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Good morning, Rose. We appreciate you coming down this morning to give your time. We would like to begin with the place you were born, your parents' name, the number of people in your family.

I was born in Krzywicze, Poland. They used to call it Krzywicze. And it was Poland. It was Russia. So it's really like White Russia.

And there was-- now, it's my mother, my mother only. My father passed away here in Phoenix. But before that, we were four children. My mom had another daughter and twin boys.

Could you state their names for us?

I really don't know. I know the sister's name was Peschke. The boys' name I don't remember.

Were you the youngest in the family?

No, I was the oldest. When 1939, we were occupied by Russia. And things change. But when we lived under Poland, we were, I guess, more than average. We had land. My father was a hard worker. There was a very large family.

My father was the youngest of 18 children. They were all married. And they all had children, 4, 5, you know.

My grandma lived with us. She was extremely Orthodox. What I most recall about her is every Friday around noontime, she would always lay out her special dress and her sheitel, her wig, for Shabbos on the bed because she was already ready for Shabbos. We had a very strictly kosher home. And--

Would you mind stating your maiden name--

Oh, my name is-- my maiden name was Rose Shoshana Botwinik.

And your married name?

My married name is Rose Jaloviec.

Your mom's name is?

Marcia Botwinik. And my father's name was Alan Botwinik.

Did you attend public school or private school?

Under Russia, I attended partially-- I was too young for when Poland was in power. But under Russia, I attended public school with some Jewish education afterwards.

Do you recall if you mingled with non-Jewish children?

Oh, yes. Yes. We had friends that were non-Jewish. But, of course, mostly was Jewish. It was a small town. I don't even know how many Jewish families we had. But it was a nice shul.

And my dad always went to shul on Saturday. And nothing was done in the house Saturday or Friday late afternoon. Holidays was always observed very strictly. And my grandfather, my father's father was very, very Orthodox, very-- super Orthodox.

And right next door to us my mother's family lived. They were two brothers and two sisters. And my grandmother was the widow.

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You were always surrounded by family.

Oh, yes. And next door, there was an aunt and four children. And the other door down was another aunt with two children. And a lot of the older brothers and sisters of my father moved away to Vilna and Vileyka. But there was quite a bit of the family in town.

In your childhood as you remember, you felt no discrimination of any kind?

Oh, yes, it was heard of. Even my grandmother stated all the years for the Tsar-- I mean, she went through a lot of changing times. In the czarist time how they always were against the Jews. And there were the pogroms and the beatings. And my grandmother on my mother's side stated that they were in Russia and how terrible it was, how they used to drag out the Jews with beards and cut them off and stuff like this.

But when you were a child, somehow you listen. It's stories. It really did not affect me that much. And I still had friends.

I remember I had a girlfriend that lived out of town. And her dog had puppies. And she invited me to come out. And I went there with a girlfriend of mine because she didn't believe I saw all these puppies.

And we went, and we were caught in the rain. And our parents were looking for us all over town. And we were in the barn counting the puppies. And she was not Jewish. And the family took us in, and they gave us hot to drink. And he drove us back home, the father. So I remember that. And that was before the war.

When did you start feeling the real oppression?

Well, in 1939, when the Russians came to our town. And it wasn't that much noticed against the Jews. But when they were going away in 1941, they were saying to-- and there was like court-- they took over part of our house. And they made a court out of it. And the judge said to my parents, please, come with us. You'll be destroyed here.

So my grandmother, olav ha-sholom, said like this, oh, I've been with the Germans before. Because the rumors came true already how people were being tortured and in camps and in ghettos from Warsaw and Lodz and even in some Vilna section. But she says, it couldn't be that bad. They must have done something against the government, or they wouldn't be-- just because they're plain people like us, they wouldn't be prosecuted like that.

And everybody always was thinking, how can you leave your home, your belongings, everything you worked for all your life? But unfortunately, we didn't listen to the soldiers. And to the judge, we should have listened to him. All he said is get on your horse, take your family, and follow us, and you will get across the border. Because we were not far from the Russian border.

