

## **Danguole Gabis**

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### **Abstract**

Danguole Gabis was born Danguole Puronas in Kaunas, Lithuania on August 7, 1929 where they happen to be visiting. Her father worked for the Lithuania Border Police. She was brought up in Žeimelis with her brother, Romualdas was born three years later, and her sister, Gerda was seven years later. In the summer she visited her grandmother who lived on a farm and could not read. Danguole enjoyed reading books in the library where her mother worked. Her father lived in another town and joined the Lithuanian partisans. They left Žeimelis when the Russians came. The children were first placed on separate farms and then together on the uncle's farm. Her mother slept outside the home but returned to feed the animals and was deported. She returned from Siberia 15 years later and did not know where the family was nor did the family know her circumstances as they were never told. When she learned the family was in Chicago, the mother got a visa and went to live there in '65. She was emaciated and unhappy and could not adjust. Meanwhile, Danguole and her father, siblings and aunt moved to Svencionys near Vilnius a Polish area and Danguole attended school and her father was Chief of Security. She knew of very few Jews in the area including a classmate. In the Summer of '43 her father was arrested by the Germans and put in prison in Vilnius. When he was released, he moved to Perniwiges (?) in '43 or '44 and she was in Kupiskis with her siblings; they would take a train to visit the father. Then they escaped from Lithuania by train to live in Bavaria, Germany. At first they lived in a hotel and then with a Lithuanian priest. After the war, they entered a DP camp until they were able to get a ship to the US. First Danguole worked as a mother's helper and then attended college where she met her future husband, Stanley Gabis, a Jewish/American. They had three children and Danguole did not speak of her war experiences but her daughter, Rita, was curious and found out that Danguole's father deported Jews in Lithuania and published a book on it in 2014. Danguole had never heard talk of her father's duties. She is happy living on Martha's Vineyard and showed a few old photos of her family.

### **Summary**

00:00 Danguole Gabis was born Danguole Puronas in Kaunas, Lithuania on August 7, 1929. Her father worked for the Lithuania Border Police. Her parents were visiting the uncle in Kaunas when she was born and after she was born they lived in Žeimelis. Her brother, Romualdas was born three years later, around 1932. Her sister, Gerda was seven years younger and born around '35 or '36 and just turned 79. Her mother was Ona Martinaviciute and her father was Pranas Puronas.

- 05:00 They did not live near her mother's family as they were not close so lived near the father's family who they were close to. Her mother's mother was dead and Danguole met her mother's sister in Kaunas when she visited her Aunt Julia at seven or eight. Julia was divorced and had two sons, one was a priest. She met him when he came to visit her on Martha's Vineyard and is now deceased. She first met him when she was living in Chicago and he was a priest in Oklahoma. They took a train to visit him. Her father's sister took care of them when her mother was deported. Danguole visited her in New Jersey and the cousin visited them there. Her father was fond of the mother but the mother was not fond of the father. Danguole finished Gymnasium when they lived near Palaveny (?), a large town in Lithuania. They lived on a large farm and were fairly well-to-do. There were two brothers and two sisters, five in the family.
- 10:00 The father's sister who lived in Kaunas had married well. One was a nun briefly and left to get married and she visited them. To get together with the family was hard as you had to take a train which was expensive and find a place to stay. Her mother had a baby that died, then the brother, then another baby who died and then the sister. Her father worked on the border, usually the Latvian border and, when they lived in Žeimelis, her mother worked in the library. Most of her mother's family was well-educated. Her father's family were farmers. His mother had 12 children and she could not read or write. Her father seemed bright so was sent to school. They lived in Flunge (?), south of Žeimelis in NW corner of Lithuania near Latvia. Her father's family was not wealthy.
- 15:00 In the summer, Danguole visited her grandma who lived with uncle Danielus. Another uncle lived too far to walk to. Eight of her grandma's 12 children survived as four died in infancy. One child immigrated to South America. Danguole's sister was in touch with him until he died. The rest lived in Lithuania. Danguole never met all of them. The farm was measured in hectares and was not large. There was a big oven in the kitchen to bake bread. There were other buildings. There was a barn for the animals and one for storing grain and had a summer bedroom. The kitchen had benches and a large table where all the meals were served. Danguole spent most of her time in the kitchen. Servants worked the fields. There was a bed with a stove in the big room, a smaller cool room for smoked meats, a hallway with a bed and a bedroom. Only the aunt, uncle and grandma lived there when Danguole visited. The land was divided up so the others had their own houses. Eight children grew up there and her father was in the middle of the eight.
- 20:00 Daniel was younger and Ulna was older. Peter was older and Paul was younger. He married a woman from another village who had no brother so she inherited her parent's barn and property so Paul had a larger farm. One of her father's sisters married a drunk. He visited her after the war. Maria was the youngest. Her paternal grandpa was already dead when she visited. Danguole liked visiting the farm as everyone was nice to her. She had freedom to go to the fields and see the mowing and raking of the hay and would play in the hay piles. She went to the farm with her brother and sister or just the brother

