

That there was a transport in Vayslits which meant, of course, that you couldn't return, right?

Of course.

Did you know when there was a transport, were you aware at all of how it was done? I mean, of where they were going to be transported, whether it was in a by train, whether it was an open cars, closed cars? Were you aware of anything?

I wasn't aware of anything. But I find out after that they in our hometown, in Vayslits, they made the farmers come with their wagons. And they took the Jews from our hometown and several other towns surrounding to a train station together, and they load them on the train, and they sent them to Treblinka.

So they were in closed cars?

In closed cars, yes.

When I found out about what happened, I felt complete lost. I didn't have nowhere to turn to. I didn't have nobody. I was alone in the world with a little baby.

Your husband was with your parents?

My husband was with my parents. Yes.

And the only hope what I had is that my parents did hide, did manage to hide, and did manage to go to the farmer. And they are alive. And I knew if they will be alive, they will let me know. So my only hope was to stay outside. I knew the farmer they had those hiding place. To stay outside, and look in the direction some the road where the farm, the man will come, if my parents remain alive, and hoping he will come.

I mean where the hiding place was, they had to pass by?

No, the road from this village, the road. I know from which road he could come from that village, the farmer. My parents couldn't come. I expected that they will let me through him. They will send them to me.

Oh, I see.

Because they know where I am. They will send him to me, to let me know that they are alive. And I was sitting there that Saturday all day in the front of the house, looking if this man is coming. But he didn't. And the same night, somebody came and told me that some people escaped on the way, when they were going with those wagons. Before they come to the train station, some people escaped, ran away.

And there was one woman who ran away. She was I think from Krakow. She came to my hometown like other peoples from big towns came. And I never really talked to her. But somehow she know who I am and I know who she is. Because it still was a small place.

So as soon as I found out she came back. I went to her. I was told where she is. And I went to her.

Was she in--

In Dzialoszyce, yeah. And I came to her and I asked her if she saw some of my family by the transport. And she said, yes, I saw your mother. And then when I began to cry, you know, my parents went. I didn't have no hope. And I cry, and I was tearing up my face. I was sure that my parents went. I won't have no connection with them anymore.

And the following day, I heard an other man, a man who was living in Wislica, and know me very well from when I was born, knew my mother, my father, and my whole family. His name was Luther Brown. And I found out that Luther

Brown came, escaped, and came back. And I went to him. I came to him, I said, rab Luther, did you see anybody from my family? He said, no. I didn't see nobody, not your father, not your husband, nobody. Nobody from your whole family, not from your aunts, from your uncles. There was nobody out there. Because there was nobody from them.

And I said, well, why did she told me this lady, she's my mother? He said, look. There's no sentiments now. I wouldn't have any sentiments. If I would see your mother, I would tell you I saw your mother. He said, she doesn't know your mother very well. She just came to Vayslits. How does she know your mother? I know your mother since she was born. And you tell me she was there. You go where you are. And your mother was not there. Your father was not there. And if I would see somebody, I wouldn't have mercy on you. I would tell you. But nobody wasn't there.

And when he told me that, I realized that they didn't went to the transport. But there was a big question if they managed to go, managed to escape to this farmer. Anyway, I was sitting there Sunday all day on the steps, looking in that direction. Nobody did come. Then I found out they escaped, not Saturday Night, but Sunday night. Because Saturday night was still too dangerous. There were a lot of people. They were there in this hiding, until Sunday night. In Sunday night, they escaped.

And Monday morning, it was about 10 o'clock. And I could see them from a mile away. I knew he was far away, but I could see him. He's coming, the farmer with my parents. And then I got the sign that they are there. And I begin to run to him. And he told me to get away because he doesn't want nobody to see me with him. Because some people may put two together, and realize.

So your parents sent the farmer to tell you.

Yes, sent the farmer to tell me that they managed to escape, and they are there in this hiding place. And not only this. The point really at that time, they wouldn't eat from the farmers. When I left to Dzialoszyce, my mother gave me a couple of pots, so I can cook for the baby, because she knows how much I care for the baby, if I was not been able to cook something to give to feed her what I want, how miserable this will make me. My mother gave me a couple of pots, so I can cook whenever I want, whatever I want.

And my mother wrote me to send them those two pots because they need it, because they don't want eat-- at those circumstances, they wouldn't eat treif. You understand? And they told me what else, to send them some other things there. I send them everything what I want, and the farmer went back.

And I was staying with the [NON-ENGLISH] It was the same thing every night. Everybody was dressed and ready, ready to run away.

Let me ask you something. Your parents were hiding at the place of this farmer?

Yes.

This place was not in Vayslits anymore?

No, no it was in a village. No. It was out of Vayslits.

Do you remember name of the village? The name of the village was, let me see if I remember.

Well, maybe it'll come to you.

Stawiszyce.

Stawiszyce?

Yes, Stawiszyce.

Was the village the same--

It was a farmer village. It was all farmers, with all the farmers there. Like our hometown, the village was business, was--

And it was very close to Vayslits?

It was about I would say 5 kilometers. And I send them all they what they want. And the farmer went back home. And I remained in Dzialoszyce. And I was there for about, I would say, for about a week more, one week, or maybe 10, 12 days. And I was going one morning on the street there was a baker who was baking those bagels. And every morning, I took the baby and went to the bakery, and bought a bagel and gave it to her. And she ate this bagel. I was going on the street holding the baby in my hand, and she was eating the bagel.

