

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Anthony Chudzik  
January 24, 2015  
RG-50.030\*0785**

## PREFACE

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## **ANTHONY CHUDZIK**

### **January 24, 2015**

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Anthony Chudzik**, on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in **Westchester, Illinois**. Thank you very much Mr. **Chudzik**, for agreeing to speak with us today, to share your story, to share your experiences. I'd like to start the interview at the very beginning. Before we go into the war years, I'd like to get a sense of what your life was like before the war, before it all started. So I'll start with the most basic questions. Could you tell me the date you were born?

Answer: I was born on April 27, 1927, at the place called **Krulewicz**(ph) in cen – in central **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: That's near **Leżajsk**.

Q: Is **Leżajsk** a town or a district?

A: Town.

Q: And **Krulewicz**(ph), was that a town or a village?

A: **Krulewicz**(ph) was a small village.

Q: It was a small village. And you're saying in central **Poland**?

A: Yes.

Q: So, was this west of **Warsaw**?

A: Well, southeast.

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Q: It would have been southeast.

A: Southeast of **Warsaw**.

Q: Okay. So was it in the eastern part of **Poland**, even though it was in the middle?

A: No, as I say, in the central part of **Poland**. But then, in 1932, my family moved to eastern **Poland**, which was [indecipherable]. The district was **Tarnopol**.

Q: **Tarnopol**, okay, okay.

A: This is the eastern part, which was then overrun by Russians.

Q: Okay. We'll come to that, thank you. Let's stay with **Krulewicz**(ph). Since you moved in 1932, you were only a young boy then, but do you have any memories of this – of **Krulewicz**(ph) at all?

A: Yes, I have pretty good memories. It was a fairly well organized village, very new, as a matter of fact. And it was close to a village of importance, was **Wola Żarczycka**.

Q: **Wola Żarczycka**?

A: Yes.

Q: And why was that village important?

A: Because all the homes were pretty new. It was a new village, and – and as I re – as I remember, houses were pretty nice for that period of time. Lot of them were brick, with large lots. Will – buildings were quite new.

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Q: What was the economy of **Krulewicz**(ph)? What did people make their living from?

A: Oh, I really don't know very go –

Q: What did your family make their living –

A: My – my father was a builder.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: So, he used to build homes, and also larger objects like school, or even he helped to build or renovate a church, a village church.

Q: I see.

A: So – and other people are probably just maybe working in the forest, because there was a forest nearby. So th-th – in timber.

Q: Was it an agricultural place? Were there many farmers?

A: Yes, mostly agricul – agricultural, yes.

Q: Okay. And do you remember the house that you lived in, or the place you lived in in **Krulewicz**(ph)?

A: Yes, I have some memory of my – of the house. It was a fra – frame house, a wood – wood frame. And –

Q: Was it also new?

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A: Yes, it was ver – fairly new. And it had other buildings, like the – for – for the animals, for – farm animals were kept in there, and also the one where they kept grain.

Q: So you had a barn, and a stable. You had a barn for –

A: Yeah, there was a stable, and as a matter of fact, the stable was a brick building.

Q: That's pretty unusual.

A: Yeah, it's pretty – a-and I remember there were special facilities for – for the animals, where everything was run down, and I mean, it was pretty clean –

Q: Oh, you mean when the – where you could wash down the dirt from the animals?

A: Yes, yeah, th-the –

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, it was concrete floor. And of course, there was also this – a lot of straw on it, but –

Q: What color –

A: – underneath there was a concrete floor, and with gutters, so you could wash out – wash the area where the animals were living. And of course, you know, th-there was a different – the separate par – place for horses, also. Because we had cows, and horses.

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Q: Did you have any other animals besides cows and horses?

A: Well, a – I had a nice dog – dog, a German Shepherd. It was called **Rex**.

Q: Oh, **Rex**.

A: Yes.

Q: That's such a universal name for a German Shepherd.

A: Ah, well, yeah, it was –

Q: The king.

A: – very, very good, very intelligent dog.

Q: Yeah. Did your father build this place too, since he was a builder?

A: No, it was already there, because when – when – when they – when he left his village – when he was born, he moved into this – it was called a colony really, you know. Like the –

Q: It was a colony.

A: Colony. **Kolonia**, in Polish. But it was a straight street, very straight street, and houses on both sides of – of the street. And there was a church, there was a blacksmith there, who was very busy all the time. I – I spent some time watching how they were putting shoes on the horses. So, it was interesting to watch.

Q: Yeah, for a little kid.

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A: And then there were – there was – well, there were – I – I – a carpenter. There was a big place where the owner was the carpenter, he built furniture and all – all sorts of things. So that – that it's – that's about all I can recollect.

Q: Well, that's a lot. That's a lot. Did –

A: Yes, and I remember there was a pond at – at the end of this colony. I spend some times cat-catching the frogs in that pond.

Q: Did your family have land near the house? You kept – you kept farm animals, you kept cows and horses.

A: Yes.

Q: And what were they used for? The cows, I can imagine, for milk.

A: Well, the horses were used to toi – to work on the farm.

Q: So, in other words, you lived on a farm –

A: On – on a farm – no, the farm was attached, or the house was built on a farm, because every owner had a lot behind the house, let's say, you know, a lot of area, where they would raise grain, and – and cabbage and potatoes.

Q: You know, one of the reasons I focus on this, is because it's – it is in some ways unusual for people to – it doesn't sound like you lived in the middle of an agricultural place, insofar as you had a street, you had both houses on the side of the



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street, and – and it l – sounds almost like a small residential area, but not a place that's a farm area. And – and –

A: Yes, some of those habitants, or the people who lived there, were of German extraction.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yes, so it – it – it was even referred like a German colony.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, because there were Polish people, and some German people were living in there, so the buildings I can recollect, were brick buildings, and pretty substantial, let's say, you know, there's – they not dilapidated or anything like that, it was – I think it was a fairly new colony.

Q: Okay. Let's turn now a little bit to your family. Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: Yes, there were four of us, and two sisters.

Q: Okay.

A: Four brothers and two sisters.

Q: Uh-huh. So, can you tell me their names?

A: Th-The oldest was **Jusef**(ph), then **Franciczek**(ph) –

Q: Okay.

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A: – **Roman**. And there was **Maria, Stanislaw**, and I was the last, **Anthony** – **Anthony**(ph).

Q: S-So you were the youngest child?

A: The youngest child, and the difference between them were 17 years.

Q: So you – you –

A: My oldest brother was born in 1910, and I was born in 1927. So the difference was 17 years, over 17 years –

Q: I see. So you –

A: – the family, and I was the last one.

Q: You're the baby.

A: In – baby, yeah.

Q: Were you the favorite?

A: I – I don't know.

Q: Now you mentioned that your father had come from someplace else, the village where he was born.

A: Yes.

Q: Does that mean that everybody in **Krulewicz**(ph) came from someplace else, because it was a new colony?

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A: M-Most of people probably came from different areas, from around the villages, because I think it was a fairly new settlement, let's say, like outside of this larger village, **Wola Żarczycka**.

Q: I see.

A: But it – it had – it's na – own name, **Krulewicz**(ph), but right now, when I look at the maps and everything, kr – kr – it's just **Wola Żarczycka**.

Q: **Wola Żarczycka**.

A: Yeah, which is quite the large village now.

Q: So does mayb – yeah, maybe it just expanded, and absorbed it.

A: Expanded a lot, yes, expanded, yeah.

Q: Okay. Where had your father come from? What was his birth town – you know, hometown?

A: He was born in **Charlna**(ph), near **Lancut**(ph). **Lancut**(ph) is a c-city. It was probably about 10,000 inhabitants. And it was known because there was a castle, owned by a – the **Pototskis**(ph) family, which i-in Polish history, **Pototskis**(ph) are well – very well known –

Q: Were they nobility?

A: – name.

Q: Were they nobility? Polish –

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A: Nobility –

Q: I see.

A: – yes.

Q: And was your mother from the same place?

A: Yes, from – not from the same village, but from the same district.

Q: Okay.

A: Same – maybe like seven kilometers, like five miles, area, you know, that radius

**[indecipherable]**

Q: Okay. Now, what wa – now, I didn't ask earlier, what was your father's first name, and your mother's first name and maiden name?

A: My father's name was **Jakub**(ph).

Q: Okay.

A: And mother was **Carolina**, maiden name **Valat**(ph).

Q: **Valat**(ph), okay.

A: **Valat**(ph), yes. So part of her family was also – lived in the same place. My uncle lived in the same place. But –

Q: You mean, in **Krulewicz**(ph)? In **Krulewicz**?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Oh.

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A: But, I am talking about the early life, because in 1932, my father bought some land in the eastern part of **Poland**, because there were huge far – farms, owned by counts – **hrabias**, in Polish, and they were dividing the land for purchase, and a lot of people then purchased this – this land. So we moved from that original area, into the eastern part of **Poland**.

Q: Okay. I'm going –

A: And that's where my – most of my youth – of course, that wasn't long, because from '32 to 1940, when we were deported to **Russia**, it's what, only –

Q: Eight years.

A: – eight years.

Q: Yeah.

A: But that's where I spent my you – youth.

Q: Right. Where – so, how mu –

A: Up to the age of 13.

Q: Okay. We'll come to that. Now, I just want to do a bit of comparison. Your father owned the land in **Krulewicz**(ph)? Did he own it?

A: He owned the land, and buildings, and yes.

Q: Okay.

A: He was a builder by cro – by profession. But he also owned a little farm.

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Q: All right, how much – how many hectares was the farm?

A: Four.

Q: Four hectares.

A: Four hectares, including an orchard.

Q: Okay.

A: Which was right by our house, in the back of the – the lots were very wide –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know, by –

Q: Well, he – four hectares is – it's maybe small for a farm, but it's an awful big area for, you know, a lot of land. You know, for a piece of land.

A: Yes, I think it was just average.

Q: Yeah.

A: F-Four, five hectares.

Q: Could you feed a family from the four or five hectares?

A: Oh yes, yes. So –

Q: So how many hectares did he buy in eastern **Poland**?

A: Seven. He – he bought seven hectares, because that – it was called **folwark**, which is like a large f-farm owned by count.

Q: Okay.

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A: And they were dividing the land after the war. It was government program –

Q: Land reform.

A: – to – to break up this large –

Q: Estates.

A: – ownerships.

Q: Yeah.

A: So people were – were able to buy – some people who had some contribution in obtaining the independence of **Poland** were given land. But my father did not get, he bought it.

Q: He bought it.

A: He bought it, yes.

Q: But tell – tell me –

A: Because he was a bricklayer, and a builder.

Q: Okay, tell me this. Seven hectares, compared to four is not that much more. I mean, it is double.

A: Yes.

Q: But he moved his family across **Poland** –

A: Right.

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Q: – for that. What was the motivation? Because it was seven hectares, rather than four?

A: First of all, the – the – the land was much better in the eastern part, because it – you – you – part of the **Ukraine**, which was – it was called like the feeding area for the **Europe**, for **Europe**.

Q: Was the breadbasket of **Europe**.

A: Breadbasket for **Europe**, and I – I don't know why he didn't buy more, but actually, that was – that was it. But, as I say, his farming was a part-time actually.

Q: Okay.

A: Cause his main income was from –

Q: Construction.

A: – being a builder.

Q: Yeah. So did he – did he build that – was there already a house on that land when you moved there, or did he build it? What did that place look like?

A: Well, that was another example where the land was being divided because it was owned by **hrabia**, which is Count **Flossik**(ph).

Q: **Flossik**(ph), mm-hm.

A: Yes, he – he own a huge amount of land, and people were buying a lot –

Q: Yes, yeah.



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A: – like I remember seven new possessions started –

Q: Okay.

A: – on that land where – where he sold out.

Q: Okay, so seven parcels of land.

A: Seven parcels from this original –

Q: Estate.

A: – big land.

Q: Yeah.

A: So some bought more, and other, you know, but there were, again, fairly new, like subdivision. It was there – there was a village, a old, ancient village, and then this new area was built on the land that was subdivided.

Q: Okay. And paint me a picture with words, of what this place looked like when you were growing up. Did it also have one straw – one street with brick houses on each side?

A: No, it was more like scattered. There was – there were small streets.

Q: Could you see your neighbors from your own house?

A: Yes, we could see neighbors. As a matter of fact, we – we were close to four families.

Q: Okay. And were the hou –

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A: Four families ar – all around, and just connected with the road.

Q: Okay.

A: And then little [**indecipherable**]

Q: Did your father build the house you lived in there?

A: I – I don't think so, no. Although I – I remember the house.

Q: Tell me about the house.

A: It was rectangular, with two large rooms, and two smaller rooms, which was a kitchen, and like entrance – pretty big entrance, with an attic.

Q: So the whole family lived in the rectangular house in the four rooms?

A: In the rectangular house, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: There were two big bedrooms, let's say, you know, for the – for the father and mother, and then for the children, there was this – this other room, and we lived, sisters and brothers. But by that time, you know, my oldest brothers were already gone. He – he was an editor of a newspaper in the city of **Równa**. So he didn't live with us, he only came from – for visiting. And then the other brothers, who were – that had their own families.

Q: Oh, so how many to –

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A: So there is on – there was only five of us. The parents and two sisters and I, that lived in that house.

Q: I see. And so the three br – other brothers had already left. Your older brothers?

A: Yes, all – all brothers had their own families, and their own –

Q: Did they also move to eastern **Poland**?

A: Yes. Yeah, they be – when we all moved together, let's say, but my oldest brother didn't marry at that time. That was – and then the second brother, **Franciczek**(ph) married and had their – his own house, and worked in a different city. He – he m – moved away from the home.

Q: Where di – what city did he live in?

A: **Zloczow**(ph).

Q: **Zloczow**(ph).

A: **Zloczow**(ph), he was a railroad worker. He work on the railroad.

Q: Okay. And –

A: And one – one – and then this oldest brother, like I say, he was an editor of the newspaper, and then **Roman** was in school yet. And after he finished school, he got married very early, he was only 20 years old when he married. And they moved away, and had their own house.

Q: Did all – did – was your father – did he finish high school?

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A: No, he did not finish high school. As a matter of fact, he only had like four years of primary school.

Q: And your mother?

A: Oh, Mother was just taking care of the house and family.

Q: Okay.

A: She ne – she never worked.

Q: Well, I would say that she worked a lot.

A: Well, she worked at hou – in the home.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But she never –

Q: She never had a paid job.

A: Bret – brought any income, or something like that.

Q: Yeah. The – the – your older brother who was the editor of the newspaper, in **Równa**, you said?

A: **Równa**.

Q: **Równa**.

A: **Równa**.

Q: **Równa** is where?

A: Eastern part, very close to the Russian border. The –

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Q: Russian or Ukrainian?

A: No, Russian. At that time –

Q: Russian? Oh, okay. Soviet, or –

A: In – before the war, I’m talking this – this is before the war.

Q: Before World War II, or World War I?

A: Before World War II, yes.

Q: Okay, but –

A: Th-This – this period that we are talking about is between the two wars, first World War, and the second World War. So let’s fra – from 1920 to 1940.

Q: But excuse me, the reason why I’m being more precise is, wasn’t that the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, or was it the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic? Was it the Soviet border?

A: Oh, it was be – prob – it was Soviet ra – yes. So – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Q: The Ukrainian area, or – you know – you don’t know.

A: No, there was no Ukrainian – there was no **Ukraine** at that time, na – na – na – never – **Ukraine** was never a state.

Q: Got it.

A: It was just an area.

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Q: Got it.

A: That was within Polish borders, and some were in the Russian borders.

Q: I got it now. Thank you, thank you, I got it. But it also then was close to where your family lived. That is, **Równa** was closer to the village where you eventually, you know, settled. Tell me again the name of that village near **Tarnopol**, where you lived, from '32. I forgot the name.

A: O-Oh, th-that was **Palikrowy**. Podk –

Q: **Palikrowy**.

A: **Palikrowy**, near **Podkamień**.

Q: Near **Podkamień**.

A: They're all on – on a map.

Q: Okay.

A: **Podkamień** was a pretty well-known city, because of an abbey, Dominican abbey, which was, you know, famous for that whole area.

Q: Okay.

