of fights. Her father had planted a fruit garden. As a child after her father died, Cecylia was always hungry. They had bread, water and milk. She was very skinny with sunken cheeks.
- 35:00 Everyone was Catholic in the village. There were Catholic churches and Jews lived there. They were businessmen and provided work for those without land. Her mother worked for a Jewish family where she took care of the children and the grandmother cleaned the house. They did this to add to their income if they had a bad harvest. The Catholics believed the Jews killed Jesus. They had no choice but to work for Jewish families to have food. Some of the families they worked for were nice. A Jewish salesman sold them a broom that fell apart so the grandmother hated Jews. She was not educated and did not value education so did not insist the children attend school. Cecylia

saw Jews come to their home. In '39 when war broke out and there was bombing, they hid and the next day went down the hill and brought the people bread and buns. After they came the third time, the Germans told them not to return and said, "Today it is the Jews and tomorrow is your turn." Jews were placed in the middle of the courtyard, were loaded up on trucks and taken away. After the war they learned of Auschwitz and other camps.

40:00 She never accompanied her mother when she worked for the Jewish families. There was no church in Granitza (?) so on Sunday they walked two or three miles to church in Ropezyce where there was a school until Hitler invaded Poland. The Germans picked up the children from school and took them to laboratories. The children's blood was taken for the German wounded soldiers (found out after the war) and were never seen again. They also experimented on the children. She graduated high school in 1953 and worked for a Polish language newspaper in New York. There women showed the scars on their arms from the experiments where she worked as a receptionist/bookkeeper for the newspaper. She remembers hiding under the trees while the Germans were bombing Ropezyce but no soldiers came to their farm in Granitza. A few days later, Cecylia saw the soldiers with their machine guns inspecting some homes but not theirs. She saw the soldiers in Ropezyce where the school and church were bombed with wall-to-wall soldiers and tanks. It was scary. She stayed with the adults and the soldiers did not talk to them. She saw the soldiers beat the Jews and being forced onto trucks. The soldiers did not hit the Poles with their guns. The Poles were in a state of shock. The world had suddenly changed.

45:00 She was scared all the time as she did not know if the soldiers would break into her grandmother's house. It was never locked. A year later, in 1940, her mother got a notice from the German Occupation Government to get ready to be shipped to Germany. She told them that since she has a small child and an old mother, she cannot go. They said if she disobeyed, she would be separated anyway. She packed a small suitcase and her Uncle John drove her and her mother in a horse and buggy to the train station. They took the train to Krakow and reported to the Police according to the notice. They were placed in a school which was filled with hundreds of crying people—young, middle age and old. The German soldiers had German Shepherd dogs watching them. Cecylia was afraid as she was almost bitten at age three or four. They had to march like soldiers from one place to another. They had to undress and take a shower. The hundreds of women were her age or older. They had a haircut and were examined by a doctor to assure they were healthy. Only healthy people who could work on farms or factories were needed. Cecilia was six in the fall of '40 when she was shipped. Some mothers had boys with them in the shower room so the boys stared at the nude women as they never saw a naked woman before. They slept on straw on the floor and got a piece of bread and the next morning were placed on cattle cars which was standing room only. She was short and only saw

the ceiling. Cecylia was wearing her own clothes. She had one change of clothes and her mother had two. They could not afford more clothes and the suitcase was small. There was no water or food on the train. They traveled from Krakow to Puznek (?) and walked to the farm. It was in East Germany, about four hours from Poland. The German soldiers were yelling to everybody, "Outstagen!" (Get out!)