when her sister was too young. Her grandmother, Barbora Jucyte, was a lovely, kind loving woman. Her grandma thought her pretty except her dress barely covered her butt as it was too short.

25:00 The village women wore their dresses below their knees. Her grandma worked in the kitchen where she smoked meats and made cheese. She was religious and went to church most Sundays in Palavinera (?). Her grandma wore long clothes and a kerchief tied under her chin. Palavinera was a small town with two stores and a home for the priest. On Saint's Day, everyone brought food to church and after services, sat on the grounds and ate. They served a nice sweet cheese she liked. Uncle Danielus, her youngest uncle married a seamstress who went from farm to farm to do the sewing. It was not a rich life but a good life. The family was close. On holidays, they visited each other and had a good time. Her father was sent to school. In 1918 he fought for Lithuanian independence with the partisans and did not farm. All his siblings could read and write. Her grandma carried a prayer book to church which she could not read. She had a pretty flower garden. Danguole was too little to work, not even to wash dishes so just played. Her brother was three years younger but tall so liked the twins and spent a lot of time together.

30:00 Danguole was in town after she learned to read. She loved to read. At 8 or 9, she took books out of the library where her mother worked and sometimes hid them as they were not appropriate such as romances. She liked Karl May, a German writer who wrote about American Indians though he never saw one. He glorified them. His works were translated into Lithuanian. Danguole would play "Cowboys and Indians." Her father fought from 1915 to 1918 in the war for independence. The family was nationalistic like the Lithuanian schools where the children were taught to read and write in Lithuanian. Under the Czar's occupation, it was forbidden to print books in Lithuanian. They would print the Lithuanian books in Prussia and smuggle them across the border to Lithuania. They could be punished by the Czarist agents if it was found out they had Lithuanian books. It was a good feeling to have your own books and own government. The people's lives concentrated on farm, family and the weather, not on the government.

35:00 They did not welcome a foreign country taking over Lithuania. The Russians came in 1918 when Lithuania was separate and the Czar was defeated. They had no TV and only listened to the opera on radio. After the Communists took over Russia and started a war, Lithuania declared independence in 1918 and her father went to fight. Her father was born in 1890s as was in his early 20s in 1917. Her mother told stories. Her parents met somewhere away from the farms when her mother was dating someone else

40:00 She found out that her boyfriend was cheating on her so married the father to spite him. It was in rebound so it did not make a happy marriage. Her mother felt the father never accomplished much as not ambitious and happy-go-lucky. Her mother felt she made a

mistake in marrying him. She would tell her friends and Danguole heard her talking. Her parents argued about money. Her father had a relationship with someone so her mother did not respect him. It was not a happy atmosphere. Her parents did not visit each other. Danguole believes her father loved her mother but did not measure up to her expectations. Her father was easy-going. Her mother did not love him. Both parents were very caring for the children. She leaned toward her mother but her parents did not bring disputes in front of the children. She heard that her father was not working hard enough and not supporting the family enough. She never heard her father talk against her mother.