A: There were pilgrimages, and people would come to – to this abbey, because they said there was a picture of our lady of ro – of the rosary. And this **Podkamień**, where the abbey was on a hill, well-known for – for that time, and that area.

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Q: Now in this new – new place that you lived, were there also German settlers there as well?

A: No, no, no, this is eastern part of **Poland**, there were the Ukrainians and ru – res – ru – Russian people, mostly. Ukrainian and Russian.

Q: Were there any Jewish people?

A: Oh yeah, there was a lot of Jewish people. They were busy with commercial – commercials. They – they own businesses, and stores, and all sorts of things like that.

Q: So about how large, in total, was – was the – now, the village you lived in was close to **Podkamień**, or part of it?

A: Very – very close. Three kilometers, which is like two miles. Two miles from **Podkamień** was the village of **Palikrowy**, and that's where that gentleman, **Schlossik**(ph) had his lands, and then sold off to –

Q: Okay.

A: – seven families lived in there – in that area.

Q: And –

A: Part of them, ther – my – my family, like my uncle bought some property, and then my – my married aunt, which was another family, bought some, and the rest. There were three families that my –

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Q: Were your family.

A: – my family. For – you know, like –

Q: Yeah.

A: – uncle and – and aunt.

Q: So in addition to your own fam – your own nuclear family, you had an extended family in this new place that everybody m – had moved to.

A: In this place, but in – in addition, there was four ma – other families, too.

Q: Yeah, yeah. That sounds like it must have been nice, that – to have your, you know, a larger family, even though you had moved. That you have aunts and uncles and cousins.

A: Yeah, they – that's right. My – they came from the same village of **Krulewicz**(ph). When they decided to buy this land in the eastern part of **Poland**.

Q: Tell me, did your father and mother – I mean, that your brother, your oldest brother ended up being an editor of a newspaper, speaks to that he probably went and had more schooling than your father had.

A: Oh yeah, they – they all had the good education, because they were sent to schools in **Kraków**, which is –

Q: Oh, really?



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A: Yes. The oldest, and the third in line, studied at the **Kraków** – the higher education, high school.

Q: High school.

A: Yes. And **Franciszek**(ph), who was the second, he was more into carpentry, so he was a good carpenter, and he didn't want to study.

Q: Okay.

A: And he – he was working as a carpenter in –

Q: Did your parents – did your parents have a value for education for the children? Did they want –

A: Absolutely, my – yes, they both stressed that you must have education. They stressed it. And that's why they – they made sure that they did get in [indecipherable] education if they wanted to. But like I say, **Franciszek**(ph) wasn't much interested. Excuse me, I think –

Q: Okay.

A: – I – I still have a cane that my brother made.

Q: Oh really?

A: I have a cane here.

Q: We'll show it. We'll – we'll film it later.

A: All right.

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Q: Okay. Now, your sisters, did they also go to school?

A: Yes. They finished primary school, seven years.

Q: Seven years, okay.

A: Seven years. I mean, they didn't go to higher school, but seven years. Two of them were like junior college, I think, because –

Q: Mm-hm, there were other –

A: Because normal education in **Poland** was six years.

Q: I see.

A: And then like seventh or eighth was – eighth was the **[indecipherable]** and then you could go higher –

Q: I see.

A: – to – it's called gymnasium, or **Gimnazjum** –

Q: **Gimnazjum. Gimnazjum.**

A: – you know, I don't know why. But **Gimnazjum** was – it was six years, then two and two. Two in the gymnasium, and two in the **liceum**, which was high school.

Q: Okay, so **Gimnazjum** was gim – it was two years **Gimnazjum**, two years **liceum**, and that kind of was the equivalent of a high school – school years.

A: High school. After that, you could go to university.

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Q: I see. And were they public schools until the eighth year? Was it public education?

A: Yes, it was public education, compulsory.

Q: Okay, and then be –

A: Mandatory.

Q: And then beyond that, was it still –

A: Beyond that, you could just send –

Q: So then it was tuition?

A: – send your children to higher education.

Q: Okay. Then it was that you had to pay –

A: Yes.

Q: – in other words? Okay. Your – you mentioned the domini – Dominican abbey –

A: Yes.

Q: – that was in –

A: **Podkamień.**

Q: **Podkamień.** Was your family very religious as well? Was your family religious?

A: Oh yes, yes, yes, my – both parents were rel-religious, especially my mother.

She – she brought us up in a Catholic religion, and yes, I attended mass every day, beca –

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Q: Every day, even?

A: Every day, because I served at the mass.

Q: Ah, you were an altar boy.

A: I was – I was an altar boy all the time, so I – I had to walk two miles to when – yes, two miles, to serve at the mass.

Q: And was this in the morning?

A: In the morning, yes –

Q: In the morn – in the –

A: – before going to school.

Q: That's quite a schedule for a –

A: That's quite – it was quite busy. Quite a busy schedule.

Q: Tell me a little bit about home life, and I'd say maybe the atmosphere in your home.

A: Well, Father was usually busy with building. Like, he be – he was building homes, and in addition, he built a community center.

Q: Oh.

A: A large community center, similar, you know, with a stage, and seating like a small theater. And I remember when – when they finished that, of course he wasn't himself, he had the help, and every – that even the city government, or the village

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government was involved in it, because they wanted this. So they built community center, and when the – for the opening of this air – for this community center, they bought a huge radio console. It was, you know, like maybe five feet long, and one of those with the record player and things like that. It was very new at that time. So they, for the opening of this community center, they purchased this thing and they had an opening. So everybody from the village came, and it was a huge, huge event.

Q: And a celebration.

A: Celebration. They put this radio on – in a si – on a stage. And of course, you could hear – listen to any programs you wanted, but I don't know what – what was the program then, probably some music, or whatever. But I remember that day when everybody came –

Q: And celebrated.

A: – and celebrated. This was a big, big day for the village.

Q: And does that – does that mean that people didn't have their own radios?

A: Very rare, very rare. Or if they had, it was a crystal radio. And I – I remember operating this crystal, where you had like a needle, and there was a little silicone piece, and you had to dig into this to –

Q: Hear anything.

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A: – to get somebody – some – some – some radio station, you know. No – no knobs, nothing, at that time. At least that's what I remember, as is –

Q: Yeah.

A: – for myself. But this console already had everything, you know, knobs and lights inside, so – with a scale. So it was different. But people normally didn't have that, I mean, this – the – some people had small radios, yeah.

Q: But the crystal kind.

A: And I did have a radio, and – with phones.

Q: Mm-hm. And so you –

A: No speakers. There were no speakers.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Well, at that –

Q: At that time.

A: – I'm talking about my experience, I don't know –

Q: That's – that's what – all I want, is your experience, yes.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So did the radio in the community center become a source of information?

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A: It was also an information and entertainment when – because there was music, people – they had dances and everything, fro – for this music that came through this console.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, young people were very happy to have that opportunity for a dance and meet –

Q: Yeah.

A: – girls and boys and –

Q: It's fun.

A: – there was fights over the – over girls, and yeah, it's **[indecipherable]**. There was an incident when one guy was stobbed – stabbed.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, over a girl. Yeah, so these things that –

Q: Come to mind.

A: – come to my mind, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: No – no details, but there was such a thing as –

Q: How large was the village? How many people would you say?

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A: Oh, the village was about 300 people all together, so let's say divided by four or five, and maybe 60 – 60 families.

Q: And were all of them Polish?

A: No, no, no, not all of them. They mostly – the local people were like Ukrainians, or –

Q: Okay.

A: – or we call them **Ruski**.

Q: Okay.

A: We didn't –

Q: Distinguish.

A: – distinguish a **Ruski**, that's Russian.

Q: Right.

A: But a – basically, they were Ukrainians.

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: Did they have their own church?

A: Yes, they had the **cerkiew**, which is a Orthodox church, and the school was common.

Q: Okay.



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A: We all went to the same school, and well we – we had a lesson in – in Ukrainian, or Russian.

Q: Oh, you did?

A: It wasn't – it wasn't pure Russian, it was like English [**indecipherable**] smi – sme – they call it something simple, plain.

Q: Okay, okay. Basic.

A: Basic, yes.

Q: Basic.

A: Basic Russian. So at school we had to have one hour of this language.

Q: Even though there's a – this was still an independent **Poland**?

A: Yes, it was independent **Poland**, but those – those – the territory – the eastern territory was mainly inhabited by people of Russian descent, or **Byelorussians**, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Now, it's **Byelorussians**, Ukrainians.

Q: I see. I see. Were there also Jewish people in the community of 300?

A: Yes, yeah, Jewish people were businessmen.

Q: Okay.

A: They owned businesses, stores, lawyers, doctors. They were all Jewish.

Q: Did you have a doctor?

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A: Yes.

Q: Did your family go to a doctor?

A: Yes, yeah, there was a doctor, and I had an opport – opportunity

**[indecipherable]** necessity to – to use their services, because I – I climb – I was climbing the stairs to go to the attic, and I fell, and I lost teeth.

Q: Ah.

A: My – still some teeth missing, so the doctor had to – and then dentist had to do something, you know. But I was all blood and everything was –

Q: Oh yeah.

A: I fell like seven feet.

Q: That's a lot. That's a lot.

A: Yeah, from – from the ceiling all the way to the –

Q: Yeah.

A: – to the bottom.

Q: That's a lot.

A: But otherwise, there was – there was a doctor in the village, yes, people used to go to the doctor on ma – somebody broke a hand, or arm, or something like that. So I even remember his name, he was called cro – his name was **Krumpietz**(ph).

Q: **Krumpietz**(ph).

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A: **Krumpietz**(ph), he used to fix – basically that were ins – accidents, where they broke a leg or – or a arm.

Q: So he would set the arm, or the leg, and –

A: Yes, he – he was ba –

Q: – he'd take care of these things.

A: That – that's the kind, but he was also for other ailments. But I don't know if – not many people used the doctors. Basically mothers took care of everything.

Q: Yeah. The unpaid mothers. Were there Jewish children also in school?

A: No, there weren't. In the – in the village, there weren't any Jews. They came from **Podkamień**, from the little town.

Q: Ah, I see, I see.

A: But they would come, horse-driven vehicles and brought stuff on it. Or, there was a store in the village, but it was owned by a local per – person –

Q: Okay.

A: – of a Polish –

Q: Descent

A: – ese – ethnicity – **ethnie**. But they would bring stuff to – to the store.

Q: So you mean traders? Like – like traveling traders would come?

A: Traveling, or suppliers. I was maybe call it a supplier. There was a store –

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Q: Okay.

A: – owned by a local guy, and they would bring stuff into the store. Lots of ine – everything you could buy. Basically, I was interested in candies, you know.

Candies, or – you know. But you could buy school supplies, pencils, notebooks, and that. It was just a small store for –

Q: **Podkam** –

A: – with the shoe – shoelaces, and things like that.

Q: So, **Podkamień**, about how large was it, population-wise?

A: **Podkamień** was about 10,000.

Q: Ah, so your village was about 300, three miles away from a place with 10,000 people.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So you're close to a town. Really it's a town, a large town. But because they must have then had, you know, a railway station? Did it – **Podkamień** have a railway station?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: In **Podkamień** there was no railway station.

Q: No?

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A: Th-The closest was 24 kilometers, was **Brody**.

Q: **Brody**. I see.

A: That – that was closest, where there was a station, and – but **Podkamień** had the hospital, and the court.

Q: Okay.

A: Like a local court.

Q: Did anybody – you mentioned that when some of the merchants would come by, they'd come by in horse driven wagons. Did anybody have a car, either in your village, or – you know, di – was it common to have a vehicle?

A: Oh yes, I mean, almost everybody el – all the owners had some kind of a vehicle

–

Q: I mean a car.

A: – so he could drive around.

Q: An automobile?

A: No, no, no.

Q: That's what I was after.

A: No automo – no automobiles, no, no.

Q: So, nobody had an automobile.

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A: No, nobody had an automobile in the village, but there was a expressway – no, not expressway, but it was a very well-built road between, let's say, **Brody**, **Podkamień**, and then **Zloczow**(ph). It was – but it was like, outside of the village. So that – there were automobiles traveling on that road, you could see them.

Q: Was it asphalt? Was the road asphalt?

A: Not really asphalt, but it was hard, hard gravel –

Q: Okay.

A: – but well –

Q: Well packed, yeah.

A: – maintained. Packed, yes. But no-not tar, no –

Q: Okay.

A: – not asphalt.

Q: Okay.

A: And one other thing, there was a railroad going – railroad tracks were going about two miles from the city, and there was a very fast, short – short – maybe two – two carriages, and it was called **Luxtorpeda**.

Q: **Luks torpedo**, the luxury torpedo?

A: Ye – a very fast moving vehicle with two wagons.

Q: Really?

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A: And – and it was – everybody around a – if we knew that it was like three o'clock, it would be passing, everybody run towards, to be close to it, to watch it.

And it's a **wooom**.

Q: Yeah.

A: It just passed re-real fast, and I was one of those that –

Q: Would run?

A: – liked to watch it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Watch it, yes. But it was outside of **[indecipherable]** but it was tracks –

Q: So it was on tracks, it was on railroad tracks?

A: On railroad tracks, yes, and –

Q: What is the –

A: – they were regular – what if – wagon – no, transport for goods trains.

Q: Okay.

A: But this was for passengers –

Q: Oh really?

A: – this **Luxtorpeda**. I mean, this **Luxtorpeda** was for passengers, so –

Q: So if they wanted to go to a larger city, they would go by this way?

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A: Yes, they would go to **Podkamień**, and from there they could go somewhere else.

Q: Okay.

A: North or south. **Brody**, **Zloczow**(ph), you know, those larger area – larger cities.

Q: Did people talk much about the larger – the larger world outside of **Podkamień** and the village, and the ree – this area? Did the events of the 1930s, like **Pilsudski's** death in '35 –

A: Yes.

Q: – was this something that was talk –

A: It was a big event, right. It was – everybody took part in it.

Q: Okay.

A: There was a – a meeting, of course, and funeral somewhere else, you know, but –

Q: Yeah.

A: – but people were following it, following on the radio, and listening to the radio.

Q: As much as you remember, was news of events outside **Poland** talked about, or reported, or discussed? Such as, you know, **Hitler** came to power in **Germany**?

A: I know that my father used to meet with other – with his neighbors, and they had some – some get together, let's say, get together at some places. So they talked



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about the politics and things like that, but children were – I was, you know, 13 years old.

Q: Yeah.

A: That was at the top of – of this area, because – so we weren't – I don't think we were interested in any –

Q: No, of course not.

A: – anything, but I – I remember getting a newspaper.

Q: Oh yeah?

A: We were getting a newspaper at – up the house, and my father used – read the paper every day.

Q: What was the paper?

A: “**Echo Krysway**.”

Q: “**Echo Krysway**,” so Echo of –

A: Eastern, or the eastern part on –

Q: Did you get the newspaper your brother edited?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was his newspaper called?

A: From?

Q: What was – from **Równa**, what was his newsp –

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A: From **Równa**.

Q: Yeah, what was his newspaper called, your brothers?

A: “**Echo Krysway**(ph).”

Q: Oh, I see, so that was the paper.

A: That was the paper.

Q: I see, I see.

A: I have a picture of my father reading the paper.

Q: Oh really?

A: I can show you –

Q: I’d like to see it.

A: – later.

Q: Yeah. And so the news in that paper, would it contain news of not only Polish events, but international events?

A: A lot – yes, international events, but mainly what was going on on the border with **Russia**. And you can – at that time, there were some misunderstandings on both sides of the borders. So –

Q: Do you remember any of these incidents –

A: No, no –

Q: – that were recorded?

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A: – I don't remember any incidents, but I know that people were interested in – in what was going on along the borders, because at that time already, there were some questions between **Russia** and **Poland**.

Q: Okay. So there was a bit of nervousness. There was a bit of nervousness.

A: Oh yeah, there was, yeah, there was a little, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me, at home, who were you closest to? Of your family, who was the person you were closest to?

A: Well, my older sister.

Q: **Stanislawa**?

A: **Stanislawa**. And I – yeah, I used to get in – in trouble with her all the time.

Q: Why?

A: Oh, I was annoying her, I was pulling her hair. So one – this is, ah, it's just a small incident, but I did something to her, I pulled her hair or something then, and then she started chasing me. So I went to the bedroom and knelt at the bed, and started saying prayers, you know, so I thought she won't touch me.

