

OK. So when I came back from that trip and I came in at a hidden place, and I told the man that Mrs. Garlick searched me, they all lost their voice. Because they thought that she found a letter, and he would find the letter and he would know what they wrote there. We probably would have lost our lives then. We were very much in danger.

So, why were your lives in danger? What did you write in there. Because they begin with, there all different things what they didn't want the Garlick to know. And if they would find out what I wrote, because they told him always that they tell him everything, he knows everything from their lives. And if he would know that not, he got mad. In a place like this, you couldn't afford to get this man mad. Because if he got mad, you don't know what he's going to do.

But when I told them, what happened, how she searched me, and how I accidentally for no reason, where I put my letters, then so it's just a miracle from God that this happened that we all will be saved, that he didn't find the letters. Another thing, I didn't want him-- I never wrote a letter to him to my parents, because I didn't want him to know the address of my parents. I never knew when I go out if I will come back, if something will not happen on the way. If I have not some [NON-ENGLISH] and I will get killed.

And on this occasion, I didn't want them to know the address from my parents, because I wasn't sure what he is going to do, if he's not going to go into the Gestapo and tell them, just to get even with you or whatever.

Kill another Jew you mean?

He'd kill other Jews. For that reason, I didn't want him to know, not so him, like her. She was a terrible anti-Semite. And I didn't know what she is going to do. For that reason, he never knew the address for my parents. And whenever this man, the farmer when my parents came to me, I told him not to tell him, because I didn't want him to know. He never told him his address.

All right. So you spent a year and a half in hiding.

Yes, I did.

And what did you do every day?

Every day, from the time we got up until the time we went to sleep, we talked about food, all the time, we never were tired of talking about food.

Why were you talking about food?

Because at the beginning, we were hungry. And talking about food, for some reason, apparently it was satisfying just to talk about food. We were talking about home, what kind things we throw away, how in the world could we throw this away. You couldn't understand. I remember my mother, [NON-ENGLISH], she always cooked different food. And one between those foods there, those sugar-- those big sugar beans. And when she cooked them, now she put them on a string and throw away the water.

And I say, for goodness sake, how in the world could anybody throw away such delicious water? I just thought to save my life, I couldn't understand it at that time. There was no way anybody could explain it to me. Like I would say, you take a most delicious steak now, and throw way, and suddenly I couldn't understand how they could throw away some delicious food like, this just throw it away. We always were talking about food.

And you spent every day talking about food?

Only about food. We didn't have any games. We didn't have anything. Sometimes, we talked about politics, what's going to happen there, what's going to happen there.

Wait, were you aware of what was going on outside?

No. No. We never had any paper. The only time when we were aware is when it was a good situation when something happen or was some hope that the war will finish. The Garlick came down to us and discussed it with us, that the Germans was beaten there. The Germans were beaten there. And there's a hope that the war will end.

Did he want Germany to lose, Garlick?

Of course, you want Germany to lose. Poles were bitter German enemies. They're enemies from the Russians. They never liked the Russians. And Poles were not communists. Nobody will tell you that Poles are communists.

Wait. But they didn't like the Germans either?

No. No, they didn't like the Germans. But they remember like they were divided after the First World War, and how the Germans were there.

But they liked the Germans' idea of getting rid of the Jews?

Oh, yeah. Oh, then they came to the Jews, it's just like now between the Arabs. The Arabs between each other, they're enemies. They're fighting. But when it came to kill Jews, they are together. They unite forces. The same thing in Poland. They are German enemies. But then they came to kill Jews, they do all they could to help them.

So OK. So why don't you tell me exactly about the liberation, what exactly happened?

OK. So on several occasions, we sometimes heard during the day and sometimes during the night, we heard shooting, like somebody shooting. And the first time when we heard this, when the Garlick came down to us, we asked him. What was the shooting? Was something going on?

And he said, no. Nothing is going on. It's just the Germans make [NON-ENGLISH]. How do you say this?

Military maneuvers?

Maneuvers, yes. They're maneuvers. There's nothing going on. And this was January the 15th of 1945. Like I mentioned before, when I was out in December, I spoke with this Balachowski. He said, now it can take five years, 10 years. The Russians went back to Bug. And they can stay there-- they can stay there for several years. What do they care?

Oh, right. So as far as you knew the war was going to continue?

As far as I know, the war was-- the hope was very slim, and we were very, very down with no hope of surviving. And this was January the 15th of 1945. It was in the morning, around 8:00, 9 o'clock. Suddenly, the Chaim and I just opening, and we know there's something wrong. But yeah, we heard shooting in the same night. But we thought, it's the same thing. They're German maneuvers.

But then we heard he opens in the morning, he never opened in the morning. Only opened in the evening when it got dark. And we hear Garlick said the Russians came forward, and there was a big fight going on between the Russians and the Germans now here in Jedrzejow. People are running away. I'm leaving too. I will this door are open. If you want, you can go out. If you want, you remain there. Whatever you want.

And he did that, and wait a minute. And we figured he was going out, whoever poor, especially the other people, they lived there. They were born and lived there, the other peoples in the hidden place. Anybody who would see them know who they are. Taking those chances now was ridiculous. We said, no. Now, at the last minute getting killed, no. We will stay where we are. And we told him, cover the place. Put that on it. We stay in here. And we did.

For the whole day what's going on shooting, not shooting. When we went out at night and as we were liberated, there was a German-- they call it [GERMAN]. In Polish, is [POLISH]. They go on--

Tanks?