But this is what happened. And then all of a sudden, we heard that the Germans came in. The non-Jews were very happy to see them. But they were also happy to see the Russians too when Poland left. Everybody stood in the streets with flowers waving. They were liberated. And then when the Russians left, they were doing the same thing to the Germans. They were standing with flowers and shouting, the liberators out here.

And all of a sudden, we heard in towns surrounding us that they were gathering people. They were forming [NON-ENGLISH], committees, and to select certain Jews to be executed. And when this happened already it was too late for us to run away any place. And the men in the family started digging under the foundation. All the floors-- the top of the floor was wooden.

So in one part of the house, which my father remembered how it was built that there was quite a bit underneath not filled. So they loosened up some boards. And the men worked every night and dug out all this earth and the sand from underneath. And they disposed it where nobody could see that it's fresh ground.

We stayed there, and all of a sudden, somebody came running through the town shouting, the Gestapo are here. To me, I guess, it didn't mean all that much yet. But by the sound of it and everything, I could feel the terror in it.

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My mother and father gathered everybody. And they put us underneath what they dug out. But it was just enough to lay if they pounded on the floor, it wouldn't be hollow.

And my grandmother was an older woman. And she said she's not hiding any place. This is her house. But they also did not tell her about the secret place.

And there was an aunt of mine, which was even older than my grandmother. And she remember she always coughed terribly. So they decided that the whole family would be in jeopardy because of her. So they couldn't put her with all of us.

So she was hidden in an attic. And my grandmother put on her tachrichim, her burial clothes with her-- her sheitel. [SOBBING] And she took out the prayer book. And she was just sitting and praying. And she says, nobody will do nothing to me. And it was in the same house where we were laying underneath the floor.

And my mother closed on us the boards and put a bed over it, iron bed. And she ran away. We didn't know where.

So as we were laying, we could see by the slits through the foundation all the Jews were being marched through the streets. And I saw a girlfriend a very dear girlfriend of mine also. And I wanted to say something. But my father put his hand over my mouth.

And we saw them being marched. And we could see from far away, there was an unfinished barn. They were all put in there. And then the soldiers lit with gasoline, and they were all burned alive.

When this was finished, they were going through the houses again to gather the rest of the people. And they came into our house. And they asked my grandmother, where's your husband? So she says, I'm an old woman. I have no husband. So he was beating her with the handle of the--

Of the [INAUDIBLE]--

No, the gun. But it's not-- what do you call a big, like a machine gun, or whatever. And kept saying to her, where is your husband? And she kept saying, I don't have a husband. I'm an old lady. What do you want from me?

And then they shot her. And when they shot, her blood was dripping on me when I was laying under the floor. And my father pushed my head down in the sand so I wouldn't scream.

And then we heard they were breaking things and hitting. And we heard that they took my aunt down and marched her away. And right near the house one of them said, she's too old to be bothered with. And he shot her there.

And they looked all through the house and ransacked it. And we heard everything being broken. And the furniture being kind of knocked around. And they kept knocking on the floor to see if it was solid. So thank God that the men had the wisdom to do what they did.

We still didn't know what happened to my mother. And we were laying there and laying there. And then we saw the cars of the Gestapo leave. It was very early dawn.

And when they were burning the barn with the people, we saw how some of them were jumping out. And they were just thrown back in. It was very terrifying and scary. And we did not know what to expect when we opened up finally the boards and get out.

But we were laying there. And I kept saying, I think my mother is no longer here. And I was crying. And my father says, God will be good to her, and He'll save her.

And when dawn came, we heard footsteps in the house, just single footsteps. And my mother kept saying my name,

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Raizel, Raizel, are you there? And she moved the bed. And my father says, don't answer. Maybe she's forced to say this. But when she moved the bed and opened up the floor, we realized, because she would never give us out. So most of our family was saved from that one happening.

So she told us of how they caught her and locked her up in the jail. And she broke on top of-- they had ovens to heat the houses. So she climbed up on top of the oven and broke through the wall and jumped on the other side and ran away. And as she was running, she ran into a cellar. And it was full of water. And they were shooting after her, but it was too dark. And they just didn't go in-- the cellar was filled with water. So that's how she got saved.

Well, we cleaned up and buried my grandmother. My mother's brother was also killed at that time. And we went on. And a couple of days, you know, it was all right. And then--

You stayed in the house?