Somebody came to me, you know, your parents came. Your husband came. And your brother, my brother, Menasha was with him. Because Chaim was in Slomniki. And there in Dzialoszyce was living my cousin, Zlata's daughter who got married with a man who was from Dzialoszyce. And they from the transport, they managed to escape. And they came to that place, because her name was Roizel, and her husband's brother was married too. And he lived there in Dzialoszyce, and they came to him.

And my parents knew. They didn't know. But they knew that about his brother, and they came to them. And I said, my parents. Where are they? I don't know where to go. They said go there. I forgot their name. They're there, by those relatives. And I went there. And I don't know if I can tell you in words what happened. How we began to cry about it, and the hugs. And what happened, it was terrible. It was impossible to explain.

This was on a Friday. Was a Friday about 10:00, 11 o'clock. And my mother managed to get some way some flour, and she baked a challah, and she made a cholent. And about it was about a half an hour before lighting the candles. My husband came home. He said he met a man whom he sold flour when we were living in Sosnowiec. Who has his wife's parents are living in Dzialoszyce, and they came back. And they have big homes, and a lot of rooms are empty from Jews who didn't come back. And they want us. They want to give us a couple of rooms. There's plenty pillows and dishes and a whole house.

So you were in Dzialoszyce then.

In Dzialoszyce.

Your parents who had been by the farmer left a few days later and came to Dzialoszyce.

Yes.

And all of you went to those big rooms?

We went. It was a half hour my father said, no, let's stay here Shabbos. Of course, my mother said, no. I can't be on my own. We don't have anything here. Just the two pots. I don't have for the two pots me the food. Let's go there. We went there right away. And we were there for about-- for about a month.

I was there, my mother, my father, my husband, and Sheila, and my brother, Menasha. And my mother was baking bread. It wasn't a normal life, but at least we were there in a home. We were free. And they begin to--

It was open? Like you weren't really in hiding then? You were just--

No, no, no. It was open. Because I told you they formed a community, a Jewish community. There wasn't many Jews, probably 100 or 50 Jews. And they formed already a committee. And they begin to form police. And my father began to work on it. And my husband and Menasha became policeman. Because when you are a policeman you have a better way to know what's going to happen.

So this was around November?

This was about November.

Of 1942.

1942, yes. And there was some Jews who were ran away from the transport, from the wagons. And they came back to Dzialoszyce. And every day was in our home was a poor home with those Vayslits who managed to escape, who came to us to be together, to talk, to find out a way what to do, what not to do, to talk about it.

OK, now about after three weeks, two weeks or three weeks or four weeks, something after several weeks, it begin to get hard again people. Began to talk that there's going to be a second transport. They're going to get out, take out a second time the Jews. So my father began to say again, what's going to happen?

We can run away to the farm, to the hidden place. What's going to happen with Devorah and the baby. She cannot come there. We have to do something. What do something? Polish papers. She can go with the Polish papers.

Now I have to go back when we were still in Vayslits before they take me out. When we saw that what's happening in other town, we were hoping it won't happen in our town. But we have to be prepared. So we were talking about that, what's going to be with me with the baby. So my husband said, the only way is to make Polish papers. Because I was very fortunate. Everybody was jealous that I had an [NON-ENGLISH] That I wasn't favored to Jewish. I had in the face I was very much like a Polish woman. And this was worth millions then, that you didn't look like Jewish. You understand?

So I could go on Polish papers. Because if you look like Jewish, you couldn't. Because your face was Jewish. But for me, I could go on Polish paper. So my father began-- I don't know. He asked people around. He began to talk about the Polish identification. The Polish identification, I have to have a place to go somewhere. So Paula, Chaim's wife's parents, were very friendly with a woman who lived across the other side of the fence where they lived. Her name was-- I don't remember.

Anyway, so she said she will write her a letter to invite her here that she has a very important thing to discuss. And we will ask her. We will pay her whatever she wants, in case it happened when I have to run away, I can go to her with the baby.

She didn't tell her about what. She said a very important thing to discuss. Please come. I cannot come. I don't have a permission to go. But please come to me. It's very important. And they know each other very well. And her parents also give everything what they, they gave to her to hide. And she knows--

Where was this at? This was in--

This was in [NON-ENGLISH], where my sister-in-law came from, Chaim's wife. So she didn't come. She sent her son. She had one son. And he came by. His mother was sick, didn't feel good, excuse. He came. What do you want to talk about?

And we talked to him. And we told him, look, does she look like Jewish? He said, no. She can go away for Polish card, 100%. No one suspects she's Jewish. Fine. This is what we want to do. In case happened in our hometown is being transported and she has a baby, she cannot go to a hiding place. We would like her to go to your mother and stay there until we begin to form-- for a week or two, because we were sure certainly is going to begin, community is going to come back.

So he said, OK. I can't answer you. This is up to my mother. And I will come home. I will tell my mother everything and she will let you know. We never had a word from her. Which means no answer is an answer too, no deal.

OK. Then in Dzialoszyce, when it begin to get hard, we begin to talk again. And I didn't have a Kennkarte. I didn't have

an identification.

What was it called?

A Kennkarte. A Kennkarte, mean Kennkarte, Kenn means know in German. [NON-ENGLISH]

Yeah Kennkarte.

Kennkarte is a card, I means a knowing card, identification.

Oh, identification card.

Yeah, with your name, birth place, everything. Everything where you're born. But in Poland, Europe, you got to have this, you understand? Just like you need when you drive, you need a driving license? So you need this. A Kennkarte, everybody had a Kennkarte.

Jews and non-Jews.

Even before the war.

So you wanted to get a Polish Kennkarte.

In Polish it was called [NON-ENGLISH], which means a personal identification.