Q: That'll save you?

A: She won't touch me, but no, this didn't help. I still got a lot of –

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Q: A whack or two.

A: A whack on the – yeah. On the back. Tha-That – that was about all. But otherwise, yeah, that – we always had something going on between us, and no-not the older sister –

Q: No?

A: – cause she was all right, she didn't get too much.

Q: You didn't – you didn't annoy her too much

A: No, I didn't get any trouble with her.

Q: Okay. What about your parents? Were you closer to one parent or the other?

A: Oh, I was close to my mother, because my father was cons-constantly away from the house, he was very busy, all – all day, he was very busy with his business. So I we – just school, and I-I mentioned before, we had cows, so I would, after school I would take them to the pasture and –

Q: Take care of them

A: – kept – kept – kept – watched – watched them, but it wasn't much problem, you know, we had the property along the river, a little river that runs through our possession, and they were just at that – that pasture.

Q: Well you had a – but you had a lot of duties for a small – well, not a small child, but a growing child, if you're an altar boy, and then you go to school, and –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – then afterwards you have the chores with the cows.

A: Yes, yes, and that's all true, all true, and somehow I managed.

Q: Did your mother –

A: I had got – used to get into trouble too, because at one time, over that river, there were – there was an area where pe – village women would come to wash their laundry. There was special areas prepared, like wooden planks, and were – I don't know whether you're familiar with the way they used to wash their clothes, but –

Q: Show me – I mean, tell me.

A: – little pallets and they – there was water in there, very clean, of course th – and they had raised like benches. And they would –

Q: Pound it?

A: – they would pound their –

Q: Their clothes.

A: – clothes, their clothes, and then dry them.

Q: So, in other words, there was like – you sat on a bench, and there is this pallet in front of you, a raised pallet.

A: Yes.

Q: And then you have some mechanism, some wooden paddle, or something?

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A: Ju-Just a little paddle, right.

Q: A paddle, and you pound the clothes.

A: You pound the clothes, and rinse –

Q: Any soap?

A: – rinse in the water. The water was constantly flowing –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, so it was clean. And after they had enough of pounding, they would take it out, because there was like poles, and with a rope between them, and they would hang it – hang the – the –

Q: And would this be – would – would they use any kind of detergent, or soap?

A: Yes, they wa – th – there was like a powder, but it was probably, I think – when – when you burn something and – and what's – what's left, what –

Q: Ashes.

A: Ashes. They used to use some ashes from special woods. Tha-That's why you –

Q: And that would clean the clothes?

A: Yeah, I think.

Q: Well, you me – these are things that we don't know any more.

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A: I don't know, but that – that's what they used on that. And then they would hang them, or before they hang, they would put them on – I was a very naughty boy, so you know, I – I took some dirt from the street, and –

Q: Throw it in there.

A: – throw it in there, because this thing for washing, this was under the bridge. The road was above, river underneath, and there were these benches, specially built for the women to wash their clothes in. And then they would put up, and I took some dirt from the road and threw it on. And then one –

Q: Would they catch you?

A: – one lady started running after me. It was about two kilometers to the forest, or a little forest, so I barely reached that thing while she was still running after me, but I hid in the bushes and –

Q: She didn't find you.

A: – a-and – and then I had to avoid her, as much as I could, because I – I knew that –

Q: She could recognize you.

A: – I – I earn – I earned some punishment. But th-th-that – that's just things that I can –

Q: Yeah, the things you start remembering, yeah. And did she recognize you then?

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A: Oh, she – of course, we knew each other, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But it was just – I don't know.

Q: You were a kid.

A: Bi – bad – bad boy. Bad boy. Very bad boy. Well, no, I'll – generally I – I had a very good opinion, because I was a good student at school.

Q: Did you have a favorite subject?

A: Yeah, geography. Geography, math, and I always liked math, even here, after I studied at the college and things, I was quite good at math. And I – I was able to tutor –

Q: Others.

A: – others, yeah, even you know, in the later days, when I went to college, tutored in math.

Q: Got it.

A: Now that's –

Q: And was history taught at school?

A: Yes, history, geography, drawings, we had drawings, basic drawings. Some people had talents for drawing animals and things like that, so they were recognized, and the teacher would help to develop –



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Q: That talent.

A: – that – yeah, so, yes.

Q: It sounds like a – actually a very nice life.

A: Yes. Sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A: I'm emotionally – because I think that –

Q: Hang on a minute.

A: – there were – there were opportunities for everybody. Yes, I – I – that was –  
yeah, school was good, teachers were very nice, and opportunity for everybody.

Q: Let's –

A: Somebody with a talent and ability, or – or desire, could go high. But that time,  
the government was very conscientious and tried to help, the – you know, right after  
the **Poland** regained independence in 1918, the – the government used to be very  
conscientious, and that they did everybo – everything that they could to help  
farmers, professionals, to get on – get – get ahead. And those 20 years between  
1918 and 1940, or '39, when war started, it was a very intensive development. I – I  
can – can vouch for that, remember that. Government was very helpful. They were  
giving loans for – for the farmers for develop – to buy equipment. We already had

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mechanized machinery to – to sow, instead of sowing like this, you know, from a pouch, then you had machines to –

Q: To sow the –

A: – to sow the grain, and –

Q: Yeah.

A: – pick up potatoes, there were machines that you pick up the potatoes. It was – I – I enjoyed –

Q: It was a change, yeah.

A: – I enjoyed doing all those things, and help, and I was very interested, we had our own machinery at home to – to cut the – to **burn** the hay together, bale – like bale –

Q: Oh, so put it toge – yes, bale the hay.

A: Yes, baling machinery, to wrap up, things like that. It's – you know, but it was very interesting, but not – not long enough. **Poland** didn't have enough time between the wars.

Q: So let's – so let's talk a little bit now about how things start to change. You said – you're born in 1927.

A: Yeah.

Q: And in 1938, you're 11; in 1939, you're 12.

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A: Yes.

Q: Can you remember –

A: I'm – I'm talking about 1940, which was almost – almost 13.

Q: Almost 13.

A: Because I born in a – in April, and in February we were deported from – from that area by the Russians –

Q: I want –

A: – yeah, to – to **Siberia**.

Q: Before we get there –

A: Yeah.

Q: – I want to talk about all of the events that led up to that.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, do you remember where you were when World War II broke out, when **Germany** invaded **Poland**. Do you remember that time, that day?

A: Oh, 1939, yeah – yes.

Q: September first.

A: Yes. I think we were probably in school. We were in – at school that time.

Q: How did you learn that the war started?

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A: Well, through the radio – ra-radio, and it spread real fast, you know, through the village.

Q: What were people talking about?

A: They were afraid that – first of all, S-September, let's say, first, to September 17<sup>th</sup>, when the Russians came in, it was a very short time. So we were afraid that the Germans would come close to us, because **Germany** took over the – the western part of **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: Invaded the ve – western part, and –

Q: Right.

A: – occupied real fast. But they still didn't come to us.

Q: Did you ex – did you ever see a German soldier?

A: No.

Q: Never. Okay.

A: No, not at that time.

Q: Okay.

A: I saw them later on.

Q: Okay.

A: But no. And then, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, the Russians come into **Poland**.

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Q: And did you see –

A: In-Invaded the eastern part, the – completely half of – of **Poland**.

Q: So –

A: So I remember them ki – coming in on tanks.

Q: Tell me about that. What did you see, and when did you see it?

A: Well, first the village didn't have very good roads, they were like dirt roads.

Q: Okay.

A: And they ca – came in tanks, so they would raise a lot of dust, and everything like that. And some people, because the population was mixed, some were ra – of Russian descent, let's say, or Ukrainian, and some Poles. So those Russian people would welcome them, with flowers, and they would throw flowers at the soldiers. And they were happy, waving, things like that. We were not happy. We were – we knew that they are not our friends, they are our enemies. So that's –

Q: Was it expected that – I mean, did you expect to see Russian soldiers in – or was it just something people were waiting to happen?

A: No, no, no, it was sudden, came in because there was no like, radio programs with news on a regular basis. So no, we only saw them when they came in to the – the village.

Q: So it was a complete surprise?

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A: It was a complete surprise, and they came on tanks, on dirt roads, instead of maybe just armored cars on tires, you know. No, it was horrible, it was terrible. And we're scared, we absolutely – well, we di – didn't know what to do, but everybody was interested to see what – wha – what's going on. And right away, the local people, those Ukrainians, formed like militia. Militia?

Q: Okay.

A: And they declared themselves friends of the Russians.

Q: So pe – are these people you actually knew?

A: Yes, and we knew, we went to s –

Q: They were your neighbors.

A: – school together, they're our neighbors, and my friends that I played with. But ethnic background was different. So we were scared, and it was really bad, cause we didn't – Ukrainians killed a lot of people then.

Q: Really?

A: When the Russians came in, they take like a revenge or something like that, you know.

So –

Q: What ki – what – what would they have been taking revenge for?

A: For some personal maybe, misunderstandings, or quarrels, or something like that. I don't know, I didn't have anything against anybody.

Q: Yeah.

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A: My father was very well liked in the village. He was very well liked, because they – like, he was helpful. He – he was in such a profession that everybody –

Q: They needed him.

A: – needed, right. Who wa – whatever they needed, he was there to do it. And yet, they were very turn – turned – completely turned against us. It's – I still can't understand that, because I think that they – they lived in – peacefully until the very end when – when the Russians came in. So everybody was friendly and everything else, helpful. But when the Russians came in, they already put armbands, those local – local Ukrainians, and they started cooperating, collaborating with the Russians. But it wasn't wrong, because the Russians then arrested those people –

Q: Really? Okay.

A: – who were so friendly towards them. They arrested them, and they send them somewhere nobody knew them.

Q: And what had happened with the Polish police? I mean, there was Polish police, and then this militia comes and they disarm –

A: Well, they were disarmed, and you know, I don't know whether they arrested or no, or just let go.

Q: Okay.

A: But – yeah.

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Q: What about your father's business? Did he – was he continuing to work, or did he stay at home when all of this was taking place? You know, did life go on?

A: No, life went on, but it was a very short time, really, because September to February, and – and – and February we were taken a-away from – from there, from our place.

Q: Did you go to school?

A: I was going to school all the time, yes.

Q: Did school change? Did the school –

A: Oh well, yes, yes, because first of all, right, they forbid us to say prayers, because we used to, before lessons started, we used to say short prayers, in the school. But when this took place, when the Russians came in, they forbade praying in school.

Q: Okay.

A: So that was the first indication, you know, that –

Q: It's different.

A: But – but we still tried to say prayers before, but privately they'd say, you know. The teachers wa-wasn't in this class, and never took part before, teacher would guide us with the –

Q: Right.



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A: – with the prayers, but after that, that stopped completely, right away.

Q: Did your teachers change? Did the teacher change, or the same teachers?

A: No, no, teachers didn't – the teachers remained, and they were all fine, all the time they were fine. They were – had – had to be probably very careful what – what they taught, and – but of course, it changed.

Q: What else changed, besides not being able to say prayers at the beginning, what – did the classes change? Did the curriculum change?

A: No, cu-curriculum continued, continued the same way.

Q: Okay, even Polish history?

A: Until a – all the way to the time that they deported us. So, September to February.

Q: February.

A: Beginning of February. Nothing changed. The same teachers and –

Q: And the same stu – subjects.

A: Some – the same subjects, yes.

Q: Did – were there soldiers that stay – did you see soldiers staying in the village, or did they pass through, and then left?

A: No, they – they – some stayed, and they took over the administration, you know, all the – the offices were th – where the trustees, village trustees probably, you

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would call them then, you know. So they took over these offices, and no – no-  
nothing substantial to me. Nothing substantial took place. We carried on with th –  
with the schooling and we could say prayers and sing Polish songs, and everything.  
No – no problem.

Q: Now, the – but the – the people who took over the – the authorities that took  
over the village, sort of administration –

A: Yes [indecipherable]

Q: – they were not local. They were from the – the occupiers? Or were they local?

A: No, they were – some were local.

Q: And they hadn't been arrested?

A: At the beginning – at the beginning –

Q: At the beginning.

A: – when they put those armbands –

Q: Armbands on.

A: – and everything, they declared themselves friends, and that – they actually  
welcomed those local people.

Q: Welcomed.

A: I – I call local people. Those that lived there in the village, before we came in.

Q: Right.

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A: Before my father bought some land there.

Q: Yeah.

A: So they were local people.

Q: Right.

A: So they were very friendly towards Russian, because they were mostly of – of Ukrainian – they speak – spoke Ukrainian at home, and – and of course, at school we – we had a regular classes in Russian, or Ukrainian.

Q: So – but you said they were then arrested. So who replaced them? Wer – you said that some of the Russians arrested – the Soviet army arrested some of these people.

A: Yes, they did.

Q: And then were they replaced in the municipal –

A: Replaced with some of those Ukrainians who – who were able, or maybe a little more educated, that could carry on.

Q: And were these people di –

A: And they took over, and the Russians soldiers.

Q: Okay.

A: Russian soldiers with – in uniforms, they were running thi – stuff.

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Q: Okay. I – I guess one of the re – what I’m trying to get at, is after the local Ukrainians, who then welcomed the Soviet forces –

A: Right.

Q: – they’re there for a while, and then they’re arrested. The people who eventually started running the village, were they local, or had they – were they strangers? The ones who were around when –

A: No, there were both, maybe –

Q: Both.

A: – higher positions were Russians.

Q: Got it.

A: But at the lower level, they were –

Q: Okay. And there was –

A: – the same people.

Q: Yeah.

A: The same people, but they – they were cooperating better.

Q: Got it. So – and there were soldiers in the streets?

A: Yeah, there was some. Not a lot, but there was soldiers in the street, yes, yes.

Q: And did your father continue working?

A: Yes, he was working, working. Carried on.

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Q: How did the – how did the atmosphere change? Okay.

A: But, you know, this was into the winter, September to February, so it was right in the – into the winter, so everything slowed down in the village.

Q: Cause he's a builder, of course, of course.

A: Yeah, slowed down, so – but it – it went fairly normal. Fairly normal.

Q: Okay.

A: The life.

Q: Do – do you remember how you celebrated Christmas that year?

A: Well, yeah, I remember, it was very sad, very, very subdued. Although religi – at that time, religious was not forbidden, and you could still go to church, and I – I carried on the same way.

Q: You were an altar boy still?

A: Yeah, still, and the masses were said, and everything, people went to church.

And – but it was very subdued, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: No. Not –

Q: Was there – were there any arrests? Were there any arrests at that time?

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A: Well, there were some arrests right away, but later on things quieted down, so there was nobody revolting, let's say, against the authority or anything like that.

There was no reason to.

Q: Mm-hm. Were there any Polish military units, or officers, or soldiers who had been in the area when the Russians came in?

A: No. There were no –

Q: So there was no Polish military presence?

A: No military presence, no.

Q: Okay.

A: Not organized, but my brothers, because when – they were at war, so they were on the front.

Q: Western?

A: Was western a-against Germans. So when – when Russians came into this eastern part of **Poland**, they ceased to exist as a – as soldiers. You know, they took their uniforms off, and went into civilian, and there was –

Q: Came home?

A: – na – no, no Polish soldiers at that time, no.

Q: Okay. So let's go up to the – to February. In February it was dead of winter.

A: Yes.

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Q: Tell me what happened.

A: Well, early in the morning, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, I think Saturday, they came in. It was still dark outside, maybe five o'clock, something like – we all asleep. So they started banging on the doors, open up, open up. So, I think – I don't know who was the first, Father, Mother, got up, went to the door, opened the door, they came in. There were about five Russian soldiers with guns – no rifles, with rifles and bayonets. And first of all, they said, do you have any weapon? **Imet' oruzhiye**. That's in Russian.

Q: **Imet' oruzhiye**?

A: **Oruzhiye**. Do you have weapons? My father says no, I don't have any weapon. Although, he did have a rifle hidden somewhere, but that was useless, you know. He didn't even say nothing, because he couldn't get to it, or even if he could, he couldn't do anything, because there's lo – many of them, these Russian soldiers, well-armed. So they say, pack up. Start packing up because we are – you are going to be taken away from here. And says, you – you do not belong – you do not belong to here. He says, Father, what? This is my land. No, it's not yours. We are taking over. It's no more – no longer it's yours, you – you have nothing, just pack up whatever you can, food and some clothing. Because they came with those vehicles, carriages.

