

OK. You were just concluding with the family, who in a sense rescued you and Chaim by hiding you. You were telling me--

Oh, yeah.

--that you were poor.

Yeah. Yes, we were. They were very poor. And they did the best what they could, really. And we felt so sorry for ourselves laying there. And on the end, I remember there was a little boy what was running after a bird.

And it was already we heard already the Germans coming up. We hear already nearer coming the war coming, the front, we heard already bombs near coming to us. And a little boy went after this bird. And at once, he sees us. And thank god, a day later, were the Germans-- we saw the Germans running away. And we got freed.

And it was a very difficult time. We didn't have anything to do. Also once-- we were watching always the storks, the storks on the chimney. And we were watching the storks, we didn't have anything else to do. And the storks went away.

And the farmers, they think it brings something to them. Or a fire, or something is coming to them when the storks going away. So one day, he said, what are you doing the whole day? Are you perhaps watching the storks? And we say, yes.

So says already when the storks going away, you have to go. We cannot have you anymore because then is something bad will happen to us. So we stopped watching the storks. And thank god the storks came back.

And I was very weak. I didn't know that I was pregnant. I didn't have my period all these years that I was in concentration camp and ever. And I was very weak. I couldn't walk any more. And I didn't get heavier. And I couldn't sit up almost, not anymore. And we didn't know anything what was going on.

And the woman where we were hidden say that I was pregnant. I said, no, that's not true, and I don't grow. And when I didn't walk, and I was just laying. And she said, you have to go. We don't want you anymore. And later, we talked to the end that it was not so.

And then in July, we went down. And then I found out I was six months pregnant. And that was-- we never told this in 40 years. And that was very bad, of course, when we thought, what will we do? We had nothing. We went, it was free, we were free. We had no money, we had nothing, absolutely nothing. No clothes. Only what we had on, and that was it.

So we went to Chelm. We thought we were the only Jews alive, of course. We thought every concentration camp was really like Sobibor. But we found more people alive in Chelm. We came in a home in Chelm. And Chaim had to go in the army.

And I was there in Poland all alone. I didn't speak Polish and I had no money. So Chaim started working in the hospital. We saw that helps.

And I also never forget. They all went back to Sobibor. Did all the Jews went back to Sobibor because all the Jews put so much money in the ground. And everybody went back to Sobibor to take the money out of the ground. And they started fighting there and killing each other.

So I said, Chaim, that's not worth it, you don't go. So we didn't go back to Sobibor to get the money out of the ground. Most Jews did it. And one Jew did.

And one of the Jews-- Chaim knows already a little bit around. He was always in business. And so he walked already a little bit around. And one give him \$100 bill. And Chaim say, I know a place where I can change it for you. So perhaps I could change it for you. But of course, the number was gone, and that was not valuable.

So we put it that night under our pillow. And middle in the night, somebody stole it under our pillow out. So the next day, Chaim told him, and he didn't believe it, of course.

So the first money what Chaim made, I don't know made what. Made working in the hospital. Not to go in the army. When we thought that we get free in the army, and later that was not. Then he starts selling, I think, gasoline. I don't know what he did, really, exactly. I don't remember. And we paid this man off.

So that was a very bad situation. I have to tell something done. 20 years, 15 years later, we were in Israel. And we came together with all the Jews from Sobibor. And I said to the man, do you remember the \$100 what they stole under our pillow?

Said, yeah, you still owe me the \$100. And the next day, he came with somebody, and we paid him the \$100. Because he say-- my husband say, when he needs the \$100 so badly that he has to come to Israel to our house, then he needs it very badly. So when we went away from Sobibor, from this farmer, we stayed in Chelm a very short time. But you don't want to know that anymore.

I want to ask you some other things. I want you to talk about how you lived from one minute to the next when you were in the camp. I want you to go back and tell me how you feel you survived.

OK. I don't remember. We survived in Sobibor was most because we had each other. I don't think that-- I would have been like all the Dutch people or died very quickly after that. I think that we had each other.

And also, we were very close. I found a cousin there, first cousin. And a girl that came from Holland, Ula, Ursula Stern. We stick together and we helped each other very much. Because I got typhus and she took care of me. And I took care of her when she was sick. And we took care of each other.

The tense atmosphere in Sobibor was so bad that I don't want even to think back on that how bad it was. Because every minute of the day, we were called to do something else.

Like even when we walked from camp two to camp one, we never could walk regular, we had to [GERMAN], we throw ourself off the floor. And we had to go up and a man with a whip on the back of us that we had to do that till we almost not could walk anymore. When we came on, we had to stay in line for food. And sometimes there was no food.

And sometimes-- once, I remember, the cook, they killed him almost when he was sitting middle of the place in the middle from where we were sleeping. And we couldn't get food on that day.

And I remember once, a young men, he was 16 years old, and he was the favorite of one of the SSeS, really. And he was sleeping, and one of Wagner came into his room, and he said, go out, [GERMAN]. And he hit a little bit so with his whip. And he had this whip next to it. And the SSer took him out and shot him.