Identification card, so you wanted to get a Polish one.

Yeah, a Polish, a Polish name and everything, and for Sheila too. So my father happened to met a young man from Wislica, who also was married and had a wife with a baby. And he made for her this identification.

In Dzialoszyce?

No, it wasn't for Dzialoszyce. This was made in Krakow. But he told him to whom to write, get in touch. This was an underground organization. He knew about this, who made Kennkartes for Jews. And I don't know exactly how he got in touch. I know only that he got in touch. And a man came over. And I don't remember how much my father paid him. He paid him something. And he said he's going to make me a Kennkarte. He's going to make for Sheila-- because since she was a baby you needed that Christianity-- that she was Christian in the church.

Baptized?

A baptized, yeah, a baptized identification, yeah, where she was baptized. Everything will be in perfect order. And this was from Krakow. And he left back to Krakow and he came back. He came back--

Who?

This man came back with identification card, it was like Monday or Tuesday. And this identification card was like the first name was-- the first name was like Dora. The second name was Gutterman. And they made a mistake. Instead of putting first Dora, and then they put first Gutterman, and then Dora. It was a minor mistake, you understand? But my father said, look. If you would be a real goya, it wouldn't be any problem. But you're not a real goya, and the slightest thing can form a question. You can't afford any questions.

But on your identification card, everything's got to be perfect. They shouldn't be the slightest error. So he told the man to leave this Kennkarte here, in case something happened in between, and going back with other one. The man said he cannot do it. Because if he will do it, the organization will think he sold this Kennkarte, that they will not trust him. So he had to take back the Kennkarte.

He had to take back this one, in order to get the other one. You understand?

Right.

And my father said, OK. Do it. But come back as soon as possible. This man came back Saturday night. My parents had left Friday night because it was so hard. We hired for them a wagon, because they couldn't go that far. They were too weak. And they left Saturday night.

To go to where?

To go to this hiding place.

Again?

To the farmer. Yes, it was very, very hard. We could expect any hour another take me out. I remained, and my husband, and Menasha remained in this house. The man came back Saturday night with a new Kennkarte. Sunday morning, Menasha was running around everywhere because everything has to be perfect, the signature, what I made. My name was Sofia Wojcik on the Kennkarte. The signature had to be the same ink or the whole Kennkarte. Because usually, when you go in a City Hall, you make a Kennkarte. The man who writes out the Kennkarte, he give you the ink pen, and you sign it.

Right.

So the ink pen couldn't be an other color, had to be the same color what the Kennkarte.

What was the name that you had? My name was Sofia Wojcik. And Sheila's name was Celina. It was a Polish name, Celina Wojcik. Yes. And she had a baptized heart and everything was perfect. And he spent several hours trying to match the same color ink. And he finally finds something, and I signed the Kennkarte. And I left. If the man would come one day later, I wouldn't have the Kennkarte. I wouldn't have no way. I wouldn't have nowhere to go.

I left Sunday at about, it was about 4:00, it was between day and night I left to a train to go away on that Kennkarte. I didn't have any idea where I could go. My husband told me to go to this woman, which didn't answer the request. You understand?

Yeah.

How can I go there? But I didn't have any choice. So I made up my mind. I'm going to go first to Slomniki where my brother is.

So you went with Sheila.

I went with Sheila.

And what happened to your husband and Menasha?

My husband and Menasha ran away to the farm. They walked.

So they went back to go to the hiding place.

They went back with my parents. Yes. And I went to the train. When I come on the train, and the trains were always very full there. I couldn't, I had the baby on my arm, and I had a very small suitcase with a little pot for her, that was nothing for me. And I couldn't-- I stood on the platform, and this was in November. It was when Poland was very cold. It was freezing. And I stood on the open platform. The wind was tearing my head apart. And I was afraid that this baby

will collapse. So when I was standing by the door, but I was trying to push her in at least in the door, so she will be protected from the wind.

But I couldn't. And of course, the trains were always dark. There was no light. So the man was standing, I told him in Polish, if he would please let me move one step, so I can have the baby in the door. , Apparently there were people inside who knew me, because we were in business. So I worked in the business, some shoemakers and farmers who recognized my voice. And I heard right away, what is she doing here, this Jew? I'm going to give her a lesson in Miechow. Miechow was the town where this train-- where I was going it was a small train.

In Miechow I had the chance to the big train, to go to Slomniki where my brother was. And she said, I'm going to give her a lesson in Miechow. I didn't have any idea who this is. I knew only that somebody who knows me, because she didn't see my face. She recognized my voice.

So when we went down from this train, I never was in Miechow in my life. I didn't have an idea where a big train is. There were a lot of people. Everybody was walking very fast. And it was raining. And it was muddy. It was pitiful. And I had the baby in my hand. And I had the suitcase, this little suitcase and I felt that I won't keep up with it. So I know where to go, with other people. If I would stay behind in [NON-ENGLISH] in front of me, I wouldn't know where to go.

So when I looked back, I saw only one man going under me. And they all were in the front going very fast. So I didn't have any choice. I told him in Polish, good my thing that I spoke a good Polish. I said, excuse me, please. Would you please so nice, and help me with this little suitcase. It's too hard for me to hold me. He, said sure, sure please. I'd be very happy to. So he took the little suitcase. And I went with him.

At least, I know where he's going, you understand? And when we came there, he said-- when we came to the other train, he said to me, come on in where it's light. You can get some coffee. I said, no, my baby is asleep. And I prefer to stay in the dark. I don't want to wake her up.

