--had done it on tape but not on--

[BACKGROUND NOISES]

No, I haven't done it.

OK.

--who I'm interviewing, and then I'll start with some questions.

OK.

This is an interview with Sara Kohane for the Oral Documentation Project of the Holocaust Center of Greater Pittsburgh by Rosalind Kent at 10:00 AM on April 25, 1990, at the Holocaust Center of Greater Pittsburgh.

Mrs. Kohane, let's start with a few questions about your early years, what you remember in your hometown about your family, siblings, education, this kind of thing.

All right.

You want to know before the war, before the war started?

Sure. Your earliest memories, really.

Oh, my-- I was a little girl.

Yes.

Well, we had average Jewish home. We're having three children-- two daughters, one son.

Where were you in order?

I was the youngest. I went to school every day. And--

What kind of school?

Well, my last was gymnasium. I started gymnasium. I finished public school, which was a unusual public school promotion, from what I understand from Poland It was a public school which did not-- the children did not go to school on Saturday. It was only for Jewish children. Only Jewish children went there.

We did not have the Catholic prayer, which other schools had. And we had Hebrew-- or, what they called at that time, religion-- once or twice a week for a short period.

And this was a public school.

This was a public school, yes.

Which town--

It was in Wilno.

In Wilno.

The number of the public school was number 38. And after that, I went to a gymnasium, to [? Och's ?] gymnasium. We had two gymnasiums. We had more. We had Hebrew gymnasiums too.

But this was-- at the time I went it was already the war years, when Russia invaded that part of Poland. And the gymnasium, the school, the classes have been conducted in Yiddish. And this is when I really learned Yiddish. Till then, I spoke most of the time Polish.

I understood Yiddish. My parents used to speak Yiddish to us. But we as children prefer to speak Polish.

Was this a Jewish neighborhood you were living in?

I lived in the center of the city, which was not-- you would not call this specifically a Jewish neighborhood. But we had Jewish neighbors down the street, and things like that in them. I don't know what you call that. Like the courtyard where the homes have been. We have been the only Jews in that courtyard.

But two doors down, and stores around have been Jewish. The street was quite well known because it was in the center of the city. It was across the street from the Rathaus. And with many--

The Rathaus is a local government.

Yes, yes. And it was very close to the famous Ostra Brama, which was where the religious-- this is known-- Ostra-- Matka Boska, Ostra Bramska is known in Poland. It's like the two centers, which one is in, I think, Czestochowa and one was in Wilno, or the famous-- the Mother, Mother Mary, where you could pass that street and see--

Yes, we're in the-- I want say in the lower part, when the Pilsudski died, which was the Marshal of Poland-- I don't know what you call it in English-- his heart was laid there. And--

It was a Catholic center of some sort?

This was the religious center. This is from where pilgrims used to come from Poland there to pray for miracles to the Holy Mother, and things like that, where you used to pass that street. It was like a narrow street. People used to kneel on the street.

And I had very bad feelings many times when I had to pass there that I didn't feel--

And then you were not kneeling.

And as a child, I always thought that everybody looks at me and sees that I don't kneel there.

You were uncomfortable. [LAUGHS]

That's right. And--

And still, even though you lived in this sort of area, your school was a Jewish school.

Yes, the school was on the other side. It was a sense-- a Jewish school only in that sense, that we did not say the Catholic prayers. Otherwise, it was a school like any other school there.

And we had the Hebrew, the religion, the Old Testament taught, which I suppose the other schools didn't, which I don't really know why. I have never attended another one.

You and your brother and sister went to the same school?

My sister went to that school at one time. My brother went to a Hebrew school, Ezra school. I still have a picture of him

in a cap from that school. And my sister started also in a Hebrew kindergarten.

So you had religious training.

I started already in that school because the financial situation changed. And those other schools, where my brother and sister went, [INAUDIBLE] was private, which you had to pay for. When I started, I started in public because that was free. And the financial situation changed. Where my father worked before, the job became nonexistent anymore. And he had to change trades.

What was your father's trade?

It was an unusual occupation. He was a forester when I was born. And later on, I suppose-- I don't know at what age. I must have been quite young. When the forests either disappeared. They simply, they cut them down, or some burned down.

Was the forest near where you were living, where he went to work.