We stayed in the house. We kind of cleaned up. Most of our belongings were gone. We had cows and chickens and that. The people in the town, I guess, just took it because I couldn't see-- we couldn't see that the Germans would take-- the Gestapo would take it. But everybody just ransacked the house. And mostly, people we associated with all our lives, the non-Jews were friends, all of a sudden they were no longer friends. So we stayed there.

And then whoever was left, able-bodied, was given away to the farmers to work. The rest, my mother with her children, we were put in a ghetto. There was one house surrounded with barbed wire because there was very few left of us. And we were allowed to go out, I don't know how often, to scrounge for food in the fields and work, whatever they told us.

Did you have guards in this ghetto?

Yes, there were guards. But they were not the SS. They were the local people that were kind of--

Militia--

Yeah, mobilized or I don't know, that were non-Jews. There was still a Jewish committee. And they would come in. And they say, if you have this, your life will be spared. They said they need so much money, and they need so much this. But we didn't have any of it. Most of it was already taken. And we were in the ghetto.

And I remember that we were out in the field, my mother and my sister and the brothers, for food. In the meantime, the Gestapo came again and eliminated the ghetto, whatever was left there. But my grandmother, my mother's mother, and us, we came back. We didn't know. And they just left. They were passing through, and they left.

By the time we came in the evening from the fields, we were again locked up. And one of my brothers was crying very badly because I guess he was hungry. And the guard says, don't worry he won't be crying long. So we knew already what that meant.

And my father was on a farm working. And my mother's sister was also on the farm working. My grandmother was, I guess, too old for work. But we just got saved by luck because we weren't in the ghetto at the time that this happened.

I'll tell you the truth. It's very vague to me. I don't know what happened to my brothers. Whether I it's too terrible for me--

To remember.

To remember. My mother never talks of it. And I once asked her, she says to me, if I want to go on living, I don't want to talk about it. So it must be very terrible for her. Maybe it was even terrible for me that I don't think about it. I often wonder how come that part I can't remember. I know my sister died.

And so a couple of days later when we went out to the fields to work, they used to say, if we don't come back, the rest

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will be eliminated. Well, there was no one to eliminate any longer. So when we went out early morning to the fields, we didn't come back, everybody that was left there.

And we went. And my mother, me and my grandmother and-- and her brother, she said, you go ahead to the woods, and I'm going to go pick up Dad from the farm. I'm going to tell him what happened. And we'll meet you in the woods.

When we came to the woods, there were the partisans there. My uncle knew the way. And he took us there. So when we came, the partisans were there. And we were supposed to wait a day till my mom and dad would come with her sister.

So we waited. And they didn't come. So the partisans said, we can't stay here no longer. We're surrounded by Germans. We have to leave.

So I said, I'm not leaving without my mother and father. So my uncle picked me up on his back. And he just carried me off. And that was the last I seen till after the war of my parents.

We were in the woods, scrounging for food. There were swamps there. And the trees were so high that you could never see the sky. And we lived there.

My grandmother, my uncle, as there were a few other people that survived from our shtetl. And as a matter of fact, one was a first cousin to my mother. And we kept walking towards the front, hoping that-- they said that the partisans take some people.

So we were in the forest. And when we escaped, I had only a pair of boots on and a dress. And my grandma had a light coat. And my uncle also had very little clothing.

And we came there, and we stayed. Some food was given to us by the farmers and the partisans. And there were quite a few of the Jews from around the shtetls, from the towns, that survived and were in the forest with the partisans.

Were you sleeping on the ground?

On the ground. And it was wet because it was swamp land. And we kept walking and walking.

And then the winter came. And we had no clothing whatsoever to help us. But we built fires when we could if the Germans weren't around.

And we had a little potato, sometimes a little flour. And my grandma would make like a soup from the flour. Tasted like paste for the walls. But we were happy to have that. Or just plain hot water to drink to warm ourselves up.

And then this first cousin that I told you that was to my uncle, his wife, his feet were so swollen she couldn't walk anymore. And what sticks out in my mind that she sat down on a sawed off tree. And she says, please, just leave me here. I'm not going any farther.

