

OK, so you were saying?

So I left by train, and I had to stop there in a town to get a permission, because in order to pass the German border you had to have permission. It took me about two days because of the line was very, very long. And I finally got the permission. And I went on the train. And when the train stopped on the border, and the German Gestapo came up to check the permissions, a German Gestapo came up to me. And he looked at it and he saw in the name that I am Jewish.

I don't know if I got a code, if I got something on it. But he said to me, where are you going? And I said, I'm going home. And he said you're going to the German Reich. That's not your home. Jews don't have a home in the German Reich. I said, I have have apartments and my furniture, all with my world. And he said, Jews don't have nothing in Germany. He took me by my arm, and throw me off the-- he tear apart the permission it took me by arm, and throw me down from the train. And that was the end of it. I had to go back. I had to go back home.

And it took me about two days to go home. And finally, I came home. It was Friday night about 10 o'clock at night. This was in January. I had a-- I could sleep there on the station on a very small train station. Friday night and Saturday. So I didn't have to come home on Shabbos. But I knew I would risk my life there. And I came in to my parents' home. I knocked on the window. And my mother opened the door. And I came in and I ran to the sofa, and I threw myself down and I begin to cry so hard.

I begin to cry that I had to come to my parents' home in Shabbos which was a terrible, terrible thing to do. My father didn't said anything. But my mother came to me. She said, Dora, don't cry please. This was [NON-ENGLISH]. And she wouldn't come now, you would risk your life. You could be killed there on this. And you didn't commit [NON-ENGLISH]. You had a right to come home. Please don't cry.

But my father didn't said one word. And this was Friday night. And I said to my parents, no, I can't let it go. I have to go see what happened to my belongings. My brother Chaim went with me to Krakow, but a different way. This was through Miechow, other way. This was the other way. This was a different way, which was a German border too.

He went with me to Krakow, and he got from me other permission. And he took me to the train. He spoke. There were people who told him how to do it. And he told me to each gate to go. And I went by. I went home. And I came back to Sosnowiec. What could I do? It was silly to go. What could I do? It's nothing I could do to bring home anything. I was there a few days. And I went back.

Your apartment, no one was in your apartment?

The apartment was still there. But nothing I could do. What could I say? It's nothing I could say.

But everything was there still?

Everything was there. And I left back home. So I did a silly thing. My mother was right. There was no point of going. But I was young, and I was so anxious to save what I have. And I just-- I came to the point where I saw there is nothing I can do.

Were there any Jews there when you were there?

In Sosnowiec? Oh yeah, sure.

All those who were who had remained were still there?

Sure, everybody who lived there. Why did I left? Because I have parents in a small town. Maybe a few others left too. But the majority were there. They lived there. They have their homes. Everything was there. There wasn't no ghetto at that time.

Was Pinchas's wife still there?

Yeah, of course they were there. But the children were at our home, still at our home. So I went back home. And a few weeks later, I wrote to my Uncle Pinchas, that I think everything over. And I gave him advice to take separate the furniture, and take every day, at night, a piece of furniture and put it in the attic from the building where he lives.

So Pinchas was still in Sosnowiec?

Sosnowiec, sure. And put it in the attic. He lived in a big building. Put it in the attic on the very top, and cover it with some rags, and with things cover it. And it will take you maybe a few weeks. But slowly, he can do it. And it didn't pass about eight days. And I received a letter from my brother that he did like I told him. That he took everything on the attic, and everything is covered, and everything is in perfect order. And then when I realized that my furniture is gone. The Germans took my furniture.

Because I knew that he couldn't do it that quick. You understand? And when I got this, I began to cry very hard. And my mother said, she came to me and she said, please don't cry. My mother was a very smart person. She had a vision of it what's going to happen. She said, Dora, please don't cry about furniture. This is all materialistic. And pray to God that we all be together after the war. And we will work, and we will start for the new.

And I have a lot of hidden goods, and no matter what, you're my daughter. And everything what I have is yours. And we will share, and everything will be all right. Just don't cry please.

So I calmed down. I accept the fact that everything is gone. And I saw my mother is right, that there is no need to cry about furniture, about other things.

So at that time in your house was living Chaim.

Chaim, Menasha and me, my parents. And in our house--

And Pinchas's--

And the two children, yes, two kids. In our house, it was never a hunger, because my parents had hidden some leather. And we had some farmers whom we know, whom we trust. And when a farmer came in, and he wants some leather for her boots, my father told him, give me a sack of flour, or give me a dozen eggs, or whatever, food. I will give you a leather for boots, you give me food.

In this way we never had any difficulty having to eat. There was no problem. And the children were there until about Pesach of 1940. Then when my brother decided to-- he was missing them terrible. They were two beautiful little girls.

How old were they? Sheila was born in 1943. She was seven years old. And Helen was four years old in 1940. And he sent a Gentile woman to bring the children to Sosnowiec. And my mother said no. Here they have everything. They have all the food they need. And they are safe. Leave them here. And she wouldn't give him the children.

But Sheila was an extremely smart little girl. And she understands everything. And when this woman left, she was crying she wants to go.

It's OK, mom.