That I don't know exactly. I remember that we used to go in the summer on vacations, certain or we call vacation, into the country, which was much closer, where he probably worked. But that had to change. He had to do some other things later on for a living, which probably haven't been as profitable.

Was your mother-- your mother was a homemaker?

A homemaker, yes. My mother never worked, not at the time, since I don't recall that she ever told me. Maybe as a young girl she did. But not after she was married.

Where were your mother and father from?

My mother was from Wilno. My father was born in [NON-ENGLISH], which is a small town very close to Wilno.

Is Wilno what is known today as Vilnius?

Vilnius. Yes. This is the very much-talked Vilnius today. When I was born, it was part of Poland. Later on, in '39, when the war broke out, Germany occupied half of Poland and Russia occupied the other half. Western part, Germany took over till the Vistula. And the Eastern part, Russia occupied. And Wilno became a Russian-- a part of Russia.

Russia?

Yes. [CROSS TALK].

Let's go back to your father. Your father was from?

[PLACE NAME].

Where is that?

This is a small town not far from Wilno. I don't know how many kilometers, but it's not far. And my mother was from Wilno, as far as I know.

Then did you have family nearby?

Yes, we had family. My father had a brother and a sister in Wilno. He had some others which I didn't know, from what I heard, probably somewhere else, in Russia or so. But he had a brother and a sister in Wilno. My mother had two brothers, one sister in Wilno too.

And we had grandparents. I recall the funeral of my mother's father, which was, I remember, a casket at that time. There was no funeral homes. Yes, it was in the house, in the home, which was at my uncle's, my cousin. who is-- one of my cousins, who is still alive in Israel. And I remember the funeral of my--

This was my mother's father. My mother's mother I never knew. She passed away very young, I remember. My mother told me that she was quite young when her mother passed away.

My other grandparents, I knew my grandmother from my father's side, whom I remember when she passed away. And I think this was the first time I went to a cemetery. I didn't go when my first grandfather-- I was very young then. To that grandmother's funeral I went to the cemetery.

But that grandfather I don't remember. I remember his picture, a big picture hanging on a wall.

Did you have a home or an apartment in Wilno?

This was a apartment. It was not a home. In the city, I would say, not many people had a home. People owned businesses. But particularly because in the city, there haven't been single houses. It was like a courtyard, where there have been apartments.

I don't know. Maybe some people owned. But I know that we paid rent.

And you were comfortable.

Yes. We have been very, very--

[CROSS TALK] comfortable living.

Yes. Middle class, middle class living. We haven't been rich, what you would call. But we haven't been poor either. Comparison, I know some children in school who really, parents struggled. And then I know some who didn't, who have been much wealthier than ours, who have been professionals, and who made a much better living.

But I never lacked in the daily necessities. What, as a child, how much did I need? I mean, my needs haven't been so great.

Was it a religious household?

Till '39, till 1939, I would not say a religious household, what you consider in this country. My father never wore any-- always wore a suit, modern, shaven. I don't remember if he always wore a hat or not.

But I remember my brother laying tefillin. I can't remember my father. Maybe my father too. I know that he attended synagogue on Saturday-- not every day, but on Saturday.

He was not overly pious, because I remember some-- I remember a uncle whom I many times refer to my cousin in Israel that I never knew his father, because any time I came to their home, he always had the prayer shawl over his head.

You never saw him. [LAUGHS]

I never saw his head. And he never-- you haven't been allowed to talk to him when he was praying. So my father was not--

Not quite that pious.

Not quite that much. Yes. But it was-- my mother--

You were observant.

My mother kept a kosher--

Shabbat.

Shabbat was observed. Yes, Shabbat and holidays. But the three time a day praying and so, I don't recall. I have to say, the prayers, I don't recall.

But we knew very well about the holidays and things like that. In '39, of course, everything changed.

Yes. You were born--

In Wilno in 1927.

In 1927. Were you born at home?

This I don't know. That I don't know. That's interesting that I never-- well, I never inquired.

Oh, just [CROSS TALK].

I never inquired. I really can't recall how children have been born.

There was a big hospital, I remember. But how children had been born at that time, I don't remember.

Were your friends mostly Jewish friends?

Yes. Yes. My girlfriends have all been from school, and these have been Jewish children. Boy, our family had very good relations with Christians. My mother was very liked in that block, because she had blond hair and blue eyes. And she was very typical--

Not typical.