- 45:00 Her mother was hard. Her father was more open, loving and fun. Her mother did not play with the children. She made sure the children looked good. You can see in the photo the children wearing red velvet outfits. Her father was not a disciplinarian. Her mother had to do the hard work. Her mother ran the library as they needed the income. Danguole loved the library. Now she cannot read without a machine. On the corner of the street was the Market Square where they held Market Days and the farmers sold eggs, animals such as horses and farm produce. There was a Jewish bakery on one side and on the other side of the corner was the library. It was a one-story building and had her mother's desk and bookcases in a large room. Danguole would ask for 10 cents to go to the Jewish bakery and buy a sweet made of gingerbread in the shape of a mushroom and had icing on top. It was an easy life. There were no other buildings in town. Nearby in Žeimelis (?) was a nice Lutheran church. It was far west near Latvia, Oshtatia, a small town.
- 50:00 She read Chekhov as an adult. The town reminded her of Chekhov's stories as it was a little provincial town. The Chief of Police's wife was her sister's G-d mother and one Christmas gave her a beautiful doll that could open and close her eyes that made her jealous. Danguole was always jealous of her sister who they said was a beautiful child. When Danguole was growing up, she adored her and wanted to be like her. She got along with her brother but her sister did not count so she tried to avoid her. She visited her grandmother Barbara in Palaveny which might have had Jews. There were more Jews besides the owner of the Jewish bakery. There were Jewish holidays and they all wrapped themselves in garments and went to the river that ran through the town. The children told stories that the Jews used the blood of Christian children for their baking at holidays.
- 55:00 Her family did not have prejudices but there was a separate feeling. Someone arrived and he was a banker or a lawyer and her mother said to invite him to a dinner party. They served pork as did not know that he was Jewish and he ate it. She never heard her family say anything bad about the Jews. The Jews were separate and knew little Lithuanian but knew enough to run the stores. There was a butcher and a grocery where they bought her mother's cigarettes. If you wanted clothes made, you bought yard goods and the seamstress made it. There were Protestants and a Lutheran Church and maybe a Jewish

Church. She had a Jewish girl friend in school who was a little older than her. She went to her home which was nicer than hers but it smelled funny; maybe it was garlic which they did not use. They lived in Žeimelis and rented an apartment and left when the Russians came. They did not own their own home. They moved to a rundown place with a small stable in back of the yard and no grass. They had electricity, a radio, and a telephone.

60:00 Nearby was a train station, a post office and the police station. They hardly used the telephone as there was no one to call since the farmers did not own one. The Police Chief seemed like a bigger shot than her father, maybe because they had no children. The townspeople had friendships in their own social class. They had jobs and no political demonstrations except on February 18<sup>th</sup>, the Day of Independence. There would be a parade, her father dressed in uniform, school was closed and there were speeches. It was cold and miserable. People went to church though they were not very religious. They were baptized. Her mother made her a pretty white dress for her First Communion with flowers on the sleeves. There was no celebration at home. Her father did not live with them and got a job elsewhere. He moved to an adjoining town and visited them. Her mother was in charge and her father contributed. There were no cars in town.

65:00 Everyone came to town in a horse and sleigh in the winter with the children holding on in the back to have a ride. It was dangerous as they could fall off and be trampled by the horses. It was a safe town. She was never afraid that someone would steal from her or beat her up. No one in her family spoke of politics. Her father was with the Border Police and went on patrols as he was in charge of stretches of the border. He rode on a beautiful horse, "Lyla" and checked on patrols. Every six months a supervisor arrived and he presented documents that her mother filled out. Her father did not have to go to work every day. He did not have an office. He was either at home or on inspecting borders. In the spring, they had a bright pocket made of birch bark filled with tiny strawberries called, "Jam." They went by horseback to visit the grandma. Her father showed up in Žeimelis as there were rumors that things will be bad in '38.

70:00 The Communist Regime began August 7, 1938 at 9 o'clock when Hitler and Stalin signed the pact. Her family did not listen to the radio so did not hear of it. They just knew the Russians took over and that President Smetona ran away without fighting. It was a disgrace and people made up songs when the Germans entered, "One is black as the devil and one is red as a dog, you don't need Berlin and you don't need Moscow." The library was still running and school was running but the "Young Pioneer" started. There was clamor about Communism and the new common man. Some people in town were happy that all would be equal. The farmers were concerned as they were required to deliver a certain amount of food, grain and animals to the government and get paid very little. Slowly, they would have to sell land as they won't have enough to deliver to the government. The land will belong to the State and all will work there.