So I was afraid to go in the main room, because I didn't know who is there. So I stood there in the back. And there was sort of like the wall was a little bit out in the bottom. And I sat there with the baby. And I was waiting for the train. I didn't have a ticket. I didn't know what's going to happen. I was sitting there at the table, it was about two or three hours later they come. And there was this lady going back and forth.

And she came to me and she said to me, some of them, some Poles, one in a million were very nice. They were trying to help. And she said to me, where are you going? I said, I'm going to Slomniki. Do you have a ticket? I said, no. She said, why don't you give me the money. My husband is going to buy a ticket for me and him. He's going to buy it for you too. And I said, thank you very much. You've been very nice of you. And I gave her the money. She bring back the ticket.

And she said, look, you going out to the train, my husband is tall, and I am tall. Go between us.

Did she know you were Jewish?

Yeah.

How did she know?

I don't know, because Sheila looked like Jewish. And the other thing, they saw how I was sitting there, and I wouldn't be Jewish, I wouldn't be there. You understand?

Right, I see.

You understand?

And she said, you go between us. And we will go together on the train together. You go behind my husband. I will go behind you. And she told me, I will help you hold the baby, because she didn't want even to tell me that she knew I'm

Jewish. But she sort of wanted to help me. And this is what happened. We went out on the train.

And on the train, we came to Slomniki, and it was pouring. We went down from the train, and I had to go to the city. On the way, there were a lot of Poles walking through. And I heard one to the other one said, do you know they're cleaning out the Jews today from Slomniki? And I said, no. It's not possible. No. He just-- it can't be possible. It's impossible. I'm going there. And they're cleaning out. I'm going and right on the fire, and the tiger in the mouth? No.

I didn't have no choice. I went. I came to the city. And I came there. It was quiet. I couldn't see a person. And I realized what's going on.

Another transport was happening.

Yeah. I came in right on the transport. And when I was going there, Sheila was almost two years old. When I got tired, I let her down, and she walked a few steps. But then it was muddy. When I picked her up, her shoes were there and my coat was all full of mud. How did I look? And I didn't eat for the past day, and didn't sleep the past night. You can imagine how I looked.

So I was walking there and I saw a policeman, a Jewish policeman with a star running. And I said to him, excuse me. I came to Mr. Orbach. Do you know where he is? He said, he's no more here. He left. And he ran, ran away. I didn't know what to do. Where do I go? What do I do? I was going back to the train. I think maybe I will go to this woman. So I turn around. I was on the sidewalk and turn around to go back. There was in the middle of the road going in my direction a Gestapo and a policeman, a Polish policeman, going right in the front.

I was going back this way on the sidewalk and they were going in the middle, up. Up to the direction where I was going.

They had to pass by you in other words.

I had to pass, yeah. So automatically, what do I do? Going back. No It would be-- when I saw them, I turned back.

In other words, if you turned back, it would look suspicious.

Yeah. Why did I turn back when I saw them? Apparently I want to go this way, so why would I turn back? I'm going to go. I go. I didn't know if they're going to stop me, or what they're going to ask me. I didn't have an idea. When they came even with me, they stopped. And I stopped too. And the policeman asked me, [NON-ENGLISH], which means where, are you coming? I said from the train. [NON-ENGLISH] which means where are you going?

I tell him where I'm going. I said I'm looking for a cafe. I would like to have breakfast with my little girl. I'm looking for a cafe. And they looked at me in my face. The policemen and the Gestapo. I don't know how long, 10 minutes, a half hour. I don't know. And I looked him straight back in their face. And the policeman said to me, a cafe is right up there to the right. And I said, thank you. And I turned around and I went back.

And walked-- of course I walked slowly, and they walked faster. And when I saw them disappearing, I didn't see them more. I turned around and I went to the train. When I came to the train, in the front, before the train there were children playing, Polish children. And I heard they're saying to each other. You know who this woman is? She's Jewish.

About you? They were talking about you? Polish children, in Slomniki, they knew you.

They didn't know me. But they saw how I looked. Understand?

I see.

The way I look with the mud, with everything, that baby on the hand, no Polish woman would be in this condition there. Did I had any chance to survive to go on a train now, there they took daily off Jews from the train and killed them? But what could I do? I didn't have any choice. I had to go. I went on the train. I was sitting there again in a dark place. And



when I heard the train came, I went on the train. And I went to Jedrzejow.

I came to Jedrzejow. I went out from the train station. I know that Polish parents were living on Klasztorna Street. Klasztorna was the name of the street. But I didn't have any idea of the number on it. And it was a long street, because Jedrzejow was a much bigger town than my hometown.

I didn't have an idea of what number. And I didn't know what to do. There were those not cabs, but those wagons, where they took people. So somehow, I wanted to go on one of those things. I went into a wagon. And he asked me where to go. And I said [POLISH], which means to the main section of the city. I didn't know what to tell him. What I'm going to tell him, where Gottlieb lived?

Right.

You understand?

Right.

So I went there. And I came out. In [POLISH], he let me off. And I stood there. I didn't know what to do, where to turn. And the Gestapo going by, Heil Hitler. Heil Hitler. [NON-ENGLISH] all around. That was a big town with a big Gestapo office. It was full with those murderers. I didn't know what to do. Suddenly, I saw a Jewish man. This was for those people who remained after they took out the people from Jedrzejow. Because he was wearing a--

[AUDIO OUT]

He was walking fast. And I went to him, and I say, please, wait a minute. I have to ask you something.

This was this Jewish man.

This Jewish policeman.

That you recognized in Jedrzejow.

Jedrzejow, of course I recognized him because he had this Jewish star.

Did everyone wear-- did all Jews?