Tank. There was a tank right next to the road from the house where we were. And every time when this tank [NON-ENGLISH], this house that we were, were jumping up and down. And every minute these [NON-ENGLISH] because we know it's something terrible wrong. And we were afraid that this building will collapse, and we will be buried under the debris from that building.

And every minute of that day, we were holding on because when the building was jumping, we would fall down. We were holding onto something, to a nail, to whatever.

Did you know what was going on outside?

We didn't know.

What was it? Was a German tank that was firing?

The German tank was firing. We find this out after. This was going on all day long. Suddenly, it was about-- I don't know, 4:00 or 5:00. It was in January. The days are short. 3:00, 4:00, 5 o'clock, everything stopped. It quiet down. We didn't know what happened. We know that something happened. We didn't know if the Germans ran away and the Russian came in, or the Russians ran away, and the German are still there. We didn't know, no one.

After about an hour quietness, the opening suddenly opens again. And Garlick came in and said, [POLISH]. It means, came out. You are free. The Russians are here. So to tell you what happened then is impossible.

It's all right, mother.

Everybody get to scream and cry so loud. We didn't know. I was especially, I was crying so loud because I was so sure that my parents survived. My husband survived. I was more sure about-- I'm talking about Sheila, because Sheila in the house where she was, was very close to the train station. And Garlick came to us, whenever he came to us, he told. He said how whenever there's bumping, the bump, the train station, the bump the railroads, and he said everything around that train station, the train, everything is knocked down. There's nothing there.

And I was afraid that something happened to Sheila. And I can't explain what happened then. We were there for about an hour screaming and crying. Then we went out. And I can't remember how Rubinek went-- his father was buried there. He died before the liberation.

His brother died-- OK, his brother died.

His brother died about a month, or five, six weeks before the liberation. So he lied down on this place where he was buried, and he was crying so bitterly. Because if he would have survived a few more weeks, he probably would have taken him to a doctor, and he could probably-- and even, I forgot to mention. When he was sick, when I was going out at one time, they had a doctor there, a very good, very close friend.

They asked me to go to him, and ask him if he could come and check on him. And I did. I went to the doctor. But he said he can't do it. He's afraid to risk his life. If you could bring him to him, he would be more than happy to check him. But there's no way he could do it. And his brother died.

Anyway, we went out. And it was dark already.

This was in Dzialoszyce, right?

This was in Jedrzejow.

I'm sorry, in Jdrzejow.

We went out. It was already dark. And we all want to go to [NON-ENGLISH]. But we couldn't because the street was lined up one vehicle [NON-ENGLISH] those [NON-ENGLISH]. All kinds of war equipment was one next to the other. There's no way we could go through because in order to go there, in order to certify the route, we had to cross the street. And there's no way we could do that.

We spent that night still in the hidden place.

Well, let me ask you. When you went out, were there other Jews then that you'd see?

When we came out some Jews came back from hidden places from the forest. There came back, I don't know, about 25, 30 Jews. And when I left that hidden place in the following morning, I told Garlick that I will be by Balachowska. And I told him when somehow come from my parents, any sign from my parents, to tell him where I am. Because I couldn't be 100% sure. Because I didn't got from them a letter for the past six months. But I know for the past six months, there was no private mail.

So this sort of calmed me down that I couldn't have a letter. How could I if there wasn't any private mail? So this gave me a hope.

Were there Russians in the village?

Yeah.

They were full of Russians.

And what did they do when they came over to you? I mean, did you get food right away, or what?

Wait a minute. There was no problem of food, because the Russians, whenever a Jew or anybody come to the Russians, they gave them food. There was no-- as a matter of fact, some Jews died because they gave him those canned meat, and canned fish. They were not used to it. Their stomach was not used to eat so heavy food. And some of even died because they ate those too heavy food.

And I told Garlick, when he had the slightest sign to let me know immediately I am by the Balachowska.

Did you think that every place had gotten liberated then? When you were liberated?

When I was liberated, I know they come from the other side. I know my parents were liberated before me. I didn't know how the other direction is. But the Russians couldn't come from other way, because there were Germans on the other side.

OK.

The Russian army could only come from the side where my parents were. So I know if I was liberated, they are liberated. But I also knew that there was no train. There is no nothing for any communication. And I didn't know if this farmer had a horse or whatever. So I told Garlick, if anybody will come, any sign from my parents, to tell them that I am [NON-ENGLISH].

Well I waited about till the middle of the day, and I came back. Did anybody showed up? No. Then I waited a few other hours, a few more hours. And I came back. Did anyone showed up? No. I was there several times during the day. And then the following day, when the following day nobody would come, I began to realize that I was afraid something is wrong. And I waited an other day. And the third day I began terrible--

Well how-- they knew you were there?

They knew I was there, sure.

Right.

And when the third day I hadn't had any sound, I told Balachowska I want to go there. I want to see what happened. Well, she was such a fantastic woman. She hired a German soldier who had a truck, and she brought-- I don't know how she got it or she could do it. But she bought several bottles of whiskey, because that's the way you could only do it with them. She gave them several bottles of whiskey. And she told them that I would like to pick up my family what I had there in a village. And she also talked with [NON-ENGLISH]. She convinced him to go with me, because she was afraid for me myself to go with this Russian soldier.

German soldier.

Russian soldier.

