

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Wiesław (Wes) Orłowski
August 15, 2018 & May 23, 2019
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PREFACE

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WIESŁAW (WES) ORLOWSKI **August 15, 2018 & May 23, 2019**

Nancy Cooley: This is United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Wes Orłowski being conducted by Nancy Cooley on August 15, 2018. Wes, can you start off by telling me your name at birth.

Wiesław Orłowski: I was born, my original first name and last name sounded and it still does, Wiesław Orłowski. My middle name is Josef. In about 45 years ago when I was already in this country, I acquired a nickname Wes, because it was easier for Americans to remember. So returning to my date of birth, I was born on May 17, 1935. I am 83 years old now. I was born obviously before World War Two in a small Polish town which was about half and half, Polish Catholics and Jews, mostly Orthodox. The, one of the most important things to know about this town that was a very historic town which these two religions coexisted with the best harmony one can imagine. There are no recorded incidents of any conflicts between these two religions in that small town. And the town was located about 20 miles southeast of Warsaw. My mother came to this town in 1929 or 1930. My father was born in nearby and lived most of his adult life in that, in town, or in concentration camps or in western Poland where he resettled.

Q: What year were your parents born?

A: My father was born in year 1905 and my mother was born in 1910. So and they were, my mother came to town as I said from southern Poland which used to be called, before 1918, before Poland regained its independence was called **Galicja** which was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Those who know history will know that Poland didn't exist on the maps for about 125 years. And when it regained independence in 1918 was made up of three previously partitioned parts – Prussian on the west, Russia on the east, and Austro-Hungarian Empire on the south, which included Galicja.

Q: How did your parents meet?

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A: My parents met most likely if I can recall it well, in the post office of **Góra Kalwaria**. My mother was a teacher in nearby village. And my father at that time was working in the post office. My father was a bachelor at that time and he had great ease of communication with people so I am not surprised that they met. They married in 1931. I have beautiful picture showing their wedding and I was born four years later. My father was an accountant. He worked in the bank for some time and also in post office. And my mother was grammar school teacher. She was really gifted and praised by many parents for her exceptional human skills and ability to communicate with children and motivate children.

So my first memories were started with the age about three. When my father was assigned a job, temporary job outside of our town and I was sent to the store and I already at that time had a good sense of humor. I was kind of the cracking jokes which I believe were told to me and then I think I remembered, but I'm not sure which is it. My first major shocking experiences were related to the war because in 1939 at the beginning of September, when Germans were bombing Polish cities and they attacking Poland from the west, Warsaw was attacked relatively early by bombers. And although there was only 20 miles between Warsaw and Góra Kalwaria, German bombers apparently made mistake and they were looking for military objects. They bombed the residential part of our town, although there were military barracks on the other end of the town. They were all made of bricks, covered with the yellow shingles made of clay. And from the air they could have looked identical to the big hospital area which was next to my house. So they made a mistake and they dropped several bombs and one of them landed very near of my house where family of 11 people, escapees from Warsaw were hiding in. The escapees from Warsaw when they thought, they saved their lives by running from Warsaw. However, German bomb dropped on that house killed all of them, ten of them were killed. Only one person was saved.

Q: Before we get too far into your memories of the war and the beginning of the war, can you tell me more about your family background. Your father's family and where they came from as well as your mother's.

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A: So starting with my father, my father's family was -- it's a long history cause one of my uncles was keeping the history of our family. Unfortunately this book which was, hand written book, which was keeping notes was destroyed after the war. But what I remember was read to me was that Polish kings nominated in 17th century, one of our ancestors, he was a general, **Yosef Orłowski**, as a commander of old town which had the medieval walls around it. And then there was water around, I'm missing terms.

Q: The moat.

A: The moat. And this structure survived for several centuries, defending eastern territories of Poland against the invasions of Tartars and other armies which were trying to conquer Europe from east.

Q: Was it in Góra Kalwaria also? Or outside?

A: No, Góra Kalwaria was more to the west. On Vistula river. Góra Kalwaria was in east located on the western shore of Vistula river which was the main river in Poland, running from almost the border with Czech republic and now was Czechoslovakia at that time to Baltic sea.

Q: So where did this ancestor live?

A: They, some of them they lived in this area. Others lived in, which is called Ukraine and my great grandfather was participant in 1970, 71 uprising against Russians.

Q: 1871.

A: 1870. There was called **Postalistichi Novy** [ph]. In translation its January uprising that was 1870, 1871. And he was caught by the Russians and sent to Siberia. He was very intelligent man and he learned Russian quickly. He changed his physiognomy by starting a beard, side burns and hair style and acquire false documents and he run away from this camp. And then was traveling mostly by foot. Sometimes working as a handyman on the way to earn some money for

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food. But it took him 11 and a half months by foot to get from Siberia back to the area which he lived near Warsaw. Meanwhile, all his property including quite an amount of land was confiscated by Russians so he had to start his life from square one.

He managed to have two children, a boy and girl which were raised by somebody else because he became ill and he died very shortly afterwards. So I still visit his grave when I am in Warsaw and one of the – pardon me.

Q: What was his name?

A: His name was **Saldwan** [ph] which was normally by Polish kings was Josef and my grandfather was Karl and the one which is at the cemetery – what my memory now escaped. I will recall it, during this conversation. So –

Q: Does your mother's family have a colorful past just like that?

A: Just returning to my father, to my grandfathers. They came from an impoverished nobility of medium kind of the level they had their own coat of arms and everything was recorded and my uncle was keeping these records which unfortunately were destroyed.

On my mother's side. My mother came – my mother was raised on a small farm in the mountains. She I would call it, she was a mountaineer. I was visiting this area many times after the war and I met all her cousins. Family was rather big and when my father was born he was the oldest. He had three sisters. My mother had one sister and four brothers. And there were two or three who died because of the illnesses of the time and bad medical care obviously. So it was I would say strange combination of the history of these two families and I have to admit that my parents were not the best matched couple, as I see it, especially from the distance of time. However, I loved my both parents and when my father was arrested in 1943 in Warsaw, he was traveling between Warsaw and Góra Kalwaria often, and trading with different items. One of the most important items he was trading was golden coins because those who know life in Poland, during the occupation they would know that everybody was trading, even children. There was either barter or cash. Everybody knew value of everything else. All was illegal. Germans absolutely didn't allow trading unless it was sanctioned by them, by stores which they would

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approve and you have to be either confident or some other, doing some other functions, useful for Germans. Or the trades was illegal. And, but everybody was really smuggling to survive. Jobs were very scarce. Food was difficult to obtain. Even if you had money, you couldn't enter the store and buy what you wanted. So my mother was an early – when my father was traveling between Warsaw and Góra Kalwaria, my mother was very involved in social movements. My mother was involved in the trade union, the labor union, teachers labor union. She was demonstrating in 1937, 8, I know from her memories. I was too small to remember that. There were demonstrations for higher salaries, for better working conditions and so on. Partially successful. During the war my mother relatively quickly joined underground movement which was led by Polish government in exile in London. It was pro-western, it was called **Armia Krajowa** [ph] in English. Actually it was AK in English was national army. Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about your mother's occupation as a teacher, what she taught and her role within the community?

A: Before war, my mother was teaching grades one to five, I believe, four or five. And she was teaching all basic things. Usually teachers on that level they didn't have specialty so she was teaching history, geography, Polish language, less sciences. However, during the war, Germans -- it was very lucky that in our town there were somehow more liberal. And we had two schools and each was – had classes one to seven. However, what I heard at the same time in different parts of Poland, they were allow, the classes were only from one to four. And obviously they would allow teaching history, geography, anything which would enlighten people. They wanted Poles to just read and write and do the basic calculus. They didn't, the all middle schools, all universities were all forbidden.

However, there was a lot of underground schooling. There were regular classes in people's houses. Some of them denounced, people were arrested. Torture sometimes. There were all kind of sanctions, but many, many of the schools because of the solidarity between the people.

Everybody was interested having the children educated in spite of German restrictions.

Most of the schools I would say survived and there were all different levels. Diplomas were given. Exams were passed. It was just very normal and popular for -- and people were chipping in, in different ways.

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For example, the parents of this – for example my mother was giving tutorials after the regular school hours. There were, different kids are coming different days, different hours to my house and my mom was teaching them, helping them to catch up to the level which was expected and there were either less talented or they had harder conditions at home. Parents which are uneducated and they couldn't help them with homework. So my mother was fulfilling that role. And well she was paid with real goods, usually food. Like farmers cheese, homemade bread, eggs, carrots, onions, chickens sometime which was already plucked and ready to cook for soup or whatever.

So we are relatively, relatively and there were periods of time when there was shortage of food, where there were no tutorials and they depended on detention and what was happening outside where, especially at the beginning of the war and just before the end of war, when they were first uprising in Warsaw ghetto and then Warsaw uprising of 1944 which were major upheaval for the Warsaw and the near surroundings where we lived.

Q: Kind of the beginning of the war, do you remember hearing about the war, hearing about the tensions between the Germans on the radio or the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany?

A: We're not allowed to have radios.

Q: Before the war?

A: Before war, yes. Oh you're talking about before war.

Q: Yeah did you have any sense that a war was coming before September first?

A: Yes and no. There was some talks but most of the population were kept in the belief and that included Jewish population. I mean all citizens were kept under belief that if Germans attack. It was considered a, such a possibility, French and English are going to attack from the west because there were international agreements signed between the governments who were the western powers declare that if the Poland is attacked they are going to attack as well.

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However, what we learned later and obviously Hitler and his intelligence services had very good recognition of the mood and plans which French and German had and that's what I learned was later obviously when I was four, five, six years old I didn't know that. But I knew it shortly after the war. Germans kept 92 percent of their armies in the eastern front and there were absolutely vulnerable from the west. And Poles, Polish army and civilians were defending Warsaw for several weeks. Warsaw was encircled by German army but there were organized resistance. There was some weapons, ammunition and arms to protect Warsaw against the German army and it was very harrowing defense. However Germans had superiority in the air. They were bombing and they had superior tanks so in spite of the barricades and all these fortifications which were built around the outskirts, on the outskirts of, of center of the city, was conquered after several weeks.

Q: What was the response from your parents when the war began? Was there any talk about fleeing the area and going elsewhere?

A: Yes, it's very good question because what happened here. After the first bombs were dropped on Góra Kalwaria, there was real -- start to be just somewhere else. Germans are attacking them. They come here eventually or maybe Polish army would defend them. Maybe French and Germans would attack from the west. The whole resistance was hinging on that promise cause otherwise Poland realized it, its population realized that they didn't have any chance because the Germans who had huge amount of the very well, well trained, well equipped, quite modern arms, artillery, airplanes and so on.

And so what happens here that my parents at the very beginning, after the first bombing, organized a group of families, perhaps was six, seven people in that group, plus the owner of the big truck, Mr. Victor **Balitzky** was his name. We packed our belongings within hours. Packed our belongings on the top of the truck and we are running towards Russia to escape Germans. On the roads and roads were narrow, whole traffic was mostly towards east. And there were columns and columns. Sometime trucks which were rarity. Small cars also rarity. Mostly was carts pulled by horses and people loading their belongings and there were columns as long as you can reach by eyesight. What German fire, the planes were doing. They were running along, flying along these roads and from the machine guns and also small bombs they were dropping on these convoys. So whatever it would have and we could distinguish between Polish aircraft and

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German aircraft. There was something different. And my task on the top of the truck was to look to the west and watch and listen for the sounds and I was the one who was bringing attention of the adults and then what people were doing, they running quickly to the left and the right side leaving truck in the center of the road. And they were hiding in between the potato or rye or wheat you know whatever we could – or trees if it was nearby. And we're sitting there waiting until they go away because they came for a couple of minutes and they were gone and then maybe next time, whether it will be the same day or maybe three times next day. It was nothing regular or they are not – unpredictable. This way we reached Russian borders which was Soviet Union at that time but we called it Russian. And since Russians enter Poland from the east on September 17, we were at that time in Russia already, not deep.

And we are ordered to go back towards west, towards Poland itself which was still Poland but it was already occupied by Russians that territory. And not many people know that the Russia took more territory in 1939 or September than Germans took before that. However the population density was much higher in the western territories which were eastern territories. Also eastern territories had much more minorities and so and Russia started to resettle Poles to Siberia, or to west, Kazakhstan, towards Siberia. They had to, were less organized than German but they had trains which were equipped with pig, with cars adapted to transport pigs. There were no passenger cars. And they were sent to which they later was called Kulaks, gulags.

Q: During this evacuation and when you were listening out for the airplanes coming, do you remember being scared. I mean weren't you frightened?

A: Well scared is understatement. I had you know my shorts full of almost and – you know I mean?

Q: Did you comprehend it?

A: How, you know what's a child's reaction when he sees front of the plane going towards you and kind of the almost aiming at you and they were coming very low sometime so when they're coming low we are definitely out of truck already, but was very, very scary experience and one which you cannot forget til the end of your life.