And he kept begging her, please try, I'll help you. And he did. All the way, he was helping her. But she was a very heavy woman. It was almost impossible to carry her.

And he left her sitting there. And everybody just walked on because the partisans said we couldn't stay there. We never know what happened to her.

And then there was a lady with a small baby. And we were in the woods. And some farmer told on us. And the Germans surrounded, and they were shooting. Of course, they didn't go inside-- it was so thick, the forest, that they didn't. But they just sat at the edge of the forest shooting in with machine guns, were surrounded all around. And the partisans said, if we lay in the swamps, we might not get hit.

And we thought the Germans will quiet down, and they left already. But as soon as we got up, they started shooting

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again. And we had to kind of lay down in the water again. And this lady with a baby, the baby was crying because it was hungry. And she squeezed it so hard to save it that by the time she got out, the baby was dead. And I remember they buried the baby there, and somebody said a Jewish prayer over it.

And we went on. And the partisans took us to border where the railroad train was. We must have been at least, I think, six months in the woods.

Do you recall the partisans, were they Polish or Russian men?

There was just a-- I think mostly were Russian. And there was a lot of Jews among them that have escaped from the ghettos, young boys. And they joined the partisans. They did a lot of work. They blew up railroads. And--

And they were carrying arms?

They were carrying arms, yes. And between them, I guess, this is how we survived because we had some of their potatoes and whatever was left over that they took from the farmers when they came back.

And we came to the railroad. And this leader said he can only take across 3 or 4 at a time because there were Germans with guard dogs walking back and forth. And there was like a motorcycle that guards the rails going back and forth. And they timed it how often he goes. And the whole crowd could not go through, just 3 or 4 people.

And I was supposed to be among the four that was going through. And I-- I'm almost hesitant to tell the story because I don't even believe it, that this could possibly happen. And I couldn't run fast enough. And we saw the German come with the dog. And they just left me in the bushes.

And I was laying there and absolutely not moved. And he told me, we'll come back for you. And, of course, the German came, marched back and forth with the dog. And the dog did not bark.

And didn't see you.

He must have smelled me. I don't know. I just don't know. That shows you how--

A miracle.

Yes. Yes. It's not by what we did. If you don't believe in God, you have to believe in God because how else could this happen?

And he went away. And I still laid there. And when they came for the next--

Group.

Group, and I was already right near the rail, he took me over. My grandma and uncle were so happy to see me. They didn't think I would be there. And then we went on to Russia.

Was this the border that you were crossing?

I think so. I really don't-- I cannot say it. But when we walked-- came to the next down, it seemed like that's where most of the action was going around with the Russians. There was a lot of soldiers there. There was a lot of tanks and stuff from the Russians. And they told us to go to the train station and that we would be shipped farther into Russia.

When we came into the railroad station-- I never took off any of my clothing because I had nothing else to wear. But when we used to be in the woods by the fire, the lice, excuse me, and were just eating pieces out of us. So we used to take off our clothes and just shake it over the fire. You hear them crackle. How terrible it was.

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And we were at the railroad station. When we walked in, you couldn't walk through. People were like sardines laying there, sardines in a can. There was no place to put your foot in even.

And then the train would come. And some of them went on. And others came in and laid down, if there was a place. It was hardly-- there was only standing room. There was no place even to--

These were war refugees?

War refugees and soldiers waiting for whatever they had to go. And some were wounded. There was no doctor there or nurses. We didn't see any of that.

What about the food? Did you get any?

Well, we were there like 24 hours. And then they announced that the people that are going to go on and this train will get rations. So my uncle went. And they took him away to the-- it's called the [NON-ENGLISH] army. That means they were not allowed to go on the front because they weren't trustworthy. But they were for digging ditches and--

Like a forced labor?

Well, it's worse really than a forced labor. And later, I found out he wound up in the mines, in the coal mines. And for him to get his piece of bread would be on the other side of the fence. So he was forced to go into the coal mine if he wanted the ration of bread and soup.

And me and my grandmother were put on the train. We were given a bag of potatoes, not the big bag, but whatever they gave, and a little bit of flour. And they put us and a lot of others like us on the train. Half of it was with cattle, and half of it was with people.