She told my mother, she said babciu, which is grandma in Polish. She said I love you very much. But I also love my parents. I was with you for a time. Now I want to be with my parents. Why didn't you let me go? I want to go to my mommy and daddy, and you didn't let me go. And she stopped to eat. She wouldn't eat. She couldn't eat. She couldn't sleep. She was crying. We thought this little girl is falling apart that she is terrible missing, as long as she--

Did she have any idea what was going on?

No, no. No. She had plenty to eat, and she was happy, and she went to--

Was she aware there was a war?

Maybe she was. We never discussed it. I really can't tell you that. And she was going there, where my cousin Eve lives. She had several sisters. And she was always with them, you understand? With their family, and they were playing with her. At one time she came home and she said to my mother, grandmother, you don't have--

Of course, she said in Polish, the only language she spoke in Polish. You don't have to dress me so beautiful. My mother said, why darling? Because my Aunt Balcha or my cousin's older sister, told me that I am a [NON-ENGLISH], which means I'm a beauty. She was a beauty. If she were grown, she would be another Elizabeth Taylor. She was an extremely beautiful little girl.

Let me understand also. Next door to where you lived, where did Eva--

They were living in the same street down the block.

And how are they related to you?

Their mother was my father's sister. We were cousins.

What was your father's sister's name?

Aho.

And she was married? And she had how many children?

She had-- let's see. She had one son and five daughters.

And Eva was one of the daughters?

Yes, Eva and Lily.

They were sisters.

And there were three more sisters one was Devorah. Like my name, because it was my father's mother's name. And one was Marmol. And one was Balcha. And my parents wrote a letter to Pinchas to send this woman, because there's no choice. They have to go back now, because Helen was only four years old. She was a little girl and she didn't-- she didn't know anything. She didn't make any response to this. But Sheila was coming apart.

She couldn't-- not she didn't. She couldn't eat. She couldn't sleep. She just was missing so much. There was no choice. We had to send them back. And this woman came, and she went right back to Sosnowiec.

So how did you spend the rest of 1940?

Well.

You said Sheila was born, your daughter.

Sheila was born. My daughter Sheila was born April the 15th or 16th, 1940.

Was Sheila was named after the same person?

Yes. Yeah, this was my mother's mother's name. And she was so smart. Because we had taken some leather. And given out to a farmer to hide. Because in our home there was always revisions that because we were rich, we were very famous. Whenever the Gestapo came, they always came to us. Look, search for goods. And everything was hidden. But you never could be sure if they will not find this hidden place.

So we took one time at night, hired a man with a big wagon, and we took out a lot of merchandise to a farmer, to a man who we thought we can trust. This farmer, and took most, I would say 95% of this leather and hide it, and about a few pieces. And he called the police, anonymous. He doesn't say what his name is. And there is leather, Jewish leather. And the police came and confiscated this. And he came the following day to us. And he said the police came and took everything out.

We understood what happened. But what could we do? It was a terrible tragedy. Still at this time, nobody knows that the life has not-- but I was sure that the war will be over. You got to have something to start a life. But natural at that time, it was a terrible tragedy. We lost almost everything what we had.

This was in 1940?

It was in 1940. And whenever we talk about that, we took the two children and sent them to my aunt who lived across the hall, my father's sister, older sister, not Eve's mother. And we sent them--

What was her name?

Her name was Zlata.

Zlata?

Zlata, yes.

And she had children?

She had four sons. Phil, Kalman, Shlomo, and Eziel. And she had three daughters, [PERSONAL NAME], and Hanna, and Roizel, and all were married. And all had children. Not a sign remained from them.

These were your cousins?

They were my cousins, yes. And so we were sure because a child, no matter how smart you couldn't hide still a seven year old little girl. We always would come out to talk about this. We always send the two kids to [NON-ENGLISH] Zlata. And my brother, Pinchas, wrote us when the children came home. He wrote us a letter. And they came in, the little one, Helen, said, Daddy, my aunt Dora had a little girl, Sheila.

Sheila, it was quiet, but Sheila, his little girl called him in the other room. She said, daddy, she knew everything. She was so smart. Despite the fact that we never talked in her place, she saw in the faces, in the mood. She called and she said, daddy, come in the room. She wouldn't even say when somebody else was there. Something terrible happened over at grandfather's home. I don't know what. It was something terrible. And see how smart she was?

And Pinchas wrote us a letter, what Sheila told him, to write him exactly what happened. Because if not, he will know what a thing. To tell him what happened, because he knows something terrible happened. And we wrote him--

About the leather and all--

It's only leather. It's only [INAUDIBLE]. It's a terrible thing, but thanks to God we're all alive. So life was very difficult. There was always [NON-ENGLISH] in our home, not only by day, at night, during the night. They begin to bounce in the door, come in, and look and search. One time they came in even was a Shabbos.

We always had people eating, because a lot of peoples where they made ghettos in the big towns, they came to small towns. And they were housed there in the shul, and way in the [NON-ENGLISH]. And every Shabbos, so whoever has some, and here come two or three peoples to feed them. This was Shabbos. It was one Shabbos, after the service we had there I remember, a little brother and a sister, about 10, 12-year-old children. They were eating over at our home, the Shabbos.

And two Gestapo came in. And they asked why we have the merchandise. We had merchandise. And my father said, I don't have any more. Because in the beginning, when the war broke out, they made us to sell. And we sold. We didn't sell. It was given away. Because the money was nothing there. But this what we managed to hide, we hide it.