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Q: Do you remember what your parents told you? Do you remember them communicating with you at this time?

A: They were scared by themselves so you know this is the time when children mature much faster than their chronological calendars. During the war my father was already in Auschwitz. My mother was part of this underground movement and during the day quite often when she was at work, my house looked normal. There was nothing unusual but on occasion, once every week, every two weeks on an irregular basis, we have a crew coming to our house. Crew, and those are the members of the same underground movement which my mother belonged and they were coming with the radio transmitter, receiver in pieces.

Some of the pieces were hidden in our house. Some of -- they were bringing and putting together in minutes literally and they are starting communication by Morse code with radio base which was located on the outskirts of London.

And they are communicating forth and back, sending information which is coded also besides the Morse code. They were also using some coded, so it was not easy. However, Germans knew about these stations, that they exist. However, they couldn't easily find them because they are villages, small towns. They couldn't be everywhere all the time so my task was that as soon as the station was ready to go, I was told to go outside, although I remember some time the Morse code I can hear it today (sound effects) are the key. My task was to go outside and I had friends who were fulfilling similar role, although some time they were, didn't know all the details, because we didn't talk among our self, all the details for obvious reasons. And was to look for the German, they look like a pick-up truck today, but it was a low truck, small truck, which dipole antenna which, the antenna which allows to determine from which direction signal is coming, from that station. So to determine where is exact location of that station, of the transmitter, they had to have two measurements from different angles. And then on the map they could identify very exactly which, almost which house, that this transmitter was located.

So my task and my friends' task was to detect existence of this German trucks nearby and notify my mother one to another one were standing on the corners of the streets. So within seconds my mother knew there is a truck nearby. And my mother was running inside of our house and telling the crew. They were taking apart that radio station, hiding whatever they could, take the rest of

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them and they obviously they are not running around the streets. They are going in the back of our house, through the orchards. Orchard to orchard. Orchard to orchard, never going through the town itself, but on the outskirts, through the dense whatever the forest and usually there were no Germans in this area. Besides they knew exactly where the concentration German where police headquarters. When they come into town they knew exactly where to go and not to go.

Q: How many times do you remember seeing a truck and having to warn your mother that it was coming?

A: Fortunately, not even once we detected this truck at the time when a radio station – yeah, I saw these trucks but at that time there was never that station in my house. So we were lucky. This same crew which came to us several times, we learned they were shot when they were jumping through, were escaping and they were machine gunned. They were decimated, all of them, two or three were coming to our house when another crew was coming. But they were detected and killed in some neighboring small town.

Q: It was a different town that that happened.

A: Yes, they were going from town to town through different places on irregular basis, unpredictable for anybody else but they have their own system will allow them to coordinate with the house owner and having this system of people who were protecting them from. In this one case the system failed obviously and they were killed.

Q: I'm sure you talked to your mother at some point, especially after the war about her experience. Did she share with you how she got involved with the underground movement?

A: Yes there was, my mom was very friendly with the principal of the school at which she was teaching and his wife was teacher as well. And this lady, she was the head of that women's division in support of other girl fighters cause my mom didn't have, she didn't train. She knew how to shoot but she was not really specially trained. And there was not a role for the women. There was mostly role for men. The women had a lot of supportive roles. One of them, for

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example was, and there was, as a part of underground movement, but also as the interest of my mother. Because as a teacher she had a lot of Jewish kids as her pupils. By average, her classes was around 50 percent of the kids were Jewish, before ghetto was created in 1940. For, and it existed for about half a year. So my mom had a lot of good acquaintances, I wouldn't say closest friends. But a lot of people who respected her and from both religions and including Orthodox Jews who, many of them they were sending their kids not only to **cheder**, Jewish school, but they sent them to the public schools, to the Polish because they were doing business. Most of the stores in our town were Jewish owned. There were excellent relationship between both religions and as I mentioned no accidents. So my mom was involved and at the very beginning there was a lot of smuggling going between Warsaw which was the biggest center where you could get food. Or from countryside farms, to the ghetto in Góra Kalwaria. Ghetto in Góra Kalwaria was very unusual because it did have sections with the barbed wire fences. However specially during the night, the traffic was unbelievable. That somehow people were able to bribe the guards which were part of **Judenrat** organization which was set up to communicate between Germans and the Jewish population.

Q: So the guards were mostly Jewish?

A: Jewish with the bands on the arm, civilian or semi-civilian dressed but during the night was like a shift and I had a friend who had the, his house windows were looking at the ghetto fence. And I had to pass, my house was located less than half a mile from border of the ghetto.

Q: What streets was the ghetto on?

A: **Piarska, Pewsitskago** [ph]. They are descriptions of that. For example, I – a good friend of my mother is a gentleman who died recently. His name was Henrik Price. Here is article about him. And I was admiring him. He ran away from ghetto. And there is one recording in Holocaust Museum which you sent to me, the -- you are there, and his, the general's name is **Felix Kartman**. He describes in much better, in greater detail than which I wouldn't be able to describe what was going on inside because I was not inside Polish of non-Jewish, non-Jews were not allowed to enter.

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Q: Can you tell me more about your mother's involvement in the underground movement and some of the tasks that she was given to do?

A: So one of the tasks my mother took and also she was assigned later officially by the underground movement was to find people who would be actively involved in smuggling food to ghetto, either from country side by her knowledge of the farmers who were parents of the children which she was teaching at the school. Or people who were traveling regularly or willing to travel to Warsaw and bring some items which were not regularly available locally. And there is too many names to mention here, but they are people still alive, my peers or people who are already recorded in the archives of Holocaust Museum, like Mr. Felix Kartman and Mr. Avram Henrik Price. There are You Tubes, they are very detailed interviews with him. He, I was -- my mother was on very good terms with him. Last time I visited him about ten years ago, and I spoke to his sister a couple weeks ago by phone. This gentleman died in the age of 101 and a half. Unbelievably strong physically and mentally. He describes his life in great details and there is so much to be learned about his life and the life of other people.

Q: So your mother worked with him?

A: My mother worked with him after the war in different organizations. But my mother knew him and he knew both my parents because I talked to him about my father especially from before war. He knew my father quite well. So –

Q: Did your mother ever go to the ghetto when she was trying to get food into the ghetto from all these farmers?

A: As I mentioned, the non-Jews were restricted. They couldn't, they were not allowed to enter. So but, through mutual friends and mutual acquaintances there was quite good communication and again, in spite of German regulations, people tried to conduct normal life. By normal life I mean people are working in ghetto. People are trying to preserve food, to sell items. Everybody believed in the ghetto that this just, just temporary solution, that they would be resettled in a

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different place. They would be saved from – people didn't want to admit that this is any of kind of the organized massacre and they are going to be killed. Everybody had hope and as you well known that kept people going and living because once you remove the hope from human beings, the whole life doesn't make sense.

So obviously there were moments when people becoming depressed or they stop to be positive and optimistic, but there was role of others to keep the spirit alive and so there were all kind of preoccupations, including small theater, singing groups, educational aspects, organizations were getting together and having discussions.

Q: Outside the ghetto or inside?

A: Inside, everything inside the ghetto and unbelievable overcrowding. People were living sometimes eight, six, eight up to ten people in one room. Incredible. And but this gentleman like the three people whom I am well familiar and I knew them, was Henrik Price, Felix Kartman and **Heinrich Mayevsky**.

Q: So they were friends of yours who were in the ghetto?

A: Those are the people who were able to escape, hide and they were able to survive and they returned to Góra Kalwaria after. Out of three, around three and a half thousand Jewish people who lived in prewar Poland, that's were people who were able to –

Q: Did you have friends who were in the ghetto?

A: Not in my age and not my classmates. But they were like friends of my friends. A lot of people who I knew because of my parents' acquaintance being there. Or there's very interesting story. My, one of my three or four best friends -- they live in this, closer to center of town. And they had a house with several rooms. My friends and his last name is **Ptak, Witold Ptak**.

Q: How do you spell that?

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A: P-T-A-K which in translation means a belt, a belt.

Q: And his first name was?

A: His name is Witold, W-I-T-O-L-D. Witold. I was quite often visiting him. And one of the reasons was that his grandma was doing excellent white **barsht** which is like made of it's like a sour dough soup, kind of, I don't know how to translate it even in English. It's made of the sourdough bread which is added some aging, you know like you make kefir. Ferment. Went through the process of fermentation. So to get the essence of that I was coming to their house and bringing empty bottle, like one liter bottle. I was paying for it, whatever was asked. And then it was like a broth for making a soup. Potato was added and one of my (part of our?) when my mother was in school I was doing the cooking. I was preparing dinner. And my mother and – I was six, seven, eight year old but I was preparing dinner. My mother came from school quite often and either dinner was ready or not much left to finish the dinner.

So this, my friend's uncle which was brother of his mother's, mother's brother. He fell in love with a Jewish girl. At the beginning of ghetto when she was surrounded and she was forced to resettle and live in that ghetto, she escaped, like a lot of people did. But not high percentage. And she, and it was interesting that people who were escaping from ghetto, they either tried to be in countryside which was easier to hide. Living with a farmer like this gentleman, Henrik Price. He was adopted. He got the false document and he was adopted by a family of farmers who had son of similar age who didn't return from war. He was part of the Polish army and he didn't return. And this family adopted Mr. Price. And –

Q: What happened to the uncle's girlfriend?

A: She, when she escaped from Góra Kalwaria, she went to another ghetto in a small town on the other side of the Vistula river. There was no bridge so you have to be, there was some special people who for a fee they took you in a small boat, one p, two persons, three people that could fit on that ferry so it was just basically like a major canoe. And a long stick and that's the way they got on the other side of the river. The river was quite substantial and you could get in troubles if you tried to swim across. Anyhow so she went to another ghetto which was much more liberal so

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to speak, much easy to get in and out and so on. And then again she escaped from there because he was able, he was working at the cemeteries of smaller towns and he found on the grave a name of the Polish woman and her name was **Yanina**, fitting the age. He went to the priest and he got falsified document for the name of Yanina, I forgot the name.

And she was under that name til they got married, this couple but meanwhile there was not the end of this story.

Meanwhile she was sent under the falsified name and there was Jews, not as much as non-Jews. They were sent to Germany to work on the farms because Germans were short of manual, menial workers. And so a lot of Poles, depending on the historian, but their calculation at least one million Poles worked on the farms in Germany during the war and were obviously all forced. They were paid a little bit, tiny bit, given food and shelter and many of them survive. And to the extent that the family of bakers who owned the bakery, German in the small town, they loved her so much that they were being ordered. They wanted to give the bakery to her. However she didn't want to stay in Germany. She returned after the war to Góra Kalwaria and she married my friend's uncle. Her name is Salome, or **Solika** they called her, her real name and again I forgot her real last name. But they had two children. They have children again and my friend was baptizing. You know he was –

Q: The godfather?

A: Godfather, exactly. He was godfather of one of the children of that Solika.

Q: Were a lot of people in your town sent to work in Germany?

A: Surprising, surprisingly I cannot recall many, but I know many others including my cousins which I visited later in Belgium. My cousin met her husband who came from Belgium. He was of Polish descent. She was of Polish descent from Poland. They married and they settled in Belgium and they have two daughters and I visited them after the war several times in Belgium. Not from our town. Somehow if they were, I was not familiar with them, a small percentage but I heard there were many, many others who went and they return. A lot of people in our town were in hiding. I wouldn't say majority, definitely not. But in my family one of my cousins was,

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most of the German occupation he was just hiding. He was not at home because if he showed at home he would be either denounced or he would be sought by police and he would be arrested.

Q: Why?

A: Because they had records. Either they beat somebody, some German and they runaway and the police knew who was he, came home. He was gone. So luckily they -- nobody got, the Germans didn't care the other members of the family but he was gone and he stayed alive. He is 90 something.

Q: What's his name?

A: His name is **Dietsich Kralska**. He was kin to my grandpa. My grandma was Kralska from her maiden name before she got married.

Q: Spell his last name.

A: Kralska, K-R-A-L-E-W-S-K-A. Kralska. Zuzanna, Z-U-Z-A-N-N-A.

Q: So that was your grandmother was –

A: Grandmother or my father's mother.

Q: We haven't talked about your father very much.

A: That's right so my father was arrested in Warsaw. And miraculously.

Q: Before that, so that was in 1943 that he was arrested, but before that what was he doing during the beginning of the war?

A: He was traveling between Warsaw and Góra Kalwaria but then more and more he was staying

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in Warsaw because his -- what trading he was doing involved presence of big like a farmer's market in Warsaw. Góra Kalwaria had farmer's market when farmers were coming once a week with their horse pulled, horse pulled cart full of goods which they grew. Warsaw had market but there was less farmers but more middle men and women and who could get a lot of interesting things there. Not everything was exposed. There are certain things which are shown and other things which were kind of behind counter or underneath. Only when you struck a conversation and since people got familiar with you they had some level of trust. Then they tell you, you know I have this yet, I have that yet. Like other.