- 75:00 Danguole and her mother's lives remained as before as she went to school, her mother worked at the library and her father was unseen. He showed up to assure everyone that he was alive but then disappeared. Before deportation, he came home. Maybe people knew that something was going to happen. Her parents got in touch with the uncles and they came and took the three children to their farms. She did not see the Army in Žeimelis. No one lost their stores. There were no more market days. Her mother said that it was hard to get meat and there were other shortages in the stores. She did not see newspapers as her family did not read them. She did not know about the new Communist government. There were no changes in the town. There was a patriotic feeling. They wanted independence. They did not want anybody else, no Russians. It was sad that Lithuania was not independent and part of Russia.
- 80:00 There were Communists in town but no flag raising. Before deportation, her mother did not want to leave her apartment but did not sleep there as there were rumors that war was coming. The Russians demanded more from the farmers and store owners. The population felt uneasy and uncertain what was going to happen. They did not like the Russians. The uncles came from the farm with horse and buggy cart and her mother said they were going to the farms. This was not usual though it was June (/41) and they always went in the summer. Deportations started June 14, 1941 and a week later, the war started. They were taken to the farms. The population felt rumors or spies thought the Soviets were being pushed out by the Germans. Most people felt that was good as the Germans were religious. She stayed with her uncle for a week and then was taken away as the uncles distributed the children among other farms. She did not know where her siblings were. None were with family members. She did not know why.
- 85:00 Maybe it was because war was coming. Her family had an earth cellar to enter if they were bombed. Danguole does not remember the family she was with. They were kind and good to her and did not tell her what was going on. She wanted to be with her brother and they said she could not. When the Germans came, they were taken to another farm with another uncle and the three children were all together again. It happened in a few weeks. Her father joined the Lithuanian partisans and her mother was deported. They thought that's why something was going on and they were sent to different farms. Her uncle found out her mother was deported when the Germans came. Her aunt, her father's oldest sister Ulna, was going to an adjacent farm. She walked on a little patch and someone was working on the land.
- 90:00 The man said, "I hear Poronas (her mother) was taken away and the aunt said, "Sh." Then the aunt told her that her mother was deported, that the Russians took her. They never went to Žeimelis. Her sister went back years later and found the apartment. She said the brick stove was still there. Danguole saw her mother when she came to the US.

Forty-nine years ago, in 1965 they got her out. The family found out she was back in Lithuania from relatives in the US who were from the same village and corresponding to relatives there. In turn, her mother found out they were living in Chicago. When her mother returned to Lithuania, she did not know if the family was alive. By that time, Danguole was married to Stanley and had her third child.

95:00 Her mother came to the US and stayed with the sister in Chicago. Danguole and her family saw her mother 49 years ago. She only had two children upon hearing her mother was alive and sent her gifts. Her mother lived in Klunga and Guarda and it was difficult to send anything to the Russian region. They sent her yard goods to trade. She had a tiny home owned by the father's sister and exchanged the goods. She worked in the Parish as a Head Cook but basically lived on what they sent. Her mother bribed authorities for a visa to the US. Her parents had never divorced. When her mother arrived in Chicago, Danguole was living in Columbia, Missouri. Her brother came from Kansas with his wife and they all greeted the mother at the airport. It was close to Christmas. Danguole stayed home as her baby was sick. Her sister said they recognized the mother when she arrived. Her mother said that when she flew from Russia to Switzerland, she knew she was safe. Her mother was first in a prison where she was interrogated and badly beaten as they wanted names of Partisans and she did not respond.

100:00 The camps were in high mountains and it was difficult. Her mother had training as a nurse and caught TB and almost died. She worked in the fields. Sometimes people in the area left packages of food in the fields for the prisoners as they knew they were starving. A cat appeared and no one ate it so they were living better. Her mother did not hear from the family for 15 years while she served as required by her punishment. After she completed her service, the authorities said she could remain and work as a nurse for pay but she wanted to return to Lithuania. She was released in 1956 and lived in Flunga as her sister lived there and was given housing. Then she came to the US and lived with her sister, Gerda in Chicago. Her mother was very thin, somewhat gray, and emaciated. Gerda took her to the doctor and they said she seemed starved. Her mother was not happy as she missed having her own place. She did not like living either with Gerda or herself. Later she lived with her husband and died when living with him and the brother.