You said she hired a German soldier.

It was Russian soldier, a Russian soldier.

I couldn't figure out why you said German.

Well, I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

OK.

Understandable I didn't hire a German soldier.

Well, I don't know. I get so confused between who the good guys are and who the bad guys are. You said there were good Poles around. Maybe there was a good German, you know?

No.

The Germans are all gone. Not only was there a good German, when the Russian came in they somehow trapped several Gestapo. And the following day, they told me there several shots, from the Gestapo on the court from the Gestapo building. And I went there and they were lying dead. What could I do? All I could do is spit on them. Everybody Jew that came there and spit on them. That's--

I read stories where sometimes Russians gave guns to Jews, and told the Jews to shoot them.

Yeah, for the German because I mean-- the German.

Yeah.

Well, they know by the Russians they can be sometimes [NON-ENGLISH], how it is--

Punish?

Punish before they killed a Jew. Anyway she hired this Russian soldier with his truck. And I went there to my parents. And with Mala.

Now where were they? They were supposedly in hiding?

They were in Stawiszycze. But it's not-- this was all I know. They were all were there. They should have been at the first

farmer. This was not [NON-ENGLISH]. I forgot the name of this village. And I know where they are. This was the village where I went there where I met him. And I came there. And at that time, I wasn't afraid to ask where he lived because I with a German soldier.

A Russian soldier.

A Russian soldier. And I came there. And when I came there, I asked where my parents are. And he wasn't there. He ran away or whatever. She was there and her son. And she said, they left. I said, what do you mean they left? They were here. Well, she said, a few weeks before the liberation, they decided to go. And I went there. I opened that, because I knew where they were. I opened that hole. And I came down. There was nobody there.

But I saw my father's tefillin there hanging there. And I don't know if my father would have left without his tefillin. I don't know.

Talk a little louder please.

When I saw there not there, my mind went blank. I thought I lost the hope to see them anymore. I realized that they got killed.

Did you make her tell you where they were?

She said, they left. She don't know where they are.

Well, did you believe her. No I didn't believe her. I had a feeling that she killed them, they killed them. I don't know what. I didn't know what happened. And what could I do? What could I do then?

So you never found out how they died?

No. I never found out how they died. I was in the same place. And I began hysterical to cry. I didn't want to leave. I was there in now I can know they won't come. I said, no, where am I going to go? I don't have no nobody outside. I said, it's all same for me, I better stay here. There's nothing for me to go out to. And right now, he was there with me too. When before I came to the cemetery, I went to the [NON-ENGLISH]. And there was this Dzialoszyce survived.

And I was hoping before I went to the farm, I went to [NON-ENGLISH]. Maybe I went to camp at Wislica. They could walk. It wasn't far. I was hoping they were already there. But when I came to this house, there were about 10, 15 Jews who came out from the forest, from the hidden places. And when I came to this home, and they were not there, I realized that there is no hope. Because to me, maybe they couldn't somehow they couldn't let me know. But to there in a hidden place, when here is about a half hour walk, or hour walk, I they would be there, to Wislica.

You're right. So Wislica was like a half hour away.

Yeah.

And when they're not there, I know that's something terrible happened. And I have to go Dzialoszyce. He said, wait a minute. Let me go with you too. And there was a meeting in Dzialoszyce who was from Wislica and Mala who went with me. And they both came down, and they both dragged me up from that hole. I didn't want anybody. Let me be here for a day or two.

And I left this place, and where could I go? I said, now, I don't have anything left over. I have to go to see if Sheila was alive. Let me see where she is.

But let me ask you. There was no way you could get that lady to tell you the truth?

Wait a minute. I will tell you about that. I went back to Jedrzejow with the truck. And I went to Kielce. And Sheila was

there. I didn't see her for about a year. But when I came into this home, and when I came into the door, everybody recognized me. And they called her in. And said Selena, Selena, your mother is here. No they didn't. They said, Selena. Selena they want to see if she would recognize me.

And she came in I was standing round at the door. And she came in through the other side. And when she came in, and she told me, she began to cry. She said, [POLISH]. She said, mommy why didn't you come to me? Why you left me here alone?

I said, darling, now we'll be together. I'm going to take you out and we'll be together. Your daddy hasn't come back yet, but he will. And--

How old was she then?

She was then not quite five years old. And I took her out then. And I took her out, and I went to Jedrzejow.

So did the sisters give you a hard time? Pardon?

Did you tell them that you were Jewish?

No, I didn't tell them I'm Jewish, no. No, it was a good thing I didn't. Because I had to put her back there. I didn't have any choice. I came back to Jedrzejow, and I was there for a few more days. And there was nothing there for me to do. I didn't know where to go. I didn't know what to do. I was complete-- my mind was completely--

Were you in Vayslits then? Or were--

I was in Jedrzejow. I came back from Kielce to Jedrzejow. After being there a few days, I decided to go back to Vayslits. There are people who know me, and maybe I will know-- maybe--

Did you think Pinchas?

No. I didn't have no hope to see him. I didn't.

Because you knew he had gone to Auschwitz.

I know he'd go to Auschwitz, yes.

Right. OK.

I didn't have an idea he will survive or not an idea. And I didn't know. However, I was concerned, I was sure the war is over then. Because there wasn't any paper. There was nothing. But at that time, I was sure that Germany left the whole Poland. The war is over. There was no fighting going on anymore. And I was waiting for a month or two. And he didn't showed up. I lost hope.