Of course, there was no place to go to the bathroom. They had just a big thing with water that we had to use. And there was another barrel of water for drinking. And there was a little oven in the middle that had coals in it.

But this is like a freight car?

It was a freight car. And a lot of the people that were on it died. And when the train would stop, they would just-- they were put in with the manure from the animals, and they would just dump them out, the people with the manure together you find from a night or two nights. There was like shelves. And people laid there.

So we didn't know how long we were going to be there because it often stopped and stayed and stayed in the same place without letting us out. And then if it was-- whether they needed the railroad for something else, I don't know. They would let us, the train, go a little farther.

Well, my grandmother said, the only thing we're allowed is three slices of potatoes because we didn't know how long we were going to be there. So so many people died from hunger because they ate up most of what they had. And then there was nothing left.

So we used to bake a slice of potato in the morning and later on and before we went to sleep. And as I was standing, baking my potato on this oven that was providing the heat, the train jerked. And I fell with my arm on the oven. Well, of course, first of all, we were concerned my clothes shouldn't burn. And the arm was the least of it.

But a couple of days later, it looked very bad. And my grandmother took a piece of schmatta and wrapped it around. Well, by the time we came to Russia where we were supposed to go to a kolkhoz, which is a commune, my arm was all pussy and looked very bad. I was in terrible pain with it.

When we came there, my grandmother couldn't work in the fields. And I was too young for the fields. So I'll never forget the [NON-ENGLISH], which means the head of the commune, kolkhoz, said to us, who sent for you? We got

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plenty of our own. We don't need you Jews here.

But I guess he had no choice. So he put us in the back of a store where there was no windows. And once a month, they used to bring the ration truck for bread distribution. So we had boarders there, rats as big as us.

Well, we got our ration the first month. And he gave us some potatoes and stuff to eat. And me and my grandmother stayed there.

We hid the bread underneath our straw mattresses. But the rats came at night and ate it up. Of course, we were scared. They were very large.

And so the next day, we went there. And I asked him, please, could we have somewhere else? He said, there is no place for you that we could possibly give you. You have to make the best of it and clean them out.

So we scrubbed, and we cleaned. But there was-- I guess they were surviving as well as we are. And my arm got very bad. So--

You had no medical--

No medical. So she took me to the head of this commune. And she showed him how bad it was. She says, well, there isn't much I can do for her. I'll send you to a doctor in another village.

So we walked a long way. And we were begging in the houses for food. And we had the sacks with us. And I learned how to pray in Russia. And I made the cross. And I asked for food. And whatever they could, they shared-- a potato, a piece of roll. They weren't off well either. The situation in Russia was very bad.

So we came to this town. And the doctor took a look at my arm. And he said, I'm sorry, but she's going to have to lose it. It was all infested with pus. I have no medication to give her. The little medication that we have goes to the soldiers.

So my grandmother became very hysterical and started crying and screaming. So he says, I'll tell you, I don't know how much pain she can tolerate, but we'll scrape it 3 times. So see if we can't clean away this bone with the pus in it.

So I remember we went there three weeks in a row. Once a week I went there. And he made me bite on a towel. And he was scraping it. There was no-- he didn't give me nothing for the pain. And afterwards, he put some kind of white powder on it.

And after the third scraping, when I went back the fourth time, he saw that there was redness already and that most of the pus was gone. So he says, I think because she's a young child, she has a good chance of getting it back. So I kept it nice and clean. And I still got it. Well--

Another miracle.

Yeah. We're full of them, I guess. The boys in the kolkhoz used to wait for me and beat me up and call me dirty Jew. It was very, very difficult. We had to scrounge for wood so we keep warm where we lived.

I had to go to the river and carry water. My grandmother got sick. And I remember one time, it was very cold that winter. And I-- oh, when we came to Russia, what I did was take off the boots. I've had them on since I left the ghetto.

When I took off the boots, they had to cut it off. And the socks, whatever I had inside, the flesh came off with it. And when we were by the doctor, he saw this. And he says, the best way to do it is just keep it clean. And he thinks that it's going to come back, which is brown, pieces falling off.

And we made ourselves from rubber tires like shoes with rope tied around it. And then we took rags and wrapped around our feet. And this is what we wore as shoes.