105:00 Danguole's sister bought a house in Park Ridge where she is now living. Her mother broke her hip and could not climb the stairs so the brother took her to Kansas where she had a one-floor house. Her mother seemed like a complete stranger and unhappy no matter what was done for her. Nothing pleased her. She was not unhappy when Danguole was growing up except she did not get along with her husband. Danguole does not remember her mother laughing, smiling or meeting anyone with joy. Something in her character and the deportation and arrest affected her and the inner sadness was always there. Her father was very different from her mother. Her mother died in Kansas around New Years. Her brother called that the mother was in the hospital so she called and her

mother said she did not feel bad. Her mother's English was no good but someone spoke Polish (and her mother also knew Russian) and she died the next day. Her mother had lived in the US about 10 years and was about 80 when she died. Danguole flew to Kansas for the burial. Now, both her father and brother are dead and buried in Kansas on a sweeping hill and you can see as far as your eye goes. It is a good resting place, very quiet.

110:00 Danguole does not know why her mother was deported. It was not specific but she was not the only one from town taken. Also the mayor and his family were taken. A small daughter who was staying with her grandparents was left along and she grew up and came to the US. Maybe they tried to pick up the better educated who might have caused a problem. Danguole never heard of anything about her being picked up because of the father. There was no reason given to anyone taken from town. They were just picked up. It was a massive deportation from all over Lithuania and they were shipped to the Soviet Union. Later, her uncle said that his family was deported in the 40s after the war. There was no particular charge to anyone. They often separated small children from their parents and gave them to Russian families to raise. This was a rumor and might not be true. No one explained it to her why her mother was taken. She missed her terribly.

115:00 Her sister who was seven years younger also missed the mother terribly. They thought the mother must have done something. Now, Danguole would question such a thing but then she was small. There was war and no questions asked or answered. She never saw Soviet soldiers before her mother's deportation. Her mother was not staying with the children. The three children were separated and they heard the Russians left and the Germans came. People were glad to see them as the Russians had confiscated farms and imposed regulations and thought that at least the Germans believed in G-d. (Danguole recites a Lithuanian poem.) "Neither Berlin nor Moscow are dear to me, one is black as the devil and the other is brown as a dog." She got reunited with her siblings on her Uncle Damalus' farm in Palėvenėlė. Then her father appeared and she saw soldiers. Her mother and the children were not at home so they were not picked up. Her mother slept elsewhere but came home early in the morning to feed the chickens before work and was picked up. Danguole learned this 25 years later from her mother.

120:00 Her mother said they were moving to the town of Svencionys where her father would be head of security. He said he would be a bigger boss than the Chief of Police. He said this in Lithuanian. He wore plain clothes except wore a uniform when he worked for the Lithuanian border police. They left Žeimelis and did not live with him. Her father did not wear a uniform which seemed strange to her. They moved to Svencionys was near Vilnius. They moved into an apartment with furniture. She did not know anything. She went to a nearby school. Her g-dmother, her father's oldest sister, came to live with them to replace the mother and, sometimes, the grandmother came. Her aunt was very religious and went to church and took them on Sundays. Danguole had no friends. She



met a few classmates. One would come over to play. It was a nicer home than in Žeimelis. It had more room, nice furniture, a garden and a flower garden. They rented it. Her daughter, Rita (?) looked for it but it had burned down

125:00 Danguole assumed they had a Lithuanian government as the Russians left. The Germans were there to protect them from the Russians. It was a quasi-Lithuanian government. She liked her school. The children were friendly. It was a Polish population in town and in the school. Classes were taught in Polish. Previously, lessons were in Lithuanian. The area around Vilnius was in Polish hands after 1918. When the Communists came, part of it returned to Lithuania and part to the Germans. Danguole and her aunt visited a priest in Vilnius that the aunt knew. There were lots of churches there. Vilnius was far from Žeimelis. Many other people were also being resettled. The whole country was resettled. It was not unusual to have to move and start elsewhere. There was nothing for her in Žeimelis once her mother was taken. She had to go to school so she could not live on her uncle's farm. It was not a disaster to be moved. It was only hurtful that her mother was not there.

130:00. She liked the aunt but felt that her mother was more worldly and more sophisticated. Her aunt was a very religious country woman and kind. She has warmer memories of her grandmother. Her father had an office that she did not see. Whenever saw German soldiers around. She knew few people in town. She only knew her aunt's friends at church. The Parish Priest gave a huge elaborate Easter breakfast and invited people. Danguole was involved with the church and got confirmed in Vilnius which had been Polish. Everyone spoke Lithuanian at stores, restaurants and at school. She did not meet anyone in school that spoke Polish.