My father said, he didn't say that we hide it. I sold everything. They make me sell everything. And they took them to one corner, my father and my brother Chaim. And they took those-- they had those long guns, with those one side the heavy wood, and they begin to hit him with this wood. I was there and my mother was there, and the two children.

And we all began to scream terrible, very, very violent scream. And they left. But they hit them pretty well. And then when after when we went out, we found out that the people around were sure that they killed my brother, because for the screaming we made. We made a screaming. They were sure that they killed some people in our home.

But this life was very difficult and very hard. And there were a lot of Jews who were starving. People who were very rich before the war who were in big towns, and they lived in a small town without anything. They were starving. But our home, we didn't starve. And we feed as many peoples as we could.

What did you do every day? What did your father do every day?

Nothing. There was nothing to do.

Just be in the house.

Just being in the house.

And waiting.

Just trying to get a sack of flour or two, so you can have to eat.

Did religious life continue or?

Yeah. We came together in a private home, where we every Shabbos where we made a service.

But theoretically was it allowed to be, to get together?

I don't know. They probably wouldn't, but they didn't know about it.

So how come people didn't go to shul?

The shul was burned.

Oh, I see.

They burned down the shul. As soon as they came, they burn down the shul. Like my father's minyan was about the rabbi's, the rav, the rav from the city. Over his house was a minyan. And my father was there on the minyan. And my husband, when he came back, and Chaim, my brother, and--

Well, so what happened?

Well, everything was they used to take out peoples too, like Jewish. And then they came to the middle of the night, a Jew, when somebody said up order, took him out. And they-- I don't know. They sent them to Auschwitz or they shot him. There used to be many--

You heard about people disappearing?

Yeah, oh definitely, very much so. People disappearing, and people, we had to get counted again, people going to the concentration camp, or to the death camps.

Did you know about concentration camps at the time?

Like in our hometown, at one time, Chaim received a paper to go to the work camp.

When was this? This was, I think it was at the end of 1941 or the beginning of 1942. And, of course, my parents wouldn't send him. So at that time, this was common. Like, you hired nobody didn't think that you go to a death camp. And maybe they didn't at that time. They really went to work camps at that time. But people who could afford hired somebody and send them instead of this man.

Another Jew?

Another Jew, yes. And the reason why the committee, the Judenrat, sent the rich Jews, because they knew what's going to happen. At least the poor guy will go away. He will have some money. He will leave some money for his parents. Because they were starving. They'd be able to get a coat, a hat, a coat, a [NON-ENGLISH], something, you understand?

Well, if they will send those requirements to poor Jews, they will have to go without anything.

So the Judenrat would purposely ask richer Jews, because they knew that the richer Jews would pay.

Would pay a poor Jew to go. And the poor Jew, the poor Jew's family will benefit from the money. You understand?

Did Vayslits ever become a ghetto? Was there ever?

This was when Hitler made up his mind to solve the Jewish problems, to kill all the Jews, I think this was in the beginning of 1942, when he had this big shock at Stalingrad, when he lost at Stalingrad. When Hitler lost in Stalingrad, he knew then that he lost the war.

Stalingrad was Russia.

Russia, Yes. He knew then that he lost the war. His only hope was that he had some kind of chemist there in Germany who were preparing a bomb. Atomic bomb. And he was hoping that before he lose the war, he will be able to throw the atomic bomb on United States, whatever he will pick. This was his only hope, just revenge. But at that time, he decided to get rid of the Jews, to kill the Jews. And then when he began to take out peoples at small towns, he surrounded a small town.

And he took Poles and surrounded complete unexpected. Nobody know. It was a big secret. No Pole would tell a Jew what's going to happen tomorrow. And when the Jews woke up in the morning, 6 o'clock, they saw they were completely surrounded. There was no escape whatsoever. They had to go.

Go where?

They didn't know where.

That was like a deport-- a deportation?

Deport, yeah.

But how about the ghettos? Like in certain towns--

The ghettos there, they formed ghettos in the big towns. In our town too there was a ghetto. But the town was so small, you couldn't go out of the town.

When did this first happen, the ghetto?

You couldn't go out. I think from the very first one, like 1941. You couldn't go out of town.

Right.

Like the town was there a bridge. When you were caught on the bridge, you were shot. And there was a woman shot there. A Gestapo just happened to go out from our hometown go to the other town where they had the office. And the woman was going from some kind of village, I don't know she got a little bit of flour or a few potatoes. You know, so her kids will not starve. And they saw her.

Right.

And they shot her.

But ghettos were only Jews lived in the ghetto.

Yeah, only Jews. So it was a ghetto formed in Vayslits too?

And I told you, honey, that Vayslits was too small. A very small village, so in the city after you could go any place, but you couldn't get out of the city.

So Jews and non-Jews continued to live amongst each other?

Yes. Yes, but only there was a very-- I told you it was about three blocks.

Right. So there's no way a ghetto-- in itself it was like a ghetto?

But itself, itself, the city, this village by itself was a ghetto.

Right.

And the big towns like in Krakow, or Lodz, or Warsaw, Kielce to form ghettos.

When did ghettos start to form in Warsaw?

They start to form get I think in 1941, the end of 1941. They didn't wait late.

So you in the meanwhile continued to live with your parents in Vayslits during 1940 and 41, during those two years.

Yes. I was there all the time.