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And my grandmother was already sick. And I had to go to fetch the water and fetch the wood and go begging for food for us to survive. It was a very bad winter that winter. And I had to go to the well. In the middle of the town was a well. And we went there to get the water.

Well, I was small. And they had the wooden buckets that went into the well and you brought it up the chain, the water. I couldn't reach it. I brought it up, but I couldn't reach it. So they had like ice where they hid-- you know, it looked like steps. But it was made out of ice.

So I put my foot on the ice step. And the bucket pulled me into the well. Of course, I was screaming. And this man came by, this Russian man. And I was sitting in the bucket when he pulled me up.

And he says to me in Russia, a little girl like you, who lets you out so late at night to do this? Let me help you home. So he took the water and he carried it home. And I'll never forget when he walked in, he saw how we lived, he just cried, and he left.

So shortly afterwards, I went to the [NON-ENGLISH], the head of the commune. And I told him how sick my grandmother was, and if they couldn't please put her in the hospital because she was very sick. So he said he'll see what he can do. And two days later, they came, and they took her to the hospital about-- I don't know how many miles away, but it must have been at least three or four towns away.

And me, they put in a Christian home, which was nice. It was nice and clean. The lady said, all she asked for me to do is to bring in enough water to fill the barrels, to wash the floors, to be sure there's enough wood for heating. And for this, I could sleep on the oven. And I'll have my meal, which was a big step up for me from what we had before.

So it was nice and warm. And it was clean. And I kept it know like she wanted it. And it was very nice.

And every Sunday, they went-- over there, they were still allowed to pray. It wasn't that strict. So Sunday morning, they went to church. And she baked these little rolls.

And being a child, I didn't realize that she counted them. And I used to go every Sunday to visit my grandmother. It was far away. And I always felt guilty that I lived so nice and maybe she was hungry and everything.

So this one Sunday, I decided that I'll take one of the rolls. They were ready. And I straightened out the rolls like I thought she wouldn't notice. And I went to the hospital. And I was hiding it, you know. I took my share of the roll, and I took one more from my grandmother. And I walked to the hospital. And I came in there. And she didn't even want to eat it.

But on the way back, the boys attacked me. And they beat me up. And I came home. And she says, you stole the roll. And I said, yes, I took it. All you have to do is not give me my dinner. And I explained to her.

She beat me so terribly. And she called me a dirty Jew, and I cannot be trusted anymore. And she threw me out on the street.

So I went back to the head of the kolkhoz. And he said, well, I have news for you. They're not going to keep your grandmother in the hospital anymore. So bring her in town.

I said, but I saw her Sunday. She was still so sick. He says, they can't do nothing for her. The medicine that we have belongs to the soldiers.

So they brought her back in town. And that same day, she died on the oven of the [NON-ENGLISH] kolkhoz. That's where we stayed. And I found her dead.

And they came, two men. And they took her to the cemetery. And they just dumped her there. They didn't dig a hole or

anything.

And I stood there, I don't know how long. And I dug out with my own hands a hole enough for her. And I just turned her over. Everybody passed by. Nobody helped. It seems like when you're Jewish, you don't need any help. And I put some leaves over it, and that was the end.

But one thing she said before she died, remember, Raizel, you're Jewish. This is the address. We had such a big family. Maybe somebody will be left when this is all over. Don't forget. Every day write a letter.

So this lady came by that knew the lady that I stayed with. And she said-- she was from another city, Jaroslaw. And she said to her, you have two children. And your husband is in the war. And your son is in the war. She works very good. She can't be trusted because she stole the roll, but she works very good. Why don't you take her with you, and she'll take care of your children. So this lady took me with her to Jaroslaw.

And she had two children. One must have been about two and one about five. I had to do all the work in the house and milk a goat and cook everything. But at least, they had a place where to stay. And--

What about food? Did they provide you with food?

Well, I didn't know at that time. But she got rations from me. But she just gave me a little bit, whatever. They didn't have much either, you know. And I saw that it's not like they had a lot of food and they didn't share with me. She had her bread and she had her potato soup and a little milk from the goat for the children, you know. But I was happy with that because it was a warm house.