50:00 The soldiers had dogs and they opened the sliding doors and the prisoners jumped down. It was a long train with people jumping down and the German farmers waiting to choose them. The farmers wore boots that came over their knees, perhaps for hunting or fishing. They were clean-cut and pointed their stick at her mother and Cecilia held her hand. They went to the farmer's home by horse and buggy. There were three floors in the barracks for the workers. There were other Polish workers there. They were placed on the second floor. There was no heat or water. The next morning her mother had to report to the courtyard where there was a pile of manure. The courtyard's gate was closed at night and opened in the morning to let the animals out and the people in. Her book indicates a fictitious name for the farmer as her son was afraid of a lawsuit. The Germans do not want to admit that Poles worked their farm. Her son and wife went to Sweden and at Christmas the wife stayed with her family and he went to Puznek and inquired where was Dubrecks farm. The people spoke English so at a bar he asked in English for their location. They showed him and he went to the closed gate and knocked on the wooden gate and the person spoke English.

55:00 He asked for Pola, the farmer's daughter and was told she was at the stable with her two sons. The grandchildren came and spoke English and Cecylia's son explained that his mother had been there during the war. She was six to eight and Pola, who was 12 to 14, was pleasant to her. Pola did not speak English and said that it is Sunday and she has no time and does not remember Cecylia so he returned to Sweden. He brought his mother books on Puznek (?) written in German where Cecylia only recognized a picture on the cover of the town center with a fountain. One time Cecylia had gone with Pola on a horse and buggy and was told to remain on the carriage while Pola attended to her business. The horse was spooked and went around and around and no one could stop it but finally she jumped off and cried. Pola came and controlled the horse. Cecylia has a few pictures of the fruit garden in Puznek that they had taken. Her mother had to report at 6 AM to work. Puznek became East Germany near Leipzig, Dresden and Gera (?). When her son got home, he contacted the farm family by computer. They were friendly for a few months and sent a photo of Pola but she did not recognize her at 90 and then communication stopped. Perhaps the sons were ashamed of the farm activities during the war so stopped the communication. One son left for another country.

60:00 The German farm workers returned to Germany and some Germans said they could inherit their farm after they die so perhaps others did not want to have contact with returning workers. They had communicated via skype and then the communication

ended. In the book, Cecylia uses a fictitious name, Heinrick, for the farmer. She changed the geography a bit in the manuscript. When her mother reported to work at 6 AM with 10 or 15 other workers, they were given tasks such as pick potatoes, milk cows, clean the stables. The horses were nearby and across the pond were the cows.

65:00 The fields were too far to bring them in. The horses would be taken out as needed and attached to the cart. Her mother would be gone from 6 AM to 6, 7 or 8 PM and Cecylia was left alone in the small room. She was fed soup and bread once or twice a day and later she fed herself. Her mother would go straight to bed as she was so tired upon her return. The farmer behaved kindly and she thought he never yelled. The foreman did the yelling and distributed the work. The foreman would tell the workers that they were not working fast enough or producing enough. Her mother told him that if they fed the workers more, they could do more work. He responded by punching her mother in the nose which made it bleed. Cecylia tried to comfort her mother and was so nervous during the day. She did not speak German and the German kids would bully her upon their return from school. One day they asked her to swim and she replied that she could not as did not have a bathing suit. They said it was OK so she followed them to a lake filled with algae and they said it was shallow enough for her. She could not touch the bottom and paddled to the other side. She returned home alone as the children ran away. She had nothing to do all day and another day the children asked if she wanted to hold a chick.

70:00 She went to the chicken coop where they locked her up and the smell was atrocious. It was locked from the outside and she had a hard time to breathe. She worried how her mother would ever find her. Finally, she noticed the chicks getting out through a small opening and she followed them and took some raw eggs. Later if she got hungry, she knew where to find raw eggs. Besides the 15 Polish workers, there were French and Russian POW working on the quarry. The farmer was the richest one in the Dubricks (?) area. When the POW marched from the gate, Cecylia watched them and thought they looked hungry so saved a potato that she had picked in the field after a tractor passed over it. She hid the potato behind her so the German officer would not see her and gave it to the last prisoner. After she did this a few times, her mother told her to stop as if she was caught, they would be separated. Her mother got sick after the beating and could not work so fast. The prisoner smiled when she gave him the potato and said that even potato peels would do so she saved them.