Q: Contraband materials or black market kind of?

A: Definitely materials which Germans didn't allow, including cold cuts. Unfortunately there were not refrigeration so you can imagine have to be fresh and salt. They couldn't take them outside, so by the end of day they were selling for less and less and less. Also you could bargain. You could --

Q: Barter?

A: Not only. No, no I'm talking about like in selling and like in mid-eastern markets if the sale person sells at nominal price, they are not fully satisfied, although they got fully amount of money.

Q: Haggle.

A: Haggle is the word. You need to haggle and the more you haggle you know one another better. And that is a satisfaction for both sides involved. There is more pleasant feeling about the transaction when you haggle. If you just pay, if you just pay what you are asked for, it's kind of you don't get much respect from the salesperson. That's the psychology of specially small town and you know village.

Q: So your father was acting as kind of one of these middle people?

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A: He was middle people because he didn't produce anything. He was buying and selling but you need to know where to buy and what price and to know where to go and sell. And you buy through your own trusted channels and you sell where it's a lot of people when you again establish certain relationship. You sell certain items to strangers maybe most of them but you have your own customers who know you, come and you are always standing in the same place so -- or the same area and people recognize one another and they wave and then they go sometimes to the site. They don't do transaction with everybody is looking at their hands. So the whole culture.

Q: That's kind of an occupational shift for your father, right?

A: Absolutely.

Q: He was an accountant. Why did he switch?

A: Because the pay, pay couldn't get job at the very beginning. Pay was poor and you could be much better off. And later as, as I learned my father and those are -- I don't have hundred percent proof but I think my father was renting room from some people. And then I think from a lady. And there could have been some relationship there which he was obviously hiding from my mother. My mother -- women have this instinct and can sense; however we didn't have proof.

Q: This was in Warsaw?

A: It was Warsaw itself. So when he was arrested barely anybody in our small town knew. Only that he was arrested, only because he was not often coming to Góra Kalwaria. So he was not coming for longer time. He was arrested, sent to Auschwitz and people didn't know about that. Only closest trusted people knew about that. We didn't broadcast it, we didn't spread that information. Obviously his mother, his sisters knew about that. And they again didn't talk to anybody about it. Because there was nobody's interest to talk about that. Was too many

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questions. People were asking so, and so and so on. Avoid unnecessary lying or making stories people rather avoiding subject.

Q: Why was he arrested?

A: That's a big mystery, which is mystery to me til today. I do not have hundred percent proof but the hypothesis which were my mother's hypothesis and since my father died 33 years ago, they are my hypothesis and I never met anybody who really knew my father in Warsaw who would get the -- from the first hand.

Q: And your father wouldn't tell you?

A: My father had different theories and he was avoiding the subject. And besides, 1946 my father is divorced so my father changed the location. He moved to so called regained territories from Germany. He started a new family in **Yeren Yagoda**. He had two children there and I maintained very loose relationship to the extent that when I immigrated, I left Poland in 1970 and he died in 1983. My mother died in 1985. My mother died in my home, United States. My father died in Poland, 1983 in a town called Yeren Yagoda and I was on his grave. However, I didn't maintain the relationship with his new family.

Q: He was sent to Auschwitz immediately or was he sent and –

A: First he was tortured in Warsaw special headquarters where they specialized in torturing prisoners to get the information about the coworkers, what he knew about underground movement. They didn't learn much because he didn't know much. The underground movement in Góra Kalwaria didn't accept my father. He didn't apply for it and my mother would be, wouldn't agree for that because he was traveling a lot and he was talkative and he might not keep the secrets. The underground movement, most of the people who were members they knew only pseudonyms of one another, unless they knew them self from before.

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But that was rather recommended that to work together with people whom you didn't know before and used pseudonyms which were different from your real names. In the case you are arrested, you are beaten tortured, you couldn't say if you didn't know.

Q: Did your mother have a pseudonym?

A: My mother had a pseudonym. Everything is written. I have books describing. They are by historian who wrote a book *Heroes of Two Towns* and he describes especially one, one it's in Polish, **Bohaterodia Dvu Myastits** [ph] in Polish in the original. And yes, she did and so after the removal of the ghetto from Góra Kalwaria, as you can imagine a lot of real estate left there. Three thousand people were crowded but it was a lot of empty housing, which Germans didn't care because they were not specially high quality housing. They are not office buildings. They did confiscate my school and they keeping their hospital, they keeping for certain time school for German children, families. German officials who were in town. And then there was in a hospital for German prisoners who were returning from eastern front and I vividly remember they were getting off the train and they walked through the town and how they were wrapped around up to sometimes barely their noses that were sticking from the bandages around. There were people who were the soldiers who were returning from Stalingrad when Germans were, Russians defended them self and then was part of the – from the defense mode they started to press. And there was full winter. Germans absolutely unprepared to survive Russian, Siberian type of the weather. And many of them they lost parts of the body, noses, ears. They were all wrapped around when they were coming for **reconvalison** [ph], for recovery. It was like a military hospital there when they were staying for a couple of months and they were going back to Germany because they were not, many of them were not capable to fight any more. And they had huge shortage of manpower by the end of the year.

Q: There were German families living in Góra Kalwaria?

A: Yes, but they were all implants. There were few German families who are native and they, most often they were, cooperation. They knew German language and they are cooperating with authorities and, but Polish underground movement's task was to watch, monitor and eventually

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execute these traitors. And one of these Germans, his name was Miller and he was killed by underground movement. And there was one incident when in the school where I was attending, one boy came and he was crying, saying that Germans killed his older brother. There was quite an age difference. I knew it from my person who was temporarily living in my house and they had these conferences and training sessions after curfew.

Q: In your house?

A: In my house. So it was part of the activities of my mother. She allowed her house to be a place where fighters, underground movement you know fighters were training, exchanging information, getting commands to do and there was an execution squad that came and it was reporting to this gentleman. His name was **Jan Savada**. It's written in that book. His pseudonym was. And he was a prewar officer which lived under pseudonym Jan Savada but his name was **Batachevsky**, real name. And they were reporting that they killed two traitors and they left a short note on the chest. This is a traitor, was warned twice and by underground court decisions he was executed by AK, which was underground army.

So this boy was crying, telling his colleagues that his younger, older brother was killed by Germans and that was not true. I knew the truth. He was killed because he was a traitor, but obviously was not in the interest of the boy to tell the truth. So a lot of stories which you hear and you read not always were true because for whatever reasons, people were hiding the real reasons. And I saw it again and again and again and there was in all the villages, doesn't matter age. For different reasons people are having a second mask, second face to survive and there were different motives but there was a fight for survival. First was life to save and second was to get food.

Q: The trainings that were hosted at your mother's house, do you remember that and do you remember what kind of training?

A: Quite often doors were closed and my bed was literally one yard from the door. Door was thin and they were talking in regular voice. Besides there was a key hole which I could see through and many of the voices I recognized because they happened to be parents of my colleagues or friends. They come into my house and they were trained including this execution team.

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Q: Do you remember any of their names?

A: Of the -- oh I remember all of them. All of them because they died you know all of them, there were tons of names I could, I could. And I remember many of them because I knew their voices because I was in their houses and they were parents. Or they were just acquaintances so if I didn't hear the first time when I couldn't recognize the voice through the keyhole I could see who was there and I knew . And so I knew where the, all the places where the hidden maps were for the manual training officers.

Q: So they hid things in your house as well?

A: In my house. There was at least one dozen of the places. Usually we have two small attics on our level which was like roof coming down and there were doors and frame and then was main attic and there was entrance from the kitchen. You have to have ladder enter them up in the attic. In the attic and this is related to this radio transmission, there was a metal wire spread between the rafters. One to another one, very dense. And they were wrapped with the fabric where they pretending to be for drying clothing. The ropes for drying clothing. However they were not used for that purpose. They were used as antenna. So that end of that wire went into the wall, down to my kitchen. And then came out in the form of power socket. But if you plugged the, your whatever, hair brush or you know you couldn't get any power in there, because there was no power. There was, this transmitter was connected when this crew was coming. They had the plug and they were plugging in that one outlet entire house which they only knew and I knew is not for power. That was the, that was one of the reasons why coming to our house, because antenna they didn't have to spread antenna outside. Antenna was already in the house, heated, ready to be used, whenever somebody came in and knew that one outlet is the entry to the antenna. So you can plug in and be connected and transmit to London. Or receive from London.

Q: It seems like such a risk for your mother --

A: Huge, huge risk.

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Q: Did she ever give you any explanation of why she saw the risk as worth it?

A: My mother, from as far as I can recall and then reflection of 30 years was what you would call today human rights activist. She very strongly believed in social justice, fairness and she was a real patriot. She wanted to help the country. Already had huge sacrifice by having our father not to be supporting family anymore, being tortured. And certain point we stop to get letters from him. We believe that he died. So when he showed up in 1945 was a huge surprise for us because there was no communication, no letters. We didn't expect at all. Basically everybody we buried him and say you know end. And then when he show up we are shocked.

Q: Did you have an actual funeral for him at one point?

A: No, no but it was kind of you know since we didn't know anything was nobody knocking down but it's, it was like everybody and our friends and there were at that time we are talking a little more about that. But still til today, I talked to several of my friends who survive obviously. They didn't know that my father was arrested and in Auschwitz.

Q: Back to the training that they did. What kind of training activities were they doing in the house?

A: So the training was to pass exams for the officers. How to set up traps, how to put dynamite on the railroad tracks to explode at the time when German train with German soldiers or tanks or whatever, going east towards eastern front. Trains in our town were very, were narrow gauge. And it was going to Warsaw and then to another town, **Gruyets**. So was relatively, 20 miles in one direction, 20 miles other direction and it was very local, not connected with the regular gauge normal trains. But there were trains not far from us and this unit which was training them, they were going different places, having different tasks, including I was witnessing the report which they had a task, a nearby forest. There was a big opening which could have been turned into the grass field, runway for planes with the big tires which they were able to land and take off in the middle of the night so that task was on the, it was a big forest on the outskirts of the forest.

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These units were guarding whether Germans are nearby here. The other units were starting the bonfires on two ends, beginning and end of the runway and they, these planes coming from either Italy or some other bases of western –

Q: The allies.

A: Allies. And they were bringing goods, money and people and taking off also, people. This way I'm not sure whether it was that airfield. A gentleman whose name was **Jan Karsky** who visited two concentration camps and then was sent as emissary to England and he visited President Roosevelt. And he gave eyewitness testimonials, what's happening in the concentration camps and Polish government in exile was begging both leaders, Churchill and Roosevelt to bomb the tracks leading, railroad tracks leading to concentration camps. Unfortunately didn't happen. And this is history, there are people who are studying the subject. I have my own opinion but this is my own opinion and doesn't count. But the historians should explain why this information was ignored by both leaders.

Q: So the people who were training in your house and were part of this underground movement, can you go ahead and tell me some of those names?

A: Yes, yes there was father of my friend **Wittold Gatt**. His name was (thinking). No, I cannot recall it now. You know it's 75 years.

Q: Who else?

A: But I knew them very, very well. They were, you know I was in their houses all of them many times. And I absolutely knew them. I knew their voices. I could recognize their, when they were other side of the door. And so not every night obviously. I had to sleep but at least one hour to two hours, sometime I was just not right to not make noise on the other side of the door and I was listening fascinating stories. And I knew so much and I couldn't talk about that to anybody. I couldn't tell my mother that I knew because she would be terrified. However, just before end of the war, my -- the gentleman who was doing this training in conversation with my

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mother, they were talking about something about gun and I said yes, I know this was hidden there. They didn't know that I knew all these hiding places. And I knew how to load the gun, this gun and how to unload it. I knew how to, apart, how to clean it. I knew everything because out of boredom nobody was at home. I went to that hiding place what they are talking about to check whether this gun is still there. I was I self-trained myself.

So after the war when German army left certain amount of arms. Whenever you went there were all these mines in the fields were a lot of arms here and there. Me and my friends were taking the arms and ammunition. We went into the trenches and there were nobody else there and we were doing full, full shooting like on the shooting range and we knew safely we could manage and nobody train us. We were self-trained.

Q: So this was after the war.

A: After the war immediately. And a lot of young people died because farmers needed the fields before so that army came. The people who are disarming mines in the fields, they wanted to plow the fields. And the mines here there and there and you never know where so they were training mine young people who they were training, paying young people who were foolish enough to go and dismember. And a friend of mine, two years, three years older than me, a brother of good friend of mine. I just stopped to think a couple days ago. He was learning how to disarm that, these mines. And similar, his friends and their friends were hired by farmers which was I think cruel to let young people go into the fields.