So when Uncle Pinchas didn't come back, you thought it was because he was killed. And you didn't know at the time that, in fact, where Uncle Pinchas was, it still hadn't been liberated yet.

No, he was in Auschwitz. He still was--

That was Germany-- but Auschwitz is--

Auschwitz was Poland, was in Osweicim. Yeah, I forgot to mention when I saw my parents are not there, I didn't took out Sheila then. I decided to go to Sosnowiec. And see if anybody came back, anybody from my brother's wife's family. And if I could get some pictures from my-- because I had a big album with pictures of my home. And my brother had a big album in his home. So I decided to go to Sosnowiec.

It took me about, I don't know how long, a week or two, because all the trains were knocked down. That when I got on the train and the train was going a half an hour, and they came to a place where they railroad was knocked down, we had to-- the train stopped. I had to go on the other side, and wait there again. You could wait a day or two. There was no schedule. There was nothing.

And most of the time I was walking. And when I finally came to Sosnowiec, I went to the place where I was living. And there was this, of course there were no Jews. And there were several Jews then. But this place was liberated. And I went to the place where I was living. And there was this janitor, a woman. And when I came in, I asked her. I asked her if anybody came back. She said, no. Nobody had come back yet. And I told her if anybody will come back and ask about Orbach or [PERSONAL NAME] tell them that I survived.

And then I asked her if I can go to the apartment, if I have any pictures, if I can get any pictures. She said, no. You can go if you want. But everything when the Jews left, what the Poles could take, they took. And everything else I've taken out in the middle of the yard and burned. It was remained only the empty walls, nothing was there.

Then I went to the place where my brother lived. And there was living-- I went there to this janitor too. And he said, nobody hadn't come back yet. Then I went to the apartment where he lived--

Where Uncle Pinchas lived.

Yes, and there was a Polish family. And I told her. I told the janitor also, and I told her because I know somebody will come to his apartment. looking for pictures. And I told her, look, if anybody come and mentioned the name Orbach, or mentioned the name of what was my sister's name from the home-- Varga, Varga Orbach, tell him that Orbach's sister survived. She is living. And she said, OK.

And I went back. I went back to Jedrzejow. And then I went to Kielce and I took out Sheila. And after a few days, I decided to go to my hometown, Wislica. Well, we were there, and I was there in my hometown about I would say about two or three months. We were there about 25, 30 people, all survivors. We were living in a home, two rooms.

Vayslits? This was like during February and March?

It was February, March, April. And Sheila-- and Sheila was around the time she was in this Polish children's home, the antisemitism was so high, she became such anti-Semite, you couldn't mention to her that I am Jewish. When you mention that I'm Jewish, she became hysterical.

So she didn't know she was Jewish.

No. My mother is not Jewish. My mother is Catholic. And it was Sunday. She was urging me to go to church. But in the beginning, I said I don't want it. And I don't want you to. She got mad at me. Why don't you? You don't want to go to church? It's a big sin. We are Catholic. So I had to say either way I am sick, and I had headaches. Every time I had to find excuse. I couldn't tell her that I don't want.

And on one occasion, I found out that there is a committee in Warsaw, a Jewish committee, which tried to help Jewish people to emigrate go to Palestine in they go. But most of them what they do, if there is a Jewish child, they do the best they can to send the child to Palestine, and then the mother or the father, whoever survives, can go to this child.

So what do I do? I decided to go to Warsaw. But it was the same thing. There wasn't any communication. It took about a week or two before you could come to Warsaw.

Did you know at the time still-- did you know at that time that the war was not over yet?

I didn't. I was sure the war was over. You mean, no one ever mentioned anything?



No, we didn't discuss much politics. Everybody was only a single member. And everybody was looking away, how to get out from Poland, how to survive Poland. Because at that time, Polish people killed Jews. It was very risky, very dangerous to stay in Poland.

So what kind of politics do you have in your mind if you went to sleep, you didn't know the night the Poles are now coming to kill us all?

Were you aware of the fact, I mean did you learn later perhaps that, was it any different the treatment you got being liberated by Russians as opposed to people being liberated by Americans?

No, I didn't have an idea.

I don't know. I don't know.

But anyway, when I came to Vayslits, there was no more Russian military there. There was nobody there. Because if there would be Russian military, I would do something about my parents. But not being a Russian military, and I would never go to the Polish police and tell them what I want to do. I wouldn't have no way to survive. I couldn't do anything. Do you understand? Because it took about two months before I come to Vayslits.

There was no way I could do anything. And I even discussed it with the other Jews who were living there. He said, OK, if you want to find out, we have to run right away. Because you can't stay here. Because as soon as the police will find out what you want to do, they're going to notify this farmer and there's no way. He's going to come and kill us all.

So I went. I took Sheila and I was trying to get to Warsaw. But on one occasion, when I was waiting on this train station for a train to come, apparently I was tired. And I fell asleep. And I always had Sheila, her hand in my hand, because she always liked to run around and find what everything. And I woke, I don't know how long I was asleep. When I woke up, she was not there. And I began to look around where she is. And I came out outside the front of the station. And she was sitting on the step and next to her was a Russian soldier.

And she had his gun. He had a big gun, they already carried on the shoulders. She had this gun, playing with it. And I said Sheila what are you doing. And she said this man is teaching me how to operate a gun, how to shoot. I said, why you have to know this? Why you have to know how to shoot? And she said, [NON-ENGLISH], which means mommy and I--

[AUDIO OUT]

OK.