And that was-- every minute of the day was such in danger. A danger about your own life that we try not to think about it at all. Because I remember that we had to go in the woods once and pick blueberries.

And on the end of the day, they had to show our tongue of we had of eat one of the blueberries. And we would have eaten one of the blueberries, they would have punished us with 40 whips, of 80 whips. And they didn't shoot so much woman, the more, the men. And everything what you did was scary and was dangerous.

Also, we had to pick mushrooms in the woods, I remember. And I put it in my underpants all over. And they asked us, did you hide something? I was very heavy from the water, these things say, in the camp. So they didn't see it that I was full with mushrooms. But when they would have looked at it, they would have done something to punish me.

But generally, and every time you saw somebody else got punished and got hit. And we have to look all the time when they give 45 whips. All the time, we had to look that they did things like that.

And I think that we didn't get insane it was because we had each, Chaim and I. We were always together. We tried. Not when we worked, most of the time in daytime, when we had to go in the woods. But then I was a worry if I was here.

Once we were on a roll call. And there was somebody had run away. So every 10 people, they took out of the roll call. And Chaim was number nine. And I was standing there, you know. You were always, always in danger.

Many times, we had to stay the whole night on roll call because there was a dog or cat run on one of the mines, and they thought that we ran away. And Chaim and I, we always tried to stay together. And I think that that made us that we are, we stayed sane. I really think that saved our life.

Before the war, tell me about-- OK. Just one more.

Good.

I want you to tell me about the choices that you think the Germans and the Lithuanians had as guards.

How do you mean?

Did they do things of their own free will? Or were they following orders? And then what choices did the Jews have?

The Germans could do with us what they want. They had no orders whatsoever. They could kill us, they could harm us, they could punish us, they could do anything they wanted. The Ukrainians, I don't know much about. Because I didn't speak Polish and I couldn't talk with them at all. And they were always more on the outside. I really don't remember much about it. But they were also such antisemites.

They were there at free will. And the Germans were in Sobibor because of the free will. They didn't have to come. They didn't have to go in the war fighting on the front when they went to a concentration camp. So they went by themselves to the SS. The Germans, they had free will. They could do anything. And they did.

That was their biggest pleasure, to tell each other that we killed-- one of the SSES told once that he could kill-- he had a very big whip made-- that he could kill a Jew in 10 whips instead of 40 for somebody else or 50. And once, he had a friend so telling that he shows babies in the fire from the transports what they came on, what was too much work to put them, perhaps, in the gas chamber.

They could do anything they want. There was not such a thing humanity in these Germans at all. Perhaps one what give me the boots. But like Frenzel, and Wagner, and Wolf what was sometimes nice to us. Also he was eating bread and he said, you would like to have a piece? And we say no most of the time.

And they let us singing and dancing all the time when the fire was there. We had to do. No, I don't think there was one decency in these people's blood whatsoever. But I don't. In the Ukraine, I don't know much about it. The Polish Jews, they know more about that because they could talk to their language.

What about the Jews? Did they have choices? Talk about the choice to leave or not to leave.

No, it was no choice. We had no choice for anything. We had no choice. I remember once, I walked. I don't know how come. I walked by myself. And I saw people from my hometown sitting there on the side, the cantor from our temple. And then I saw [INAUDIBLE]. I say hi to them. And then I remember, I better don't say anything whenever he say hi to me. Then they will say, oh, you want to sit there, too? And that's the end of me.

We didn't have anything. We just were like a hoarder of sheep. And we had to do everything what they say. And god forbid. We did. We tried to do everything what the Germans say. I remember once, also through a window, that I saw a whole family from my hometown walking. Whole family-- father, mother, and children.

And I just made sure that they wouldn't see me. When they would have seen me, what would I have said? And I know that I see them still walking. And after the years, I forgot the names. Many times, I saw people what I know from face walking to the death.

We didn't have anything to say in the camp. Nothing. We just made sure that we were always in the background and that we didn't-- and especially Chaim always told me, be in the background. Don't let them know who you are. And we tried that so much as possible.

And I think that was one of the things that we were safe, that we were not [? martled ?] to death. Because a lot of them were [? martled ?] to death. Especially Dutch people. But somehow-- they saved a lot the Dutch women, the women somehow. The men was more in danger always.

And Chaim always tried to push me. When I'm already quickly go in the front, and do things, and come up for people. But he always told me, stay out of it, stay out of it, leave it alone. And you couldn't do anything anyway. There was nothing that we could do. You could nothing do. Was nothing, nothing.

You had to just take care of yourself and to sabotage against the Germans. Whatever to sabotage. Where we once were in the camp where we slept, that then was the only thing what you could do, stay in the background, and don't show yourself so much in the front. That's all.