During that time, the incidences would be that they'd have people were taken out occasionally, or sent to camps. But it was nothing organized. It was just--

I don't know what you call it organized. It was incidents with [NON-ENGLISH] came into our home, and took out somebody. Nobody knew why. Nobody knew for what reason. They took him out and nobody saw him again.

And they'd also have people get called to go to the work camp?

To work, yes. Not only the work camps, but this was a normal every day. Every man, my brother Chaim, my husband, went when he came back from Warsaw, they went to local work. They built a highway there. They took the Jews every day.

In Vayslits?

Yeah, we had to go to work.

When did your husband come back?

He came back when Sheila was born. He came back for Pesach. Sheila was born, it was about eight days, two weeks before Pesach. He came back for Pesach. And I didn't want-- I didn't let him go back. He didn't go back there. He was home then. This was in 19-- 1940. In 1940, April of 1940. He was there just for a short while in Warsaw. He couldn't do anything.

What was life like during those two years in other ways? Like how about in terms of you said that food and housing was very difficult.

It was very difficult. Like a Jewish family, we had two rooms and the kitchen. The first room was our business and we lived there. It was a tiny kitchen, and there was the other room. So I had my room. My mother gave me this other room. And my brother Chaim got married, he had his room in the kitchen. And my parents had the front room. Every couple, if a home had a room where no couple was living, the Jewish Judenrat put in a family from those who came from other towns.

It was very crowded. It was very difficult. I don't think I can explain how difficult.

How about schooling? So what happened--

There was no school.

No schooling.

How about any sort of music, or art, or theater, did that continue at all?

No, maybe in the big towns.

But not in small town.

No, no.

How about political activity, any sort of political activity?

Political activity, the Jews between others have politics, what's going to happen. Well, it will take only a week or two, and Hitler is going to have a [INAUDIBLE] there, and Hitler going to have a [INAUDIBLE] there, and he be finished right away. Don't worry. Everything will be all right. It won't take any more long. We will be safe.

So there was no thought of resistance of any kind.

There was no sort of resistance, no. No. No just thinking that the war will finish soon. There was no sort of resistance at all. And also, there was no leadership. You understand? I spoke with Mr. Steinbach. He told me there was no leadership. For any kind of resistance, you've got to have a leader. You've got to have somebody to tell you what to do. You've got

to have somebody to tell you, come to this place.

To take charge.

Yeah, take charge. Come to this place. Let's get together and give him advice, and tell him what to do. There is no leader. There was nothing. You understand?

People just hoped that it would pass.

It would pass, that's right. That's all it was to it. And people knew even it will not pass, even we will have to go to a work camp, even when we were taken out. Because when they began to clean out cities, nobody didn't know they were taking them to death. Everybody was going to war camp. They're going to work. There's going to a resettlement. They're going to be resettled. They're going to work.

Everybody know it will be a hard life. It will be a difficult life. But somehow, are we going to survive. That they're taking us to Treblinka to kill, if other towns knew, I don't know. We didn't know. We didn't have any idea what's happening. And I'm sure most of those small towns, other didn't know what's happening. Maybe in the big towns, they did, where they had-- maybe they had some kind of leadership. I don't know.

Did you ever hear from anyone that got sent to the work camps? Was there any way of--

No, no. No. We understand that the Germans don't allowed any letters. They don't allow any mail. And everybody accepted this.

Who was the first one in your family that got notice to go to a work camp?

You mean when I was my parents?

Yeah.

Chaim.

When did this happen?

This happened in 1941. I think.

Was Chaim married by then?

No, he wasn't married then, no.

OK, he was still engaged to that one?

Yes. Yes.

And so what happened when he got called to go to the war camp? How did they get out of it?

Well, I told you. We hired.

Oh, you did hire someone. To go in his place.

Yeah, my parents hired somebody. And they gave them a lot of money, and the other man, maybe this man survived, most probably because I know he was in that work camp. In the beginning, they didn't send-- at that time they didn't send the gas chambers, no.

But your husband was never called?

No, no. He wasn't called.

OK. So that continued during '40 and '41.

'41 there was always those searching with those, always the fear for being caught for something. Because if God forbid they would caught something in our home, we will be shot immediately. There's always this terrible fear for that. But beside this, we always had sufficient food. Our home had always sufficient food. And I know I had an uncle in Chmielnik, my mother's only brother.

And one time he was living together with his daughter and son-in-law. And I think there were four grandchildren. And two of them, the eldest two boys--

[AUDIO OUT]

--send money to a friend of my uncle, my mother's brother, so when they were behind, then they can go and get us something, whatever they can to get something. Because he couldn't possibly support the whole family. It was absolutely impossible. But this was an elderly couple. And when they became hungry, they were old. They couldn't take it so he, whatever he could, he supported them.

So this was your mother's brother?

The hunger was-- yeah, the hunger was so terrible there. When they saw this bowl of butter, my mother said go ahead, darling, put yourself some butter. And he said, no, I don't want to take away your. And [INAUDIBLE], no, we will have plenty. And they just couldn't believe it that this can happen, that a Jewish home can have bread and butter as much as they want.

These two men were the sons of--

The sons, the grandsons of my mother's brother, my uncle.

I see. Nobody survived from there. So when they begin to make those transport from Jews--

When did that start? When was your first memory of that happening?

It just started I would say in 1942, about the beginning of 1942 maybe two or three months later.