And once a month, she got rations for bread. In order for us to get the rations, I had to stand in line at 3 o'clock in the morning, be there already. Otherwise, by the time, if we came late, the rations weren't enough for everybody. So I used to go there and stand in line.

And in the beginning of the month, they knew when people had the whole 30 days worth of rations. They would come there, thieves, and rob the ladies of their purses and everything. And I remember, I had to go through a long, long place. I don't know if it was a cemetery or some kind of institution where there were always dogs there barking. And it was early, 3 o'clock in the morning was the middle of the night. It was dark. It was so scary to go there.

And I stood in line. And a lot of times, they pushed me away because they wanted to be first. But anyway, I stayed there. And by the time, I went home already, it was like maybe 9 o'clock. And all this time I stayed and waited for my place in line to get the bread.

And I was lucky that I came early enough that there was a ration enough for us. And I used to go by and I used to see these children playing in the schoolyard. I used to say to myself how lucky they are. They have a home that they don't have the trouble I do. And I thought my mom and dad were dead.

So one day, I was walking with the rations. And two ladies came up to me. She says to me, are you Marcia's daughter? And I looked at them and I said-- I was almost afraid to answer because how would they know me? And they said, aren't you Raizel? And I said, yeah. She says, I know your mother and your father. And I said, oh, my God, how do you know?

I told them. They asked me where I live. And they went with me. And I showed them. And they said, this is not a place for you. You should go to a nicer place.

You know, I don't know how-- I always-- when they started telling me this, I felt maybe they would take me or whatever, you know. But they took me out of that house. And they said, you're working too hard. Look how you look, how terrible. I was skin and bones and really-- so they took me to an orphanage.

And I don't know why, all these years I lived with hope. I felt, OK, maybe one of my letters-- because I wrote every

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single day-- one of my letters maybe will reach somebody. Maybe somebody will know that I'm here.

They put me in the orphanage. OK, they gave me a bath. It was nice and clean. They gave me a uniform that the other kids wore. And they took me in. And they shaved off my hair completely. And as--

Was that a Christian orphanage?

Yeah. Oh, yeah, sure. Yeah. And as I was looking in the mirror, somehow for the first time-- I must have cried many times before, but that kind of sticks in my mind. Like this was my last stop. I had no-- it's like they took everything. With the hair came away all my hope of ever finding anybody. And I looked in the mirror and I said, well, I guess this is what's left.

And the girls came a lot of them from Leningrad and from places where the war was terrible going on. And their parents were killed.

Did everybody have a shaved head?

No.

No.

They did not. But I did. And I guess now I understand, at that time I didn't understand it, that some of the children still want to be leaders, no matter who they are. So who did they beat up? On a Jew.

So we had to do chores and things. So these two girls said that I had to do my chores and their chores too. Of course, I could never do it. It was impossible. So I always got punished. And they said if I tell on them, it will be worse for me.

So I stayed there. And I kept writing. Every day I wrote the same thing. Grandmother is dead. Uncle is gone. I'm all by myself. And this is my address.

And then the war ended. But for me, it didn't seem like it was anything. I was here, and this was my place. And all I could do was envy, you know.

I remember that some parents came, found out that their children were in the orphanage and took them away. And then one day, the office called. They said they want to see me. I said, oh, I'm getting punished again, you know. I mean that's all I ever got there. Or I lost my rations, or I lost this privileges. So whenever I was called there it was, you know.

And the lady behind the desk was very well groomed. And she smiled. For the first time in all these years a smile. She says, I have such good news for you. So I said, what is it? She says, a letter came with 100 rubles. It's your parents. And they're alive. And this is a ticket for you to go home.

Well, I don't know how long I was in the train. They put me on a train. I was in the first-- in a nice class, in a bunk to sleep on. And I had food. And I came home. And my parents were at the station.

And I'll never forget what my mother said. You know, Rose, you didn't grow 1 inch.

[LAUGHS]

How could you with no nourishment?