75:00 The prisoners gave her chocolate from rations from Poland. Cecylia had never tasted chocolate before. It seemed like it was from heaven so she brought them more potatoes. Her mother asked Enrique, the farmer, if Cecylia could go to school and he responded that she is not German and only if the mother became a German citizen could she attend. Her mother replied that she was born an American citizen and would die an American citizen so Cecylia was not permitted schooling. Her mother got sicker and they went to a

smaller farm where the work was not as demanding. The farmer had three or four workers. The workers had free time on Sunday afternoon so they gathered in a room to play the harmonica and sing Polish songs. Suddenly they heard the SS arrive by motorcycle and run up and beat the door. They knocked out one guy's teeth and were told that no gatherings were allowed and they left. Their faces were left bloody and swollen. They decided to meet in the woods since they could not meet in their rooms. They went on a 15 or 20 minute walk one Sunday where they played the harmonica and sang and saw American planes fly by and she wished they would come down and scoop them up. She does not know if the foreman or the Germans reported them.

80:00 Heinrich lived across the village so he could not hear them. At Easter they entered the church on Sunday which was not full and the priest was talking on the pulpit. He saw them in their raggedy clothes and he got down and told them to leave as the church would be closed if they stayed. They all wore a "P" for Polish on their left shoulder. The small farm was near the large farm. Cecylia was weak as she was malnourished and walked up the mountain to the farm where the owner wanted her to call her "Tante Lotte" (Aunt Lotte). By then, Cecylia spoke a good German. Lotte had an older son in the service and a younger one in the Hitler Youth Group. Cecylia's mother worked in the fields and had befriended a Pole at the first farm and they had lived like husband and wife. They were given a pass to go to Poland where her mother gave birth to a son. Since her mother was an American citizen, she was treated differently from the Polish people. After six months, they returned with her new brother so she was no longer alone. The lover, Josef Brodowski (?) returned with Cecylia, her mother and new brother to the small farm where they remained until the end of the war. A Russian girl also worked there. When Cecylia was 10, she was told that they no longer could feed her unless she worked with the adults. Mr. Brodowski wanted her to call him "daddy" but she had only one daddy so she called him "Josef." He would run after her with a stick so that her Aunt Julie, who was also in the camp, told him to leave her alone. Cecylia had to clean the stables and feed the animals besides caring for her little brother. She took the cows to the field to clean the stables. There were about six cows. One cow chased her so she ran quickly and rolled under the picket fence. After that, Cecylia was afraid to take the cows to the field.

85:00 She took the manure out and it all fell on her so she just piled half at a time. Then she cleaned the stable and put new straw down and fed the geese and chickens and placed food for the cows into their troughs in front of them. Her mother returned from work and they were fed soup and bread. Tante Lotte had a garden where Cecylia had to help pick the fruit for preserves which was never offered to her. To pick the cherries, they had a dish with a pulley which pulled up to Cecylia up the tree where she was picking the cherries but her back hurt her and she was accomplishing very little. They exchanged places and Lotte went up and Cecylia stayed on the ground but she still could not work. Cecylia lay down on the ground and Lotte dragged her into the house by her armpits.

Cecylia's mother returned from work and they did not know what to do for her. She screamed all night and in the morning the farmer took her to the doctor in his horse and buggy. It felt like knives in her back, especially when the buggy was bouncy. They stood in line and people laughed at her as her mother was holding her up by her armpits. The people said, "The Poles cannot even stand." The doctor said she had inflammation of the kidneys and gave her medicine which made her feel better.