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Q: Horse-drawn?

A: Horse-drawn carriages, yeah. And they said, here, pack up what you want, or what you can, take some warm clothing and some food. So – and they were well, like I say, armed. You had to obey their orders. I mean, Mother was resisting. Whatever Father and sisters, maybe even I put on, on this vehicle, she would throw off. She was very unreasonable, you know, wha – with them. She – she – she didn't – she couldn't comprehend this, you know, what's going on. Why – why are you taking us away? What was – where are we going? We don't know, but you have to move. We'll – we'll take you away from here. So she was throwing things off. And the soldiers would put some food, let's say, food or clothing, or – back on the vehicle, she would throw it back. They threaten her, if you will continue like this, we'll shoot you. This is what – what the soldiers said. And my brother-in-law started talking to my mother, and says, you have to do what they tell you to do, because otherwise, you know, it may end tragically. That's what he said. Now, so she calmed down, and we put some stuff on the – on these carriages, and then they drove us away from our home.

Q: How much – how much time had they given you to do this?

A: Oh, it – maybe hour and a half, it was something like that. No – no more than two hours. We – we – we were on the way. But they took us – this I remember, I'll



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tell you why, took us to the local school, because there was room, you know, in the school, classes and everything, there was assembly hall. So they put all these people together in this school, and I remember that I had a violin at home. So I sneaked out from the school, went back to our house, which wasn't far, maybe half a mile. So when I entered the house, the soldiers were already cooking eggs, you know, and bacon, and everything else, smell nice, you know, they having a good time in our dining room. So, I took the violin. I could have run away somewhere, you know, to –

Q: Right.

A: – some neighbors or something like that, but I didn't. I took the violin, and I went back to my parents, which were held in that school. But I saw this [indecipherable] when they already having good time on the food and everything. So imagine, I – I see – really terrible thing to even imagine how these people felt, that they had to leave everything behind, for what, why? Why do – why are you taking, what's – no compensation, no reason, no nothing. Just –

Q: You were never told – you were never told why you –

A: No, you never told. You – he says, this doesn't belong to you any more. State is taking over. State means **Russia**, Soviet **Russia**. The state is taking over your – your possessions and everything, and they forced us out, by taking us to this school.

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They kept us there for several hours. Course, it was early in the morning, but I think by noon, they moved us to **Podkamień**, which is the town, because they had better facilities there, larger. And they put us in a courtroom, large, big hall, where normal trials were taking place. Now –

Q: I want to ask something. The – in the school where they put you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – do you recognize – were there other people there from the village, who were also taken?

A: Yes, yes, there was my uncle –

Q: Okay.

A: – was taken. But strange thing, his family was the parents, they had two girls and two sons. So, these authorities, whoever they were, took the father, my uncle, with two sons, arrested them just like us, but left the mother and the girls in the house.

They left them there. For no – what was ever reason? They wanted – the father and mother wanted to –

Q: Be together.

A: – get together, as a s – you know. But they didn't allow it. No, you stay. Who decided that? I don't know, but this is happening, I see it right now, how it happened. So they were deported, this father, my uncle, and my two cousins,

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deported to the **Russia** – to **Russia**, the same as us. But the f – mother and girls are – were left behind. And they – they lived there all through the war.

Q: It makes no sense.

A: It makes no sense, but this is what happened. And my uncle and [indecipherable] were – were together in **Siberia** with us.

Q: So tell me, what other neighbors did you recognize?

A: Well, there were **Chongwall**(ph), there was **Klat**. **Klat**, **k-l-a-t**, **Klat**, **Klat**. **Kortsaba**(ph), which was my – my aunt husband, my family. And they had daughter and – and a boy, my cousin, right. My aunt son.

Q: Did you node – did you know pretty much everybody who was in that school gymnasium?

A: We leaved on the same – like a na – and – you know, area, the same district.

Q: But the – the village had 300 people.

A: Well, that was village. The village is here, and this little compound –

Q: Is there.

A: – of seven families –

Q: Is there.

A: – which purchased that land, which that landowner had, were here.

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Q: And the people who were in the school area only came from the compound, or not from the village? Or from the village, too?

A: No, no, nobody from the village.

Q: I see. So it was not even the whole –

A: Only – only these people that – that came – originally came from the center of **Poland**, you know, that purchased this land.

Q: Yeah, yeah. So how – so the pe – the soldiers who came into your home, you didn't recognize them. You didn't know who they were.

A: No, they were Russian. Russian soldiers.

Q: But somehow –

A: Never saw them, you know, in my life.

Q: So s – but somebody must have told them that this family, and this family, and –

A: Yes, yes, and they – of course, they were these Ukrainian people who took over administration, this village administration, they said, oh, these are the people. But we – everybody knew, because we were like a newcomer from the central foreign. So we – we live in that area. That's a part of **Westchester** here.

Q: Okay.

A: But the village was – was over there, and we were only this compound, seven families.

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Q: And – and nobody else from that larger village was deported?

A: No, nobody. Only these people that came several years –

Q: Before.

A: – before, and purchased the land, and lived there until this happened.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes.

Q: And so when you were taken to **Podkamień**, in that courtroom.

A: Yes.

Q: Were there more people from other places?

A: Yes, there were a lot of other people from **Marinicka**(ph), **Nakfarsha**(ph), pok  
– **Pieniaki**. Small villages where similar people were living. Similar people like us.

Q: I see.

A: Who came from other parts of **Poland**, to – and purchased the land there. There  
were other villages.

Q: I see.

A: So they are together, and from then on they moved us to the railroad station in  
**Brody**, 24 miles – no, 24 kilometers away.

Q: Okay.

A: On the horse driven carriages.

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Q: Wagons, yeah.

A: Yeah. So it's took a day. In the morning, before noon, to **Podkamień**. They kept us there for a while, and then in the afternoon, they drove us to **Brody**, which had the railroad station, and there were already freight trains, boxcars, wooden boxcars in the rail – on the railroads. And they put us in – in these railroad cars, shut the door, and drove us away.

Q: What did it look like inside those boxcars?

A: Well, there was wooden platforms, I think two levels. So they put, let's say, two families in each. Oh, I don't know, for instance –

Q: Oh, I don't think you should get up, sorry.

A: No, that's okay [**indecipherable**] something like that.

Q2: Should I pause, or –

Q: No, no, no, no, no. Okay.

A: Imagine this is a freight car.

Q: Okay.

A: With the doors over here, just like you see in –

Q: Okay.

A: – the same kind –

Q: Hang on a second. When he's showing on the book, do the book.

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Q2: Yeah, I'm ready to.

Q: Okay, all right. So – so focus on the book when he's showing the book. Okay, so yeah, the – so you're showing me something. So here's the freight cars.

A: Yes, boxcar just like you see now.

Q: Right.

A: Taking goods all over. Brown – mostly brown, with – with a door here, and a door here, right?

Q: Right.

A: Sliding door. And this part, there is like a center, you know, and this part they had platform, they built platform, two levels.

Q: Okay.

A: And they put two families on top, and two families on the – depends on the family, maybe three families, if they're small family. But there was like seven, eight people on this wooden platform, inside this freight train.

Q: So there would be – so there would be these – these levels would be wooden levels.

A: Wooden.

Q: And – and you would be lying down, or s – or sitting up in these –

A: You couldn't – you couldn't – you had to go on knees, you know.

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Q: Okay.

A: Because regular there is, if you put two platforms, divide that height.

Q: That's right. Yeah.

A: Which is what, maybe eight feet?

Q: Okay.

A: So, you had to –

Q: Slide in.

A: – on the – on your knees.

Q: And then anybody –

A: And they just lay down. There – there was straw on the wooden planks.

Q: Okay.

A: And on this straw, you just laid down and –

Q: Was everybody crammed in, so there were people –

A: Very, very close together.

Q: And did anybody stay in that middle area, standing up?

A: No, in the middle area there was a metal – what do you – heating – heating like – stove, a stove.

Q: A stove, okay.

A: Metal stove with – with pipes –



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Q: Okay.

A: – going out, and a hole in, let's say over here, a hole for a restroom.

Q: I see.

A: And people put up a sheet just to, you know, some – some privacy. But they didn't care. I mean, they were just providing a hole, and you had to use it whenever you needed. And there was this stove, where you could boil your water.

Q: If you got water.

A: Well, yeah, you – you – you – there was a pai – pail.

Q: A pail of water.

A: A pail of water, and every – I mean, this is at the beginning, right, so you could boil this water, and nothing else. But they told us to take some food, so people will take whatever they had, maybe bacon, or bread, basically. Cheese. Things like that. Eggs. So, whoever was more industrious, they take more on – and it was a good decision. Others didn't take much, and they were starving.

Q: And – and – and so it mean that those soldiers, who were yelling at your mother –

A: Yeah.

Q: – were doing you a favor, because she – I mean, it's ironic that they were saying, take the food, take the food.

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A: Yes. Ta – as much – yes, take as much as you can, basically food and warm clothing.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's – that's all they told us, yeah. Warm clothing and food.

Q: And since this was February, were there snowdrifts outside? Was there a lot of snow at that point? Was it cold?

A: There was a lot of snow, this was a very heavy winter, a lot of snow. But was – was – soon as they put us in – in those freight trains, it was on – on the railroad tracks.

Q: Yeah. And was there – you say there was a stove.

A: Yes.

Q: Was there wood to heat it? Was there something there to heat –

A: No, coal, coal.

Q: There was coal.

A: They provided – yes, yeah, some box or some – some – some kind of a vessel to – to hold coal. And they would provide this coal every time they stopped on the – on – on this trip, so they give you more coal.

Q: Did it keep it per – did it keep it warm, or not really?

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A: No, because it was as cold as it is now, or colder. No, no, no. There was frost inside of the – of this freight train, inside.

Q: And about how many people were in that one boxcar?

A: In our car, th-there were, I think about 40 – 40 persons. So there were like four different platforms where you could – so in about 10 – 10 to a platform yes, it's exactly – because my platform had nine people. We were close together, and –

Q: Was it your whole family?

A: Yes. Well, whole family, that means my parents, and one sister, and me.

Q: I see, four of you, and five other people.

A: Four of us. Four of us.

Q: Okay, did you know any of the other people who were in the car?

A: Oh yes, because the other people were mo – my brother –

Q: Okay.

A: – with his wife and – and t-two – two sons, young, nine years and seven years.

And it's just beginning of a horrible – they all died –

Q: Oh my.

A: – on the journey, because there was no food, cold, pneumonia, you know, who knows? My father. Ah. Yeah, that's –

Q: So, tell me about the journey. Tell me about it.

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A: Well, when – when they put us into this trains, the car – transport – was quite the long transport, and it started to move east – east from **Poland**. It was in the city of **Brody**, yeah, I said that – that's what the station was. And we started the journey. So, next day, the – the journey actually start the next day, because the first day, was 10<sup>th</sup> of February, was just moving from the house to the station. And next day, the train started moving towards **Russia**.

Q: Did anybody tell you where you were going?

A: No, nobody told us, but direction, you know, we knew that we are going east.

Q: How did you know that?

A: East, west, south.

Q: I mean, you were able to tell – were you able to see through – was there any place to see through?

A: Well, yes, yes, there was.

Q: Okay.

A: There – there di – sure, there were little openings, like small windows, about the size of – of that thi – block.

Q: Th – oh, the one – I see.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Small windows there, and somebody would be looking through?

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A: Well, somebody, yes. I was looking through, the only time.

Q: Tell me what you saw, as you –

A: Well, I saw little villages, and under the snow, these were all covered with snow, so whatever. Trees, rivers, roads. I could see it.

Q: That first day – yeah, the first day when you're moving out, were you able to look through that little kind of window, outside of –

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: So, could you tell when you left **Poland**, and entered the s – the **Soviet Union**?  
Was it – was – you able to tell that, or not?

A: Ah, yes, first of all, the Polish railroad trucks are narrower than the Russians. So when you came to the border between **Poland – Poland** and **Russia**, they had to change the wheels, or – or –

Q: Aha, they had to narrow down – to go to – or they widen up?

A: No, wider, so –

Q: Okay.

A: – it took some time before – and they had technique – they – they had ways of doing it, and it was all pretty efficient. So they just change the whole wheel assembly. The same box, they lifted up, changed the wheels, and off we went to

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**Russia.** So we knew that we are going to **Russia**, and where – wherever they stopped it for – for changing this wheels, that – that was the border.

Q: That's right. That would make sense.

A: That was the border. And as far as I know, I have some notes that I took, four days it took us, between our house and the time we reached the – the borders –

Q: Oh, really?

A: – in **Russia**. It was four days.

Q: Four days?

A: Four days.

Q: I would have thought it wouldn't take so long because –

A: It shouldn't. It wasn't that far, but it took time.

Q: To get there.

A: First of all, when – when they took us to **Brody**, a lot of other people would be co-coming. So they were gathering this transport, they were arranging a hu – long transport, maybe of 40 carriages, or something like that, you know? A long transport. But there were only few from our place, and few from others, and I know these people because I met them later, in **Canada**.

Q: On the same transport?

A: No, no, that they were taken the same time.

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Q: Yeah.

A: And – yeah, the same – in the same transport, right. So, it took some time to f-  
full – to organize the complete –

Q: So fill up all the cars.

A: Fill out.

Q: Okay.

A: Fill up all those, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because fr-from us, there was not enough even for one – one wagon.

Q: Yeah.

A: But from other places, and like I say, **Pieniaki**, **Marinicka**(ph), **Kutishcha**(ph).

I remember those names from – they are still there.

Q: Okay. I want to stop right now, for a second.

**End of File One**

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**Beginning File Two**

Q: Okay, this is a continuation of the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Anthony Chudzik**, on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. And before the break, Mr. **Chudzik**, we were talking about the day, and the time of year when your family was thrown out of their homes and put on the train.

A: On the train, yes.

Q: And – and we stopped pretty much at the area where you had been describing to me the border where the train cars are lifted, and the wheels are exchanged for the wider rails of the Soviet railway system.

A: Right.

Q: Tell me, after that – after you passed into the territory of the **Soviet Union** proper, about how long did the journey take?

A: It took two – two weeks, or just under two weeks, I think maybe 11 or 12, 13 – 12 days.

Q: Twelve days.

A: Twelve days, because that's 10, and 22<sup>nd</sup>, we were at the destination, which was in **Archangel** district, and the place was called **Shenchuga**.

Q: **Shenchuga**.

A: **Shenchuga**.



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Q: **Chuga**(ph).

A: And it was a small settlement, where there were already some families lived there who were moved by **Stalin** from **Ukraine** to that area, in about 33<sup>rd</sup> – 1933, 1934. It was that area when all the time where **Stalin** moved a lot of Ukrainian people and Byelorussian people into that – we call it **Siberia**.

Q: Okay.

A: **Archangel**.

Q: So that could have been – that could have been during the – what eventually became the famine. The – the famine in **Ukraine** in those years.

A: Exactly, exactly. That's – that's the time.

Q: Okay. And –

A: A lot of people were moved from **Ukraine** to those areas, and their –

Q: Would you say they were deported as well, by being moved?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: We must have been deported just – just to c – they were taken out of their –

Q: Okay.

A: – homes and – and sent there, sent to that area.

Q: So tell me, geographically, this archet – arc – how is – how do we pronounce it?

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A: **Archangel**.

Q: **Archangel. Arkhangelsk**. Where is that in the **Soviet Union**? Is it in the – just where is it, where do we find it?

A: All right, it's almost north of **Moscow**.

Q: Okay.

A: It's – **Archangel** is the port on the ber – **Bering** Sea, I think.

Q: Okay.

A: Up north. And it goes through another city of **Vologda**.

Q: **Vologda**.

A: **Vologda** is the – one of the larger cities, and it's like a – a railroad center from there, there are different directions that – that – that they had, that the tra – tracks built.

Q: So tell me, in this 12 days that it took to get there, what were the conditions like in the cattle car?

A: We were able to get out of the wagon, or whatever, wha – how could you call it?

Q: Cattle car. Cattle car.