When did it happen to Vayslits?

In our hometown it was a [NON-ENGLISH] as of 1942.

That was like in October then?

This was maybe, I don't know. Exactly I remember is was [NON-ENGLISH]. It was like maybe at the end of September or October, at that time.

OK. You mentioned by that time was your brother, Chaim, married?

He was married, and he was living with his wife, with us, with my parents.

And why did he end up getting married? He was engaged to--

He was engaged. He was engaged to Paula.

And where did she live?

She lived near Jedrzejow. And they got married in Shabbos [NON-ENGLISH]. This is of 1942. And they came straight to us. They lived with us.

Shavuos, so that was around--

It was about I would say May 1942.

Why did they decide to get married?

My father really didn't want to get married. But it was a problem they had with some leather. My brother, Pinchas, had hidden by Polish parents, and they said he said he wanted his younger daughter wanted to get married. And he didn't want his younger daughter to get married, before the older. Because Paula was the older daughter.

And so because they were very religious and in religion supposedly--

No. That wasn't no before at that time, it was sort of it-- I wouldn't say a shame. But it wasn't customary a younger sister get married before the older.

So the younger sister got engaged. And the father said that he wanted the older sister who was engaged to Chaim to marry first.

Yes.

So they did.

Yeah, they did. I also have to mention that this younger sister's fiancée, his name was Rubinek. He was coming to us during the war with merchandise, yard goods. He had a permission from the German Gestapo he could travel because his profession was to make those [NON-ENGLISH] girdles. If somebody has a bruch, a-- I don't know how--

For women?

No, no, no. No. I don't know how to say it in English. Sometimes somebody has a physical--

A hernia?

A hernia, yes.

Yeah.

He was making those girdles for hernias to support the stomach. You understand?

Right.

And he made this also for the Gestapo. And for this reason, he had a permission, a stable permission. Whenever he wants to go on the train, he could go. And he came maybe once a month or twice a month to us. And my husband bought from him those yard goods, and he sold it to other people there, he know who to deal with them. Everything was, of course, black, in the black market, without nobody's knowledge.

And this will be important for later on how he knew me. He knew me the, Rubinek, and I knew him because he used to come to our home quite often. Jedrzejow, the town of my sister-in-law, Paula came--

How close was that to Vayslits?

I don't know exactly. What about I would say 30, 40 kilometer.

How did Chaim and Paula meet? Was that a shidduch also?

Yes. Yes, it was a shidduch. [NON-ENGLISH] was deported the first day of Rosh Hashanah of 1942. And Paula's family, naturally went. And also his fiancée, Rubinek's fiancée, went also. He remained there. They left there, I would say about 20 or 25 people, like a doctor, shoemaker, a tailor, they left a few Jews, only men, no woman whom they need to serve them.

In the town?

In the town, yes. And Rubinek who came to us, remained there, and his brother. And then we found out about that Jedrzejow was deported--

You're talking about transport?

Transport, yeah.

Well let me ask you something. Was that your first knowledge at all of any sort of transport?

No. They were transported from other towns.

When was your first memory of transport? Did that go on in 1941 too?

I don't think there were any transports in 1941. In 1941, they only took people from the Judenrat, ask them to go to the work camp. But this was a transport, it was a clean out all the Jews.

And where did you think those Jews were sent?

We were told, and we believed, we were hoping they were sent to work camps. Because I remember at Yom Kippur at that year, we knew Jedrzejow was taken out. In Yom Kippur, the rav in our town, I told you we were doing the service over his home. He had a speech telling the peoples to pray for those peoples who were taken to other places, and they will be strong, and have help, and be able to survive.

But they were dead at that time a long time ago. You understand?

Yeah, I understand.

He didn't have any lie. He asked to pray for those people's [NON-ENGLISH].

You later found that they were sent directly to the death camps.

Yeah, I found out this later on. At that time, I give you only an example--

Yeah, right.

--how the people didn't had any idea where they went. So my sister-in-law, Paula, had I don't know how close she was, this relative, a distant cousin, or whatever. A man, his name was Bialobroder He was living in Slomniki. And he was a Gestapowiec. He served the Gestapo.

He was part of the Judenrat?

Maybe. I don't know. But it was the other town. At that time, and you had somebody you could--

And what was the name of this town?

Slomniki.

OK, now let me understand. There was a transport in Slomniki, right? In other words--

No Slomniki was still there.

OK.

But the town Jedrzejow, where my sister-in-law came from.

There was a transport.

A transport and she knew her family left. She was hoping, of course, that they left just resettling, she didn't know that they didn't live anymore. But she wanted to go there to Slomniki to be under his protection. She was hoping that under his protection she will not be deported. She wrote him a letter. She told him, as you know, my family was deported.

[PHONE RINGS]

[AUDIO OUT]

Paula wrote a letter to this man, to Bialobroder was his name in Slomniki.

And how was he related to her?

He was some kind distant relative, I don't know exactly what kind. And she wrote him that since her family was already deported, and she doesn't know where they are, and she lives now, she got married and lives now in Vayslits with her husband, Chaim. And she would like to come and stay there. She would like to move to Slomniki and be there under his protection.

And she didn't heard from him. At the same time, another town, Dzialoszyce, was deported. And from Dzialoszyce, a president from the Judenrat, from Vayslits, his wife, parents, family lived in Dzialoszyce. The Dzialoszyce transport wasn't like our transport. Our transport from our hometown went straight to Treblinka.