90:00 Soon it was 1945 and they heard airplanes and bombing and her mother was getting sicker and requested that the two of them be shipped elsewhere. They were shipped to a factory that produced rifle butts. After giving birth, Cecylia's mother had returned to Germany as there was no food in Poland. Also, the grandma had thrown them out and they had to live in someone else's house with their cow. They rented a house about a half mile north. They had no food to feed the cow so she produced no milk resulting in having no food for the family. Cecylia suggested to the mother to return to Germany to the farmer as they had promised or they would be caught so they returned to Dubritz (?). At 11 PM there was a knock on the door and opened it to find a couple and a child who were on their way to Russia and needed a place to sleep. They asked to sleep on the floor but were shown to the closet and they left before Cecylia awoke. Her mother told her that they left at 5 AM and they were Jews running away from Hitler and hoped that no one saw them. Cecylia looked out and saw German soldiers on the snowbank with a machine gun looking around. She was petrified and told her mother to return to Germany for soup and bread as they had nothing. Her mother owned 1 and ½ acres that were overgrown with weeds and was not seeded so nothing was growing. They never returned to Granitza (?). After the war, they went to the US. They left their aunts and uncles.

95:00 Later, her mother brought over the whole family, one by one. Josef was a chain smoker and got sick. He smoked in sawdust and had trouble breathing. After the war they put him in a German hospital and Cecylia, her mother and Josef's son visited him. His wife and two daughters had gone to Siberia and they might have returned. Cecylia does not know if he died or returned to Poland. She thought it was just friendship rather than love between her mother and Josef. He loved his son, Leon, and would carry him on his shoulder on his day off. The half-brother was born in '45 and they left in '45 so he does not remember his father. Leon is surprised that she remembers so much. Cecylia was on a larger farm for two years. At the end of '43 she was moved to a smaller farm when she was ten. She felt she was treated the same at both farms. She was not permitted to attend church at the smaller farm. The small farm was near Dubritz (?). They lived in one room above the factory with other Polish workers and the owners lived in the house next door. Cecylia was not required to work in the factory as the machinery was too complicated for her to use. She recuperated from her sickness and took care of her brother. In April '45 they were liberated by American soldiers and the factory closed. The butts were pushed to the train station and distributed where needed.

- 100:00 Cecylia heard a lot of bombing as the Americans bombed factories and the train station. The night before liberation, the Germans slept in the factory and they behaved as they were afraid that they would be shot. After the war, Cecylia saw corpses. The next morning, the Germans left and the Americans pulled in. Cecylia hid underneath the factory with the other prisoners in an unfinished hole with rats, mice and dirt. They were afraid to sleep on the third floor. They had no food as it was upstairs. There was an opening in the wall. Lithuanians and Poles arrived and the Queen married the Lithuanian King. The factory was not far from Salzford on the Fala River. Josef peeked out from an opening and said, "Shh, quiet" as he saw an American soldier come with a machine gun. Josef scrunched down with his hands up and someone yelled, "Polska, Russki" so the Americans would know they were not Germans. The soldier put his gun down and asked if there were any German soldiers. They were told to get out and meet the others.
- 105:00 The sun hurt their eyes and they saw a line of tanks of American soldiers and got scared. The soldiers threw candy at the children and they picked it up. They saw more soldiers coming out of the tanks and the grownups kissed their boots. The Americans said they are still fighting so the prisoners should walk to the DP Camp and have the Germans feed them. Her mother told them that she was American. They had 24 hours liberation to do as desired. Some returned to Germany. Cecylia saw some bodies. They packed their bags and walked toward Sala (?) where there was a gathering of Poles and other nationalities in a school. They walked as the trains were not running and the bridges were down and arrived at night. There were bottles scattered around as the people were drunk and had robbed the wine cellars. Cecylia picked up a bottle and drank without knowing that she could get drunk. She was 11 and drunk so her mother put her to bed. They stayed a few weeks and were shipped to a better camp. They went by truck or walked. They went through eight camps and her mother remarried. They said good-bye to Josef at Camp Lekoof (?) soon after liberation around April.
- 110:00 By Fall, they had been to three or four camps. Since her mother was American, they were told to go to certain camps for American citizens. They went to Camp Woodspa (?), a camp for Americans going to America. Cecylia only had her Baptismal Certificate. She was eligible to be an American citizen but did not know that until she was in America. She reported as an alien every January in New York City. She was told to go to the Immigration Office and was asked why she was bothering to report as she was an American citizen which surprised her. She was about to graduate and vote and had no papers. They asked for a small picture and they sent her a certificate. She learned that she was an American citizen since birth and did not know it until she was eighteen. They were at Salfad Sala (?) a few months and then to Lederan, then to Frankfurt Am Main and then to Weilfreken where she attended Polish school from '46 to '47 when she was twelve. She studied Polish and English. Then they went to Bootpah and then to Bremen and Bremerhaven to the US. Her mother met her second husband at the second camp.