A: Car – cattle car? Yeah, goods train, cattle car. When the train stopped to take water, as a locomotive was filling up with water, and maybe fuel, then people were able to get out of this transport, and just maybe walk, or go to a – because usually it

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was like a – by the station, railway station. So they could go there, and maybe purchase something, like bread. On some stations, there was bread available. Or, get boiled water, which they called **kipiatok**.

**Q: Kipiatok?**

**A:** In **Russia**, **kipiatok**. Which is just boiled water, but you could use it to make something like tea, or what – or whatever you had to put in it – into it. And sometimes it was two hours stop, maybe three hours stop, and then everybody would get back. Of course, it was guarded. There were, every few wagons, or yes, yes, I call it wagon, there were guards, Russian military guards. So they were taking – w-watching everybody. You couldn't get too far away from – from where the station was, where the train was stopped. But normally, what the train was put on a side truck, and there was nowhere to go, really.

**Q:** So there wouldn't be towns that were connected to these railway stations?

**A:** No, there was towns, yes.

**Q:** There were towns?

**A:** There were towns, but nobody was allowed to – to leave, towards the town.

**Q:** Were there people in your car, in – in your wagon, who spoke Russian?

**A:** Oh, I suppose, yeah, I spoke Russian.

**Q:** Even so? Even as a young b – oh, because of your studying in school.

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A: Stu – in school we were learning Russian in school, yes.

Q: And were you able to, when you stopped in these places, to get a sense of where you were, geographically?

A: Oh, not really, because wa – if you ask – and I did ask, also, so they said, because it was war. So they say, military secret. You – you – you – we are not allowed to discuss anything, you know. They couldn't tell you. But there were names on the stations, so we could read the name of it. **Moskva** is easy. **M-o-s** –

Q: Did you stop through **Moscow**?

A: We went through **Moscow**, yes. Our transport went through **Moscow**, towards north.

Q: Okay.

A: To **Vologda**, and then little past **Vologda**, there is a **Kenosha**, similar name to this **Kenosha** in – in **Wisconsin**.

Q: Really?

A: Well, ko, or **K – K – Kenosha**, or – **Kenosha**. And there is a truck going towards northeast, towards **Kotlas**.

Q: **Kotlas**.

A: **Kotlas** is larger city again, on the **Dvina** river. **Dvina**, **Dvina**.

Q: Mm-hm.

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A: So they – they took us on that.

Q: So people were able to at least get out and get some he – some hot water.

A: Get out – get out, get water, or even purchase something, or exchange

[**indecipherable**] purchase, because the – nobody had that money, at that time, in rubles.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, but exchange, you could exchange anything, shoes.

Q: Do you remember if your family traded anything?

A: Yes, we traded some, like we traded shawl, a shawl, or, we – we had some extra shirts, so we could trade it, or ba – blankets were very, very – I mean, you know, desirable, but I – people kept some blankets for themselves.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because it was cold, and there was only one metal stove in this va – wagon.

Q: Did anybody get sick on the way there?

A: Yes, people got sick. And out of about 60 people, nine died on this – on the journey.

Q: In your wagon?

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A: Yes. And my – my brother's two sons, little guys, you know one was nine years old, and the other was seven years old, they died. We think that it was from pneumonia, but nobody could tell for sure, because there were no –

Q: Yeah.

A: – doctors to tell you what the disease was, or what – what was – the element was. But –

Q: So from – in 12 days.

A: Yes, in 12 days, exactly 12 days. And we – if we stopped at a station, people were allowed to get out of the wagon, and either walk, or people took a opportunity to do the natural –

Q: Functions?

A: – functions, or get this – this boiled water, which is – it was very, very important for everybody. **Kipiatok** was very important. Alco – we could get some boiled on the stove, but there was no way of getting water –

Q: Yeah.

A: – anywhere, because there was only one pail provided. And so what, the water didn't last. But people gather snow, and melted the snow on the stove, and took – drank that water made fr-from stove – from snow.

Q: So your brothers two children, your nephews, who died –

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A: Yeah. Yes.

Q: Did they – did they die at the end, or in the middle of the journey?

A: It was, I mean – the middle. In the middle of the journey. And they – they didn't have any burial. People who died during the journey were left on the railroad platform, where there always – there were always corpses already, as we were, let's say, passing through the stations, or we stopped at the stations, so there were people, dead people, corpses on the platforms, ready to be moved somewhere, but we don't know where. I mean, you know, whether they [indecipherable] cemetery, or whatever.

Q: And were the two little boys left there as well?

A: Yes, left there, against, you know, wishes, you know. They wanted to bury them, but there was no chance of anything like that. No chance.

Q: I can't imagine how your brother, and how their mother must have felt.

A: Oh, terrible, terrible. They were crying, and – and their despair, and it was awful. Absolute terrible. But that – that was – nobody cared. The guards didn't care, and people who were – the engineers, they were – here they call them engineers, who were in charge of locomotive, they couldn't do anything. They were just given orders to go – you know, whatever.

Q: Drive the train, yeah.

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A: Pardon?

Q: They were given orders to drive the train.

A: Yeah, drive the train, or th-the trains were put on a side track and they were – we were waiting for a couple days maybe. Because the 12 days, I mean, it's not that far, you could do it in one day, really, if it – if was going all continuous, but they were stopping, and yes – yeah.

Q: Were there old people who died as well, in your car?

A: Oh, sure, sure, there was old people. I – even from my distant family, because my brother's – my brother's wife – wife's sister, married sister, were also with us; so her husband passed. He was maybe 50 years old, or something like that. So people were dying.

Q: What did you see when you got to the final destination?

A: Well, we got to ma – **Poduga**(ph), which is – was a little town, where the station was. From there on, we were taken by sleigh –

Q: Okay.

A: – driven by horses, on – on snow. During the winter, they use sleighs.

Q: Okay.

A: Am I pronouncing it right, or no?

Q: Yes, you are, you are.



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A: Yeah. So, they put us on sleighs, and some people were forced to walk behind. Those who could. Children and older people could sit in the sleighs. And they draw us from this railroad station to that final destination, which was a settlement inside the forest. Th-Th – there was an opening, a large opening, and there were mo – log houses. They were built like twins. It was one big, log house, with a wall in between

–

Q: I see.

A: – separating these two. And there was a door here, and a door here. And you could just enter through this door, into the large room, and the whole families were there. I mean, you know, a large family, maybe seven, eight people, because there were families like that. So there was only one family, but otherwise there were two families, either a three or a four. So there were two or three families put into each of these big rooms. And there was a iron stove here, and na – and a bed, bed made of wood. And there was straw for mattresses, in a – in a box.

Q: And did you – and this –

A: A wooden box.

Q: Would this be one bed in each corner, for each family?

A: No, by one – let's say it was a room smaller maybe, than this. So there was just a bed made of wooden pla – pla –

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Q: Planks.

A: – planks. Planks. Yeah. And the whole family was in a – in one bed.

Q: But if you have to –

A: Parents and me and we're all in one bed.

Q: And then, did other families have another bed, in the same room?

A: No, there was only one bed.

Q: In the whole room?

A: In the whole room. So if you were a family that was given one room, then you were okay. So the family wer – otherwise, there were two families in a bed. So there's –

Q: In one bed?

A: Yeah.

Q: How could they all fit?

A: Well, what do you mean, you know, they just as – went to bed and slept it like, on a platform, on a wooden platform. There were no beds, or mattresses.

Q: No, no, no, I guess I'm trying to get a sense of, if you had one room.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you had two families in it.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And there was only one bed –

A: Right.

Q: – how could they – how could two families fit on the one bed?

A: Well, there were about si-six people could fit in a bed like that. It was not a regular bed, it was just to –

Q: A raised platform?

A: Raised platform, yes, with – with some sides, and lot of straw, and you just lay there.

Q: Okay, and it was in the middle of the room, or to the side of it?

A: No, maybe toward the corner, yes –

Q: I see.

A: – maybe to-toward the corner. But there was not much room for anything other than just sleeping, that's – that's all.

Q: And were these rooms already occupied by other families when you came in, or were they empty?

A: No, when we came in they were all empty. These – these log cabins were empty.

Q: Okay.

A: So they just are assigned several people, or one family, or two families to one room, and it's –

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Q: And that's –

A: – it – it just started up like that.

Q: And –

A: So it was almost similar to being in the wagon, you know, in the carriage, on the way.

Q: Yeah.

A: Except that it was larger, and bay – made of logs.

Q: And it didn't move. And it didn't move.

A: No, no, it didn't move.

Q: Like – like the **[indecipherable]**

A: You can – you can see these log houses in movies or in –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **Canada** or something like that, you know. They're putting log – little log cabins, they call them.

Q: Yeah.

A: Log cabin, that's exactly what it was.

Q: And was it – you say there was a stove in there.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was it use – did it – did it heat up the place, or was it frosted like the –

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A: Well, na, na –

Q: No.

A: – it – it gave a little warmth, but it was used for cooking, too, you know, if you had something that you could cook –

Q: Okay.

A: – then you could cook on that stove. But after we ga – that was during the journey, right, you are talking about –

Q: Yes.

A: – in the ra – but similar situation was at the destination, where they took us to **Shenchuga**, that – that settlement. So, it's – the homes were just like I describe, and you could – you would get cooked meal at the dining room. There was a large dining room, a co-community dining room.

Q: Okay.

A: Where they provide you with food, you didn't have to pay for it.

Q: So was this the first time that the authorities actually fed you, and up til then you had to eat whatever you had taken with you?

A: Yeah, well, they were given – they were giving bread. At every station they were giving bread.

Q: Okay.

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A: Maybe a one loaf, or two loafs, depends on the na – the number of – of people in a family, so –

Q: Okay.

A: – everybody would get out, and received an assign – assigned –

Q: Portion.

A: – portion.

Q: Okay. And about how many of such log cabins were there in this settlement?

A: The di – this is only from my memory, because I know how they were distributed. So maybe there – there were about 30.

Q: So it was large? Was – you know, for a settlement in the middle of the forest.

A: In the middle of the forest, but there were like a road, and a little cabin on both sides, and then another row, and another row. So there was – yeah, that's probably a – a – a – maybe between 30 and 40.

Q: And the forests, were these taw –

A: They were people already living in s – in half of it.

Q: I see.

A: Because those people were deported to those areas in – during that famine.

Q: Got it.

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A: Yes. But half, or almost half of that **poselok** we call it, it's a settlement, was empty.

Q: Did anybody come at that point, and when you got to that settlement –

A: Yes.

Q: – did they tell you why you were there, and what you were going to be doing?

Was there any official announcement?

A: Yeah, yes, they were tell, you are here to work in the forest, until you **podokneish**(ph). In other words, until you die. But it – it wasn't – this word die is not regular death, but if you – by the time you just end your life. **Podokneish**(ph), it's more towards the animal, you know, pe –

Q: Okay.

A: Animals, they die also, right?

Q: Right.

A: We use this – at least I think we use the same word for animals and – and humans.

Q: Okay.

A: But over there it was different for animals. The animals, they're just ending their life.

Q: Okay.

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A: So you are here until you end your life. That's all. That – th-that was – they will always tell you that you are here to work, until you die. You could hear it from every guard, cause there were armed guards over there. It was like a – a military compound.

Q: And so was it surrounded by a fence?

A: No, there was no fence. The – the fence was natural habitat, you know, I'm – where could you go?

Q: Yeah.

A: Forest, and nothing. There was a river, a large river. Nobody could pass probably, unless he knew how to swim. But what – where – where could you go? On the other side of the river?

Q: So –

A: I – I did swim that river, and I – although, I was – yeah, I was only 13 years old, to begin with, and then 14.

Q: Yeah. So – so, did they tell you what the work was? What was the work that everybody had to do?

A: The work, mostly men and able women were assigned to cut timber. They were cutting timber, **woom**, you know, and then cutting these shorter pieces, about a yard long, three feet long. And somebody would put a cubical or something, you know,



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like three by three. And then they would tie it with a rope, and there – the guy responsible, supervisor – a man – a Russian guy, would come and stamp these pieces. He had like a hammer, and he put a stamp on everyone. It was funny. Well, now it's [indecipherable] but some people were – would cut the ends very tiny, you know, cut it off during the night, or something like that. And they said, well, this is what we did today. So he would stamp it again, but it was the same cubicle.

Q: So, in other words, they cut out the –

A: They were cheating, people were cheating the authorities, let's say.

Q: So that meant they – they'd cut the end that he had stamped.

A: Yeah.

Q: And they cut the stamp off, and they left it as if it hadn't been, and then they used the same cubic feet of – of logs for the next day.

A: Yeah. For the next day. But it wasn't that – I mean that – it's not that typical, really.

Q: Yeah, not that often.

A: Not that often, but it happened. I know that happened, because my brothers used to do it, yeah.

Q: What kind of instruments did they use for cutting logs, for cutting the trees?

A: Oh, hand saws.

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Q: Hand saws.

A: Hand saws. A big saw about five feet long, with big teeth, and a handle at each end, and they would –

Q: So all of this was, let's say, from human energy, no machines at all.

A: There were machines at a saw mill.

Q: I see.

A: Because what happened, they cut the wood, timber, and they put them in the river. And they would float those logs on the river –

Q: Okay.

A: – to a place where they had saw mills.

Q: Okay.

A: And there were machinery with hooks, metal hooks, that would constantly rotate like this, you know, big chains, maybe 12, 14 feet long. And they – this chain would go into the river. And there were men who were guiding the logs towards this machine.

Q: I see.

A: And the hooks came, brought the logs on the shore, and there were people who took the logs again, in human strength, human force, and cut them into shorter

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pieces, and put them into these cubicles, and from then on, they would move them on trains, to paper –

Q: Paper mills.

A: Factories, or paper plants, or –

Q: So what – what was the wood that was being cut, was it pine?

A: Pine. Ba-Basically pine, yes. Yes, one like what's growing out here in this –

Q: And did you – you were so young, were you put to work as well?

A: Until I was 14 years old, I was forced to go – I mean forced, I liked to go to school. But it was a very short time, you see, when – when we arrive there, in February, I went to school.

Q: Okay.

A: Because there was schools for the Russian people there. So, until I was 14 years old, which, only few months, then I could stop going to school, and go to work.

And this is what I did, cause I didn't want to go to school there, so I started working when I was 14 years old.

Q: And –

A: I was –

Q: Yeah.

A: – allow – I was – how you – auth-authorized. I was authorized –

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Q: Authorized.

A: – to take up employment. But up to 14, no, you had to go to school and –

Q: And so these – you said there was a school for the Russian kids? So –

A: Yes, yes, in the regular school.

Q: Okay, so in – in addition to the Ukrainians who had been deported, was there like a regular – were there regular Russians who weren't prisoners of any kind, who –

A: That's right, that's right.

Q: – who lived there.

A: All settlements. People lived there for many, many years.

Q: Okay, generations, or something.

A: Yeah, maybe generations, but who knows?

Q: Did – did some of them live in different kinds of quarters than the one you describe?

A: No, the same – the same kind of quarters, except that people would – to expand, you know, they built a little shed by the – that log cabin, or they built like an entrance, so that normally you would enter from – from outside, like –

Q: Right.

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A: – even here, you know, I don't have anything else. But you could build a little –  
little –

Q: Pre-entrance.

A: **[indecipherable]**

Q: Yeah, so –

A: – entrance. So they were improving whatever they could do, or they just live the way it provided.

Q: What about the camp administrators? Since they were the officials –

A: Oh, they had beautiful – beautiful buildings.

Q: Oh, did they?

A: Yeah, they had beautiful buildings, large. I remember, because my father, who was a builder, he worked – they put him to work right away. And they di – they ha – the building that was there, was falling apart. So he almost rebuild it, and it was **[indecipherable]** like a mansion. Painted white, and everything you – sometimes you can see those, in the movies, big – big homes. So that's where the commandant, or the – the – the main administrator lived.

Q: And did they have families?

A: They had families, yes, but they were armed, and they were just like a military personnel.

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Q: Okay, so you were the prisoners, and they were the guards.

A: We were prisoners, but we are not prisoners in th – in the sense that we couldn't go out, or anything like that. But within that area, yeah, we could move freely.

Q: Okay.

A: Freely. But there was nowhere to go. Nowhere to go, unless somebody wanted to risk, you know –

Q: Well, going out in the winter, into the forest to cut trees, did people – were they given the kind of clothing that you would need, or not?