And they were many of them successful. Some, many of them survived, but some unfortunately made mistakes somewhere or they didn't know they stepped on a mine which were all hidden under the ground and they didn't have electronic equipment to detect it.

Q: So your friend's brother died?

A: Died, died and there was on the day where I was had appointment to see him and his brother were going together. And my mother locked me and I didn't have key to open. We were living on the second floor. I didn't want to jump so when my mother returned I was very angry that she didn't love me because I lost my ability to play and my mother says yes, yes, I saw Yasho, they

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carried him in the bedsheet. I saw him and he was killed and I was shocked, but I could have been one of them. So I was lucky during the war because every day when we are leaving home in the morning, we were not hundred percent sure that we were going to be back that evening. Threat of being killed was very real and so many, many incidences where people were killed, either because they didn't stop when they told to stop. They had something hiding on their body or something and they want to be discovered or simply Gestapo didn't like or they already knew this person or whatever and they were looking for him. Gestapo was in my house many times and it somehow happens that I cannot recall one instance where they, my mother was at home and Gestapo came.

Q: And you were always alone.

A: Each time I was alone. I don't know how it happened. They coming during the day. My mother was in school. But you know several times they came afternoon when my mother was not in school or obviously she didn't know about that. They never announced obviously. What I heard obviously boh, boh, on the steps. Bang,,bang to the door. Gestapo open. So I have the door open and they were walking around ransacking from all the drawers in the middle of the room and knocking the walls here and there and they were asking me tell us where these things are hidden. Because they had some suspicion but until they found, they couldn't do anything about that. And I knew where things are hidden. However, I never you know blink my eye and –

Q: Were they speaking to you in Polish or –

A: M, sometimes in German, exclusively and I knew German to that extent. No, I learned from German soldiers in the streets of Góra Kalwaria. And my mother knew some German so she taught me some basics. It was a survival game. You need to knew how to communicate and they knew a little Polish, including, some of them especially the regular soldiers of the Wehrmacht. They were from Silesian region of Poland. They signed so called **Folklist** which is they had some ancestors of German origin. They spoke German at home. That's and it is, how do you call it – they some of them very, I wouldn't say what's the proportion. I don't know but there were volunteers, but most of them they were how do you call it **incripts**.

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Q: Oh, they were drafted into it?

A: They were drafted.

Q: Forced, well not forced but –

A: I mean they were obligated and they really didn't have a choice. So they spoke quite good Polish. Some of them they are fluent in Polish and those would communicate with us. So first words which I learned were mostly curses. I could say what, to curse in German for several minutes. That's my first encounter with German.

Q: So after the Gestapo left and your mother came home, I imagine you told her. about it. What was, how would she react, what was --?

A: No, she was shocked each time, but what she was able to do. I mean there's no, several people asked me how come that your mother was not arrested. And I tell you why. Under their movement which I think it's the main explanation. A lot of institutions which were, had German names and had to do with the Polish population who had to do with rations. We had, food was available with coupons. You were getting coupons. So many kilograms of sugar per month or per week and one loaf of bread per week per head. These organizations were, had employees which are Polish origin and many -- I wouldn't say majority but some of these positions were infiltrated by Polish underground movement. People who secretly worked for Polish underground movement. And they will bring information and early enough my mother was informed there is an opportunity to get a document to do the function which was collecting weather, like rain, snow, the amount observation of the sky when the clouds, how low, when sun and she was, she got a book written in German called and every day at certain hours you had to fill. Sometimes in German, simple words. I don't remember now but and the numbers. Hours and the amount, how many centimeters of rain that night was and so on. And this information was collected by meteorological service, German, which were used by German Luftwaffe. German military efforts.

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That gave my mother an **Ausweise**, the document which we call it **IDcav** today was the picture or in German and that whenever she was traveling between Góra Kalwaria and Warsaw and she was traveling sometimes to take big round yellow cheese, which she was getting at a very low price and she was selling it in Warsaw in certain place. Sometime that cheese had inside underground documents. And my mother was having in a suitcase. She was very fashionably dressed, had perfumes. She knew quite well German. And she was traveling and she recalls one specific case when she was standing on the tramway stop. Tramway came. One section of the tramway **nor fila Deutsche**, was German officer seeing a lady who is trying to lift the suitcase. So he helped her to enter Polish section, put her luggage on the shelf above the head and then it went to Deutsche section. He didn't realize that he is lifting underground army's literature, hidden in the cheese inside.

Q: I bet that made your mother very nervous.

A: That's the life. Oh yes, but she – when it happens to you once, twice, and you become conditioned and you become less sensitive which doesn't mean that in my time, although as I mentioned in the beginning, children are maturing during the war much faster than you ever imagined. And adults don't realize how capable and knowledgeable children are like sponge. They listen. They might not have answers, but they know what's going on beyond their expected maturity level. So I was nine and ten, ten at the end of the war. But I was like 15, 16 it comes to the survival skills and association, judging what was happening, whether it's dangerous situation or not. Whether my life is in jeopardy or how to read what eyes don't see, so to speak. There were no newspapers, no radio. Germans were communicating with Polish population by hanging two language posters explaining you know such and such a day new regulations. You were allowed to do that but mostly was not what you were, what is forbidden. And that was the way – and there was no excuse of not knowing. You had to know it so you had to read it because your life depended on that, what's on the poster.

Q: We haven't talked about the deportation of the Jews from your town yet. Do you have any memories of that?

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A: On the day with de, deportation was taking place, I saw the pictures taken by father of my friend and his name is Adam **Marchocki** and if possible I would like him to be, I would recommend him to be interviewed by somebody from Holocaust Museum because he is very knowledgeable. His father about this period, his house was also facing the wall. He is the same age as I am. His father was arrested in Góra Kalwaria. His father was a teacher and was sent to Auschwitz also and as well as another teacher, Mr. **Piekarniak** who was arrested in Góra Kalwaria and sent to Auschwitz. So those are people whom I knew well. And they were both teachers.

Q: Do you know what they were arrested for?

A: Suspicion of being involved underground, both of them and they were. I mean especially one. Another one.

Q: Which one was the especially?

A: Piekarniak, Mr. Piekarniak.

Q: How do you spell his last name?

A: P-I-E-K-A-R-N-I-A-K. Piekarniak. Forgot his first name now. There was whole family but I cannot recall it. And so –

Q: Did he survive?

A: He survived, both survived.

Q: So Adam's father was also sent to Auschwitz?

A: Auschwitz yeah.

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Q: What was his last name?

A: Marchocki. M-A-R-C-H-O-C-K-I. Marchocki.

Q: Do you remember his father's name? First name.

A: Edward. Edward. Adam's father was Edward Marchocki. And so –

Q: So Adam took pictures during the deportation?

A: No, Edward.

Q: Edward did.

A: Edward. And these pictures are in the book which I couldn't find just before, I wanted to bring that book to show you but I couldn't – I have it home, definitely hundred percent. I didn't lend it to anybody. And –

Q: You saw the pictures but you weren't present for, you didn't actually see it.

A: Not on the day because there was like two days. I – a lot of people went to the station because they knew somebody or there was some relationship. People, you know, but most of the population, although there was Chasidic Judaism mostly but not all there were Chasidic Jews in Poland. There were some like his father's, Mr. Price's father, parents they were part of the – they went to synagogue few times a year. They were you know kind of assimilated partially. Some people one leg in one world, another leg in other world and it was for them it was easier to survive because they knew how hide. This one didn't have Semitic teachers. He could, you know, got false documents. He could mingle and nobody would know it until some Germans, German would do what they were doing. Taking a man on the side and asking him to drop his pants. You know there was a –

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Q: Being circumcised.

A: Yeah, because non-Jews were not circumcised in Poland. There was like exception and there was like a rule. And that Germans, it was for them most last test. But sometime was not sufficient. They had you know they all kind of relationships. German to survive in Poland locally, they had to somehow relate. They couldn't be just suiting left and right. They needed food, they needed labor. The ghetto itself had assignments. The Jewish authorities, Judenrat authorities had assignments. So many people they need for work. Every day different people. Sometimes people worked two, three times a week. Sometimes were paid a little bit, others were not paid. They all varied but assignment was they needed. So for road work, for some other repairs, for some help with bringing food, here or there. Last was food because with food, people would be stealing food so they tried to separate food from people. But they didn't have enough people of their own. Soldiers had tasks in the army or they went to the front, eastern front. They had to coexist somehow. So they tried to bribe people by promises. But as you know all the – most of the people who cooperated openly or the Jewish police which was guarding ghetto in Góra Kalwaria. They were the last one to be packed in the last cart and they were sent to Warsaw ghetto and then to Treblinka and you know other -- to gas chambers. Germans didn't feel loyal towards those who were cooperating with them. But at the time when they need it, they found all these people who were willing to cooperate. Those were the times. It was interesting. Let me tell you just one thing. My mother had the observation that in war time is the time when you have the opportunity to recognize who are good people, who are bad people. That among our acquaintances, friends, acquaintance of the acquaintances, people who would expect to be honest to be fair, to be real human beings, with empathy were surprised. Those were expected, they passed the exam so to speak and people whom we treated with thoughts that they are not worse to have respect, they became real heroes. Really honest people who so to speak passed the exam of humanity. And that was one of the major lessons which my mother and I learned, that the real people you recognize when real test, real need comes in life. That people have different **recaniam**, different layers and you have really to know the essence of a human person is to remove all these layers first. And the war is the time when real test on the characters of the people.

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Q: All right. So

A: So in 1943, during the Warsaw ghetto, before the Warsaw ghetto uprising, I was in Warsaw several times. My mother was coming, doing some trading and visiting friends. We had some friends in Warsaw and on several occasions my mother took me and we walked along the walls of the ghetto. There was a section, I forgot the name of the street, but I could reconstruct it where the cobblestone pavement of the street, sidewalk on outside street paved, and then the wall of the ghetto was almost on the edge of the street, or very narrow sidewalk.

The wall on that section was, had no windows and you can see the signs where windows were removed and the holes were filled with the brick. The walls were I would say about 8 meters, eight yards, about tall. I didn't see anybody on the top. There were barbed wires on the top, but at the bottom where once in a while there were small narrow windows, which had iron bars densely installed that a person, no maybe cat could sneak in but a person couldn't. But often when we are in the same area, we saw children's heads sticking out, outside through that window and they were either, they would see quite often people walking on the other side and they were showing that give me something, give me something.

And not far from there was a stand with vegetables, where you can buy carrots, onions, celery, something which you can you know person can eat raw and on several occasions my mother with as little money as we had, were buying couple carrots and I exclusively, my mother was observing when the gendarmes were walking their backs towards, back another one. So it means they walking away and they were not opposite direction and they were not looking at us on the sidewalk on the other side of the street. And we are throwing these carrots and these kids were grabbing them and eating them. You can see them. They were very hungry and every piece of carrot was consumed almost on spot.

You can see how was appreciated. So my mother, I think she did it for, that she could throw it our self, but she was giving it to me to teach me be empathetic and help other children. Children helping children.

There was, on several occasions I remember that we are doing. And also my being was our standing on the tram stop. It was like a raised area and in one particular place there was **Ulitsa Puovska** [ph] and there was like tramway place where they were, hangar where there were

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several trains were ready to, they were stored there temporarily. And they were before they got on their routine trip.

And this particular day afternoon, sunny day, a truck comes and there were soldiers come from the cabin and truck is covered and full of the prisoners. And they commanding them to get out. They putting them against the wall and one with the machine gun, kills the entire row. And other prisoners are asked, another truck comes and asked to take these bodies with hands and legs. You know one person holding legs and – to throw them on that truck and they were taking them away. After they left, we couldn't, we're encircled by the police so we couldn't go. Some I remember some women were putting their hands on children's eyes not to letting them to see it. But you know kids, even if they always between the fingers or they managed to see it. There is no way.

Q: Did you mother try to do that? Did she –

A: She didn't encourage me, but she was explaining that and strange enough that these people as sometime would happening, they were not raising, they were not shouting. They knew they were being killed but they didn't shout. **Yegshia Polskavoy derolna** [ph] let's leave Poland free or something like that. They were shouting in Polish. These people, that particular group and there were like a couple trucks came and I don't, I didn't count them but there must have been several dozen people killed this way. Mostly men that were killed.

Q: Do you think they were, were they non-Jewish or Jewish?

A: I have no idea. I have no idea because nobody to ask, nobody to tell. Who knows? I didn't see David's you know stars. I would suspect they were non-Jews rather. But I have no idea. And after all of that show which was done purposely by Germans to scare people to make demonstration because they could take these people and kill them next to cemetery and bury them. They did it in public places, purposely to spread a fear. To spread the, to tell people watch it because if you don't behave you will be killed as they are. That was the message that they wanted to send and so it was interesting reaction of the people. Once, of the people who were watching that, once -- because we are very close. We are I would

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say less than hundred yards from that. Not always every of these prisoners who were killed on spot. Sometimes they were moving so Germans were still walking around and they were shooting in their head here and there. From the, you know hand gun. Once that show ended the trucks went and police freed us to proceed. Trams were not moving, traffic was stopped for that execution time. There was, I don't know, maybe 20 minutes, something like that, lasted. Then they restored the traffic and then people were going to the execution place and the walls were full of blood. Blood was in the street, curb where the rain normally goes, how do you call it?