135:00 Danguole's education was not restricted. There was gossip that the Germans were against the Slavs. The Poles were Slavs but the Lithuanians were not so they might have gotten preferential treatment. She took piano lessons. Things became difficult. Food became scarce. You could not get meat or got very little. They had rabbits, hens and geese. She never went to the store to shop; probably her aunt did all the shopping. She was never asked to do chores such as make the bed or help in the kitchen though she was the eldest. Her father disappeared a couple of days or so or was drunk. She had never seen him drunk before. He talked loud when drunk. He never talked politics. His manner did not change to the children. He was always very gentle and she felt that he was unusually proud of her as thought she was smart until the end of his life. Her sister, Rita, and Gerda were considered pretty. There was not much shopping. Clothes were made over and changed. She had one girl friend from out-of-town and after school she might come over to play.

140:00 This lasted just a short time. Now looking back and knowing her father's history, perhaps people avoided them because of her father. At the time, she had no idea. She

was living in an unfamiliar place where she did not know the people. She was in a new school where she did well. Danguole found out information from her daughter's book which was published in September 2014. The Germans occupied Lithuania from '41 to '43 and then the Russians returned. They left Svencionys and moved to Kupiskis because her father was arrested. From her uncle's farm, she went with her brother and grandmother to Svencionys and her uncle picked her up. The summer before the farm, she was taken out of town and placed in a wooded area by a family for a few weeks or a month and then they all left for the uncle's farm. At the end of the summer, it was school time and her uncle rented an apartment for the aunt and the three children in Kupiskis, a new town for a new school. At her uncle's house, she heard that her father was in prison in Vilnius. Her uncle had found out. She felt it unfair that the Russians had taken her mother and the Germans had put her father in jail. There was a school break for a holiday in the fall and the aunt wanted to visit the father. Danguole went with her but found out that he had been released.

145:00 He visited them and then went to Pomenshis for a job. Danguole spent two years at that school. Her father was arrested the summer of '43. She attended the Schvenpinish School. There were Poles living there. She knew Vilnius and the area after 1918 was for the Poles. When the Communists occupied the area the first time, the area was returned to the Lithuanians. She felt they had bad luck. She did not know there were Jews in Pomenshis as she did not see a synagogue or Jews. She did not know if there were Jews in her school. Her uncle, aunt and grandmother never told the children the fate of the Jews but they might have discussed it. The children did not ask.

150:00 Perhaps they were scared. In Svencionys (?) they did not meet any Jews. When they arrived there, perhaps the Jews had been rounded up and moved out. Jews were supposed to wear a Jewish star or ribbon but she never saw anyone wearing it. She did not know what was happening nor thought her father had anything to do with it. She did not know precisely what her father's job involved. He was in Security Police. She remembers an incident they talked about. Two Germans were driving in a car near Svencionys with a translator. She did not see them when walking to school or town. She did not feel safe anywhere. She never found out why her father was arrested. Danguole knew there were partisans in the woods. She asked the Germans if she could go to the woods to relieve herself. The partisans shot the Germans and they were arrested by the Germans. Brown shirts were in town and came to her house and spoke to her father. They said he would be better off dead. She heard that people were shot because of this incident. The Germans picked up a couple of men either Poles or Lithuanians and shot them. They were not Jews but were shot at the Jewish cemetery and Danguole was afraid. She does not know why they were shot or if they were buried. The Germans disappeared again. She did not feel a strong German presence in Svencionys or did not see them when walking to school or in town.