A: No, no, no, whatever we brought with us –

Q: That was it.

A: – that's what – that's what they used. They wouldn't – maybe later on, because then they – they – they started paying for – for your time that you worked in the forest. People were paid, so you could probably buy little better –

Q: Was there a store there?

A: There was one official store. There no privacy – there were no private enterprise, nothing.

Q: Right.

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A: But there was a store, and usually you could buy shoes, special – specially adapted for – for that cold. They were might – made out of fabric. Fabric with some cotton inside, or whatever was it, wool? Cotton wool?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, cotton wool. I have pictures of those things here, you could see how they looked.

Q: And what else would be in these – in these stores?

A: Oh, they had lot of champagne.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, there's – you enter into the store, so the – all the shelves were full of champagne bottles. And you could buy it, if you had money. But I don't think – and they were selling bread, but bread was rationed. You were allowed, for instance, half a pound of bread, and you had coupons like. You had –

Q: So they –

A: – tender – tendered the coupon, and then get the bread for it, and pay for it. But, just give you an example. When I reached the age of 14 years old, I started working. And I was supplying a fuel to those steam boilers. You had to constantly feed steam boilers to produce steam, to operate the machines.

Q: Okay.

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A: And I worked as one that was supplying the fuel to these large boilers.

Q: And these – these were the machines that were –

A: Taking the wood out, or –

Q: Of the water.

A: – no – and then they were also cutting, but at the saw mills, they have mechanical saws, big saws like this. So they were operated by steam. Every – every machine that was there, was operated by sa – by steam. No electricity, by steam.

Q: Interesting.

A: So there were big boilers, constant, and supply tubes. They had systems, you know, built pretty well. Organized, you know.

Q: Was it – was it – were you warm, as you were doing this? Was this a kind of a job that people would have wanted to have, because of the conditions, or is it a difficult job?

A: No. No, no, no, you – you – you had no choice, you were – you were assigned.

Q: I know.

A: You – you are going to do this, and you this and this. You – you couldn't –

Q: I understand you couldn't choose.

A: You couldn't choose.



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Q: My point – yeah, my question is that, was it a good job to have, in the conditions, or was it one that was too difficult and nobody wanted to do it?

A: There was no other work available, only timber. Everything was timber. Cutting wood, cutting to smaller pieces, cleaning it, removing the branches. That's was –

Q: Was your work outside?

A: Outside all the time.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: Outside.

Q: It was outside.

A: They were cutting the trees, big, tall trees, cleaning them, then cutting shorter, putting them on like pallets, and –

Q: And supplying the fuel to the steam boiler was also something that was done outside?

A: Oh yeah, yeah –

Q: Okay.

A: – outside, yes, outside there. We were – there were four of us that were responsible for supplying the fuel to the boilers, and we had a little carriage on four wheels, that were on tracks –

Q: Okay.

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A: – regular tracks. Well, we had to push this to where the other people were cutting the – the wood to shorter pieces. We collect those ends, put them on the thing, and take it to the boiler area.

Q: So was – so, it was the ends of the wood that was the fuel?

A: Yeah, for these boilers.

Q: For these boilers.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So th – it was the scrap wood that you were –

A: Scrap wood.

Q: Wood.

A: Or whatever was there, because they were cutting certain lands, equal lands, but there were leftovers. So this leftover, we picked up, and haul it – haul it to – to the boiler area.

Q: Okay. And so, in your own barracks, did you also have some of the scrap wood to heat your own barracks, or –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Yes.

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A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Was it allowed, or was it –

A: Was it a – sure, it was allowed, a plentiful.

Q: Okay.

A: It – yeah, you could –

Q: Okay.

A: Whatever you needed for the little stove –

Q: Okay.

A: – you could have it, right, could have it.

Q: Was there anything that, let's say, of these materials, of what you found in the forest, that you couldn't take? That wasn't allowed to be used for your own purposes?

A: No, no, there was nothing, no.

Q: Okay.

A: Everything – well, I mean, I – I – I can't imagine what – what really – what –

Q: Well, sometime I've – I've heard of people who got in trouble because they were accused of taking hay that wasn't supposed to be taken, or – and sometimes –

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A: Well, yeah, maybe if there were those state farms –

Q: Yeah.

A: – of course, that's – that's right, you couldn't do that. But there was another si – instance where we stole, ma – me and my sister, **Stanislawa**, younger sister, we – we were stealing cabbage, because there was a state farm nearby, and they had their large, I don't know maybe a acre, or two acres of – they were growing regular cabbage, so we would steal the cabbage from that si – field. So – so – but –

Q: And you didn't get caught?

A: We – we didn't get caught, but we did it during a very bad weather. The storm was terrible, there was raining, and things like that. Nobody would be out at that time, but we were. We – we had some sacks, and put some heads of the cabbage into the sacks, brought it home at night. It was – Mother right away started cutting this – the head – the – the cabbage, into the sauerkraut, maybe, put in these small containers, and –

Q: And you had at least some sauerkraut.

A: And then we had sauerkraut, yes.

Q: Were you hungry in this place?

A: Oh, many times, yes, many times were hungry, because food was short and the bread was strictly rationed.

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Q: What was it that you ate? What – what did – were you given to –

A: Potato, and you – basically soup, made with fish. So they would, let's say, cut the heads off of a fish, and the fish would go to some restaurants or something like that, and the heads, they would make soup with – with the heads. So, it was like a clam chowder.

Q: A very particular kind of clam chowder.

A: Yeah – no, but they were heads. Head fishes floating. And it was very popular, yeah.

Q: Well, it sounds it – also it probably was somewhat healthy, you know, the – that as much as there was very little, fish is generally healthy.

A: Well, yeah, no, but usually they always – there was some – some vegetable that they could use –

Q: Yeah.

A: – make soup. But, as I say basically, they were oh – community dining rooms.

Q: Yeah.

A: And there was a large dining room of tables, and everybody was allowed certain amount –

Q: Of food.

A: – food.

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Q: Okay.

A: So you go to this dining room –

Q: And you get either –

A: – for breakfast –

Q: Okay.

A: – for lunch, and for dinner. And when I was working, I was paid four rubles, and five **kopek** – **kopaig**(ph).

Q: Okay.

A: Like five cents.

Q: Was that a weekly wage?

A: No, daily.

Q: That was the daily wage.

A: Four rubles, and five **kopek** – **kopek**. Each food was one ruble.

Q: Each time you went to eat.

A: Each time you want to eat at the dining, it was one ruble. So – and the – and the bread that ath – were assign, was one ruble and five **kopek**. So that was my daily wage. I – if I wanted to buy all the f – bread that I was allowed, then there was nothing left. But sometimes I didn't buy, I only bought two portions of bread. So I

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spent two rubles, and I had two rubles spared. So then I could do – do something else with this money.

Q: I see.

A: Now there's –

Q: I see.

A: And that – that – that was day from day, day after day after day.

Q: What happened with the older people? Did people continue to get sick?

A: No, they continued to die. There were a lot of people there were dying. Lot of people dying, during the short time that we were there, I would say about 200 people died. And later on I got a better job because I decided to become a shepherd. So re – those local Russians who lived there for – for many years, they were born there and everything, they were free, right? So they had goats. Each family had one or two goats. So they needed a shepherd to – to tend to these goats. So myself and my mother, we decided, you know, to – to get that job, or take the job if nobody wanted it, or couldn't, or whatever. So we – what I used to have a – a little wooden piece like this on a string, and I had two little pieces of wood, you know, like – like the orchestra guy has, you know what that –

Q: Oh yeah, mm-hm.

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A: – and I used to do it, pum-para-rum-pum, pum-para-rum-pum, in the morning, about five o'clock. And these goats start coming out of their sheds on the main road. And when there was about 350 - 400 of them gathered together, then I took them to the pasture. And I took care of them during the day, and they were just feeding on – on the grass.

Q: Right. So you would just mind them.

A: I would mind them, take care so no – nobon – no one was lost. And in the evening I brought them back, and each one knew where – where she belongs. You know, it's funny. I just brought them into this little village, and they – they found their own homes, and well –

Q: And they go back.

A: And then I was paid for it by the owners of the goats, and also they gave me milk, or some other things.

Q: Well, this is a question I had, when you were out in the pasture, could you milk the goats?

A: Oh jeez, no.

Q: No?

A: I could, but –

Q: You didn't.



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A: – forbid – God forbid, I would –

Q: Ah.

A: No, it was strict, strict, everything, you know. And they said, they – if you did something wrong, by their – well, I mean, if there – did something wrong, like maybe milk them, or so – it's bad, so you would be punished.

Q: Okay.

A: Severely. I would be pun – la – people there are really well aware, well behaved, because they knew that punishment was really severe.

Q: Okay. So, but you would be – you would be paid sometimes with milk from the goats?

A: Yeah, some – some people – but they were not paid, but they just gave me, maybe a pint of milk, you know, something like – some nice people, some owners maybe had two or three goats, so they would give us some milk.

Q: Anybody have any chickens?

A: Ah, yeah –

Q: Or was it too cold?

A: – yeah, yeah, there were – there was chickens too, yeah, yeah, good, except that oh you – you didn't have any food to feed them, so what, they were just feeding themselves.

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Q: I see.

A: But there was no feed to keep these chickens, so how many can you – I know that there were some families that had chicken, yes. We didn't. We did not have, my mother and we didn't have, or my father didn't. They didn't have anything, yeah.

Q: Did people –

A: Oh, coming back –

Q: Yeah.

A: – to you – you were saying, you know, how – how they dress and everything, my sister was also working in the – in the forest, cutting this wood down, just like man. So, during the winter, she would have those pants on her, and when she came home, they were like frozen like tubes.

Q: Really?

A: So she just let them out, you know, get out of this, you know, and put them by the stove to –

Q: Melt.

A: – to get warm, to dry. They were standing like you – just standing –

Q: Like a long –

A: – pants.

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Q: Yeah.

A: And it would just melt and dry, by the next morning it would be dry. Well, that was terr – in the summer it's okay.

Q: It's terrible work, yeah. I mean, you can – you can get sick very quickly from this.

A: Well sure, of course, that's why a lot of people lost health. Lot of people suffered later, the – you know, later in the life.

Q: From all of these conditions.

A: Having – God thank – thank God that it didn't last too long, because in 1942, we were freed. We were allowed to – to leave **Russia**.

Q: Well, I'll come to that, but before I do, I wanted to ask something about the relations between people – not the pe – not the prisoners and the administration –

A: No.

Q: – but between one another. Did people get – did you make friends there? Were people communitic – communicative? Did they share their experiences?

A: Yes, they shared, but there was no community life. Impossible, you know, everybody was just work and sleep in the log. Everybody – there were no social life, let's say.

Q: Okay.

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A: No gatherings, nothing.

Q: Okay.

A: And of course, people would gather to pray together, but it was just on initiative. But there was no church now, the – religion was forbidden, officially. But people would still get together to pray, privately.

Q: Did you share your log room with another family, or were you – did you have the whole room to yourselves?

A: No, we – we shared it with – with my brother

Q: Okay, who had lost his children.

A: – and his wife. Yeah.

Q: Okay. How did they – how were they coping? I mean, how were they – they had lost their children. Did it show, or did they – weren't they ab – did they – it – what – didn't matter.

A: No, they were just – I don't know, indifferent really. I mean, they – they suffered, but it was so common, every family would lose somebody. Every family that I know of, lost somebody. Or the father died, or mother died, or some of their siblings. Every family lost. So there was people – well, I [indecipherable] problem, and just very different, and they didn't despair, they didn't [indecipherable]. They were – of course they suffered emotionally. But nobody cared. Nobody cared.

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Officially, the Russians that were, let's say, in charge of that area, they didn't care.

You know, they were – openly said, you are here to – to – to die.

Q: And they gi – and people did.

A: Just like **[indecipherable]** say, there is a word, different word for it, animal death –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and human death. And they would say, you will die like an animal.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: **Podokneish**(ph). You can look it up in a dictionary.

Q: So let's come –

A: Ah terrible, ah yeah, terrible. And maybe I should also mention that where we lived, there were some Russians that were there before us, and I – they were from 1934 when – when **Stalin** deliberately starved a lot of people, or send them to **Siberia**. But on the other side of the river, there were just a re – remains of an old buildings. Nobody lived there, but it was quite a large area maybe, I don't know, like few blocks of our, maybe five, 10 blocks, completely empty, only ruins. And mostly what – what was standing were chimneys, because they were made of brick, and the fireplaces. Because in that old time, there were just fireplaces, and not like gas cookers, or anything like that. Just a box with a – with room for – for coal or

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wood, and a metal plate on top, where you could boil something. So only those things remained. And I used to go there, and looking for various things, and never found anything. But the ruins were there, large area.

Q: And do you know – did you ever find out what they were ruins of?

A: They – yeah, they were the people from way behi – way before. I mean, way several years. Let's say '35, and this was '40, so not – not that mu – long, you know, not that long.

Q: I see.

A: So, this – what do you call it? These – this whole area was completely dead, empty, because they say that some kind of disease fell over there. And just –

Q: Wiped everybody out?

A: – wiped everybody, right. So they – whoever was left, was moved to the other side of the river, and that's the – the new one, new area where we were –

Q: I see.

A: – placed.

Q: I see.

A: But that's only regarding this place where I was, **Shenchuga**.

Q: **Shenchuga**.

A: **Shenchuga**.

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Q: Yeah.

A: And the larger place was **Poduga**. There was a hospital there, and –

Q: And all of it abandoned. And all of it was abandoned.

A: It wasn't this part – yeah, this area was abandoned completely. Only ruins were there.

Q: So tell us what happened in 1942. You said – you were mentioning that you were allowed to be – to leave in 1942. What happened?

A: When – when the **Germany** attacked **Russia** –

Q: That's in June 1941.

A: June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, we suddenly became allies with **Russia**, because **Poland** had the government in **England**.

Q: Okay.

A: There was a government in exile. And we were allied with **France**, **England**, and some – **Ireland**, something like that. So we suddenly, since the Germans attacked **Russia**, we became ally –

Q: Okay.

A: – with the ru – with Russians. So the Russian says, now you are free, you're free. You can go a will – anywhere you go – anywhere you want.

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Q: Well, i-if you say that you found out in '42, it took half a year for you to find out. I mean, from June '41, di – the news didn't travel too fast.

A: No, it's fa – it traveled very fast.

Q: Oh, it did?

A: Except nobody took any action. We knew that **Germany** is at war with **Russia**, we knew that. And the Russian told us right away. It happened in June, but in – in si – August – in August, the Polish government in exile already had an agreement with the Russian government.

Q: How did this affect you in **Shenchuga**, in those months?

A: Well, they said, you are free, you can leave, you can go away if you want.

Q: Right away they said that?

A: Right – well, two months later, maybe.

Q: Okay.

A: Two months.

Q: Okay.

A: I can – yeah.

Q: So, no longer were –

A: Because it was in – in – in August that we were actually told that we can – oh, and they give us papers.



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Q: Okay.

A: And – certificates that we can travel anywhere we want, because before, we couldn't leave the area. But then we – everybody got the certificate, like a travel document or something like that, and people would leave. Some left right away, but we stayed there until June – no, June? No, no, January. Until January '42. On the new year, the first of January, '42, my family finally decided to leave **Russia**.

Q: And why did it take that extra number of months to make this decision?

A: Because they didn't know what to do, they didn't know where to go. You couldn't go back to **Poland**, because Germans overrun **Poland**, you know, they were at war with **Russia**. So – and where were – people were asking, what are we going to do? Said well, maybe we should move, maybe we should go south. And there – then, most of them did go south. But that was later.

Q: And did you still continue working under the same conditions after you were told, or did – were you given more rations, or were you – did your – did your everyday rhythm of life change, when you were told in August –

A: Well, it was only from a psychological point of view that we are free. But as – everything just went the same way.

Q: Stayed the same.

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A: Whoever – yes, whoever worked in the forest, you know, they worked in the forest, but they were treated differently. They were free citizens. We were free. So we had something to say, and we had some rights, let's say, at that time. Because we already had the Polish government in **England**, who was looking after our interests. So they were talking to the Russian government, and the Russian – Russian allowed more freedom, and better – better conditions and better pay, and everything else. They started treating us differently.