Q: Drains.

A: Drain. So and their behavior, the people who were watching were behaving. Some people were laying down, some people crying, some people were kind of you know touching and kissing these places. It's like holy places. It was amazing that I remember scenes like that in spite of being eight, nine, ten years old. Basically nine because ten years old it was already war is over.

Q: Do you remember talking about it with your mother and did she have any –

A: It was so shocking for her. You know she saw it. She didn't ask me what I saw because I was next to her and she tried to kind screen me but I saw, I saw everything and I was like hypnotized. I was, I didn't know when it started and when it ended. I don't know what hour it was. I was just like –

Q: In shock.

A: Shock you know so the concept of PTSD we didn't know that acronym. Nobody knew about this, what does it mean at that time, but for young people like myself this takes, you cannot forget it. And to the extent that I think it's not enough of study and knowledge what tragic situations like the war like the memories of human beings treated worse than animals are treated, quite often, have impact on the psyche of young people. And I would like to be advocate for some studies to be done. What impact war makes on young people. And I know myself that

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after, when I go, like I went today with my memories back to this awful, awful times, I am shaken. I am shaken now and I feel worn out. And I feel disturbed so much that crying wouldn't release that tension. Will not be enough. That's why I not so easily return to this times and talk about that because it just disturbs me so deeply and that takes me longer time then to get back to my normal mental and psychic so to speak.

Q: Do you have ways of coping with it and getting back to kind of –

A: No, I did a lot in my life. I never been at psychiatrist's office, not for that purpose. No need, but I did practice a lot meditation, transcendental meditation, Zen meditation. Came today here. We have Zen meditation, here once a week. but I did it every day, twice a day sometimes, just to restore my senses because it's deeply, deeply disturbing experience just to talk about that. This is not somebody's else story. It's not a movie which one saw. This is, was my life. My childhood which I basically didn't have because I didn't have normal play. I, yes, we did try during the war sports. I was very achieved, hundred meter dash, runner. Javelin champion and triple jump and long jump and high jump and -- were my specialties. Yes, sports helped a lot but still didn't, I don't know what would be if was not that sport. I don't know if I had to be just with my thoughts. So yes I did, I recognized the importance of physical movement, being in the nature and so on and today I am struggling with my memories. So it's not easy experience. Not easy to talk about that but I think it's important that other people my age and even younger who still remember what similar experiences they had in their life that it's passed to the next generations so wars will be forbidden by law.

I'm smiling at this point, but people will fully realize the consequences of the war. This is not that only people die on spot, that people were buried, that people lose their members of their families. They are injured physically but the injury, the mental injury so to speak which stays perhaps even more than one generation.

Q: Do you think it's affected your son?

A: Somewhat. Somewhat, but I didn't tell him the details and I hope that when he watches that he will, he will understand me better. Because a lot of things are difficult to express with words.

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Those are the personal experiences which people underwent. And others who didn't haven't been in my shoes, haven't been there. They didn't have a fear of losing their lives or their mothers or fathers or their cousins or their -- you know friends. They, I can see it's impossible to visualize. You can be empathetic but it's a degree to which you can be empathetic. It's still somebody's else life. It's not your life. It's his life, her life. I think it's what Holocaust Museum is doing, saving for generations is so important. So important because other places there is some central archives here and there but that needs to be made available for as much as possible, especially younger generations. That's my hope. That's my hope.

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Nancy Cooley: All right. This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Wes Orłowski. We are meeting today on May 23rd, 2019. This is a second interview with Wes. The other interview was conducted in October 2018.

Wes, we ended our last conversation talking about the end of the war but we want to back up a little bit to talk about your father's experiences when he was deported to Auschwitz and then spent time in different camps.

Wes Orłowski: Yes, so my father was outside of our home about 25 kilometers from us in center of Warsaw when he was arrested by Germans, taken to the temporary headquarters where he was tortured. They didn't extract much from him because he didn't know what they were expecting him to know. And then he was transported to Auschwitz and –

Q: Do you know when that was?

A: Yes. I found the exact date when he was registered in Auschwitz. That was on sixth of July 1943 so a few weeks earlier he was arrested in Warsaw. In Auschwitz, depending on the period of time by, but by the end of war, Germans were more lenient, when it comes to the, allowing families, prisoners and prisoners them self to communicate between them self. So we are allowed that by the end of war to send some short letters, written in German and small packages. Packages had to be limited in size and weight and mostly vegetables which he had to share with his inmates, that were in the same room where – the particular one which I visited years, many years later, he was, they had bunk beds in one room. Eleven of them and so when he received the parcel he, as well as if they did, they had to share it with the inmates.

Q: Do you know which barracks he was in?

A: Yes. I have all of that. It's written on the, I have two letters from my father, authentic of original letters, written in German -- one from Auschwitz and one from **Mauthausen**. And they are in span of two months. It means shortly before he was deported to Mauthausen and then shortly after he arrived in Mauthausen. So my father survived both camps, through several, because of several factors. One of them he knew some German but he was learning very fast due

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to the presence -- he befriended some people there who knew German and they were kind of self, teaching themselves, so my father was participating in this informal classes. Second, he was relatively healthy. He was entrepreneurial because in files I found that he was listed as a gardener. I never knew that my father had any talent for gardening, but he was gardener in Auschwitz. And then what I knew was that he had skills as an accountant and they employed him in the office for keeping some records, probably you know suitcases, shoes and whatever. They, as we know, Germans are very systematic and they were keeping records of everything. So my father survived and they were also, he had some access to the kitchen as a help. And then everybody in the kitchen you try to steal as much as possible so you can have food later. Everybody was doing that.

There are some reports. My father didn't do that but people who were wearing, carrying bread in their pockets til the end of their life, long time after the liberation. And they were, you know 50 years later but they are still carrying bread in their pockets. You can imagine what kind of the insecurity these people were going and what kind of fears they went through.

Q: What information did your father tell you about his experiences there?

A: My father was telling me how they, he participated in the death march so there were hundreds of prisoners organized in groups and they were, with guards, they were chased by foot from Auschwitz camp to many, many miles along the streets and roads to the railroad station which had connection with Austria. And then they were packed into the cars and then unloaded in Vienna in Austria on the -- near the camp Mauthausen. And so I received, I still preserved one letter from before leaving the Auschwitz and then I have one letter which was sent to sister of my mother. She lives, she lived in Silesian region which was southern Poland, much closer to Austria. And that was written obviously in German with both cases there are his numbers which he had engraved on his hand, he mentioned. Also in exact place where he was located at that time, which block, which how they call it here. Block and **shtuber**, for example. So --

Q: So he left on the death march in --

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A: And he survived it because many, many – no it was before the end of 1944. Thanks god he survived this march because if anybody become weaker, became weaker and neighboring prisoners walked with him couldn't carry him, you know holding his elbows, now he had to be left on the, on the side of the road and last German guard who was passing, he would shoot him and then they would leave the body for the rock hole.

Q: But he was strong enough to survive the march.

A: But my father was strong enough and apparently he took care of himself. And one of the aspects which I didn't mention was that he became very strong believer in God and was praying a lot. And he claims that kept his sanity more or less stable and because there were many cases the people couldn't take it anymore so they were throwing their bodies on the electrical fences and electrocuting them self to death.

My father somehow was able to survive all these atrocities and later he told me and I complemented my knowledge by reading more about that. The conditions for, in, for prisoners in Mauthausen were much, much worse than in Auschwitz. Mauthausen was considered one of the most severe German camps where first prisoners and the camp was set already after the, on the Anschluss but Austria invaded 38 I believe. They started this camp in the quarry. They digging huge, huge area of quarries in the side of the mountain to prevent this place to be bombed by the enemies' bombers. And there were the entire parties. The planes they were built there. The ammunition was put together from the parts. There were, they worked into shifts. Sometimes three shifts, taking turns. The prisoners were very poor. The average life span for the prisoner in Mauthausen was two months. And my father survived seven months and was liberated in 1945 on May fifth by a unit of US Army.

Q: Do you know what kind of work he was doing in the camp?

A: All kinds of it. They were shifting them so that he was working with the ammunition for some time. Some time he was in the office, bookkeeping again which fortunately the knowledge of German by my father, his German was quite good, to the extent that they were employing him in the less physically strenuous situations. The worst was for the people who had to push heavy

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carts filled of you know stones or, or where there were not enough people to, to – So they were over extended physically and, and lucky for my father, he didn't, he hasn't had to do a lot of menial work. Consequently, he worked, he walked from Mauthausen in Austria to Góra Kalwaria in Poland. Very early he was able to get on some freight where he was nearby of the railroad station and the freight was stopped and so he could climb the train but was not regular transportation but in 1945.

Q: Did he talk about liberation and his emotions at liberation?

A: Well they are all ecstatic but they were in such a poor physical conditions. They, their joy was limited to the food which they could eat and the stomach problems they had. Because when they started to eat they didn't know where to end. Then their stomachs were not accustomed to have normal food and plenty of food. So they were really suffering. Many of them, they had digestive problems and so they quickly learning how both the prisoners and the people who were giving them food to be very careful how they transitioned to the normal life.

Q: When your father got back home, do you remember seeing him for the first time after the war?

A: Yes, obviously I remember that. When he came he was dressed in very funny – because as he walked from Austria, they were able to enter the empty houses which were abandoned by German population in western Polish territory and so they take some time and the clothing which didn't fit them or they were you know partially broken or something so he was very funny dressed, first struck me. And second his behavior was considerably changed. And to the extent that my mother had made a conversation with him and he went to live with his mother and his sister. And eventually my parents divorced because it was very difficult for my mother to raise me as a child. I was ten and a half at the time. And –

Q: What kind of personality changes did he have?

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A: Nightmares, short temper. Sometime he can talk illogical statements and there was no, one could not have a longer conversation with him quietly because he is very, the level of anxiety when he recovered physically, the level of anxiety apparently was increasing. And on the one hand he was happy that he was liberated obviously. But on the other hand this life style which they had is -- changed their every person obviously, every prisoner was reacting in different way. But they, they out, their outlook of the world outside changed so radically that they didn't know quite often how to express it.

They didn't understand what was going with them. There were a lot of what you would call today PTSD, was not known at the time. But all forms of that kind of trauma was engraved deeply. It was, it was not enough time to really rest and recover for them. So they were still living so to speak, awaking in the morning. And they were surprised that they are, don't have to go to work for example.

Q: Do you think later in his life he found ways of dealing with it or coping with it?

A: He must have because he started another family and eventually had two children. But I haven't been in the close contact with him at that time, at the end of his life. He lived til the age, he was 79 when he died. He was born 1905 and died in 1983. And I've been to his grave but I haven't seen him the last many years before his death. I was in United States already then besides, for many years.

So to return to my, to our life in 1944 we became refugees. And –

Q: What does it mean, you were kicked out of your home or –

A: We are told to leave our home, in the short notice. Entire town and neighboring villages and the whole street along the Vistula river. And the reason was that we live on western shore of the Vistula river and on eastern shore Soviet army approached chasing Germans. And Vistula river became the border line, between two armies, German army and Soviet army. And our house was on high shore of Vistula River, easily visible from the other shore of the river. And the snipers, how do you call them. Sharp snipers with their lunette they could see any moving object and they were shooting. So we were for a short time we are living in our house, but we had to go

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with our head down and almost crawl because we could easily be you know shot like that still in the home. And --

Q: Where did you go?

A: So we went with two suitcases and my cat coming in a bag on my neck. We walked and then we, for about several miles. And then eventually we hired for a small fee a farmer with his cart and horse and several families to share that vehicle. And we went to one of the villages where we rented a small place in the barn. And then we rented one room in the house. And then we wanted, went to another village. And that were where Polish underground fighters from Warsaw uprising. Was 1944.

We kept them from helping them to change dressings on their wounds. And they after a few weeks they left. They were taken by other units of underground movement during the night. But nearby there was a big artillery unit, German. And there was aiming obviously towards east against Soviets. Then certain day in the morning we see they are turning their guns aiming to the west, 180 degrees reversal and we were completely shocked. Well what's -- they will be shooting their own units. Then we realized that they were ready to defend against the encircling, which took place. The Russians broke the front. At the beginning of January. Eventually the liberation of Warsaw took place on January the 17th, 1945.

But before that these German units which were in our neighborhood in the countryside, they were aiming towards west. They are not shooting at that time, but they were aiming towards west. Because Russian army already encircled them from the, from the west. The only open area where they had is towards Warsaw, towards north. So they eventually put the stuff together. They hooked their artillery units to the trucks and they left towards north. I don't know what happened to them.