When you say your transport, do you mean Vayslits?

Vayslits. Not one survived. Dzialoszyce, they took the transport to Plaszow which was a suburb from Krakow. And there, they took off strong men, young men, young women to work. There was a work camp in Plaszow. And the rest of them, they sent to Treblinka.

You found this out later, right? You didn't know it at the time?

Yes, yes. On the way-- sure, I found out later. I couldn't know then. And on the way, during the transport, a lot of Jews also escaped on the way. Also from our hometown, Jews escaped on the way.

But the transport of your hometown had not yet taken place, right?

No, no.

OK.

And after a few weeks, some peoples from that Plaszow escaped. Some of them got killed when they escaped.

Plaszow was the work camp?

Work camp. And they came back to Dzialoszyce. And also some people who were on they way from the transport came back. And they begin to form a community, a Jewish community. The president from Vayslits, from the Judenrat, his family, I mean his wife's parents and a brother and a sister managed to escape from the road, and they came to our hometown to Vayslits. And they were with their daughter and son-in-law.

When the community--

I want to ask you something, OK?

Yes. In Zialoszyc-- is that what it was called?

Dzialoszyce.

Dzialoszyce.

Yeah.

You said some Jews escaped and came back and started forming a community.

Yes.

Well when the transport took place, originally were all Jews taken away?

All Jews were taken. Oh, yeah, not one survived. Only those survived who hide himself or run away.

So there wasn't any selection.

No, no, no.

Women, men, children.

No. The town was surrounded and everybody has to go from one day to 100 years, everybody had to go. And when the Jews began to come back the Dzialoszyce, Bialobroder came there. And whoever want his home back, every home was locked up. He had to give them, like give me, whatever he wants. I don't know \$1,000, 100,000 zloty, or whatever, I will give you the keys. I will open your home.

And when our president.

So he was in Dzialoszyce, the Bialobroder.

Bialobroder, he was living in Slomniki. But he came once a week or twice a week for that purpose to open homes for Jews who came back. We gave him the money, what he wanted.

Did other Poles know that the Jews were back in Dzialoszyce?

[NON-ENGLISH] they knew, sure.

Was it occupied then by Germans? I mean in other words, they were able to return and not get made send back?

Listen, what happened. They were able to return. They were able to return. And when the president from Vayslits, from

the Judenrat, went to Dzialoszyce, and spoke with Bialobroder. to ask him to open the home, to give him the home from his in-laws. Apparently, I wasn't there. I didn't hear. Apparently, Bialobroder told him, I don't want money from you. I have there this young couple, my cousin and my distant cousin, Paula, with her husband. I want them to send them here to [NON-ENGLISH], and I will take them from here to Slomniki. If you will do that, I will open the home for your parents.

How do I know that? It was a Thursday, the following day it was Erev Sukkos. And this was Thursday. It was about noon time. I was standing in the gate there from the home with my mother. And we looked up in the market.

In Vayslits?

In Vayslits. We saw the president with his wife going down in the direction where we lived. And my mother said, [NON-ENGLISH]. I don't want to meet him. I don't want him to remember me. Because you don't know what he could send you.

There were some ill feelings between--

There was ill feelings. And a nice human being wouldn't be a president of a Judenrat. It's just as simple as that.

I see.

You understand? He was a tailor, not only was a tailor. A tailor is nothing wrong. But he just was a very simple man. And there was hard feelings, a long story. Like I told you, my brother supposed to get married. And my mother sent to him coats. And he didn't want to return them. It's not important. But there were hard feelings. So my mother said to me, [NON-ENGLISH]

So we went in, and didn't pass two minutes. They both came into our home. And my mother said, welcomed them. What can I do for you? He said my in-laws are going back tonight. My wife's family are going back tonight to Dzialoszyce. And if you want, your son him Chaim and his wife can go with them.

And my father said, sure. Sure, wonderful. Because that's what they want. And Bialobroder he will come to Dzialoszyce, and take him back. Take him to Slomniki where he lives. Fine.

Let me just review and make sure I have this straight. OK? Chaim's wife, Paula, had a cousin, Bialobroder.

Bialobroder, yeah.

Bialobroder.

Yeah.

And he was working for the Gestapo.

Yes.

So the president of the Judenrat went to Bialobroder and because the president had had some relatives who had lived--

His wife's relatives.

Lived in [NON-ENGLISH].

Yeah.

And he made a deal, well, he had asked the Bialobroder for that place where his in-laws lived, so that he could go there.

So they can return to their home.

In [NON-ENGLISH].

Yeah, they were hoping to form-- there was one exportation, there won't be another one. They will be safe there.

So Bialobroder made a deal with him that he would do that. In exchange, the president of the Judenrat would bring Paula, his cousin, and Chaim, your brother and Paula's wife to Dzialoszyce.

Yes.

Wait a second. So OK. Go on.

So he said, since my wife's family are going back tonight to Dzialoszyce, to their home, your son Chaim and his wife can go together with them on the wagon, the same wagon.

My brother said, very well. I appreciate very much. Thank you. [INAUDIBLE]

As soon as they left, my father, my husband said, look, it's a good opportunity for Devorah with the baby to go. Because you never know when it's going to happen. You never knew in advance. There was no way. If we will get up in the morning and find out that the town is surrounded, what are we going to do? They had made by farmer a hiding place in a farm, in a village.