Q: So their behavior was different.

A: Absolutely, right. They changed. And like I say, me – a lot of people left earlier. Like my brother **Frank**, the second from the top, he left in August.

Q: Right away.

A: He left right away. Went to south, **Uzbekistan**, and we decided, I don't know why, but my mother and my father were not ready, or didn't know what to do. So we stayed until the first of January, '42.

Q: Okay. Your brother **Jusef**(ph).

A: Yes.

Q: Was he deported with you?

A: No. It was entirely different story, as I say. He was running that newspaper in **Równa**, and when the r – Russian – Soviet – **Soviet Union** came into **Poland**, they

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arrested him right away, and we never heard from him, until 19 – long, long – 40 – wait a minute? Forty-three? Forty-four? Maybe we didn't hear from him at all, we didn't know what happened to him. But now I know that he was arrested and sent to the – the – **Kolyma**. Have you heard of **Ko-Kolyma**?

Q: Oh yeah, **Kolyma**.

A: He was at **Ko-Kolyma**, working in the coal mines.

Q: I see. I see. And **Roman**?

A: **Roman** was with us.

Q: **Roman** was with you.

A: With us, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes. At that area, that **Poselok. Shenchuga**.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: So we left together.

Q: You all left together, except for **Franciczek(ph)** [**indecipherable**]

A: Only **Frank** left sooner.

Q: And he left becau – did he want to join the Polish army? Was this hi – his reason?

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A: Yes, exactly right. Exactly right, we – we didn't – we ne – found out that there is a Polish army being organized in the south of **Russia**.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's where we – most of the people decided to leave **Russia**, go south. And after we reached **Uzbekistan**, the army sort of extended their protection of **Russia**, and they took care of us, and [indecipherable]

Q: So how did you leave? Before we get to that point, how did you leave that **Shenchuga**? Was it – it wa – was it by sleigh again, or was it on foot, was it with a wagon? How did you leave?

A: No, from – from the **Shenchuga** to the railway station, we were by sleigh.

Q: Okay.

A: Sleigh. We hired it [indecipherable] or whatever. The Russians provided the transportation.

Q: Okay.

A: And then they also allowed us to use regular passenger trains, at that time, passenger trains.

Q: Not cattle cars?

A: No, that's right, and – and we didn't have to pay for the journey.

Q: Okay.

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A: So – but –

Q: And you went by train to **Uzbekistan**?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, to **Uzbekistan**.

Q: And then what happened?

A: And from **Uzbekistan**, we were moved to **Persia. Iran**.

Q: In what way, also by train?

A: Oh yes, they – it was by train. From then on, everything was by train.

Q: Okay.

A: Or – or no – part of it was just a freight train again.

Q: Yeah.

A: But under free conditions, you know, the better conditions and it didn't last that long, because it was fast, you know, they didn't put us on the side or anything, didn't have to wait. It was just from here to there, from – from **Gouza(ph)**, or **Jakobak(ph)**, there were to places on the south. We went to **Caspian Sea**, **Krasnovodsk** –

Q: **Krasnovodsk**, okay.

A: On **Caspian Sea**, and from there by ship to **Persia**.

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Q: Okay, before we get there, when you get to **Uzbekistan**, what kind of situation do you find there? You know, where do you go to – to make sure that you're in – you're –

A: It – there wasn't much problem, because when we reached **Uzbekistan** in February – it took two months to get from north to – to the south. That I remember, two months, by various means, basically freight train. So when they – when we came to **Uzbekistan**, Polish authorities, which were already trying to help this civilian population, say that we are going to move you away from **Russia**, into **Persia**. So, it was a very short period of time, only two weeks when – when my mother and sister and I was assigned to leave **Russia**, in March.

Q: Okay.

A: And since we came by the end of February, so only a few weeks. And we were already, as far as I'm concerned, ready to leave, and I fell sick with typhus. Typhoid fever. So they couldn't – they didn't allow me, because the transport was ready to – to leave **Russia**, to **Persia**, and a – we were assigned to this transport, but because of my sickness, I was retained there. Authority says no, you cannot travel, because you'll spread –

Q: Typhoid, mm-hm.

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A: – typhoid to other people. So they took me to a hospital, and my mother said, I am staying with you, I am staying with you. I am staying I'm – until you get well, and we'll see what happens. But my brother **Roman**, he was already in administrative position, he was trying to help all these civilian people get relocated, or taken care of, he says – he said, Mother, you leave with my sister, you go, and go to **Persia**, and I will take care of **Tony**. Or me. So don't worry about him, he will be all right.

Q: And what about your father?

A: Oh, my father died in **Russia**, we didn't say anything about that.

Q: No, let's talk about that. But first tell me about this, let's finish this, then – you – so you – did you – is that what happened, that your brother **Roman** stayed with you?

A: Yes, yes. And he says that he told Mother to go, that we – we will follow later on, because at that time it was this time on a lot of people were leaving, Polish people were leaving **Russia** under General **Anders**. I don't know whether it's familiar to you. He was in charge of the Polish army, which was being organized in the south of **Russia**. He was in charge of everything, civilians, and the military.

Q: Okay.

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A: So from then on we – we were really taken care of, because British were already helping to take care of the Pole – civilians.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Yes. So Mother and Sister left for **Persia** in March, and I stayed behind –

Q: With **Roman**.

A: – and took me to a hospital, and I spent there for two weeks in a hospital. And when I got well, I was released from the hospital and joined a Polish young soldiers. It was no – a sel – special unit being organized for the young people, say from 14 to 17.

Q: And you were then about how old?

A: I was 14 years, 15.

Q: Okay.

A: Going on 15. So I was accepted to this Polish young army.

Q: And – and your brother –

A: – ko – like a cadet.

Q: I see. And **Franciczek**(ph) had already joined the army? Your – the first brother, who left, already joined the army.

A: He – yes, he was already south, he was safe.

Q: Okay.



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A: He was safe, and he joined the army and then left **Russia** early. And my mother and sister also left in March, while I stayed behind until August.

Q: Oh, that's quite a while then.

A: Yes, quite a while, because then they stopped the transpor – transports. I don't know whose decision it was, but only a few thousand people left during the march – exodus I call it, let's say exodus. And then, until August, nobody left **Russia**. But in August they resumed leaving –

Q: I see.

A: – because General **Anders** was then in charge of the army and everybody that was there, and he negotiated with the Russian people, with the Russian authorities. So, in August they resumed, and they moved about hundred thousand people at that time.

Q: Huge number.

A: Huge number, but it was all concentrated. August – and mainly August, yeah, a lot of people left.

Q: And –

A: And then when – I also left **Russia**.

Q: What about **Roman**?

A: **Roman**, yes –

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Q: Also left at the same time?

A: – yes, right, yes.

Q: So let's go back now, and talk about what happened to your father. The last you mentioned is he rebuilt this beautiful house.

A: Yes, for the administrator there, the main them –

Q: Right.

A: – boss of that area. And then he started getting sick. And on – on the first, like I mentioned, on the first of January, we le – we decided to leave. And he was already very sick, very sick. But, we started the journey. And on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the journey, he passed away, during the journey. And it was **Perm**, a place near **Ural** mountains. He – he died, and I – I was, up to the last moment with him. We were talking, and he was saying goodbye, and you know, that – and he just gave up. And we left him on a platform, because when the train sto – I said, Mother – it was about one o'clock in the morning, I said, Father just passed away. Well, so the first time – the first thing, the train stopped at the station, I remember, the **Perm** station, you know. They took his body out, and put it on a railroad platform, you know, like there are tracks on large stations, so there are platforms between the tracks. So there were already about maybe 50 corpses on the platform, so we just took him. My – **Roman**, because we traveled together, and myself, and we just left him on the

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railroad platform, without – without funeral. We – we tried to get some kind of arrangement, but it was impossible, you know, there – it's impossible, just leave here, and a-as I say, there were already large heap of corpses there. So we just put some wrapping around him, left the corpse there. You know, it's – that was the **Perm** railroad station, because in **Russia**, there was just tru – you know, communication, rails. That – that was the main – main system of moving around, either freight train or passenger train, but passenger trains very, very rare.

Q: Was – you said he was saying goodbye to everybody in – as you were talking to him?

A: No, he was – we were – I was talking to him and saying goodbye. But after he gave up, then I – I woke my mother.

Q: Yeah.

A: I didn't know when he is going to have the last breath. I didn't know that.

Q: Yeah.

A: But it happened during the night, and I – I knew when it happens, and then I woke my mother, and – and I said, the first thing we stopped at the station, they put him on the platform, and – and he was left there, with others. But the death was the normal way there, you know. Inhuman, terrible to talk about. Nobody can understand that. We were treated – I can't even say. Worse than animals, by the

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Russians. They didn't care. Because it – that was **Stalin's** policy. You are here until you die, but in our case, we were – I mean, blessed that it – that we did get out of that hell. It was pure hell. People don't realize like – you know, no – no clinic, no doctor, no help. No, it – they – they didn't care. We die here or there, today, tomorrow. Nobody cared. Only you family cared, nobody else. The main thing was to get some food. That was the main thing and then I think that was **Stalin's** policy, you know, starve the people so they cannot do anything else but think about how to survive.

Q: Like you said, everybody left –

A: I – I don't know, I don't know. I don't know how to continue, because this is – this is the worst. Worst moment of the life.

Q: Do you want us to stop for a little bit?

A: Oh, I don't know. Maybe a little, how about –

Q: Okay, we can – we can –

A: – getting some water, or –

Q: Yeah.

A: – soda.

Q: Sure. [break]

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A: – the Germans were – were leading some prisoners along the road, from one place to another because they were, let's say, taken to do – do some work somewhere. Like dig ditches, or something like that, and th-they were going home, and there was a farmer bringing some potatoes. And some potatoes fell. A raw potato fell on the ground, and this guy grabbed this potato, and started –

Q: To eat it.

A: – eating a si – a raw potato. But the German pri – g-guard, when saw it, he shot him. And he was still eating when he was –

Q: Falling.

A: – falling, he was still eating that bre – that –

Q: Raw potato.

A: Who – who would believe something like that, that one man can do to another? Why – why – why did we have this concentration camp? Why they're so – you know, mean to each other? Why?

Q: Is that a question that you were asking yourself?

A: I want answer, why people fall for all, that they forget that they are human being, that they have soul, and responsibility. We – we are not vegetable. We are people with feelings, with soul. Those who believe, I don't know, some people don't believe that, but I – I believe. I – I'm a religious person. So I cannot imagine how

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another human being could be so mean, you know, to his fellow man. But I – I don't know. I've seen a lot in my life.

Q: Did you – did you ever question while – when you were there, did you ever question your belief? Did you ever think there – there can be no God, because a – what I'm seeing is so terrible?

A: No, this – then the – no, it did not occur to me like that, but I did question, you know, how can these people be saved, or something like that, you know how – maybe there isn't. But, if somebody commits such a crime against another human being, he has to pay for it. It would be unfair if these people who were so sav – savages to another people, went free. I – I cannot imagine that. So I think that there is – there must be some justice, oh, some justice that people will pay somehow, one way or the other. But maybe there isn't a way. Well, on the other hand, you know, this is probably not for social discussion.

Q: Well, actually, these are the key questions.

A: Question.

Q: Sometimes – the-these are the key ones.

A: Question that I have chance to raise with you, for instance, you know.

Q: Well, I'm glad.

A: But we discuss these things, we're friends, I mean, you know.

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Q: Yeah. You know, these are the sort of – like, these things that happened, and the people went through, they go to the basic questions of living, and of life. And the questions that you're raising, are the kind that we wish we could find answers for.

A: Yeah.

Q: We wish we could know.

A: Right.

Q: Because how else do you – how do you explain such cruelty? How do you explain such things?

A: Sure, yeah.

Q: You know?

A: Yeah. Well, I – I talked about it a lot, because my – my daughter is married to a American – not native American, but an American of so many, many years, let's say. So they – they often want to hear something of what I have to tell them, and sometimes, you know, I wonder if they ever get th-the real feeling what I have to –

Q: Share.

A: – share, yeah.

Q: Yeah. It's very hard for – for people in societies that haven't experienced something similar – individual people will be able to understand it, but the society

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didn't go through something like that, so it's unfamiliar for them. They haven't – they haven't gone through the same kind of historical trauma.

A: No, no, no, of course not.

Q: Yeah. But some do, and very well, and very deeply. Let's continue, and talk about your exodus. When you leave from **Krasnovodsk** –

A: **Krasnovodsk**.

Q: – **vodsk**, and over the **Caspian** Sea.

A: Sea.

Q: Tell me, what – what was that like? Was – were you on a boat? Were you on a – a little one, a big one? What di – what did it look like?

A: No, it – the journey was done on a oil tanker. There were –

Q: On an oil tanker, mm-hm.

A: – oil tankers, because they were out of those ships in that area. So they just put us on – on top, on – on the deck. It was all metal, and if you can imagine August sun beating in that area, which is south, real close to the meridian.

Q: Right, me –

A: It was hot, and the metal deck was really, you know, very, very hot.

Q: So, could you cook an egg on it?



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A: I guess, yeah. Maybe – hey, people said that they would – and a lot – and lack of water, that was very bad thing, because before got on that tank, we had these little canteens, so filled with water, maybe say a quart of water in there, and it – it – journey took three year – three days. So, that water didn't last long, and there was no water to get on the ship.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: So it was real – that was real bad, but we knew that we are getting towards freedom, we are leaving **Russia**, so everything was –

Q: You – you bore it –

A: – bearable.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: We – we were glad to. And after we disembarked in **Pahlevi – Pahlavi**, in **Persia**, well, people were just kneeling on the sand, after we got off the tra – off the ships in the port, and marched towards the transit area, where there were tents, large tents where we could, you know, relax, and – and one thing, there was one tent where the – everybody had to go through that. We strip – stripped everything down, left. Showers. New, fresh clothes at the other end of the tent, out into the freedom. That was like heaven.

Q: Was it? Was it?

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A: Yeah. You entered one, leave everything behind, and out the other side. That was – yeah. Beautiful moment. That's when we left **Russia**.

Q: Yeah.

A: After –

Q: So when you said people were kneeling, were they – were – were they –

A: Praying.

Q: Praying.

A: Praying and thanking God for – because we knew that everything was in past.

Q: Yeah.

A: That – because the British were taking care of us then.

Q: So what happened to you after you went the other side of the tent, and you got a new set of clothes?

A: New set of clothes, and I joined the – the si – they call them young people. It was just like a cadet level, you know, that area. And they gave us uniforms. They were like semi-military uniforms, and they drafted us into this – these schools.

Q: So you were 15 and a half?

A: Yeah, that's about right, yes. Well –

Q: Sixteen?

A: – 15 – 15 – '42. It was in '42.

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Q: August '42.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, two and a half years after you're deported, you're in **Iran**.

A: Right.

Q: You're in **Persia**.

A: In **Persia**.

Q: And so you started going to – did you see your si – did you make connection with your sister and your mother?

A: Unfortunately no, because they were always ahead of me. When I came to – to **Persia**, I found out that they left for **Africa** two weeks –

Q: Before.

A: – before we arrived there.

Q: What did **Roman** do? Did he join the milit –

A: **Roman** saw them. Because like si – I said, he was in administrative position, so he was taking care of these movements and how the transports were coming in, so he would register them, and say you go here, you go here, you know. So he had

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possibility to – to meet a lot of people, and he saw Mother and – and – and daughter  
– and – Mother and Sister.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they – they left for **Teheran**, and then from **Teheran** to – for **Africa**, but I  
never caught up with them until '48, in **England**.

Q: Oh wow.

A: After the war, a – that was well after the war.

Q: Wow, yeah.

A: Three years after war, '45, May '45, the war –

Q: Ends.

A: – ended. Sa – so we got reya – reunited in '48 in **England**, because they came  
from **Africa** to **England** and we all – the whole family got together, except Father.

Q: Okay. So what happened to you? What was your trajectory, what was your  
direction? You were – you started school, you say, and you were a cadet.

A: I call it a cadet, but maybe it's not the right way, because cadet is a little higher.  
But it was young, Polish soldiers, they called them.

Q: Okay.

A: Young Polish soldier, or boys' training school.

Q: Okay.

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A: Things like that. Those are the names that come up.