Whether they were caught in, in encirclement or they were able to successfully to go west.

Q: Did you return home at that point?

A: At this point we were free to go home and we, around the time of liberation of the Warsaw, we came with our two suitcases to our home and our home was really plundered and whatever

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was able, people who were stealing the items and they did a good job.

I have to admit and they were barely found any belongings. Including the front door where we are approaching our house, we saw a gentleman or gentleman, there was you know, who my mother knew. He was carrying on his back front door of our house so my mother told him you better leave it here. And, and he dropped the door, apologized because he didn't know whose house was it and he didn't –

Q: He didn't put it back on?

A: And my mother was his teacher so he recognized my mother as a teacher and anyhow. After the war, life, we were all ecstatic obviously but there were huge shortages of everything and food was the most important. The farmers which were all around did their best and to feed their families and have something to sell and feed us, you know people living in this small town. We quickly started to grow food in a small garden. I was one of the main providers there. I learned a lot of skills at that time.

Q: What were you growing?

A: Well all basic vegetable root, root vegetables. Which we have good soil because chemicals unknown were getting manure from farmers. My mother was coping herself and helping children. A lot of children were behind the regular program in Polish language, math, biology, geography – all the basic subjects in the grammar school. But my mom was doing tutorials at home. After the classes, regular school classes. So these children on the way home they were stopping by and you know not many, two, three, one sometime. But quite often there was somebody in my house where my mother was teaching. And these children were, most of them, they were children of farmers and there was a voluntary agreement. And they were bringing eggs, a small can of milk and homemade cheese. A chicken sometimes live, sometime killed but freshly. So we are trying to survive because stores were empty at the beginning. And, and also there was shortage of cash. I mean whole organization of the life you know it took many months. People could function in their normal so to speak normally.

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Q: How did her job change with the communists in power?

A: It's a very interesting question because my mother and, and all her colleagues they were prewar teachers. So they knew the program and they had, some of them they saved the books or made copies of the books of prewar. They were not accepted officially by the communist authorities because they were specially history books you know. In math or biology you cannot change much, but history books they were no, no for the communist times. The communist authorities. So a lot of teaching was based either from these fragments of the books which were left by, saved by the teachers.

Or from their memories. Or teachers were teaching one another. Some of that, depending who was behind the pack, who was unofficial and they were kind of the -- between the real facts and phantom history which communists wanted to teach.

And the history as the older people knew. History is not only what is in the books but what's in people's memory, especially older people's memory. So there were very difficult times. My mother was very involved in the teachers union. Before war she was participating in demonstrations in Warsaw. But after the war there was obviously the teachers union, labor union was penetrated by communists. They were open or secret agents. So we need to learn quickly who to speak to what extent. We had to learn how to read between the lines what's in newspapers. We had to learn quickly not to believe official propaganda. We have to learn quickly how to, man or woman, a radio receiver and how to listen to radio Free Europe or BBC from England. Radio Free Europe stations were located just over the border in west, in eastern Germany. Several transmitters on different frequencies and to learn that the Polish authorities are having radio stations on the same frequency located in Poland which does, were sending huge noise garbled up and noise mechanical noise which the purpose of that was just to squash the regular signals coming from Radio Free Europe from Germany.

Q: What programs do you remember listening to?

A: Oh there were all publicity programs. They were interviewing interesting people and they were you know -- we, at the beginning we believed whatever was said then because it was so

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different and refreshing what was the official propaganda. Gradually we started to learn how to read and listen with some criticism and –

Q: To the BBC and Radio Free Europe.

A: To the BBC and Radio Free Europe. They were a different type of propaganda as we learned. After some time.

Q: Was that in English?

A: No, in Polish. Everything was in Polish. No, no it was directed to Polish population.

Q: The BBC was also.

A: But, but authorities were chasing it so people were doing very secretly in the evening. Not too loud so neighbors wouldn't hear but a lot of people were doing. Even those who claimed to be communists and believing in theory of communism, we learned later they were listening to these radio stations as well. So –

Q: I'm sure you had neighbors that you could trust and neighbors you couldn't trust.

A: Yes, yes. During the war, from the very beginning my mother had a saying that real friends you recognize and distinguish from so called friends where the people have to do the sacrifices and people have to go beyond the comfort zone. So the people are – many of our neighbors which we had thought was not, were not very highly about them, they appeared full of sacrifices, ready to take their last shirt and give you if you need it. So to speak, symbolically. And people who we had high esteem appeared not worse you know opinion so to speak because they became either selfish or they became agents you know and they were ready to spy on you and report to authorities. So learning whom you could trust and to what extent was one of the major skills, human skills that one had to learn.

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Q: Did those neighbors change at all after the communists came to power? Were certain neighbors who you could trust during the war, could you no longer trust them after the war?

A: This was an interesting process. There was a dynamic process. And to the extent that these things are written and I witness the situations like that. People who were discovered by the Polish underground movement during the war, that they were cooperating with Germans and they were caught and proven, they were taken on the side somewhere in the, outside of everybody's view and they were shot and killed by the special units of Polish underground movement and it was very obvious reason. To give a lesson to rest of the society that it's not the approved way of behaving.

Plus they had to be removed because they are doing so much damage and so many people lost lives because of the people like that. So yes, they were, there are all kinds of the behaviors. There are people who were indecisive that then became very cooperative. People who were cooperative and they change their mind and they became selfish. There were trial periods for everybody. Everybody was certain way exposed and tested. And there was nobody basically who could stay in their comfort zone and stay unengaged in any way.

Q: Let's switch topics and talk about your education.

A: Yeah, so my education started from self-education. So when my mother was giving tutorials, I was sitting playing with my toys in the other room. Doors were open. I was on the floor and my mother didn't know that I am absorbing everything what she was teaching there like a sponge. To the extent when I was ready to go to the first grade, teachers who were examining me, they said no you can go to second grade and you are, you know more about that. So my mother herself was surprised but I went to the second grade and from the, from that second grade to the end of my high school, I was always to the last class, I was always a best student. I had the best grades.

However, in the last two years of my high school there was an older than all of us, young man came and he was studying in the seminary for priest. And he knew Latin like nobody else. He knew French like nobody else. And he was good but not as good as I was. But I had quite a

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problem because I was accustomed to be the best. There were all kids who were coming to me with you know problems to solve or something. I was helping. I was not selfish. I was very helpful to other students.

However in that last just before graduation I had problem with competing with this young man. As I said he was four, four or five years older than us and he had so much schooling in that seminary so anyhow. To get, I graduated from high school in 1952, the same year I applied to Warsaw Polytech to the department of electronics which was a direction, well if young men ask older men where he should go and the movie Graduate I believe you would say plastics. At that time it was electronics was a popular direction everybody wanted to learn about electronics. And we had competitive exams. I went through that. I started studying in, it was 11 semester program. There was an experimental program where we couldn't get a BS, bachelor of science. We had to go for a masters. So in one chunk without interrupting there was the first course of that entire college.

I had to go and for master's degree. So after almost ten semesters, when I was done with my regular study at the class, where it was the time to write dissertation, myself and two of my closest friends, we started to work in industrial institute for telecommunications. And was semi military institution but was a lot of work there for civilians. In our case we are doing parts for radars which were later installed on commercial ships and ocean going ships.

So they were, when I was writing my dissertation, I had to do a lot of translations from literature, not only in English but in French and I was fluent in French at that time. In Russian, in Italian, and obviously in Polish so I had to be in, from the technical translation point of view, fluent in five languages.

Q: Did you learn all these languages in school?

A: Some of them in school but like French I was learning, we started – my first exposure with French was in a two workers working for Germans in the shop which was repairing, it was 1943, 44 my father was at the beginning of – they were still visiting us from Warsaw. But then he was taken to Auschwitz. That didn't prevent two contractual workers from France. One was of Russian origin and the other was of Polish origin. I remember even names. **Stanislaw Malinowski** and **Nissinger**. Mr. Nissinger was a, had a background. His ancestors were white

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Russians, those who were murdered mostly during the 1917 revolution in Soviet Union. So he and his family escaped to Paris. And he was educated there so he was fluent in Russian and I remember he was talking a little bit of Russian to me, both of them talking French and Mr. Stanislaw Malinowski was knowing Polish but kind of the broken Polish. So an interesting conversation at the table. They were bringing me some food with them. They were cooking together. And they were for example first time I ate frog, the frog legs. Fried on butter and so on. And they were delicious but I wouldn't eat them today.

Q: Did they make you catch the frogs?

A: They, I went with them, I show them where they are and they were catching them. I knew where they were, where the frogs were. So that was my first exposure with French. Then my mother's colleague, teacher of the French. It was 1944, 45 and 46. I was coming to her home and helping her to, with the chores, household chores and she was speaking French exclusively to me. She wouldn't allow me to speak Polish. So I was quite fluent. I didn't know much grammar but I was fluent in everyday talk. I, you know, simple sentences. And eventually I was learning in school grammar. So when I graduated high school I was good in Latin, four years of Latin, four years of formal schooling, high school in French. And the learning Russian caught with me only in college. First time I had to go which was unusual. My times, most of the high schools and regular schools had to have Russian. Somehow my school, my high school omitted or they were able to avoid teaching that. They didn't have teacher and it was not popular, Russian.

That was very helpful for me. French, but English I started to learn preparing my dissertation but it was very, my master's degree dissertation was 56, 57, 58, 59 I graduated. Officially 59 with master's degree from Warsaw Poly Tech.

Q: Did you have any mentors at that time?

A: Yes. I had one of my colleagues and we happened to live in dorms in the same room. **Oris Lati** and I asked him a lot of questions. He had dictionaries to I got informal tutorial. Cause my first English self-taught words were the pronunciation of them, I found it in dictionaries. I didn't

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know how to pronounce the words so I knew what they meant but I had to see them first before or basically I could comprehend.

There was everything helpful until the -- all my life foreign languages were saviors and I was many time in my life, I was lucky. I would say. Among other things I was in right place, right time. That was part of the luck. But I developed the skills for languages and also human skills. I think coming from the training during the war and after the war and balancing acts which we had to all of the time, whom to trust, to what extent and how to build relationships and friendships and how to value real relationships, the real friendships. Those are the skills and you cannot easily learn or cannot learn at all in school.

Q: Tell me what life was like going from a relatively small town to Warsaw which is a very –

A: That's a very good question because this is a big – I would assume that this country would be something of similar nature. Small cities, small towns are in the kind of the dream certain way. Everybody knows everybody. They have set of expectations you have to follow. In big cities people disappear. They don't really care for neighbors anymore. They can be on same corridor, have doors and they don't say good morning to one another. They pretend that they don't, they avoid other people. This is not the case.

Warsaw at that time had a lot of population coming from smaller cities and from countryside. So these people brought a culture of small town, plus the experience the older generations you know of the war. People were much more friendlier, helpful, paying attention one to another, not being afraid to look into other people's eyes.

When I came to this country one of the first warnings I was told not to look into the eyes of young men especially. Being a young man because that's considered as a challenge. And can end up in being beaten up.

Q: Do you think you were misled by that?

A: I never experienced a beating in this country but I, observing other people I think that this, that was not bad advice. To be on cautious side, not to be too trustful and direct with people, too friendly.

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Q: What advice did your mother give you when you moved to Warsaw?

A: My mother being born in the countryside and then living more years in small city, didn't have much to offer in the sense of practical how to behave. More helpful was to have some friends, acquaintance of the acquaintances or have pupils or her coworkers who moved to Warsaw so I could not to live with them, but I could come sometimes for advice for some – these times there were huge problems with supply of basic goods. So having friends, acquaintances, always allow people to ask for favors and give favors. For example if I was walking in the streets and I see the line of people in the front of the store because there's not enough room in the store so people are outside, long line for enter _____. Forty people stand in line. Most of the people what they do without asking, they will first stand up and take the place in line. And then they started to ask. What do they give here? If notice that. Not because you are paying with money obviously but delivery was just coming. Truck came and was delivery of toilet paper let's say. So you wouldn't buy two or three or a small block of paper. You bought 20 or 30 toilet papers. And you took a string. You put them through this string and you make like a –

Q: A necklace? A garland?

A: Like garland and you are hanging them let's say three times around or four times around your head and you are walking in the street like that which looks funny. Right, but you are not alone in the street. And then you came home and to your good friends you sold them half or whatever your supply. So everybody was trading with everybody else and life was full of activity. Nobody was bored because to survive you had to be industrious, active, working with others, helping one another. Not to be afraid to ask for help but also be ready to give a hand or to share your goods which you received and you consider yourself lucky.

Q: Did you have any interaction with the Jewish community in Warsaw after the war?

A: No

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Q: Or did you have classmates who were Jewish?