Oh, sure.

All Jews had to wear Jewish star?

Oh, sure, the Jewish star, no doubt about that. So and he was there legal, because the Germans had left a few people. I told you about that after they took out the Jews from Jedrzejow. They left a few people for what they need to serve them.

Was that unusual that they did that In the big city?

In the cities where they had an office. Like our hometown, they didn't had anybody, like [POLISH], they had this too.

This wasn't the Judenrat Office?

No, no. This was people who served them, who cleaned for them, and cooked for them, and made them--

Was this like kapos, or is that something else?

No, no, no. This wasn't kapos. Kapos was in the KZ.

In the concentration camp.

The concentration camp. This wasn't kapos.

These were just Jews that were helping?

It was Jews who were helping them. Yes. Who were doing-- make up a shoe for them, a doctor if somebody got sick.

And this man was a Jewish policeman?

He was a Jewish man. He wasn't a policeman. He was a Jewish man who remained there. I don't remember who he was, some kind reason, they left him there in the barrack.

Did you know him personally?

No, I didn't know him personally. No, I didn't have an idea of who he is. But I saw he wore a star. And I realized that he is Jewish still in Jedrzejow apparently. And I went to him I said, please wait a minute. I want to ask you something. I said, here was a Gottlieb living on Klasztorna. Could you tell me the number? He told me the number. And he left right away. And I went there to this number.

And I saw the yard with all those shops there, where they had those lumber. And I looked across from the fence, and I saw this house where this woman was living. So I ran around the corner. And I came to the door. And I rang the bell. She opened the door. And I said, my name is Sofia Wojcik. I am Paula's sister-in-law. Please let me come in.

And as soon as I said this it just so happened that Rubinek, the same Rubinek who came to us was in her house. He told me later that he doesn't know why. He went there several times by her house. But this time he went by, and it sort of like dragged them in. Before I came to the door, he was there for about a half hour, already just talked to her, sort of something like a magnet, sort of asked him to go in.

He said, because if I wouldn't be here, she would slam the door on your face. But as soon as I said this--

This was Paula's mother?

No this was Paula's sister's fiancée, Rubinek.

I know, but the house that you were at.

The house, was not Paula's mother. Paula's mother was already dead. This was the neighbor, the Polish woman, to whom whose son come to us, whom I supposed to go. She didn't answer.

Right.

But as soon as I said this, he recognized my voice. And he said, Pani Wojcik, come on in. Come on in. He didn't wait for her to say. You understand?

Yeah, I understand.

Because he knows that she knew what the Gottlieb's give to her. Everything what they own, they gave to her to hide. You understand? So she couldn't. And he came out, and he said, come on in. Come on in. He told me after that she would shut the door in my face if he wouldn't be there.

So I came in. And I told him what happened.

This was the house of the Gottlieb's, but this Polish women was staying there?

No, it was her house. She was living in the other side of the fence. But they were very good friends, very good neighbors. They were very close friends. But this was her house. She wasn't living there, probably she was living in the other side of the fence. You understand? Because their whole business was surrounded-- usually a lumber yard is surrounded by a fence, you know that.

Right, so you went there.

So I went in. And she gave me right away some water.

And when was? Was this in 1943 already?

1942.

So it was like--

It was November all this happened, days how it took. She gave me some water to wash up. She told me to take off the coat. And she gave me something to eat. And Rubinek told me what I need. And I asked him to bring me some paper. I want to write a letter to Chaim. He was dead then already.

Chaim was dead?

Chaim was dead. I found later. That when they took out, at that same day, they took out the second time the Jewish from Slomniki, and Chaim's wife, this was a moment what kind of idea you have. It's nothing you could see in advance, or know what you're going to do.

I just want to make sure I have this straight.

When you went to Slomniki, was it to go to be with Chaim and his--

With Chaim, yes.

And his wife.

And then when I find out what happened.

And that's when you found out there was a transport, and Chaim was killed then.

Chaim was killed, and I find this out later. I will tell you this later. And she gave me something to eat. And she let me stay there. And she said that-- I told her that I would like to remain there. I have a Kennkarte. Everything is legal. But she said, no, that she is stating she was a widow. I don't think this was true. She's dating a Gestapo, yes. He told me not because I want to marry him, I date him. I'm protected. And he comes in quite often to me. But I was over her house for about a month and nobody came in.

So apparently, she didn't want me there. But she says she's going to find a place for me. So Rubinek brought me right away paper, and envelopes, and stamp. And I wrote a letter to my brother Chaim, which he wasn't-- he didn't receive it anyway. Anyway, I was there for about a month. And she found for me a place by a farmer in a village under Jedrzejow, which name is Liskow. A farmer who had three daughters. One daughter was married, and lived a little bit on the other side of the village.

One daughter was a very intelligent girl. Her name was Maria. She wasn't a regular farmer girl. She was a more intelligent girl. She was a maid by a doctor in Katowice. Katowice, in the section where Sosnowiec is close, by the

German border. But every year, she came home for a couple of weeks vacation to her parents. And she came home, usually she came home at the end of September. And she came home from vacation, and the war broke out, and couldn't go back anymore. And that's why she was there.

And the other sister, I don't know her name, a big anti-Semite. The other sister was a big anti-Semite. And she find me a place there under the condition they knew I'm Jewish, and I paid them good for it. But the neighbors, for the neighbors supposed to be that I'm a relative. I came. I was living in a big town, and my parents were killed, a big story. I made a big story. And I didn't have no home, so I came. They told me to come. And I'm living with them as a Polish woman.