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: What did that inc – involve? What did that consist of?

A: Regular units. We were like military – paramilitary units, but we went to regular school, and also training – military training.

Q: Okay.

A: Both. Parallel, you know. Morning, learning geography, history, math, etcetera, in temporary classes. There were no, like schools, but there were some kind of areas where we would gather, and there were professor, or teachers. And we had notes, you know, notebooks, to take notes. And we were learning, learning all the time.

And then, further up, as we moved away from **Russia** to **Persia**, and from **Palestine**, then we started getting regular education, in regular surrounding, in nice classes, brick buildings, and – and it's – just went up. Up and up, up.

Q: Okay, so how did you – so that goes from August '42, September '42, until when? Until what time? What year?

A: Until '43, when I joined the Polish air force cadet school.

Q: Okay, and where did you join that?

A: In **Egypt**.

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Q: In **Egypt**.

A: In **Egypt**, and then we spent four years in **Egypt** attending this air force cadet school.

Q: So from '43, to '47?

A: Forty-seven, exactly, until the end of '47, when we were evacuated from **Middle East**, to **England**.

Q: And why were you evacuated from the **Middle East** to **England**?

A: Because war ended, and there was nowhere – no – no more si – army, no more units. Everybody was a civilian.

Q: So it wasn't some event in the **Middle East** that made you leave, that re-re – caused the evacuation.

A: No, no, but in the **Middle East**, we were under the British command.

Q: Got it, mm-hm.

A: And in regular camps.

Q: I had asked you earlier, had you ever seen a German soldier, and you said not then, not in the beginning when – when we were in your village, you know, near **Tarnopol**. But, at some point, did you see –

A: Yes, at some point in **Egypt**, when I saw – maybe it wasn't – he was a prisoner of war, because me – a lot of Germans were taken prisoners, you know, in the

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**Allemagne** campa – **Alleman** – **Allemagne** campaign, and **Montgomery** was fighting, you know, in **Africa**.

Q: North **Africa**, okay.

A: North **Africa**. **Libya**, **Tunisia**, there. So they took a lot of prisoners of war, and they were still in uniforms when I saw them, because we were guarding them then.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yes, we were – we were – had – our duty was to guard these gentleman prisoners.

Q: Well, that's interesting. So then tell – tell me a little bit about these experiences of guarding them.

A: Oh gee. Well, we – we were – we were just soldiers, we were – carried orders. I mean, we – I didn't have any animosity to them, or anything like that.

Q: Was there any communication?

A: He was just another person, he was another human being, so we – we talked, and everything.

Q: You talked to them?

A: But they were prisoners and I was –

Q: The guard.

A: – the guard.

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Q: Did you speak any German?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: No, I didn't speak any German. Few words, I – not – not even worth to mention.

Q: Did you commun – how did you communicate then? Or did you communicate with them?

A: By mimicking, or some of them knew some English. So – so, it was – if we needed to, yes, I talked to some of them. But there was no much communication. They were on the one side of the fence, and I was on the other side of the fence, and I was armed, and that's it. But –

Q: The – in the cadet school in **Egypt**, did you actually fly any – any plane, as training?

A: I nev – I ne-never trained for a pilot, but I trained for a mechanic, aircraft mechanic.

Q: I see, I see.

A: So we were servicing [**indecipherable**] I serviced – I have – I don't know, I have – I have pictures to show you, I have **B-17s**, the Flying Fortresses.

Q: Oh yeah?

A: American – American bombers, if –



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Q: Oh really? You were servicing –

A: – four engine. I was servicing –

Q: Okay.

A: – those planes.

Q: So, as the war – in the second part of the war, you're actually actively involved in the war effort.

A: In all war effort – well, war ended in '45.

Q: Where were you then? **Egypt**?

A: Forty-five in **Egypt**, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: So, there was a large British air unit, a huge maintenance unit near **Cairo**, and they – they would fly those partly damaged planes, or just brought them in some [indecipherable] and we had to fix them. So that's what I worked on, **B-17s**, was a maintenance pe-person, fixing engines and other parts that were – needed the repair. And after that, I was transferred to **England**, but it was already after the war.

Q: Yeah.

A: Cause I came to **England** in 1947, at the end of 1947. So I still was in the air force, and I still serviced the planes in **England**, until '48, when I was discharged, honorably.

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Q: And did you, during the time your family was all split apart, that is, your brothers are in the – in the forces.

A: Yes.

Q: Your mother and your sister in **Africa**, and so on.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you keeping up contact with one another?

A: Yes, yes, yes. I still have letters that I wrote, because after, you know, when I – after, or between, when I visited my sister in **England**, she had those letters, so I said, well okay, can I have them? She says yes. So I have the letters that I wrote to them –

Q: How wonderful.

A: – many years ago.

Q: How wonderful. And do you have the letters that they wrote to you?

A: And – yeah.

Q: So you have a complete correspondence.

A: Exactly, back and forth, I have a stack of them.

Q: That's very important to keep. Very important.

A: Well, I don't know whether important, but –

Q: Yes.

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A: But yeah, I do have that.

Q: And when – when – I want to ask two questions of – you know, sort of like –

A: Sure, no, go –

Q: – the particular moment that the war ended. Where were you when you found out the war is over?

A: In **Egypt**.

Q: And what were you doing?

A: In – in that Polish air force school.

Q: So were you actually in school, and the – somebody comes –

A: In uniform, yes, yes, yeah.

Q: And someone comes into the classroom and says the war is over. Is that what happened?

A: Well no, I think it happened in a little different occasion, I mean, it – I think it was over the weekend. Wasn't it Saturday, or something like that, when the war ended?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And oh, it was all over radio. We had radios there and everything else. Oh, war is – yeah, I was in uniform at that time, and we celebrated with the a – with the Americans, and there was a huge American base close to us, or we were close to

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them. And then there was amer – the English. So we all got together, we – we – we had a good time.

Q: Quite different from the beginning of the war.

A: It was a very, very joyous occasion.

Q: Yeah. And then the second moment is when – do you remember when you saw your family again in **England**? Was – what was that like?

A: Oh yeah, it was – I actually greeted my mother when she was brought from – from the port to the camp. There were civilian camps. Camps for the civilian population who was either in **Africa** or in **India**, they were all coming to **England**.

**England** decided to –

Q: Bring them [**indecipherable**]

A: – receive them, you know, offer them life in – in **England**. So I was still in the uniform in the air force, I was in the Polish air force, as a regular airman. And when they came to the camp, I was there, and I – you know, the trucks –

Q: Yeah.

A: – military trucks would bring those civilian people to the camp, and we just greeted, and she recognized me, I recognized her, of course, because we were corresponding and exchanging photographs.

Q: Mm-hm. But it had been six years. Six years since you had seen her.

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A: It's a – since '40 – '42. Yeah, since '42 where they left, yeah.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And – and they left in March of '42, sadly, yeah, that's where I was also ready to leave, but because of my sickness –

Q: You couldn't.

A: And then after they – one more thing, when I – when they took me to the hospital and I lost consciousness or – for two weeks I didn't know what – what was going on. And after I regained consciousness, I started looking in my ba – military pack, you know, backpack, and I found a piece of paper. You know, some official – official piece of paper. And I looked at it, and it looked like a telegram. So I looked at it closer. It wasn't for me, it was addressed it to my brother **Joseph**.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, and somebody, the military mail got screwed up, and they deliver it to me, while was in the hospital in **Russia**. And after looking at this, I say what – what is this? So I started asking, I say yeah, this unit is about five miles from here. So –

Q: So you knew – you hadn't known what had happened to your brother all this time?

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A: Exactly. That's – you know, when we met in **Russia**, after that, and I went to that unit, and he was there, **Joseph**. So again, by that mistake of the telegram being delivered to me –

Q: And what –

A: – instead of to him.

Q: When did he leave **Russia**? When did he leave the **Soviet Union**?

A: Well, in – in – in '42.

Q: But – in August, with the August transports?

A: Yes, yes, he left with the army, he joined the army.

Q: Okay.

A: Polish army, and – in the south of **Russia**.

Q: And what was his pattern? Did he go to **Palestine** as well, and to –

A: Yes, he – we went through **Iraq**, or **Persia**, **Iraq**, **Iraq**, **Palestine**. And from there they went to **Italy**, and fought the campaign –

Q: At **Monte Cassino**?

A: Yes, he was at the **Monte Cassino**, right, yeah.

Q: And where did he end up, after the war?

A: He was in **Italy** for a while. After the war ended, the Polish unit, because Polish second corps, under General **Anders**, was still complete, as a unit, in **Italy**. So he

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met his future wife there, in **Italy**. He – she was Polish girl also. So he married her, and the unit, the whole Polish corps under General **Anders** was moved to **England**.

And –

Q: And he ended up there, too.

A: – she – she came along, and they were already married, and then we were all let go, into the civilian life, and he started his own life in **England**.

Q: And your other two brothers – your other two brothers, as well?

A: The other two brothers also came to **England**, same way. Their wives came from **Africa**, they joined in **England**, and **Roman** and **Frank**, and we all got –

Q: And your two sisters?

A: – settled in **Wolverhampton**.

Q: And your two sisters, **Stanislawa**, and your other sisters?

A: **M-Maria**.

Q: **Maria**.

A: **Maria, Maria**. She – she was in **Poland** all the time.

Q: Oh, so she never got deported?

A: During the war. They – she never – she was never taken away from – from **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

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A: So she spent the war in – in **Poland**, and was un-until she died, only a few years ago. But yeah.

Q: And the rest of the family, everybody ended up in **England**, except your father.

A: Everybody, except my father.

Q: Yeah.

A: Who was buried – I mean, left in – in – in **Russia**.

Q: Okay.

A: But we had the reunion in **England**, yeah, we all got together. I went – I was already in **United States**, and my sister from **Poland**, **Maria**, came from **Poland**, and we all had a nice reunion there.

Q: And when was that, when you had the reunion, what year?

A: Oh, fa – four – 60 – wait a minute, 60 – '62. Sixty-two it was, 1962. Because she came from **Poland**. She spent all her life there.

Q: Mm-hm, yeah.

A: So, before that she couldn't get, but we just arranged –

Q: For 1960 – yeah.

A: – you know, to meet together in 1962.

Q: When did you leave for the **United States**?

A: In '56.



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Q: And why? Why?

A: Why? I don't know, I – it probably just a little stretched, what I am going to say, but **England** at that time – let's say I left **England** in 1956. After the war –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **England** became socialized – socialist – socialist country. And they really lean towards the left, towards communist. The – the socialist government under **Attlee**, Premier **Attlee**, etcetera, you know. And they were buddy-buddy with the Russians. And I say, well, let's get as far away as possible. So where we go? We go to the **United States**. And I was already married.

Q: I see, you married in **England**.

A: Yeah, I lived in **England** for 10 years –

Q: That's a long time.

A: – before I came to **United States**. But I think, at least, this is what I believe now.

Q: Okay.

A: And I tell people that it was too close to comfort.

Q: Too close for comfort.

A: No, no, I mean it was, anyway, because I thought **England** was getting too bar – too friendly with the Russians. And I said, who knows? Maybe they'll –

Q: They'll come back.

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A: – they'll take me back to **Russia**.

Q: And you moved to **Chicago**?

A: Yes, straight to **Chicago**, right, straight to **Chicago**.

Q: Okay. In the 10 years you were living in – in – in the **U.K.**, what – how did you support yourself and your family?

A: Oh, you see, I – I graduated from the university. I was a diplom – the diploma in mechanical engineering, and I started working. As soon as I finished the education, I started working as an engineer, with **Eveready** company.

Q: Oh.

A: And from then on, it was just real nice.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the same thing here?

A: Yes, and I came to **United States** on Saturday, on a Monday I was already in my position as a electrical engineer.

Q: Well, congratulations.

A: Over the weekend, because –

Q: Not bad.

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A: – they – yes, I – I had a agreement with the company that if I come to **United States**, they will hire me. But they weren't paying for my transport. So, I pay for the transport, came on Saturday, and Monday I was already working.

Q: Very few people can say that.

A: In – in – yeah, in **Chicago**.

Q: **Chicago**.

A: Yes, I – at **Midway** airport, we flew from **New York** to **Midway** airport.

Q: So, and here were your children – were you –

A: So everything – everything went fine after that.

Q: Were your children born in the **United States**?

A: Yes. Yeah, they –

Q: Okay. How many do you have?

A: Have a daughter, and – and a son.

Q: Okay.

A: Daughter – older daughter.

Q: What is her name?

A: **Eva**.

Q: And your son's name?

A: **Chris. Christopher**.

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**Q: Christopher.**

A: Yeah.

Q: And your wife's name?

A: **Teresa.**

Q: **Teresa.**

A: **Teresa.**

Q: Yeah.

A: There is a picture of her.

Q: A picture. Beautiful. Is there anything else you'd like to add to what we've spoken about today? Anything you would want your grandchildren, and other people's grandchildren to understand about what you went through, what you experienced?

A: Well, I – I must say that my two granddaughters, lovely two granddaughters, they are very intelligent, and – and they – ever since they were small children, when I was talking about my experiences, let's say to – to my son-in-law's family, he has a family in **Minnesota**, my son-in-law. So they were always interested in hearing my stories, just like now. Maybe not to the full extent –

Q: Yeah.

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A: – like now. So, as the – the – the little girls, they were playing somewhere, you know, etcetera. Then suddenly, they were asking me questions. Says, how do you know? Oh, I – I listen to you. Yes, and they are one in **Chicago**, and one other is in **Minneapolis**. Both very bright young ladies.

Q: And do they understand? Do you feel that they understand?

A: Yeah, I – I feel that they understand, yes. They understand, and I say – I was surprised, you know, how they ne – heard almost – I mean, they were never in the same, say company, they were playing somewhere –

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: – in the same room, though. But she remembered, especially the – the younger one, they say, oh **Dziadziu** – **dziadziu** means grandpa, yes, I remember how you were talking, you know, about your experiences, and – and they were interested, and still are, you know.

Q: Here's ano – here's a question I don't often ask, but what would you want the young people of their generation, who live in **Russia**, to understand about what you went through? Because they won't hear about it yet from history books. They may at some point.

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A: Yes.

Q: But what would you want them to understand about this experience, these years that you spent there?

A: I don't expect them to really understand, but I would like them to know how fragile is the human character, or something, that you know, people can change from being very nice, to being really like an animal to one another. Which I think you have to be conscious of it and be careful, because you never know what these people are capable of doing to one another. This is, unfortunately, my experience. And I – I hope that this will never happen to anybody, the way it happened to me. But they should be aware of the human frailty, or human – I don't know what it – what it is really – that is capable of changing the character of a – of a person.

Q: That we have it in us, and even if we don't know we do.

A: I do not understand. I do not understand how can people be so mean to each other. They can be a friend and they so mean.

Q: Yeah.

A: It – it's – to me, it's against the human nature. People should be friendly to each other, helpful. Extend your hand, if you can. Don't – don't push away the extended hand, or be friendly. There – there is no friendliness among people. And that –

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that's very disappointing. Very disappointing. I – even now I says, why do people fight each o-other, all over?

Q: And these are the things –

A: There – there are some bad, bad people, like the – you know, those terrorists and everything say, but they are bad, they are criminals. But I'm talking about the average person.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, average person. He can be so nice to you, and you can be friend, and everything. Something may happen.

Q: Well –

A: And they – they destroy each other, or th-they are mean to each other. Then that hurts me. The meanness of some people. I think I am very friendly to everybody. I am. I'm sure of it.

Q: Thank you for sharing all this with us today, despite the cost, and I know there is a cost to it. And I appreciate that openness, and that generosity.

A: I'm very – oh, I am happy that there is a person who wants to listen to it.

Q: There is. And not only me.

A: And understand – try to understand.

Q: Thank you. Thank you very much.

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A: You see, I am 88 years old. How can I influence anybody?

Q: It's amazing. I think you can. It's amazing how people can. And I appreciate your trying.

A: There is not a lot opportunity.

Q: Mm-hm. Well, I want to thank you for this interview today.

A: Well, you're welcome, and I – I thank you, that you listened, and recorded it.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And I'll then say that this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Anthony Chudzik** on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in **Westchester, Illinois**. Thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

Q: Okay.

**Conclusion of Interview**