A: Only in Góra Kalwaria. And those are the people who incidentally are recorded already for the US Memorial Museum cause I was listening to their testimonials. One is Mr. Henrik Price. Another one is Mr. Kartman. Another one is Mr. Mayevsky.

Q: And did you know them?

A: Yes, I knew them quite well. One of Mr., especially Mr. Price was working some social organizations which together with my mom in Góra Kalwaria, in 50s, 60s so I knew him. I knew his family. And he had one daughter from **Gosha** and she's one of the three people I am going to recommend for the museum to interview. Mr. Price and the others are, died. Mr. Price was 101 years when he died. It's amazing.

Q: But you didn't have any classmates who were Jewish when you were going through college or your master's program?

A: Several.

Q: There were several?

A: Yeah there were several but as it happens, many of them, they had Polish names and they were not either they were converts or they were coming from mixed family where the mother was Jewish or father was Jewish but had Polish name. So several of them I was friendly and certainly only after I became friendly I learned that they were Jewish. Or had some Jewish background. Poland was the country where there were all kinds of the experiences and this is not the place now to tour. This is a longer story but people of Jewish origin were involved whole spectrum of activities. Some of them they were part of the communist establishment. Some of them they were against. They work in underground army. It, the origin, ethnic origin was not enough to make any judgement depending on how these people were behaving. What they were

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doing. What they are doing some good for the environment for where they live, where the people were living. Or they were involved in arrests you know and other not popular causes. So it's, it was a judgmental call each time. Yes, but I have several friends, good friends who origin, Jewish origin, including the other friend of mine who came from France and where he were part of the French underground movement. His brother became the owner of the major circles in Warsaw and this friend of mine taught me how to make coq au vin. It means chicken in wine, how to cook. Chicken, chicken.

Q: What was his name?

A: His name was, it just escaped me at this moment. I will recall it.

Q: When did you finish your master's program?

A: In, I got the diploma which is dated 1959. But the program itself most of, I would say majority of my colleagues graduated. It was not a one day of graduation. We are doing when we have done with our masters. Most of us were already working because we are strip of money. We couldn't support ourselves so we were looking for jobs, working as young engineers and the salaries were poor but if they allow you to survive and that's what counted. I didn't have my apartment. I stayed in Warsaw. I couldn't travel to my work in Warsaw from Góra Kalwaria because there was narrow gauge train which took almost one hour and a half, like one hour and 20 minutes one way. So I had to live in Warsaw. And –

Q: What was your first job out of school?

A: My, after the college. My first job was in that industrial institute where I was doing research work, experimental research work with the behavior of semi-conductor devices in high frequency electromagnetic fields. In, there were big dimensional rectangular in cross section tubes in which the electromagnetic signals were sent and this semiconductor devices were put inside and they were you know measurements you know how they were detecting that and all kinds of – it's based on the really cutting edge science. One of the funny things is which

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probably many people in the west didn't know that there was an embargo on the communist countries and normally you couldn't get most modern equipment and for electronic engineers, having good like today you have a computer. At that time in 50s you had to have an oscillator. And one of the best oscillators in the world was American Techtronic's and we had the most modern electronics which were embargoed by US. How it happened.

There were go between in Switzerland which for cash they would sell you this equipment but what they would do, they would mechanically remove the serial number on that so that nobody could trace it back who sold to whom. So it was a lot of equipment which we had in our labs through the purchasing agents which were having cash with them, they went to Switzerland, purchased them and brought them to, behind the Iron Curtain and we have the most modern equipment.

Q: What brought you to the US?

A: Fulbright Fellowship.

Q: When did you receive that?

A: In 1970. I applied in 19 -- I was working then at the Polish Academy of Sciences in one of the institutes, two institutes I worked for Polish Academy of Sciences. One is in a short time was institute of basic technical -- I don't know how to translate it. Another one of the, was called electronic institute of technology and -- electronic technology. What I am doing support research because I did not have the PhD and unofficially I have advanced work towards PhD, experimentally but I didn't start the course work yet at that time

So there was the work in that institute. Then I worked for a company which was managing communication in air corridors. So we are in charge of radio beacons in the corridors, instrumental landing system. I was in charge in several responsible positions. One of them was I was in charge of installation of the first instrumental landing system in **Okecie** international airport in Warsaw. There was 1962 I believe. It was one of the first instrumental landing system established in eastern Europe. And it was a British equipment pipe. That's where knowledge of British English was helpful.

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Later when I was working and had a little bit of time, my work day was ending usually at 3. For another hour or two I was working another job with the same institution which was paid separately. And there was a research for some companies and I had another job which was a translation of the aircraft manuals, civilian aircraft, from English into Polish. And I have to you know, I hand written then. I have a typist who was typing it. My conventional type all electric, maybe she had.

Q: That's a lot of pressure to have to –

A: Yeah and I was doing it the evenings and the weekends and weekends and it requires a lot of technical knowledge. It is not just your regular English. It was not an easy text and so I have to consult with the engineer and aircraft engineers sometime and that it was, it allowed me to save enough money to buy apartment in Warsaw. Finally I made enough money to buy and I got a bank loan, obviously the mortgage for that. When I left for United States in 1970 my mother moved from her apartment to this apartment and I was sending her some money to finish paying that mortgage and then I paid it to the end and became the owner.

Q: We'll take a break.

Nancy Cooley: Ok, we're back. So you were going to tell me about the youth organization that you were part of.

Wes Orłowski: Yes. In 1952 where I, when I entered college literally everybody with the exception of one or two students and they had very strong reasons why they didn't have to be members of this youth organization which in the name was like union of Polish youth. That was the official name in Polish, but what it meant is it was a communist organization. It stayed, over the years the communist party which again was not called in Poland communist party. They were called party of Polish workers. That's what was the official name. Everything was camouflaged and what not called by name. But the youth organization was like preparation for the activity in

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adults party which was elite of people who had responsibility but also access to the special privileges, which involved purchase of the items which were not available for common people. Behind so called yellow curtains and because they had yellow curtains in the windows. From the street you couldn't see if there was a street level, what's inside, but you have special ID and you entered. For very nominal prices you can get, almost like in the west full variety of goods. Some of these younger activists were members of the communist party and member as well of the youth organization. And I had several of those on the, at my first year of college. They were sons usually or daughters of communist activists.

In my case I had several colleagues who were children of the communists expelled from Belgium and France and they were sent to Poland. For their activities, communist activities. They wound up in Poland. They had children and these children got without the exam special exemption. They became the students at the elite best of the best schools. One could get. And they were my colleagues so to speak. And we had ROTC exercises like every Saturday, had to walk to the field and pretend that you are shooting or whatever. Not every ROTC. Again for boys only. Girls were excluded. But anybody who had two legs and two hands and two eyes was, had to be a member. And there were no exceptions. In that communist organization during - - there was in March I remember of second semester in the college and a studying diet. And there was a huge demonstration of solidarity and memorial in the front. There was a big podium and all the officials, first secretary of the workers party. You know and all of them, they were on a big podium. And we had to walk, the long walk and there was borders on this sidewalks. There were activists with the bands on their arms, marking they are activists of the youth organization and they were boarding so nobody could run away from that march.

So we had concentration places where we gathered. The lists were checked. Everybody had to mark you know with his name with red. And there was marking if he's present. No school whole day was for a _____. It was snowing. And there was not good weather. Anyhow we gathered that and then in orderly manner we had to walk in the front of these officials, waving to them cheerfully.

And then in the somber kind of the mood because we are all in --

Q: Mourning

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A: Mourning death of our leader so to speak you know. The leader of the communist world. There were over even one, actually make small digression. One of my colleagues was close to be expelled from the college because privately he said to another colleague in dorms that oh this old man finally kicked the bucket or something. You know a relatively pejoratively he said something about Stalin. Somebody was listening to it, one of the -- reported to communist party. They made like a judgement, big court case almost. Professors were sitting, students and he was called you know and had to testify and there were you know like and finally few professors because he was good student and good human being, he was not, he was not fired. Last result but I remember all this show, all this drama and that was so ugly that, that but it shows incredible power of communist party on everyday living at this times you know, 1950s in Poland. In Warsaw.

So when I was participating in that march, the beginning of March 1953, we had our work to do, you know classes to prepare and we didn't have time to walk. I mean we hated that. So I walk, walk, walk and there was first opportunity that there was staircase from the elevated road going down. Myself and 20 other colleagues tried to escape that.

But we wanted to do it all of us at the same time and we blocked the entrance to that staircase. Meanwhile this activist they -- several of them, they pulling out people who were trying to escape that. And one of them was a big guy bigger than me and I couldn't beat him because there were, he had a lot of friends there. I would have been beaten there. So he requested my ID card. An ID card was from the youth organization so I gave it to him and he didn't return it to me. He took it with him. And he said you will come to our headquarters in the district and you will find it there. I didn't go there at all. I learned shortly after from a friend of mine who was activist he checked. They couldn't find this, my ID and then later I learned that I was expelled for, from the organization. For misbehavior. So I was very, very happy. I couldn't publicly show my joy. I only from the best friends, I shared. But nobody knew that I was expelled or the officials or the other members of that, they were -- I still had to come to the meetings but I couldn't show my ID card. So I said to them, my ID card is in the headquarters so they ok, ok. But then I stopped to come to the meetings. I don't have ID card. Nobody cared and I was liberated from any official participation in, in the communist organization.

Q: Did it negatively affect you in any way?

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A: No it has no impact. Just my satisfaction, my satisfaction. Yes, and I was expelled because I tried to escape from the funeral so to speak of Stalin and you know they caught up with me and they took my ID card. I was you know penalized so to speak but I didn't cry. I was very joyful.

Q: It gives you a little bit of pride maybe.

A: Yes.

Q: So do you want to go back to leaving Poland in 1970 and arriving in the US.

A: Yes, as it happens because of my age. I was 19. I was 35 years old, 34 when I interviewed in American embassy. Very rigorous interview, in our language obviously. And what I was doing, research and I was not member of any organization since that when I was expelled from the – usually I never was member of the communist party, of this workers thing. I was not involved so that was probably helpful and they were interested what I was doing in my research. I had to document everything and, from my supervisors and all of it. And I was sent home and they told me they will notify me soon and there was no word for many, many months. I went on vacation next year.

I returned from vacation. That was August 1970 and I was told that I was approved and I should leave in two weeks. So I had two weeks' time to put my ducks in a row. Make order in my desk and leave the work which I was doing with somebody else and for one year I was traveling from monetary – for one year I was allowed to buy the ticket. I believe I bought the ticket or was offer. I don't remember at this moment. But the Fulbright fellowship was extremely low. When I arrived in United States, I barely had enough money to pay one room in dorm like situation. But it was private house where I shared the house with ten other students, one kitchen, one refrigerator. Maybe one or two bath, two bathrooms for 11 people. Walking distance to the college and I had to skip some meals in cafeteria because I didn't have enough money. There was like 300 something dollars per month, for to pay my dorms. Tuition was paid obviously. Cause I couldn't pay tuition from that. But I remember going to McDonald's was a luxury for me. I couldn't have afford. I had to buy bread, simple foods. Do my own sandwiches for lunch.

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Eat very simple breakfast. And for dinner was big treat to go cafeteria and have a simple meal. So it was really, really you, you hear that somebody is on Fulbright fellowship, maybe now they are paying them. But for us, when I arrived in 1970 was so discriminatory and, and awful my fellowship. I learned later from boys from India, from other countries who came, it was unbelievable simple life style. What I had to endure.

Q: So you arrive in Wisconsin.

A: Wisconsin, Madison and engineering department. I had a, I had an advisor, professor in the electronics department who was of German origin and I had interesting conversation with him and he invited me to his house. His mother was a real German, old class of German and she asked me the questions which were, I am ashamed to repeat because she asked me what, from what Poles I come. From these German Poles or the Russian Poles. She didn't know that Poland was independent country and there are Poles, Poles. Not German Poles.

Q: Was he in Germany during the war or was he in the US?

A: No, she was. Yeah, I think he was completely educated in this country and born in this country probably but his mother was you know old lady in her 70s, 80s in 1950 so you can imagine she was born at the end of the century and Poland didn't exist at that time. But she acknowledged it and that was one of the curious points.

Anyhow, by mistake I learned it later. I was put on the regime which was very unusual. There is this science, this gentleman, the professor who was my guide so to speak. And then there was one like student advisor for the entire university. They applied a wrong paragraph from some regulation book. I was treated as Soviet diplomat. I was not a diplomat. I had passport which I, yes, there was not my private passport. Passport was the property of the government. When I was going to return to Poland, I had to, next day to return the passport because passport at that time was not my document. It was official document of the government. Although it's my photograph, my – but anyhow, they applied this new rule by mistake. I learned later. So what I was told that I cannot leave the town, Madison, Wisconsin. Unless I report two weeks in advance and I have distant cousin in Chicago. So I was not able to go to Chicago from Madison,

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Wisconsin. Unless two weeks in advance, I present a plan, whom I am going, when I am going to leave, whom I going to see, what's the phone number. The name, data of the person I am going to see. Very detailed plan to supervise me basically. And I couldn't go anywhere else. Kind of the prisoner in Madison, Wisconsin.