Which means if I will know how to use a gun, I will know how to shoot. I will kill all Jews. Which is what she learned when she was--

She learned this when she was a little girl, when she was there for 18 months. And this is what they were fed there, this antisemitism was so spread in Poland. So I was there in [NON-ENGLISH] for about a couple of months. And it was bad again to leave. And most of the Jews left to Krakow. There was a Jewish committee, and most of them went to Krakow. I didn't went to Krakow, because one of my cousins, my father's brothers or some Avrum Orbach lived in Radom with his wife.

And there, he was there. And a partner of an other men, a Jewish man, a partner were in charge of the warehouse from the leather goods. Because Radom, most of the leather factories were in Radom. And after the war, everything was communism. So there was no private store. So all the leather what was made in the factories went to the this warehouse. And you could only get a leather when you had those cards from the city hall, like a worker, who worked in the factory didn't got paid with money. He got paid with cards. And he came to the warehouse, and he'd get leather.

And I went there because I know--

Let me ask you something. After it was after Poland after you were liberated, they had elections right afterwards?

No. There wasn't-- there wasn't an election, no.

So how was it communist? I don't remember how it was. But it was communist. Maybe it was election. I didn't know. I really can't tell you that. I know it was a communist regime, just like it's now.

But still--

It's still a communist regime there.

But the war was still going on.

The war was still going on farther out in Poland. And maybe the Russian, their Russian officers, they control. I just don't know.

OK.

The only thing I know what was going on. About politics I didn't have the slightest idea then. So somehow, I had a feeling that there he will help me. And I will be able, since I came from leather, I was raised by leather, I know what it means. I know what-- and I was thinking that I didn't have any money, that he's going to give me some leather, and I'm going to go and sell it in small towns. Because I couldn't stay home. I just couldn't stay home, because when I was home, all I did is cry.

And I came to Radom. And in order to go, he told him he's going to give me leather. But where will I have Sheila? I couldn't take Sheila with me. There was no way. I had always left her in Sunday night, and I and I came back sometimes Friday night and sometimes Saturday night. So I didn't have no way to leave her. I didn't have nobody. I had to go back to the Children's home, and I left her there.

I didn't have no choice. And how did I left her? They wouldn't accept her. I walked between two walls. When nobody was in the room, I left her and I ran away. But I was afraid to leave her like this. I ran a few houses, and I stood behind the wall. And I looked out. What are you going to do? And after about 15, 20 minutes, I saw two children, two older than her, maybe nine, 10-year-old girls, came out with her. They were holding her each by a hand. She was in the middle. And they were trying to find me.

And I saw they went one home and the other home. They couldn't find me. They went back with her. And as soon as they went back and they closed the door, I knew she's safe. And then I went back to [NON-ENGLISH]. And this way I was living there about until it was I think June or July. My life consisted of going from town to town, selling leather. I came back Saturday night. And Sunday all day, I was lying on the bed and crying. And Sunday night, I went back to the station and went back there.

And I had there. I forgot to tell them, I came to Radom. My cousin, his wife wouldn't accept me, because like I told you, I was-- she was a very, very, very, very strange woman. Yeah, as I told you, I was covered with those pus, with those pus and blisters.

When you were liberated, you had some sort of physical--

Yeah. I had those blisters with pus. And I--

Where did you have them? I had it all my arms and on my legs.

That was from malnutrition?

From malnutrition, yes. Well I was under a doctor's care, and they were healed up in a way, but they still, I had some signs, some dark--

Scars?

Scars, yes. And when I came in, and this was about, I don't know, May, June, July, I have a short sleeve dress. And she saw this. Right away to me, you can't sleep over at my home. I said, don't worry. I don't intend to.

What a jerk.

Her, my cousin Eva knows her too. She was the meanest person, the meanest, the meanest thing in the world. And I told my cousin, I want to go with me. I still had my Polish identification card. And he found a room with me for a woman who lived by herself.

Where was she during the war?

She was in Warsaw with her husband. And she survived somewhere underground. I don't know exactly where. I didn't even ask her. I didn't care. And there was a woman who had on the third floor, a room and a kitchen. And she lived in the kitchen, and she gave me the room. And my cousin, a [NON-ENGLISH] was very much like a Jew. And sometimes when I came home Sunday, he came to me to see me for a half hour, for a hour sometimes, once in a while, maybe once in a month, once in two months, or whatever.

And when he came, I couldn't tell her that's my cousin because if he's my cousin, then I'm Jewish too. I'm afraid she will throw me out. So I told her it's a friend. Well there's nothing wrong for a Catholic woman to have a Jewish friend. Is she going to have a bad opinion about me? I couldn't care less. So when he came in, I always closed the door, and we there there for half an hour. I tell her it's my friend.

And one time, and I was doing this. This was my life for the next I don't know.

Whatever happened to him? Where did he go?

He's now in Germany. He made a lot of money in Poland. And from Poland, he went to Israel. He lost all the money as well. And he had a brother before the war in Germany who had a big house, a big building in Germany. So he went back and he took it over as his brother, and I understand he's a big dry goods.

What part of Germany?

I think it's in Berlin. I can't tell you.

So we have cousins in Germany?

He lives in Germany.

This is your--

This is my brother and my uncle's son on my father's brother.

So your first cousin?