- 155:00 The whole system of justice was nonexistent. It was the rule of the government that was in power. You could not give any excuse. You could walk on the street and get picked up. Whatever happened to the Jews, no one knew why. It was just another crazy thing that happened. It was a hard life, a difficult time. Now in US, she is happy and does not lock her door but for a long time did as did not feel safe. Her daughter's book, "Guest at the Shooter's Banquet" was about her father's role in World War II. The interviewer read the book but Danguole did not want to know her daughter's progress until the book was finished. Rita and her husband came to visit.
- 160:00 The book is about life in Svencionys and the war and that period as her daughter felt the answers were not satisfactory. If such a thing happened here, we would be up in arms. Danguole was young and the country was having one invasion and then another. Things were not stable. You just stayed with your family and minded your own business and didn't ask questions. It's what she overheard. She thought her daughter did a good job. She wrote a beautiful work. She is a good writer and did as much research as needed and wrote about things that happened. Danguole respects her daughter's research and knew her father as an adult and was his favorite. She loved him dearly but he was vain. He was not mean or cruel and could have easily fallen into place when he did things to promote himself. The book said he went very far to do that but it was never discussed at home. She had no idea what a Chief of Security duties would do as she never knew anyone in that job. At the interview, it was said that he sent orders to pick up Jews. If it was in Žeimelis and knew Jews disappeared, it would have been curious to be arrested or taken away. It was in a larger town and did not know there were Jews residing there.
- 165:00 Her father liked to drink with others, not to drink alone. He drank alone or at someone's house. The book had information from the relatives in Svencionys who were interviewed and said Poles were shot. Danguole did not know what was going on with the Jews or her father's part. Later she learned what happened and thought of her father in his position so it is possible that the book's story could have happened. After she came to the US, she married a Jew. Danguole was a student and he taught US government. At first she was not interested in her future husband, Stanley Gabis, but he told her what was on the test and she got a "C." His grandparents came from Belorussia. They were married in a little Lutheran chapel on the University grounds in Chicago. Stanley knew the Minister and she wanted to wear a white dress and not go to City Hall.
- 170:00 The Minister was willing to marry them. Her father wanted her to marry a Lithuanian. Stanley's parents had no religious tradition and she just had a Christmas tree. She did not think it strange to marry a Jew and there was no disagreement from her father. A Lithuanian would have had the same language and history. Stanley was American. She knew more of Jewish customs than he did. Stanley had no food restrictions. He never asked her about what happened during the war. She and her sister lived in Chicago and had Lithuanian friends. She attended the University and was friendly with an Arab. She

did not talk of World War II as it was an unhappy time. There was confusion with her mother gone. She lived with her religious aunt who raised her which she did not like much. She had to learn to hide as her father was arrested and they left Lithuania in a hurry. They moved to Perniwiges (?) in '43 or '44.

175:00 Her father was there and she was in Kupiskis with her siblings and attending school. Her father had an office job with no uniform and they lived in a small apartment and she would spend a day or two with him. They took the train back and forth. Danguole did not know what kind of work her father was doing; perhaps he was with the police, government or army. In Kupiskis life was on an even keel. There were shortages and she wanted a goat. Her grandma and aunt got a pound of bacon and she traded it for a goat which she sometimes let into the house. The goat climbed up the sand pile and said, "nah nah." Danguole left her goat when she left the country. The Russians were coming and her father was in Peniwiges. He got word that the aunt and the three of them were leaving. They took the train, perhaps with her father, and reached Western Lithuania near the Baltic. They lived on a farm in a house deep in the woods where they remained several months. Her father went hunting for deer. She and her brother went into the woods with him. There was a path and her brother made lots of noise to get the deer into the open. They found a package in the wood with a parachute and brought it to the farm and opened it.

180:00 They found lots of Deutch Marks; perhaps it was a drop for the Russian partisans hiding in the woods. Shortly after, they divided the money and loaded up a cart and left for Germany. They crossed near the Prussian border over the Namanus (?) River in the evening. Her sister remembers her saying, "Oh, what a beautiful sunset over the river, wish it was not war." The Russians were on their tail. They crossed with lots of other people. The Brown shirts were pushing them but they were able to cross. After they crossed, the Brown shirts put explosives under the bridge and blew it up to slow down the Russians. She does not like to think of it. She rather think of her glorious old age with her little dog. She was in a horse-driven cart. One night they slept in a barn and her father woke them up and said to move as the shooting was too close. They got into the cart with Una, the aunt, her father and the three of them. They saw German soldiers leaving and later saw bloody German soldiers returning.

185:00 They reached a town further east than Konigsberg and got to the railroad station in Gorlitz. They got on the train with their packages and went as south as they could go so when the war was over, they would not be in the Soviet zone. They wanted to be in the American zone. They got as far as Bavaria. They had money but no one wanted it as Reich marks were not worth anything. Her father got a job in Benbrun (?) on a farm. It was beautiful. They lived in the Parish House with a Lithuanian Priest as the German Priest was ill. His sister was the housekeeper and she slept with her in a huge feather bed. Food was scarce. She saw only old men and little boys. They were not far from

Ingolstadt (?) near Munich. She heard an American plane flying. It was lined up on top of the church to bomb Munich. They stayed there until the end of the war. In the garden, she looked for flowers and saw a jeep. They went to a DP Camp that had a soup kitchen for refugee children from Lithuania. They put nationalities together in the DP Camps.