I was there for about a month. And every night, usually in the farm, the farmers go to sleep in the winter when it gets dark. And they go to each other's home. They sit in the dark, and tell stories, and jokes. So her parents and the younger sister went always to a neighbor. But Maria always remained home with me. And I put Sheila to sleep. And those we were sitting by the oven, by the fire, she taught me the religion. She said, if you have to go, maybe it will be important if you have to go somewhere, if you have to live on your own Kennkarte.

So Maria was sympathetic.

Oh my God, she helped me all she could. She taught me the religion. And she taught me.

Catholicism?

Not the Catholic religion, the Catholic prayer, the Catholic prayer. And they usually they have a morning song where they sing for the prayer. She told me this song. And she taught me the song for a night prayer. And she told me how to behave. If I have to live on Polish paper, how to behave are common to the church, where to kneel down, where to cross myself. She told me all.

Of course, I didn't have an idea. She taught me all that. So after a month--

When was this already?

This was already December.

1942.

Yes. After a month they told me that they're afraid. They heard something. They're afraid. They want me to go. But they told me I can go to their daughter who lives in the other side of the village, their married daughter. There were two daughters married, if I remember. Two, they had two rooms, one lived in one room, and one lived in the other room.

And I went there. And I was there for another month. And I did all I could. And I brought in water, and I cleaned, and I scrubbed.

You were living under false papers then.

I had false papers, yes. I did all I could to be helpful. And at that time they were poor. They were poor farmers. They could only-- they had only a certain amount of wheat flour. So they baked only once a month bread. They baked those big loaves of bread. So they gave me one loaf of bread for a month, and I bucket of potatoes. This was my ration for the month. And I paid them for this already. But they couldn't give me any more. They couldn't sell me anymore because they didn't have.

So their oldest daughter has about three or four children. And one little boy was about Sheila's age. And he, of course, was always hungry too. So whenever I gave Sheila for this bread, I didn't touched it. I kept it for Sheila. I want to have it for her two or three times a day, a slice of bread. And this was for a whole month. So whenever I gave Sheila a slice of bread, and if I let her go, so he began to run in hopes that she will drop the bread on the floor, and then he bent down and picked it up, and at it.

This little boy from this woman. She had one little boy. She had about four or five children. But the youngest one was a little boy about Sheila's age, maybe a year older. So whenever I gave her a slice of bread I had to hold on my hand, so he will not be able to catch a slice of bread. This was the condition.

When I was in the first farmer's house, Sunday they usually went to the church, the farmer with his wife, with his youngest daughter, and Maria remained home. And she made those-- this was a special Sunday dinner from white flour, those big noodles, those heavy noodles was about that thick and that long. Make a big pot, And she took those pig fat, and made those fat from the pig fat, and pour it over. And she took a big bowl, and gave me a big bowl of those noodles. And those--

Pastries

Pierogi pastries, and pork.

Called pierogi?

Called pierogi, yes. And they're cold. Put on a lot of fat, and she said to me [NON-ENGLISH], she called me [NON-ENGLISH]. You fast all week. Have once a week a good meal, and eat it fast before my parents come home. Because if they would come home and see this they would kill her. So I took the spoon and I really want to eat it. I was allowed to eat it, because it wasn't [NON-ENGLISH]. I was allowed. But I couldn't.

Because it wasn't kosher.

Not because it wasn't kosher, because the smell from that fat was so horrible. I know when I will take in my mouth I will vomit. Because the smell from that fat, from the pig fat.

You weren't used to it.

I wasn't used to it. And I couldn't. I want so much to eat, but I couldn't. At the same time, I couldn't show Marie no matter how lovely she was, she would say, oh a Jew is a Jew. First all she didn't have, and now she doesn't want to eat the pig fat too. She wouldn't say I can't. She would think I don't want, you understand?

So I couldn't bring the slightest hard feeling to her. You were afraid she'd be insulted.

She'd be insulted. Yes. I couldn't do that. So what I did I took the spoon and tried to bring it out from the bottom, which hadn't touched the fat yet. And I ate it. And then when she was finished with the cooking, she went out to milk the cows. I took a piece of paper and put all this in the bowl. And put it in my inside my brassiere, and I went out to the toilet. The toilet was outside. And I throw it in the toilet.

Flushed it down the toilet.

Not flush. It wasn't a flushing, was an open toilet. It was in the yard. I just throw it inside.

A hole in the ground.

In the hole in the toilet. And when she came in, and the bowl was empty. And she said, did you like it? Oh, it was delicious Marie. Thank you so much. It was delicious. I really enjoyed it. And this happened every Sunday when I was there. When I went to the other there, to the other place, to their--

Her sister. Her sister's she didn't give me. She just gave me a bread and a bucket of potatoes, and this is what I lived, once a day a couple of potatoes. Anyway, it was the end of the month. And it came out a law that every door for every farmer has to have a list how many peoples are living there.

This was in January, 1943.

It was in January. With the name, with the age, everything, exactly.

What town was this in?

This wasn't a town. This was in the same village, Liskow, yes. And this man, the farmer said that he's afraid. He cannot put out my name. And not to put out, the German will come to check on it. How many people they will see me there with the baby. He's afraid. Even I have a Polish name. He was afraid.

He just didn't want to take any risk. He doesn't want to take any risk. He told me I had to leave. Well, I had to leave. Where do I go? So yeah, I want to mention also this. While I was there at the second place, this little boy got sick. And he was very sick. He was burning up with fever. The farmer didn't call a doctor.

How old was this little boy?