Your father had made--

My family-- my father and my mother had made, had prepared a hiding place by farmer.

In case--

In case it happens. I was hoping it will not happen, but in case it happens. They had made a hiding place by a farmer in a village for them to hide. But in order to go to this farmer, you had to go at night when nobody doesn't see. But you never don't know when it's going to happen.

When you say when it's going to happen, you mean when Vayslits, when the transport will happen.

Yeah, well when you wake up in the morning and you see the town is surrounded, you couldn't go to the farmer. So they prepared in our home, in our attic, a smaller place where they can hide during the day. And at night they will go down and try to escape. A lot of Jews were killed this way. But there was no choice. Do you understand? But to hide in this place, there was no way you could hide with a baby. Because the slightest sound could discover you. You were taking their own shot. There was no way you could hide there with a baby.

So my father and my husband said this was a good way for Devorah with the baby to go away. They will go to Dzialoszyce. In Dzialoszyce, they will go together with Chaim in Poland to Slomniki, to we with Bialobroder. It was a heaven. It was something like from the heaven towards a way to escape. So my father said to Chaim, go out to this man. His name was [PERSONAL NAME]. Go out to him and tell him that your sister and the baby will go with you too.

So he went out. The man said, no way, only you and your wife can go. Nobody else cannot go. So Chaim came home. And he was crying. What can we do? He won't let Devorah go with the baby. And my father, my husband, and Chaim began to discuss. And we realized that this man wouldn't do us a favor. Apparently, he made a deal with Bialobroder to bring Chaim there, and he will open the house for nothing.

And in this case, he didn't have no choice. My father said to Chaim, go to him and tell him if Devorah and the baby cannot go, you and Paula will not go too. Just tell him this. Either way you all go together, or nobody doesn't go. And

guess what he did? And he came up. He went to him, and he told him this. Mr. [PERSONAL NAME], only we all go together or none of us go.

He said, OK. Go home. None of you go. None of you go. But all later, he sent back a man there, telling them that he changed his mind. What's the difference? There's plenty of room on the wagon. She can go too.

As soon as he came down, I began to cry. I said, no. I don't want to go. I don't want to go to a strange town, to a strange people. I don't know nobody. I'm with my family. As long as [NON-ENGLISH], I want to be with my family together. I do not want to go. No way. Nobody will make me to go. Definitely not. I am not going. So the wagon, we're supposed to leave at 12 o'clock night time. Because it was all black. God forbid if somebody caught us, we would be shot.

This was Thursday night. The following day was Erev Sukkos, Shabbos [NON-ENGLISH].

So that was like in October or so of 1942?

Yeah. It was about in October, yes. And I put the baby to sleep. And I said, I'm not going. I was determined not to go. I didn't want to leave. It was about 11:00 or 11:30, my father and my husband came to me. Wake up the baby. Dress her up. You have to leave. I said, no way. I'm not going. I don't want to go. I don't want to go [NON-ENGLISH]. I want to be with my family. Is it that much to ask? I want to be here with you. I do not want to go.

Then both men, my father and my husband, woke up the baby and dressed her up, and pushed me out from the house. You have to go. There's no other choice. If you will not go, we all will die-- we all-- no die. We didn't know we die. We're all going to have to go with the transport. If you will go, if it happens something, the transport will go away, like Dzialoszyce, some Jews will come back. And then you will come back. And we will be back in our home. You understand? Which way is better? To stay for there for a year or two, and I starting to go somewhere to work, or to come back? See what happened in Dzialoszyce?

People came back who managed to escape, who managed to survive, came back and they're home. And the same way will happen here. If you be here with the baby, we wouldn't be able to hide in this attic. No way. We all will go with the transport.

I still remained-- I don't want to go.

Where was the attic? Where was the hiding place?

The hiding place was, we had in the back of the house, we had like a shed. And under the roof of this shed, there we had a sukkah, you understand? And there was an opening to the shed. And we made a double wall there. And even when you looked up, you saw a wall. There was about this much room between the outside wall and the double wall. And it was about this high. You couldn't stay up. You could lie down. It was just something like you have only to kneel down, and bend down like that.

So the plan was that in case there was a transport that your family would hide there until the night. And in the night, they would go to the farmer where the hiding place.

Yeah.

But that couldn't happen if you and Sheila were there.

If I would be there.

Because Sheila was a baby.

Because she was a baby. You couldn't have a baby. The slightest sound, the baby cry. Out of there, Poles, Germans, you couldn't. There was no way.

OK.

So--

So you went.

I went. I didn't have no choice. I went. And at that time, I don't know how I should say this. It's a very insignificant thing. I just will tell you, how my father was with the owner. The man who owned the wagon came to my father and asked him to pay for the ride. And my father said, what? Are you afraid I will not pay you when you come back?

And the man said, he was a Jewish man. I forgot his name. He said, no. I know you will pay me. But now it's a war. I prefer. So my father said to us, children, kids, come on down. [NON-ENGLISH] who is asking money in advance. No, come on down.

Because that wasn't usually the custom?