Q: So you would have to submit these documents to your supervisor

A: In advance to the supervisor for the entire university. And then get approval and after getting approval I would be able to go and also report after I came that I came on time and all of it.

Q: Even if you wanted to go just outside of Madison city limits?

A: I didn't test that. I didn't because I was told not to move so I didn't move. Although I have to admit, I yes, I was invite by two girls with birthday party and their parents live outside of Madison, but not far. And I kind of you know bending my back and hiding and almost I got into the car and nobody knew about that. So I am not sure whether I committed crime at the time or not. But mostly likely not. But, but I was afraid. I was afraid so I was trying to fulfill the –

Q: How long did you have that restriction?

A: The restriction was to the very end. At the very end was another professor there of Polish origin. And he privately told me when I asked him why this is sanction. He checked with that and he being the professor they told the truth. That they realized that they applied wrong application but they you know what they can do. I mean they couldn't restore my full freedom because it was all over. I stayed another year because meanwhile I met interesting girl who eventually became my wife and we became friendly. In the library. Of, of the college, of the university and so I applied to my employer in Warsaw, the Polish Academy of Sciences through the institute which I was employed for a leave without pay for a year. And they granted this thing. After some delays they granted, so I stayed for another year. I was able to –

Q: That's your second year in –

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A: It was my second year and I did some research. But mostly I was working because I, I was poor and I didn't, and I couldn't pay my apartment. I couldn't pay you know food. So I was working through the mutual acquaintance I working in some of the institutes of the, the university. So I was able to stay with my fiancée at that time. And when I returned to Poland in 1970. It was 70, 71, 72, in summer sometime, my fiancée joined me few months later. She came for a month and we got married in Warsaw in Warsaw royal castle which was during the war destroyed, but one small wing was left and there was a civil marriage cert -- there was an office where you could have civil marriage conducted by officials and get the document. And we had small reception there. I invited friends and family. And –

Q: Did you have to have a second marriage in the US?

A: No I didn't because my wife received a document which we took to the American embassy in Warsaw and the stamp, had new name in some end of the passport, an addition. And that allow me, allowed her to use the different name because at the beginning she was using hyphenated name. Her maiden name and her married name and then eventually she dropped them. She is using for many years now only this. Because it's more convenient.

What's interesting is that because of the agreement between the governments, US and other countries signed an agreement that if US is going to grant Fulbright fellowship, these grantees cannot apply for US citizenship or even for green card. And I was only you know I did time was started to be counted from the day of the departure of this guarantee from the US. So when I departed what counted on me that's several months I was in Poland and there were supposed to be 24 months period. So in spite of being married to the US citizen, I was not able to be with my wife. So they recommended what they, that I will go to Canada, let's say. And she will come to Canada or, stupid restriction. Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State at that time. So this was restriction by State Department which was the one which was issued the Fulbright Fellowship. Obviously I had to write the report, the Fulbright center report for Fulbright Fellowship institution and then write report for my institution in Poland.

Q: So how long were you in Poland?

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A: Several months. And I had to you know I had to apply again to get without pay and I was hoping to come and return to work on my PhD and so on but things after arrival to United States and joining my wife, I, I came to visit her on a tourist visa. I couldn't get another visa and I was restricted to six months. So after six months I had to go back. So we applied, applied to our local congressman for an exception and then waiting several months, I was were granted, I was granted an exception and I could apply for green card first. I waited for that and then for citizenship which I became quickly. US citizen.

Q: So did you get your PhD eventually.

A: No, eventually no. On my interests were changing gradually. And I became, I realized that the result of my research is not used for the purposes I believe. I became more, the equipment which was used for civilian purposes but also for military purposes. And that was becoming difficult for me. I became more thinking a line of Quakers which I met a lot of Quakers and I became Quaker about 30 years ago. And that changed my life in many ways. My wife and my son are Quakers. We are very active in Great Barrington.

So you know views change and I was changing to. I was as I call it going forward. Instead looking back. But my past is very colorful and you had a lot of difficult times which I had to overcome in many ways. And enjoy every day as it comes instead looking too much in the past. There was too many things in my childhood and in my early age, including as I often say I was able to survive two totalitarian systems. One German occupation when police had to pay attention. We in Poland we didn't use the word Nazi occupation as it's used over in this country. We were saying German occupation because it was Germany was occupying, not Nazis. Nazis was a party that took control of Germany, but there was Germans. Germany couldn't conduct the war without support of majority of the country. And the sons and daughters were dying on behalf of Germany, not Nazis.

And I wanted to emphasize it again and again because it's a very strong falsification of the history. This is not the way history is being seen in Eastern Europe. When I hear there was a Nazi occupation of Poland I am getting kind of the goose skin, because when I was leaving home I would have been killed by a German soldiers or you know Gestapo. I didn't care whether he

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was Nazi or not Nazi. Nobody in Poland was really paying attention to whether it as Nazi or not Nazi. My father was tortured and taken concentration camp was not important for him whether Nazis or not Nazis. He was beaten, kicked and, and was losing teeth because of beating and not because you know Nazis or not Nazis. He was beaten by Germans. That's a very strong powerful point for me but I wanted to make it because there is so much of distortion of the history. Only eyewitnesses can tell the truth. And all historians who didn't experience that they can have all kinds of the fantasies, they can write all kind of the things, but we in Eastern Europe we learned how to read between the lines and what's the truth and what's the falsification afterwards.

One of the reasons I am giving this interview is I want to present the facts as they were at the time, not as they are being seen from the perspective of 50, 60, 70 or 80 years. Because there is no substitute of living facts. Experiencing on your own body. And there is no, there is no substitute for oral histories. I think what the museum is doing is extremely, extremely important. To have eyewitnesses. Yes, they might be sometimes colored by individuals but, but they are giving a sense of the times.

You cannot publicate what I am saying here. Those are all my personal experiences, or they were through my friends, my family, whom I trust. They were not told to me by somebody, occasionally at the -- you know bar drinking beer or whatever. So they could be colored by somebody being tipsy you know or purposely distorting the truth. No, those are the facts you know. They are part of my life in living memory.

Q: Did you and your mother talk about the war afterwards, in the years afterward? Did she –

A: No we never had like sit down and try memorize. It was a lot of conversations where we reminiscencing or trying to figure out why things took the turn where they did because there were mysteries, quite often. I mean there was things happening, people were disappearing. People were behaving the way we didn't expect. You know the conspiracy of the underground army and other -- there were other anti-German organizations in Poland which were not only linked to the Polish government in exile in London which was really we considered the one which represented Poland and having rights to say something on behalf of Polish nation. There were other organizations. They were you know millions of Poles who were in hush and they

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created the whole army. This an agreement between Stalin and Polish general. The name escapes me now. It's **Anders**, was general who was commandant of the Polish army in Russia, in Soviet Union. But – **Sikorski**, General Sikorski whose plane disappeared near Gibraltar shortly after taking off. Very mysterious situations. A lot of things indicate that his plane was sabotaged and he was downed and so were basically you know attempt, not only attempt, successful attempt to kill him because he became inconvenient. There's no proof who did it. Who did it either. British or Russians. He became inconvenient.

Q: Do you think you would have returned to Poland had you not met your wife?

A: We had, we were married in Poland and then we lived in – we both worked for Yale University. We had different plans than life dictated to us. We were both kind of because when Paula returned, my wife just returned from the research in Latin America. She was working towards her PhD dissertation. We had different interests and most likely inclining to live in Europe. I had some contacts. There were two possibilities. I have relationship with organization in Canada where I would work and we had connections with my family and acquaintances in Belgium, possibility was France. We were both you know fluent in French. We were open to travel, working different places. We were, you know world citizens. We are not necessarily. But then my wife's parents both became ill in different way and her father died in the 70s. Her mother died in our house in Great Barrington in 90s. So we had to take care of them and we just couldn't afford that. And my, our son was born in 1982 and so there was you know work, stability. We had to, needed and we had to put our roots so to speak in some place. Our son was born in New Haven. As I said 1982, but 1989 we moved from New Haven to Great Barrington where we purchased a piece of land, built house. By you know craftsman and to house three of us, my wife and my son plus his mother. And we took her. she eventually not eventually, before we moved to Great Barrington we are taking care of her mother who lived next door almost to us. She had the beginning of Alzheimer and then we were taking care of her in Great Barrington and she died in 90s.

Q: What were you doing at Yale? What was your employment there?

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A: I was doing the, I was head of the electronic design lab. Was reporting to the deputy provost for science, sciences and doing custom made measurement equipment for different departments, like astronomy, physics, coming and placing orders with us. And we were doing, it was the beginning of the chips and, and computers. There were mini computers, small computers because there were PDF 11 already at that time which was like a big refrigerator, big refrigerator really. And those are many of them in NVA department at Yale. However, people needed custom made like you would call it laptop with special features today, much more primitive than today's laptops you can imagine.

But anyhow there was 70s and we are pioneering the work of custom made. I remember the CPU units the heart of the computer coming in the book where was it was cellophane. It was kind of glued to the page, the rigid page and you had to cut it out and you know find the appropriate sockets for it and then build everything from with the resistors, capacitors and there was iron, hot iron you know and solder. You were building it on the printed board. Those are the electronics, basic electronics at that time. So there were interesting times. My interest gradually was shifting, when I was already at Yale, towards the use of the alternative sources of energy, I was interested in solar wind and micro, micro, hydro small hydro which you can install in streams you know you don't need big river for that.

So I started with a friend of mine who was graduate of Yale School of Architecture, we started an organization called ATAG, appropriate technology assistance group and we are giving consulting to the individuals and organizations which were interested in using like windmill or having solar collectors which were very expensive at the time, not like today.

Q: When did you start that group?

A: That was beginning 80s. We were in 89 when we moved from Branford, Connecticut to Great Barrington, I was already doing several projects from utilities like United Illuminating, those east utilities, doing commercial energy audits for industrial facilities and the residential units, specially those which were exclusively heated and air conditioned, using electricity almost no gas, no oil. Just electricity. Because they were huge hogs of electricity so this is the, utilities started with these houses and, and buildings which were exclusively supplied with electricity. That was huge, huge savings and make a big indent in the consumption of electricity.

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With the benefits for the facility users as well as utilities because they didn't have to generate new power which was consumed by these customers. So happily we have lived here for 30 years, almost 29 and no 30 years already. This year is passing 30th year and we have a lot of projects. Hopefully health would allow us to continue them. And just a few days ago turned 84.

Q: Happy birthday.

A: Thank you. My wife is much younger than me, almost ten years and we are full, our son is in Boston doing a lot of interesting things and hopefully we will be useful for society as we are now. We are very involved in the local organizations. And we are active in town. We are active in our Quaker meeting here. We are volunteering. Sometimes small projects. We are being paid but mostly we are volunteering. Before because taxes are very high in our town. Probably we will have to soon get involved in organizations where we will be reimbursed for our time because we cannot afford any more to be exclusively volunteers I mean without getting paid so we will volunteer somewhere to get our taxes lower cause in spite of discounts and some rebates and whatever, this town is offering, our taxes are huge for a property like this.

Q: But overall you feel like you've led a good life.

A: I felt that I did a lot of my life interesting things. I don't mind to share my experiences with public at large so to speak. And it's a lot of things to be learned from other people. One of the most shocking things for me to find when I arrived here in the United States in 1970 was the lack of the appreciation by younger, appreciation of the other generation and their experience by younger generations. The gap between certain age groups is I think very damaging for society and culture as it is. And societies as they are, are losing a lot without consulting what they are doing with the older generations. And I think it's a huge mistake, culturally. I think huge mistake in educational system that schools are not encouraging older people to come be tutors. The, you know younger generation, they think they know everything and they know better and they have no respect of older people.

So they gap between grandparents, children and especially grandparents and their grandchildren is in my opinion unacceptable. That needs to change because it's a question of survival of, of the

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nations, of people as they are and not to speak about environment which needs to be respected. But I would start with the restoring the bridges, crossing the bridges which are huge, huge gaps between the generations. It just I'm sure it change in Poland as well, but this was not my youth and not my middle age but I was growing up. The respect for older people was much higher in Europe. In general in Poland. The family links were much stronger and friendships and intergenerational communications and the respect and just spending time together and talking, talking about how was it. To learn something from that. Not to repeat the same mistakes. Again and again. And I am observing that too many there are many things would be, could be avoided if younger generations were more open learning from older generations. That's my main message which I would like to convey to younger people.

Q: That's a good place to stop unless you have anything else to add.

A: Thank you.

Q: Thank you Wes.

(end)