Before the war, can you tell me about the J on the passport, and how the underground removed yours? And then how you got found out? Tell me the whole--

I don't remember much how they did it at the time. When I was home. And there came a Catholic priest what lived in our street. And he came to me and he say, how do you think you can save your life? And I say to him, the only way is it that I be as a non-Jew, that somebody takes me up.

And somebody else came to pick me up early in the morning. That was a coincidence, my English teacher. And he picked me up early in the morning at 5 o'clock, and we went with the bicycle, and that was the last time that I saw my mother and my brothers, my family. I never saw them again.

And I think I came to a nurse from my hometown. De Groot was her name. And she drew her-- she knows when she was in the underground. And through her, they took the J from my passport. Because that's the only way that I was by a woman what was-- where she was good. I went after three months of hiding with her. She took a whole family in.

And I had to go to another family. And the other family were traitors, what I found out after the war. I didn't know. And I was hidden there three months. And they had 28 Jews hidden there. And they all got caught. And they didn't do anything to them.

And you want to tell you about how I was caught? OK. When I was hidden there, I was all alone always in the house. And I was 19 years old. And I was very depressed. And had to clean the house. I was the maid there. And I was a spoiled brat from home. I never had to do anything. And I had to do everything there. And they went away the whole day.

And I didn't get anything to eat. And there was not much food in Holland. It was really just starting to get no food, and people were very hungry. And I was alone.

And there was in the street where a lawyer there were Jewish people hidden. And after that I was there a few months, they say I could go there and visit him. And when the minute I come in, the Germans come. Sort of was that somebody told the Germans.

And the Germans-- and the police, the Dutch police came. And when I was there, I say to them-- they asked me the passport. And I show my passport. And I say, oh, I am a nurse, and I come here to help these people. And they hold my passport to the light. And the light they saw there was a J from Jew was in there. And so there was nothing what they

could do.

So they right away took me. And also the family what was there was a father, and mother, and two children. And they all had asthma. I remember they were so sick. Asthma comes up when they are nervous. And they were so sick. And the woman where they were hidden was an older lady from 80 years old.

So the Germans asked me where I was hidden. And I didn't want to tell them because the day before was came another Jewish family and living upstairs. And I thought when they find out that I was caught, that perhaps they have a chance to get away.

And that was happened. They somehow got to know that the German took us, of the police. And they had time to get away. They, after the war, they sent me a letter that thanks.

But the women were, the older lady when we were caught, she told the Germans where I was hidden. And they went later over there and they took-- what it was, I don't know exactly. I went down to Utrecht in the police station. And I stayed there eight days.

And I had a chance to get away. But somehow, I didn't. I didn't want to go away. First of all, I had no money. And I thought, I didn't know the underground was already that strong. And I didn't want to go out. The police gave me little note that say, your brother like to take you out. Your brother like to take you out.

And I didn't get along with my sister-in-law. She's still alive. I didn't get along with my sister-in-law. And I visit once my brother. And they were locked up in a little room with the two kids, and it was dirty, and it was miserable.

And I say, I'd rather go to my mother in Poland than go to my brother when I get out. I have to go to my brother and be there and help him with the little kids. I didn't know there was a gas chamber or something like that. I say, I go rather to my mother in Poland than I be locked up with my brother there. So I didn't get out of the police station.

And from there, they sent me, we were in Amsterdam in jail. In three months, I was in jail. And we were with 10 women in a little room. And it was very interesting because everybody tells the life story. And they were all-- one was a professor's wife, and one was a girl from the street, and one was that. And it was-- we didn't feel any danger.

And anyway, I didn't think anything. And we got my family from Amsterdam where we were sent me sometimes packages. And one of the guards would open the door, recognized somehow that my brother was in hotel school, and that she knows him. And from that time out, we can double food. All of us in the cell got extra food. So we didn't have it that bad in the jail.

It was-- we had to walk every morning. So like you see in the Sing Sing where they always saw sometimes movies from. And we stayed there-- I stayed there three months. And then I went out of there.

And we went to a concentration camp. And in the office, I met a whole bunch of Dutch girls. I met these Dutch girls, we stayed together till Sobibor. And from there, we went to Vught. We were in a concentration camp in Holland three months.

And I was also very lucky. There comes a man to me, and he say, are not the daughter from the Weinberg from the hotel in Zwolle? And I say, yes. Said he, I have a job for you. And he was there, a big shot already, and the camp was just opened. And he give me a job sorting clothes in the laundromat. And I worked in the laundromat.

And it was very good because I was there. I had to tell people what they had to do. And I could get away from there, too. I could have gone in the laundry room, in the baskets sit in very easy.

But I didn't know that there was an underground in Holland. And I didn't have money. When I would have had some money in my pocket, I would have done it. But I thought, when I come out of here, where do I go? They could right away see I'm Jewish.

And I don't know why I thought this way that they right away could have seen that I'm Jewish. That's what I thought. Because in my hometown was a not so big town, they would have right away recognized me. And so from there out, after three months, I went to Westerbork. And in Westerbork, I told the story.