190:00 They did not want to return to Lithuania because of the Russians. The Russians sent a delegation interviewing everyone they were staying and what brought them here. The children were told to say because their parents came and the interviewers left without the children. She had attended Istadt (?) Gymnasium for four years. The other school was in Ingolstadt (?). Her aunt was the first one to get to the US with the help of the Truman Doctrine whereby you had to have a job waiting. She came through the church and settled in Jalesberg (?), New Jersey. Some people went to Canada and Australia. She wanted to go to Australia as it is a long ride and thought it would be interesting. She came on the General Hershey Army Ship in March 1950. Danguole's father had to get permission to emigrate and have a job guarantee. Danguole was in no hurry to go to the US. She finished Gymnasium and moved to Ingolstadt (?). The three of them and her father went to the camp at Bremerhaven for awhile and then took the ship; to NY.

195:00 She did not know English. The cook on the ship said to see the lady when they got close as it will say, "Welcome." Danguole did not see the Statue of Liberty. In New York they waited a long time with all their belongings. The aunt had asked the son of the family that she worked for to pick them up and take them to Jalesberg. She worked in their tavern where she was given a room. They had not heard from the mother and did not know if she was alive and she did not know if they were alive. They traveled on their own to the Midwest. First, Danguole had been a live-in maid in New Brunswick for a nice family, the Jacobs They had a son, Alex, who was six and the mother had miscarriages so had to go to bed and hire someone to take care of everything. Danguole was hired and was driven there and she did not know any English and the man called her, "Gloria." When Danguole was married with a 19-year-old son, she returned to Lithuania in the 80s. She returned with Guarda when Gorbachov ruled.

200:00 Her father did not tell her anything when she married nor did she ask nor did Rita ask when young. She asked when she grew up. Danguole knew what happened to Jews everywhere (Lithuania, Germany, France) that Germans went. She had no clue in her father's role in that. She did not think that he was working for the Germans. She did not know that Security Police was a German position. She did not see many Germans around. They got to Southern Germany and stayed in a little hotel in Murva (?) and they could buy food in a restaurant. They were only served watery soup and no butter. She took her marks outside the village to buy bread and said, "Brot Kafen." It was late fall and the grounds were covered with beautiful pears dropped from the trees. A farmer gave them beautiful ½ loaves of bread, smoked meat and pears and would not take any

money. Maybe he just saw two bedraggled children and did not know the worth of marks.

205:00 She said that when she tells a story, it sounds remarkable but it was very ordinary in the ties she lived and the places where she lived – all was very usual. There were 100s of stories like hers in those places. Most of the people envied the people in the West and had good lived. She feels she had a good life. She did not have any serious illnesses. She was never wealthy and never very poor. She can't see much now but has a great deal of help here where she lives. Perhaps the past influenced the present but she does not think of it. Her brother is now dead but when he was alive, he remembered. Sometimes they talked of things with the sister but there is a seven-year difference. They talked how it was in Germany and how it was here when they first came to the US as they did not know English. Her sister finished high school here. Danguole does not think of her life as extraordinary or difficult or tragic. She considers herself lucky that she is here, has a house that she can take care of, has good people around her and that Lithuania is free. They are probably fighting about the government.

210:00 She is great friends with a Jewish man who she'll probably marry in the Spring. She changed her name to Rachel and he thinks of her as Rachel. She used to have dark hair. Now it is blond and fashionable. She is not as curious and searching as Rita. David is OK and works for Boston University. He saves money to retire and live on the Island. Many things happened and she was lucky. She was able to get out of Lithuania, lucky to come here, had a good marriage and ended up on this Island in this house was not bad. (Danguole shows photos with her brother, Ronaldus and her sister, Guarda in '37 in Žeimelis. Second photo is of her father in uniform on the cover of "A Guest at the Shooter's Banquet" by her daughter, Rita Gabis. A third photo is of her mother in Lithuania in the book after she returned from Siberia. A fourth photo is of her father.)

215:00