Yes. But we were not close.

You never kept in touch then?

No, no. Not my cousin Eve, not really know-- because of her. She was so rotten. She just thought of it-- it's impossible

to tell how rotten she was.

Right.

Anyway, he found this apartment. It had room for me. And I was there only Sunday and Saturday night, I came home. I closed the door. I was lying on the bed and crying. I never was home. And this was my life at that time.

Then how did my brother find me? I didn't have an idea. I was when people begin to come back from Auschwitz, when I met somebody, I was trying to explain him, if he saw and how he looked. No, nobody didn't see him. No, no. I lost hope to ever to see him again. And how did my brother find me?

One time, when he came back from Auschwitz, he naturally come to Sosnowiec. He found out there's no Jews in Vayslits. And then he came back to Sosnowiec, there was already then a committee. When I was in Sosnowiec, there was no committee, because there were very few Jews. And whenever a Jew came back, he went to the committee, and there was a paper he signed, and when somebody come, he can see his name. This is how people found out one about the other one.

And my brother came back too. Sometimes he looked at the list. He didn't see my name there. So he was sure I was killed. But one time he was going on the street, and he met your father. And the house where I lived was your father's father's home. This building belonged to you.

What? The house that you lived when?

After I got married in Sosnowiec.

Oh, in Sosnowiec.

This building belonged to his father.

Right.

And I told him, coming back I spoke with that janitor. And she knew me. So when your father came back, he went there again. He asked if somebody came back. She said, yes [NON-ENGLISH] which means that little [NON-ENGLISH]. This was my name from my first marriage. That little [NON-ENGLISH] came back. Nobody else didn't came back.

She told this to dad?

She told to your father. And now he said, I came back to find somebody, I came back to look for pictures. But there wasn't any pictures. So he knew I am back. But when he met my brother. He knew my brother. They met each other. They fell on each other's shoulders and began to cry. Here, I don't have anybody. I don't have anybody. Now, your father had some nephews. My brother said, I don't have anybody. And your father said, what do you mean? Your sister survived. He said, my sister? Her name is not in the committee. How come she-- the janitor's name was Kasia. He said, Kasia told me that the [NON-ENGLISH] came back, and she looked for some pictures.

So he wouldn't believe him. He went there. And she said, yes. She was here. After the war, as it was in February or March. She was here. She spoke with me. So what can you do? How can he find me? He knows I'm not in Sosnowiec. Because if I would, my name would be there. So he found out that there are some Jews I don't know how, some Vayslits in Krakow.

So at that time, Jews didn't need any money. They didn't need to buy a ticket to go on the train as survivors.

Right.

They didn't need anything.

So he went straight, because he did any money anyway. He went straight to the train. And he had only this certification. He came back from KZ, he didn't need anything there.

From concentration camp.

Yeah, from concentration camp, he didn't need anything. So he went to Krakow. And when he came to Krakow, he went to the committee to look for Jews. And there he found names from my home town. So he went straight to them, to this place where he found the Jews were living in one home, usually they concentrate together. And when he came there, sometime early in the morning, late at night, and he began to knock in the door, like the building would be on fire. And he opened. He said, is [NON-ENGLISH] here?

And they said, no. She's not here. But she's alive. She's in Radom. She went to Radom, because her home is there. So he didn't hear another word. He run to the train again, came to Radom. Came to Radom, and he went again to the committee. My name wasn't there, because I didn't feel why should I write in Radom. Who's going to come to Radom? I know. But he saw a Avrum Orbach. He saw his name. And this was the name and the address where he lived.

So he came there by. Was again he began to knock on the door like, it would be terrible. And a woman came to the door. And he said is [NON-ENGLISH] here? And she said, no she's not here. But she's alive. She's on the road with leather. He said, oh, I did something wrong. Everybody is telling me she's alive. But she's not here. You tell me the truth please. And he said, the girl is alive. But she's not here. She usually comes back Saturday night. And this was like Tuesday, Wednesday, whatever was day, If you don't believe me, I will show you her handwriting.

Because she can stay, she usually give me a bill, what she sold, what she didn't sell. You know I wouldn't have this before the war. And then when he showed him bill, he read my handwriting. He began to cry very, very loudly. Because he finally realized that I'm alive. And he said, well, you have to wait until she comes back. Because there's no way. I don't know where she is. She can be in Chmielnik, in [NON-ENGLISH], in [NON-ENGLISH]. She goes, every day she's in another town.

And you have to wait until she's come back. OK, he was there. In the meantime, [NON-ENGLISH] went to this woman where I lived, I shared the apartment. And he said, when [NON-ENGLISH] come back, tell her to come to me. She will be very happy.

So when I came back, I always had bags and leather. I was very dusty from the road. So it was [INAUDIBLE] on this leather. And there wasn't no bathtub. There was a big container. And I put in some water. I started washing myself, my hands, my face, take off the dirt. And I came in. And at that time this woman told me your friend was here. And he said, when you come, to come to him. You'll be very happy. And I didn't pay attention.

I didn't. She told me, and to me, it just didn't cling. And I was standing by this container. And I had my hand full of soap and my face and washing myself. And suddenly, it hit me the idea. I said, the woman said that I'd be very happy. What in the world could make me happy? Money? The whole world of money couldn't make me happy. The only thing could make me happy, I know where Sheila is. I know my parents are dead. I know my Chaim and Menasha is dead. I know my husband is dead. The only thing, what I'm not sure of that is Pinchas. Could he come back. That's the only thing that could make me happy.

