

Marsha Botwinik PHOENIX My name is Marsha Botwinik and I was born in 1907 in Russia. My father's name was Israel and my mother's name was Baila. My grandfather owned a mill. I am one of four children and we lived in a small village.

During WW 1 we were in the middle of the fighting so we took our wagons and belongings and moved to the interior of Russia away from the war. We moved to where my uncle, a rabbi, lived but couldn't find a place to live.

We moved near the Ukraine and took an apartment there. I was 7 or 8. They spoke Russian, we spoke Yiddish. We lived tjere a few years and then my aunt went back to our old town. My father was a bookkeeper and we remained.

We went to Russian schools in 1918/19. Then the revolution and we prepared to return to Poland and left everything behind.

In Russia the Cossacks were killing Jews, breaking into stores. The Cossacks abused Jews, robbing, killing them.

Conditions were awful, no jobs, no food, stores closed. If a horse fell in the street, people ate it.

Father became ill with lung disease. We were very poor, we were called refugees. In 1920 father died. Bolsheviks asked for gold.

Mother baked bread for a living, I had pneumonia. Mother supported us. A woman we knew lived with us and took care of the children. My father brought a blind boy home Morris Beck is the boy's name and his father was taken as a warprisoner, he was a mechanic. He lived with us.

When my father was live we had many people living with us, relatives, children- taking care of people. I was going to Russian public school and Jewish after school too.

They were killing Jews. I was 10 year old when my father died. We were very lost and poor. People in the village robbed, broke windows and killled Jews. In 1920 they allowed anyone who was a Polish citizen to go home.

We were on a train, 42 below zero, they took the engineer away from the train. It took 2 months to get from Tanbow to Baranovitzh. 100 people arrived there, more than double started out.

We arrived in a terrible condition. Police came to look for gold that was hidden within the stove; they killed the man who hid it.

My mother's friend, Ruchl, lost her money. (She rambles on about her mother's honest). Her mother found the money and returned it. ~other was "high class", etc.

In 1920 we left Tombov, sold everhthing. They arrested my mother and took our bread away. A woman in the house reported my mother. She stole my mother's jewelry.

When we came to Baranovitch the American Committee wanted to help us but my mother was too proud to ask for help.

We stayed in Baranovitch a few weeks. (She rambled on how much her mother loved her).

We ran to where our house was, it was below zero, we were naked. We went to my mother's sister. The windows were missing in our house, it had been empty for 4 years. Mother wrote to her brothers in America; they sent money from America.

My brother was very educated; my sister was undescrivable in languages. My husband lived next door, we married in 1933 and had four children.

In 1939 the Soviets stepped in. My brother was an officer in the Russian Army. We had a big house. My husband had a lot of land, 40 acres. He had a lot of people working for him, In 1933 we added to the house 4 more rooms. It was beautiful.

In 1940 the Germand invaded and take everyting away from the Jews. We had 15 cows, horses. They took everyting from us. My mother moved in with us. Minsk and Moscow were bombarded. My brother was crippled. He was hiding.

Ukrainians and Polish were after the Jews looking to kill them. The struggle is undescrivable. Then they took us to the ghetto. In the ghetto they killed Jews like cattle.

We hid people under the floor. Mu husband's mother was old and coughing and they killed her.

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TAPE 11

1 My brother was hiding under the floor. I started to run away to a factory and hid in the cellar.

1. To shoot a Jew was like killing a dog. I ran to a farm and asked them to let my husband work for them. He got permission from the Germans to work on the farm.

1. When they took us to the ghetto my brother had nowhere to go and he killed himself.
(pause)

1. Children were sent to Christian families and were paid by the Jews to take care of them and let them work on the farms.

1. No words can describe the ghetto. We were there for 2 or 3 months.

1. I went back home. My mother said I am afraid I will not see you again. My brother was in the swamps. I went to see him. I took the baby and a woman said I put it there. My older children were killed.

1. We were 15 miles from Russia. When there is a frost, the water is frozen and we were going to escape. My husband was not working and he hid in the bushes.

1. My mother, my daughter and I were going to the swamp. My mother~could not cross the river. I took my mother on my back. (cry8ing) I put er on the other side. It started to rain. I put her down. I never saw her again.

1. I ran after my husband. I picked him up and my sister and I came there. I lost my child. I was about to die. We decided to go home and maybe in the city we will hear where they went.

1 It was Erev Yom Killur. Three days later they wiped out the city. I started to run and they after me and I jumped in the woods. I came back to the city and the police arrested me and took me to the police station because they were wiping out everybody,. They put me on the third floor. They brought machine guns and they went away for the Jews.

1. My mother and sister were waiting. I scratched the walls with my nails. Three or four bricks fell down and I took the bricks. I undressed myself and crawled through the wall and I was on the other side of the door,+. The guards were sleeping.

1. I went down on the rails and I turned the handle and saw the street. I started running. Christians were pulling potatoes in the field and I called to them and told them this is a slaughter. They were coming for them. The police are coming.

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1. We were running to the woods. I picked up one lady on my back When the police came, they said they would kill the Christians who were running with the Jews. But they did not kill them.

1. I knocked on the door of a lady I knew. She said I never did you any harm why did you come here. Do not bother me. Go where you belong. I told her, I am not dead.

1. I gave my sweater to someone to give a note to my husband. My husband came and we went to the woods.

1. Two or three days later, we found my sister. She thought she was dreaming when she saw me. She could not believe that I was alive.

1. We started struggling again. We went looking for my daughter and my mother. We were still on the German side. We found partisans and they led us. We were running through the woods. We were 90 people The partisans were helping us.

1. They were Jewish partisans from Estonia and other places. We came t to a river. Christians with horses and wagons helped us to go to the other side. The partisans killed the sheep and wanted to feed us The Ger mans stole the sheep, made and fire and cooked the sheep. They were a couple of children.

1. My sister said to me Leave the satchel, dress yourself with as ~any clothes as you can so we will have nothing to carry. I heard the people shouting: Machine Guns. I lost my sister.

1 I looked in th4e bushes. I saw a dead mother and a child. I grabbed the child and ran. I knocked on the door and an old woman answered aD AND SHE SAID: why is God punishing you. I said I do not know. I would help you but I do not have anyting. My children were killed and my husband is gone.

1. With the little girl on my back I went back to the woods and walked miles. I went to look for my husband and for my sister. In the morning there were heads and feet hanging on trees and wolves were eating the flesh of the people.

1. We were on the German side. We fell down and slept on the grarss. There were snakes and water. I had arthritis and I was soaked with naked feet. Nowhere to go.

A woman answered and I asked her to let

us in

1. W~ went to a llttle house.

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1. the house for the night. I found my husband. She let us in the house and we slept there. There was a woman who made boots from wool. We had wool. I asked her to teach me how to make the boots. We will give you gold.

1. It was before Christmas. She said you killed Christ and chased us out of the house.. I heard that there WAS ANOTHER WOMAN WHO MADE THESE BOOTS. I worked for th9is woman. I was spinning and making wool.

1. The woman gave me a little house because I made these boots. People gave me food for these boots.

1. In 1945 my mother died . My daughter changed her name and survived. They took her away to Vilna and someone adopted her.

1. In 1947 I came to America. My husvband brother sent for us from Berlin. I was helping the refugees there. I was giving out food. I was in Berlin for about 6 months.