They looked for her sister and brother who had been in a German labor camp but they returned to Poland.

115:00 They were American citizens and could go to America. Her mother married Leon Nemochintze (?), a Polish officer who fought the war and the Russians took him to Siberia. He escaped through India and Iran and ended up in a Polish DP camp in Germany where they met. The Polish Army had only fought a few weeks and later he fought with the British. Cecylia has three sisters (Grace, Elizabeth and Barbara) and a brother, Wesley, from that family. They are close as she raised them and they have a wonderful relationship. They were at Woodspa in April '48 and then went on the Marine Jumper ship that had two chimneys. Her grandma had told her that the more chimneys a ship had, the safer it was. Three would be better than two but she felt safe. It took them ten days to get across the ocean to New York and there were too many ships ahead of them so they could not get off immediately. The people explained the Statue of Liberty when they saw it in the New York harbor. They were placed in the Hotel Chelsea at 23rd Street in Manhattan. Her stepfather was left behind as his papers were not in order. Cecylia was with the three children and her mother was expecting another. The brother in Niagara Falls wanted them to come but they were waiting for the stepfather. Immigration said they cannot wait any longer as the hotel is expensive. They took the train to Niagara Falls where they were met by Aunt Agatha and Uncle Walter. Cecylia spoke little English.

120:00 Knowing German helped her learn English. Their relatives paid for their apartment where they stayed a month. The stepfather sent a telegram from Ellis Island that he secured a janitorial position on 11th Street and Avenue B so he was staying in Manhattan and the family should come to him as there were more job opportunities. Cecylia had started school but they went to New York City and she found it to be an exciting city. She enrolled in public school and her brother in Catholic School to learn more about religion. Cecylia had sufficient knowledge about religion. The family lived in the house where the stepfather was the janitor. Helen Mira helped the refugees to get settled and had recommended the job to the stepfather when she visited Ellis Island. She had no children, was Polish, and she taught Cecylia to sew and cook. Cecylia loved school and attended on Avenue A and First Street. It was a new world for her, very nerve wracking. Her stepfather decided to get a better job in the Bronx on Teller Avenue and 48th Street. Besides the free apartment, he earned a salary of \$100. Cecylia carried out the janitorial duties of washing the first floor weekly, washing the five stories monthly and assure the place was clean while her stepfather worked as a carpenter. After her mother gave birth, she cleaned offices in the afternoon when Cecylia came home from school and could babysit. The parents split as had difficulties. It was a 16 family house. Cecylia kept busy with school, her janitorial duties and taking care of the children so she had no time

for friends. Her stepfather worked on Fox Street and visited them and bought them a house on St. Ann's Avenue and 156th Street.