And as soon as this idea hit me, I didn't wait. With this soapy hand and face, I begin to run. And I ran in the street and a woman was living about two blocks away. I ran so far, all people were thinking that I went crazy. With soapy face and soapy hands running so wildly. And I ran and I ran. When I came to the door I begin to bounce in the door like I would break the door down. I couldn't ring the bell. There was no question I just bolted the door.

And he was there living in a room. There was a Polish family. This building belonged to her parents. And they had one room, which was to the right from the apartment. And the left was the kitchen. And the family who lived there had a maid apparently. The maid came to the door, opened me the door. And when she opened the door I ran in the room. And my brother was sitting by the table. And when I saw him, I ran to him. And I began to cry, to scream so wild. I didn't

know. But I screamed like they were cutting pieces from me. I screamed so wild. I can't explain you.

And the woman, this maid over there, ask what this lady went crazy? And I screamed and I screamed more. And [NON-ENGLISH] cried we are here. Please, please cry. The more hard to cry there and the harder I screamed. And I screamed I don't for how long, a half an hour, hour. I don't know. I just screamed until I became hoarse. I couldn't scream anymore.

And finally after a minutes, I began to cry. And we were one on each other. How can you explain when you see a person who she never expect to see again? And I would see my mother, my father, the same way like I saw him. I didn't have no hope to see him.

And after some time, I quiet down. And we went to my room. And I told him-- I told him what happened. And I think that I was trying to tell him a little bit.

Talk a little louder.

And I told him also at home, it took a little bit. I don't know maybe it was her idea, maybe she didn't let him do anything. He took a little bit advantage of me. He didn't treat me like he's supposed to. He sent me one time to Radom with leather with something to buy American doll. I don't remember which was risky. And my brother find this out. And he went to our room, and he said this room, if I would have survived and your sister would come to me, I wouldn't treat her like you treated my sister. How dare could you send her to places like this, after this, what she survived.

You didn't even know if I'm here, and one cousin, one member from our family. How dare could you? And he said you will not see my face again, not my sister's face. And that's what we did. And that's why I'm not in touch with him. He lives in-- I think he's in Berlin. But I don't care.

How old was he?

Was he your age?

He was about my age, maybe a year or two older. He was my age, around. And we went to Sosnowiec. And we went, there was a family Bitner with whom we were related, the Bitners, there was a Mr. and Mrs. Bitner. She is, and they went to Israel. She's in Israel now. Her husband died. And they had a daughter, and they had daughter with already grown grandchildren. And her name from the home was Orbach, the Mrs. Bitner's name. And they had a big apartment.

They were our relatives?

Yeah. They were-- I told you already, Yeah. And they rented-- they gave us two rooms in their apartment. But then after about a month--

When was this? This was about I would say in July.

Of 1945?

1945, or August. Did Uncle Pinchas try also to find out if your parents had-- did uncle Pinchas also go back to the farm? I mean, how did he find out?

No, he didn't go there. Because he found out there was no Jews. [NON-ENGLISH] was a very small village.

So he didn't find out any more information either about how your parents died?

He didn't-- no, no. You couldn't go there. There's no way. You couldn't do anything because if you would come there, they would kill you immediately. It's nothing you could do.

OK.

Not only there, if you could go to a police station or other town, they would find out that you tried to prove a Pole killed a Jew, they would kill you immediately.

All right. So let's just review this. There was your mother and your father were killed. Right?

My mother, my father, and my husband.

And your husband. And Uncle Pinchas' wife?

Uncle Pinchas' wife and her children died.

And Helen and Sheila, their two children, died in Auschwitz.

Yes.

And Chaim, your brother--

Chaim from [NON-ENGLISH], at the same day when I came by there.

So Chaim, your brother Chaim, and his wife were killed?

Yeah, by the Germans, yes.

And Ephraim?

Ephraim was killed by the Poles.

When he was trying to get--

To get money, to try to get some money, yes.

OK. So Uncle Pinchas was the only one in your immediate family that you and Uncle Pinchas survived?

Yes.

And you made searches for everyone else, and nothing came of it, right?

Nothing happened.

OK.

When I visited Uncle Pinchas in 1969, he told me when he came to Australia, and they came by ship. And when he came there, they were looking for their luggage. He saw a big container, a big wooden box. And it was-- and the name was Orbach, Chaim Orbach. And he had a brother Chaim. And even I told him what happened. He just couldn't leave that box.

He waited there for hours. If there was the slightest hope that he will show up. And he waited there, he told me a whole day. He sat on that box and waited. Who's going to come collect that box? And finally, a man came. And he was sitting on that box. It wasn't my brother. And he told the man why he was there on that box. And my brother said, well, I'm very happy that you survived. But only the reason why I'm here is because I had a brother Chaim Orbach. And I was hoping, I was wanting him to come.

And then when I was there, there's a big family over. But there were two brothers and they had family before the war. So when I was there--

Where, in Australia? But they're not related to you?

No. But anyway, even not related, I was there New Year. I came there about the 24th or the 23rd of December.

When?

In 1969. I was there about till the middle of January. So New Year, my sister-in-law, Jean, she had to go to a New Year's party. And I had to go too. And I went to the New Year's party. And the Orbachs were there too, this family. So they seemed to gather on one table. And he said, well in the long run, I'm sure we are related.