He was about three years old. And the farmer didn't-- if somebody got sick, he was strong enough, he remained. And if not, he died. And this little boy, I don't know what he had then. He was burning for several days. And he overcame, and he--

He got better.

He got better. And as soon as he got better, Sheila became sick. And she was, I was with her in the bed. The bed was burning. It was-- you couldn't touch her. And all I could do was cry. I couldn't do anything. What could I call, a doctor? Nothing. I only was hoping and praying that she would recover, and she did recover. And she was all right.

So then when the man told me, the farmer, that I have to leave, I went to Jedrzejow. And there, this Rubinek, whom I met there by this woman, who used to come to our home. He was there at you used to call a barrack. It was a street. And one of the streets where there about three or four homes where all the remaining Jews were living. And other side, the Poles were living. And the Jews side was called the barrack. They lived in the barrack. There was Rubinek in a border of his.

And there were several other Jews living in this house. And there were several other houses where the Jews were living. So I went to Rubinek, and I told him what happened. At this time, he was my friend already. He helped me when I came into this woman. He invited me to the house. If not him, I wouldn't be able to go in--

This was Paula's sister's fiancée?

Yes.

And Paula's sister went with in a transport. She didn't remain. And I came--

Rubinek was Jewish?

Rubinek, yeah, sure. Him and his brother. His brother is now in Melbourne. I met him there. Yes. When I was in Melbourne, I met him there.

To visit your brother.

Huh?

To visit--

Yes. So I told him the situation. And he told me that across the street, on the other side of the street there is this doctor

who has a house. He's going to ask him, and he said, you can trust him. You can tell him you're Jewish. He's a nice man. And if he has a room, he's going to rent it to you. And he talked to him. And he had a room. You know what kind of room?

This was January or February, remember, which in Poland a normal temperature is 10, 15 degrees below zero is a normal temperature. Sometimes it can happen like it's here, happens sometimes that it can go up to 30 degrees. But 10, 15 below zero is a normal temperature. It snows every day. The winter is very tough. There were was a winter with those little windowpanes. There were two windowpanes out, knocked out.

So you can imagine how in this room was, this room what I got. And I moved in there. I moved in. He had there a bed. And I went to this room. And I didn't see how is it possible for me to live here. I'm going to freeze to death. I didn't have anything. So I came back to Rubinek. And I told him, how is it possible? I'm going to freeze to death there. I didn't have a speck of coal. I didn't have a piece of food. It's freezing.

And there was happened to be in the same room happened to be a doctor, a Jewish, who remained for the same purpose. The Germans remained him. And he heard the story. And he said, I know here a girl who has Polish papers, who is from [NON-ENGLISH], the same town where my mother's brother lived with his family. She has Polish papers, and her look is a perfect goya, a perfect Polish girl.

She was Jewish under false papers.

Yeah.

What was her name? She was, her name was Marie. I have a picture of her. I have to show it to you. And she is looking for somebody to share a home on Polish paper. And she was living there with her cousins who also remained for that purpose.

For what purpose?

For the Germans remained.

They were selected by Germans.

Yeah, the Germans. Yes. She and a brother and a sister managed to escape from the transport where they took out their town. And they were living there with their-- it was their cousins. And he went to her. And he brought her over here where I was. And we discussed. And we went right away there. She said during the day, you can stay with me for my cousins.

At night-- because during the day they usually didn't took out the Jews. They only did it early in the morning unexpected. At night, we will go to sleep there. How are we going to sleep? We're going to take some coats, some boots. We're going to cover ourselves. We're going to come over.

So during the day, you stayed where?

During the day I stayed there with her cousins, where she was, you understand? And for the night, me and Marie and Sheila, went there to this room.

To the house where it was very cold.

To the house, yeah. Yeah. Anyway, I realized that I couldn't survive there long, not only because it was difficult, but because they were living very low peoples. And somehow, I understood that they will understand that if I wouldn't be Jewish I wouldn't live in a room like. You understand? So I told this Rubinek that it's very dangerous. That I'm afraid that suddenly the Gestapo came in at night and take me out and shot me. And he realized it's true.

Yeah, in the meantime, the same man who gave me the room, you had to go to the City Hall, and be registered there. So he took my Kennkarte, and he registered me there. And I official I was living there as a Polish woman. In the City Hall, I was registered as a Polish woman. And this was a big, big good step for me, that I had a Polish-- I was listed in a town as a Polish woman in the city hall. And this was very good. And it helped me later on which I will tell you.

So Rubinek told me to go that there are a lot of rooms there.

And you're saying that a lot of people, though, even though they had false papers, they weren't listed in the registry.

No.

This was just like if someone approached them, they could show the papers.

Yeah, yeah.

But in terms of checking it out further--

No, sure. They didn't have any foundation. Sure. Didn't have any foundation. But for me, it was the minus was that my identification wasn't from Jedrzejow. It was from Krakow. And in Krakow, I didn't I wasn't listed in city hall, you understand? If I would fall in, if I would be discovered, they would call Jedrzejow, it would be fine. But they will call Krakow is the end of it, understand?

So he told me to go there to a man. His name was Lech, to the city hall, who is in charge of apartments. Because you couldn't go to the owner in the apartment. You've got to have permission from the city hall in order to get an apartment. When you had the permission, the owner didn't have nothing to say. He had to give you the apartment. He told me that there on the street on this Lisakowska, there was this bakery, the Jewish bakery which is the bakery and a store where they sold the goods.

So to go to there, and tell him that I have a little girl who has some hernia problems. And I went to Rubinek and he made a little girdle for my little girl. And I told them I got to have a good apartment. I live apartment where it's cold. And I didn't told him there's knocked out windows. It's cold and it's damp, and I'm looking for a nice clean, dry apartment. And since I know there is a vacant room, I would appreciate if he would give me the permission to get to rent there. And he gave it to me.