No. Oh my God. My father was, he would ask in advance, money. No way. And my mother began to cry for happiness that we are coming back. On one side, she wants us to go, to be safe. And the other side, she wanted us to stay home. So either way, when we left she was crying that we are going. And she knows we're going back, she began to cry for happiness that we're coming back. That we're not going to leave.

Right.

But anyway, when my father said this, then man who owned the wagon said, OK OK. That's all right. I know you're going to pay. You go back home. Don't go down. Don't be. Well, write it down. Go back up. My father, OK. Kids, go up and go. And we went to [NON-ENGLISH]. And this was Thursday night. We come to [NON-ENGLISH]. It was Friday morning, 4:00 or 5 o'clock. It was still dark.

And I was sitting there with those family. They were very nice people.

Which family?

With the president's parents. I was standing there until Bialobroder will come. We will go with him to Slomniki. We were there. And my mother gave us all challahs, and cake, and fish, and everything what we need to have for the holidays. Because Sukkos was Saturday, Sunday. And it was Monday, and Tuesday Bialobroder came.

He came. And Chaim and Paula went to him, and told him that they would like me and the baby to go. No way. What can you expect from a despot like this? If he worked for the Gestapo, what kind of human being was this? You understand? You couldn't expect much from him. No way. It was out of question.

So Chaim came to me and told me, don't worry. I will go there, and I will take you there. I will do all I can. You know this very well. It will take a day or two. You will be with us.

So Chaim and Paula went to Slomniki.

Went to Slomniki.

And you remained in at that family.

With the family, yeah, and with Sheila. Well at that time in Dzialoszyce, it was like that. There were only men, young men. There were no children. Children and women went to traveling camp. And they began to go rumors that there is going to be another transport. They're going to take out the Jews who came back. They're going to take them out again and send them away.

So every night, nobody even slept. Everybody had on like 10 pair of pants, and 10 sweaters, and everything what he wanted to take on him, in case something happened they can run. I was with Sheila. She was too young to walk. She was about close to two years old. She was too heavy to carry. And I had to have something, a dress for her, nothing for me. Never mind me, but for the baby.

I got to her [NON-ENGLISH], and she wants to make something. It's a baby. It was a year and a half old. What could I do? I was absolutely on the verge of collapse. I didn't know what to do. I wrote a letter to my parents, that if they will not take me back home I'm going to be finished.

Because you didn't know when it could happen.

I didn't have an idea. There was still everything OK. And here, was every night, nobody everybody was standing in the gate. To look out, and dressed up, everybody to run. And I didn't have no chance to run or survive, no way. I told them, if you will not send me a wagon to come back, I will be finished here. I will die. There's no way I can live here.

So another thing, Bialobroder came a day later again. And this lady, this mother from the president's mother-in-law, she was a very fine person. She told me, take the baby and go out. And beg him. Maybe he will have mercy. And her husband said, no, don't do it. He's a murderer. Don't do it. And she said, he will see the baby with you. Maybe he will have mercy.

So I said, what do I have to lose? All he could do is say no. I don't lose anything. So I came to him. He was standing in the market there. He had this leather switch in his hand. And I came to him. And I began to say, in Polish, Bialobroder, I would like to go join my brother and my sister-in-law with my baby.

As soon as I came to his, he took me here, and he pulled me back. And I fall down. I almost killed myself with the baby. And he said then when I came back, this woman's husband--

He grabbed you and pushed you away.

He grabbed you and pulled me back that I have the chutzpah to ask him a thing like that. But he was a murderer.

And when I came back home to this family, he told me. I told you not to go. You were lucky. He could take out and switch you with a switch, and he could kill you. It's a good thing he only throw you away. I said, this was the end of it.

So I wrote my parents a letter that the situation, how it looks. And no matter what, I have to come home. It was Friday afternoon. It was about, I don't know, 4:00 or 5 o'clock.

Your father wrote you and said that--

A man came in who was in Vayslits. He came back. He lived in Dzialoszyce. Chaim Shimmer was his name. I remembered that now. I remember him so well. He brought me a letter and a cake my mother baked for me. And he gave me the letter with a cake. And my father said that he already hired farmer with a wagon. But since that this was [NON-ENGLISH] Friday, and the following day was [NON-ENGLISH], and Sunday was [NON-ENGLISH].

And he said, you know, I wouldn't send away a wagon. In yontif, it's not allowed. Even I don't do it. But still I hired him. He said [NON-ENGLISH] Sunday, as soon as he will light a candle, as soon as it's allowed to light a candle, the man will leave. You'll be ready. And you will be home Sunday about 3:00 4 o'clock in the morning, you will be back home. And I was so happy about that.

Finally, I'm going to be back home with my family. It was Saturday. About 12:00 or 1 o'clock. I put Sheila for a nap. And I was standing by the bed and knocking off the flies from her with something. And their son, the family I was with, their son came in and he said [NON-ENGLISH].

Which means, did you hear? Vayslits is after [NON-ENGLISH], which means [NON-ENGLISH]. They took out all the Jews.

There was a transport in Vayslits that Saturday.

That Saturday night, that Saturday morning.

A day before you were supposed to return there?

Yeah, and when I heard this, I fell down, I fainted. And they began to put water on me. And finally came to me, and I got up, and I didn't know what to do. I was completely lost. Where do I go now? I don't know what to do. I don't know where my family is. I don't know if they hide? Possibly they couldn't. They couldn't hide. They left. What do I do?