125:00 It was an eight-family house. Cecylia and her siblings attended St. Addleberry on Melrose Avenue. It was a long walk from Fox Street. It took one-half hour to 45 minutes as there was no bus but St. Anne's Avenue was only a ten minute walk. The high school was across the street and when she registered, she said she wanted to learn to sew. They suggested she attend secretarial school and learn office machines, steno and English. Cecylia is grateful that she listened as followed it after graduation and became a receptionist/bookkeeper and later head bookkeeper when she retired. She worked at Novischat New World Polish Publishing Company at Broadway between 11th and 12th Streets. Her church, school and dance hall were nearby. Cecylia worked ten years before getting married in '61. Her husband wanted her home as the newspaper required she work until 8 or 9 PM. The manager died and they said she cannot leave as she is a patriotic Pole. The company gave her three free tickets to the movies and also got free passes to Polish balls. She had no one to attend the ball with. The head bookkeeper gave her the tickets and told her she will find someone.

130:00 She asked her friends Eva, a German widow whose husband died in Russia who had married Stanley, a Polish officer. They were happy to attend the ball as they just arrived from England and would meet some Polish people. A week before the ball, Eva found out that her mother was dying in a German hospital so suggested Cecylia attend with her husband. Cecylia told Stanley that they would separate once they entered the dance hall. She listened to Bob, a singer on the stage and applauded and saw older doctors and lawyers in the audience. The singer felt sorry that Cecylia was not dancing and she thought him a gigolo. Stanley asked Bob if he wants to join them for a drink at their table and he agreed. They stayed past 2 AM when the orchestra left and were thrown out. Cecylia still has the program from the dance. Stanley introduced Bob to eight people at the table. Bob was in show business so she was not interested in him as felt he was a flirt. Stanley invited them to his apartment at 83rd and Western for drinks and conversation. Also, a lady that Stanley had danced with came along so she felt that something must be going on with them. At the apartment they sang Polish songs and people banged on the ceiling asking them to be quiet.

135:00 At six, Bob left for the 6:30 mass on 96th Street as he was going to be busy the rest of the day so Cecylia felt him an OK guy as he was attending church. He asked for her phone number and she only gave her last name. He called and they went to see, "Ben Hur." They went skating in Central Park and she rented skates and he taught her. They continued dating. He traveled to Iceland and Canada and called when he got home and they got together. They spoke on a phone where you had to say, "Over" after each sentence. He was gone a long time and arrived home and said it was important to talk. They went for breakfast on Broadway at Horn & Hardett where he went down on his

knees and asked Cecylia to marry him. They married on April 8'61 so it is 53 years that they are married. Her husband got bleeding ulcers so had to quit show business as a Polish doctor said he should be quiet. He had high blood pressure and was anemic for which he got shots. He sang in a small club. Elizabeth was born in '64 and Robert (Bobby) was born in '66. Her husband applied to Metro Golden Mayer and deposited savings in Chase Manhattan Bank where she worked in payroll, proofreading and submitting to the computer room. She stopped working after her daughter was born so they gave her a big party at the office.

140:00 When Robert was 1 and ½, they moved to Manchester, New Hampshire, her husband's home. Later she worked at the City of Manchester Bookkeeping and loved it and retired after 20 years as her husband was sick from heart attacks. Cecylia told her children about the labor camps where she was not treated well and was hungry but she did not go into detail as did not want to make them sad. She had wonderful German friends and feels she must forgive the Germans. She does not want to go through with it again. She was deprived of an education and started school late. She could have learned more but was not encouraged to study. When the former president of Iran said the Holocaust is mythical, it drove her crazy so she came to the interview. She knows that she and others suffered. Americans in the Midwest said it is a myth so she went to the typewriter and wrote her story and her son edited it. Her final words – "Thank you for your time and I am glad you will spread my story when I am gone." Everyone will hear about it from her book, "Trapped in a Nightmare."

145:00 Cecylia shows a photo of Tante Lotte in an apron with her older son as the younger son was taking the picture. Cecylia was 10 years old and took care of the cows, cleaned the stables and fed the animals. Also shows the front cover of her book about her and her family going to a Nazi Labor Camp during World War II. Cecylia started writing the book in 2009. Her son edited it and published it because the Iranian President said the Holocaust is a myth. It can tell the younger generation that it is not a myth, but the truth.

147:00