And I spoke a perfect Polish. But no matter what, if you paid attention, just the idea that I had a reference from a Jew, if only the Jew came in dispute, if only came in the word Jew, you automatically had a--

A suspicion.

Suspicion, you understand? And the suspicion wasn't good for me. So one time, a day later, he came to Rubinek. And he told him this Mrs. Wojcik came to me and asked me for a permission to rent this room. But you know what? She doesn't look like Jewish and she speaks a very good Polish. But somehow he said, [POLISH]. Which means she cuts in like a Jewish. She this--

She acts?

Not she acts, you see the Jewish language, and the German and the English, you make it so you talk as so you stretch out the word, like in a singing voice, voice. But the Polish is very sharp. You talk the word very sharp out.

You mean accent, you mean?

Not even, the accent is good but the way you take the word, you understand? And he realized that I am a little bit the way I speak this Polish has a little bit Jewish background. But he said, it's nothing. I don't know, I can do, because she has a baby, a little girl. If it would be a little boy, I could check. On a boy, I can check. With a girl I can't check. That's



all right. I don't mind.

And I was living there with Marie together and he sent Marie was a typical Polish woman, but her language was terrible. She spoke a very, very bad language. The grammar was terrible for her. And he used to send her very often those cards, about going to work. Because Polish girls had to go to work to make their highways, different work. And whenever he sent her, he sent a card, I hired other girls because I was afraid to send her. I was afraid, not afraid-- I knew when she will go there, she will be discovered. Her Polish was terrible. It's no way I could send her.

So one time-- and he sent it to me quite often those cards. And one time he came in. And he brought a card again. And I said to him, Mr. Lech, why you bring me so often those cards? And he said he said to me, Mrs. Wojcik, don't talk too much. You understand? Like he would say, I know who you are. If I keep quiet, you keep quiet. Understand? So I didn't say another word.

I was living there for about a month. And my parents were-- wait a minute. In the meantime, when I moved from this place to this bakery place, my parents had to leave their place, go to other place. On top of all that, the farmer they made this hiding place was a very nice man. But he had two girls. And one of those girls got married. And her husband was a bandit, and they couldn't stay there anymore. And they left. And I lost contact with them and they lost contact with me, because this happened at the same time.

How did you have contact? How did you keep--

I wrote letters.

And who would take the letters back and forth?

No, by mail. If you wrote, like I wrote dear uncle, I'm fine and [PERSONAL NAME] is fine. And everything is all right.

I see.

And I addressed it to the farmer. You understand? And I put the address there, the other address. And they wrote me a letter dear Zosiu, I'm fine and my wife is fine. And we are looking forward to see you. And maybe you will come to visit us, a few words. Just to let you know that you're alive. And they sent the letter to my address. And they wrote some kind other address too.

In this way we were constantly in contact. I knew they are alive. And they know I am alive. When I didn't receive letters for a few weeks, I begin to shake. I realized something happened. When they didn't receive mail from me, they begin to shake. They couldn't do anything. But I decided to do something about it. I just couldn't live, not knowing what happened to them.

So when was this? This was in--

This was maybe in March.

March of 1943.

In February or March 1943. So I told Marie's cousins were in a hiding place. And I told her-- and she went to see them quite often because she brought them things, whatever they need. And I told her to ask them if they can recommend me a man whom I could go and hire to take me to this village.

How did you know where your parents had gone to? I didn't know. I just went there. I took a big risk. But I couldn't live. I just couldn't live not knowing what happened to them. I just had to take the risk. I didn't have any idea where they are. And the biggest risk what I took that everybody in this village knew me, because they were buying goods from us. But I just couldn't--

When you were living in the village then. How were you living? What do you mean buying goods? Oh.

I mean they know me from before the war?

You mean the village that you'd go to?

Yeah. The people peoples knew me. The farmers know me. You understand?

Right.

And they would see me. That no matter how good I look as a Pole, but they knew me from before.

They would recognize you.

Oh, sure.

So there was a risk.

Oh, sure.

Yeah.

But I just couldn't live. I felt like I'm going to go insane. I had to go. They gave me a name from a man there who lived also in Jedrzejow. And I went to him. And I told him I want to go see a farmer, there a friend. I don't remember what I told him. And I paid him good. And these cousins, Marie's cousins said, even when he will be suspicious on something, he's a nice man. He won't do nothing to you. Don't be afraid. But don't tell him you're Jewish. Why should you? Just tell him an excuse, and that's all. But you don't have to be afraid of him. And that's what happened.

I went to him. And I told him this just whatever I figured out then to tell him. And I paid him. And he went with me on the wagon with two horses. We came to this village.

What was the name of the village?

Stawiszyce.

How far away was it from where you were?

It was close to our hometown. But it was not my hometown. We had to go by the wagon, I don't know, three or four hours, five hours. It wasn't so far, but over there you go slow. And it was cold. And I was wrapped up in a big shawl.

Where was Sheila?

Sheila, I left with Marie. And Marie was in this apartment. And I came to the village, and I went to this farmer where I know that they are hidden, they were hidden. And he told me he don't know where they are. He doesn't have any idea where they are. Then I went to other one who was, he was making those saddles, everything for horses. And he was close by. I went to him. He was a very nice man too.

And he said that they were there, but they had to leave because he had rumors, and one time they came by the shack, those murders who were after Jews, those Poles. And he managed to find out earlier, and he sent them out in the field.