Right.

We are spending together--

Because they were survivors too.

Yeah they were survivors too. And one man said, well, I'm sure in the long run, somehow, we are. Anyway the Jews know the Jews are related, especially we have the same name. This is even more closer. So they're always in contact.

What was Uncle Pinchas' condition then? I mean he had been--

After liberation?

Yeah. Was he sick?

Well, no. He wasn't sick. He told me when he was liberated, he didn't know they were liberated. He told me that during his being in Auschwitz, it's hard to explain, but one time he became sick on typhus.

And there was there this room, where all those sick, they took him there. He could sleep on a wooden board, and they left him there. And he didn't know. The way he remembered when he became sick, and whoever was strong enough to overcome, survived. And who didn't, died. And most of them died. But anyway he became, he was unconscious he said maybe for two months. He couldn't understand because when he gained consciousness, he asked what time it is. What day?

And he realized that for the last past two months, he didn't know about anything.

So that when he became conscious, he was already liberated.

No, no. He wasn't liberated. But he became to gain strength. I don't know how much he went down. And finally he went back to work. But he remained very weak all the time. So suddenly, he said when he was there, he saw the gate is open and Jews go out. So he said, what's happening? They said, we're liberated.

So he began to go too. He was so weak. He went on all fours on his hand and on his knees. This way he was crawling. And a Jew saw him coming. He said, why don't you go-- don't you see there away is a truck with American soldiers, and giving out food. Don't you see this? And he looked up. And he saw it. And he somehow managed to crawl there, to come crawling to this truck. And when he come by, a different Russian gives meat conserves. The American gave only cans of milk, and big bars of chocolate, which gives quick strength and it's easy to digest.

So they gave him I can of milk, and a big bar of chocolate. And he ate this. And when he ate this, he asks for another one. And they give him another kind of milk and another those chocolate. And when he finished the second portion, he said he was like a new man.



Really?

He felt stronger. He got up. And he began to walk. And he wasn't hungry anymore. But he was there for a few more weeks because he still wasn't strong enough to try to go to Sosnowiec. But after, I don't know, a week or two when he gained more strength, he came to Sosnowiec.

Right, so once you and your brother got back together?

Once you got together, we went to Sosnowiec. And where we lived in the beginning with those Bitners. And then we rent a home of our own. And I began-- we were living there for about-- we were there for about until about the fall of 1946. And--

So you were there for over a year?

No. Not over a year. Uncle Pinchas came back about June, I think of 1945. And we left Poland sometimes in the spring of 1946. We were there just the end of the summer through the winter, about almost a year, not quite a year.

So you were there in Sosnowiec until how long?

We left Poland, it was in the late spring.

So when you left Poland, when you left Sosnowiec, you left Poland?

Left Poland, complete. Yes. And we left on--

And what did you do until then?

We were dealing on black market.

In leather goods?

You have to have something.

Yeah, right.

In leather goods?

Yeah, I went to Radom by the train. And I was dressed in the same boots like a farmer girl. And I didn't look like Jew.

Let me ask you did you. Did you know at that point? Did you begin to realize about the massive effort about and killing Jews? I mean was that when you found out about the--

Oh, we know about the killings, because I know how they made the pogrom in Kielce.

Yeah, but when did you find out about-- is that when you began to [CROSS TALK]?

Yeah, oh we knew then what happened.

Did you know about the gas, about the ovens?

Yes, I told you, I find it out when I was in the hidden place. That I was in the hidden place, the man there told me this. They somehow they spoke with somebody who managed to escape from there. Between hundreds or thousands, one escaped who was left to help sorting the clothes. He escaped I think by hiding in between the clothes, and somehow he

escaped. I don't know.

Some people went to DP camps, right?

Well, after the war, they formed those DP camps, not in Poland, in Germany. This was from the United States government.

OK.

And a DP camp was like they took a section in a town, like I was in Stuttgart. They took a section of a town, and they made a DP camp. The Jews, and any survivor who came back got a home in this DP camp. When I came to Germany, I didn't want in Stuttgart. We went. There was like several homes like on a little mountain. And we were there. This was a DP camp. I don't know, it was before a German place for soldiers, whatever. We were living there.

I was there for several months. And there came quite often trucks with food.

That was in the spring of 1946?

The spring and the summer of 1946.

OK, well what made you decide-- when did you meet dad?

Well, I met dad right after we came back to Sosnowiec.

So when you--

With my brother.

You and Uncle Pinchas were living in Sosnowiec. Dad was living in Sosnowiec too?

Yeah, yeah.

And this was in--

This was in 1945.

Right. And that's when you, dad and you, I mean, how did you get together?

Well, my brother wasn't the same.

When did you marry dad?

I married your dad I think about 1948 in Germany, Stuttgart.

But so when you were in--

Yeah, we left Poland, I left Poland with my brother. Your father left separately. So you weren't a couple then?

No, no. No, we knew each other. But--

And you met again in Stuttgart?

In Stuttgart, in a way, we was in touch all the time. And he went to the same camp where he went. We were always at the same place. And my brother began to, in Germany, we were dealing on the black market too, always together in

partnership. You understand?

But we wasn't married until about-- I don't really remember exactly what time it was. But it was I think at the beginning was 1948, or maybe 1949, or 1948. I do not remember exactly what year.

And what were the circumstances that caused you to leave Poland and go to Germany?

We didn't want to be in Poland. We couldn't--