Yeah. But this is-- and my mother saved a little girl's life. Her parents were killed. So she lived with my parents. And when I came, she was a little jealous. It's like she already felt this was her home. And, you know, my parents kept her with them. And--

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Did your parents recover your home and--

Yes, they came back. The house was there. Some of the farmers and people had the cows or whatever we had, the belongings, that when the war ended and they came back, some of them brought it back willingly. And some of them-- my parents went and took it because it was their belongings.

And everybody all of a sudden said, we didn't do nothing to you. We didn't do nothing to you. But that's not true.

They're the ones-- the Germans-- my father drove some Germans from one town to another. That was one of his jobs. And one German said to him, you know, that's a Jude. That's a Jew. Because he was wearing a long [NON-ENGLISH], a long--

Coat.

Coat with the payos, with the--

Sideburns.

Sideburns. He said, that's a Jude. He did not know that my father was Jewish. So that shows the people in our town gave out the people that were Jewish.

They reported.

They reported us. And all of a sudden, it's strange how your best friends, the people that wanted to be or were your friends, all of a sudden, they didn't know you. People made a living from you. So basically, I guess, when you look back through it all this years--

And then they announced that anyone who was from Poland could leave Russia. So my father had two brothers in America. So we left. And the little girl that my mother saved her life, somebody came and said she was an aunt of hers, that she wanted. Her name was Haike. She lives now in New York, has a family.

And you keep in contact with her?

My mother keeps some contact with her. And we were back in Poland, in Lodz. Then we were in Germany. And then we got papers to come to America.

Did your relatives send you papers?

Yeah, my Uncle Max. He's now gone. But we came-- we in 1947 came to America. And I remember my father was on the boat. Everybody was sick. He said, all I ask from God is a roof over my head and a loaf of bread on the table.

And America was very good to him. He worked for everything he had. But he got a lot more than what he asked for.

Did he have a trade of some kind?

Not really. But he became a cutter for shoes, leather, here. And my mom worked piecework by Kuppenheimer's and in a bakery. And they weren't extravagant. They lived very conservatively.

And did you have any chance to go to school when you came to the United States?

Yes. I went to high school. And I went to grammar school.

And which town did you live in? Chicago?

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Chicago, we came to Chicago. That's where we lived till I came to Phoenix.

When did you meet your husband?

In Chicago. I was about 18 years old. We met, and it was a very quick romance. We met in September. And November we got engaged. In January, we got married. And we're married for 37 years this month.

Your husband is also from--

Yeah, he is from near Warsaw. He survived.

So you lived most of your married life in Chicago then?

Right. Right. Ran a business.

What kind of business?

Laundromat and cleaning.

Were you active in the business too with him?

Oh, yeah, 26 years. And before that, I worked for insurance company.

And what about family? You had--

Yeah, I have a son Philip. God bless him. He's 36. I'm very proud of him. Has three grandchildren. I also unfortunately lost five children after Philip. But that's all gone. Just because you're in America that don't mean like God is going to give you everything you want.

True.

But--

What are the names of your grandchildren?

Oh, Joshua is the oldest, Jeremy and Jennifer. They're the three J's. They're very lovely. And I have a nice daughter-in-law, Cheryl. I'm very proud of them, a lot of nachas from them. Thank God.

When did you decide to come to Phoenix?

Well, I got a bronchial condition in Chicago. And it almost became impossible for me to stay there. And we always waited. Philip is going to graduate this and Philip is going to graduate that. And Philip graduated and went. And we were still in the business.

And all of a sudden, a man came in. We weren't even advertising that we're selling. And he says, how would you like to sell it? And I said, well, I think God send him down. And my husband quoted him a price. And he agreed. And we sold it.

I was very scared. I think for the first time since the war I was so scared that we sold everything that we worked for for 26 years. And we packed up. I had to get rid of all our belongings we thought we didn't need anymore.

And my parents didn't want to go. They had their family there. We had cousins club. We were 30 first cousins. My--

Are these mostly survivors?

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No, they were-- no, they were from America. My father, because he had so much brothers and sisters, so two of them lived in America. They married. And it was like a cousins club.

So you had a close family relationship?

Oh, yeah. We met once a month. And when you come from Europe and you lost everybody, you cling to the family more so, I suppose, then. It was very nice. We enjoyed meeting and talking. And they made us feel very good. As a matter of fact, they always used to remark, look how Rose has--

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