Not typical Jewish, which helped her in the beginning of the war. She used to stand in lines for Christians to obtain some bread, not being recognized as a Jewess.

What was your maiden name, Mrs--

My maiden name is Pruchno-- P-R-U-C-H-N-O, which is not a usual name.

Does it have a special Polish meaning?

Yes, but from what I understand, when I came to this country, I had an uncle. My father's oldest brother ran away probably as a young child. At that time, they conscripted young boys to the Russian army, and he left home at a very early age and came to this country.

And he told me that that name-- I ask him, from where did that name originate, because it's not a Jewish name. It's really-- and he said, it comes from Hebrew. And in Hebrew, it meant "beautiful fruit." So this was my maiden name.

My uncle had a different name, because running away, he came to this country on his mother's maiden name.

When were you first aware of antisemitism? Was there any antisemitism in your--

Yes, there was. I was aware. I was aware as a child. I was aware of antisemitism, because there had been some Christian holidays. There have been some times when-- can I say things in Polish?

Give us an explanation when you say Polish so that we will understand.

I must have been 10 or 11, where I witnessed, standing in the entrance to our apartment building, a young man. This had been university students who wore caps with a fur end. And they had a certain name I can't recall right now. And they ran in the street. And they yelled, [SPEAKING POLISH], which means, hit Jews, or--

Beat the Jews.

Beat up-- beat up Jews.

Was there a university nearby?

Yes, there was a famous university, University [NON-ENGLISH]. Yes. It was a quite-known university in Poland. From what I understand-- I have never been to the university-- but Jews had to sit in the back rows, in the last two or three rows.

But they were permitted to go.

A few were selected. Not everybody. Just a few, a few Jews.

And these were some, obviously, some of the non-Jewish university students that said this.

Yes, yes, yes. I ran in the street. I have sort of the image of them. And at other times, when there had been Christian holidays, you could hear in the streets, especially when you, as people know, Poles like to drink. And when people are drunk, of course, they do many things which maybe some of them wouldn't have done otherwise. But I know that the Jews have been beaten up in the streets, in the streets.

Even in those days, you remember.

In those days.

You were a young girl.

Exactly. Certainly. I was a young child. I was aware. I was aware of antisemitism.

And I would say that my mind started working that way. This is why maybe we did not want to speak Yiddish. When our parents spoke Yiddish to us, we answered in Polish, most-- many times, because being a child, I realized that it's easier to live in that society, and not to present your--

Not to be too obvious.

Too obvious Jewish. That's right. I realized it very well.

And from what I know is the principal of our public school was a baptized Jew, Jewess. This is how she became to be a principal of that public school.

Because as a Jew she would never have made it.

No, she would not. She would not. Maybe in a Jewish-- like we had Tarbut schools.

What does that mean?

Tarbut is-- I don't know what the word means in Hebrew. But these have been Hebrew-speaking schools, and which still exist now in some, I think, even in this country. And yes. This is--

So you were very much aware of antisemitism.

Very much, yes, yes.

Did you find this in your schools. Your brother, your sister ever talk about these things?

No, that I can say I didn't-- I can't recall. My brother was much older than me. My brother was 11 years older than me.

11. And your sister?

My sister is about-- my sister is still alive, and she is four, four and a half years older than me. So there was quite a difference between us. We did not, at home, associate with the same children. Of course, she was already becoming a young lady where I was still a child. My brother was already grown.

And my relationship with my sister was not the best. Being siblings, we always had--

Disagreements.

Disagreements, yes. But with my brother, I got along very well.

Among your friends, did you find any antisemitism?

As I say, I mostly associated with Jewish children.

But you didn't encounter it at school.

I couldn't. There have been Jewish children. I would say that I think that the majority of the teachers have-- not the majority. From what I recall, most of my teachers have been Jewish.

I see. I see. And in the neighborhood itself, among neighbors--

In the neighborhood, you could hear remarks. And so if we-- our family was very liked-- especially my mother was very liked. But you-- and my brother used to play many times as a child with what you would call here a janitor's son, the one who took care on that apartment building. They had a son the same age as boys. I know they ran around downstairs, and played together. What the remarks have been between them, I don't know.

And I know there was antisemitism. It was part of life. And everybody knew that. But you made do the best with it.

When did you first become aware that there was a war, that th8ere was a problem? Do you remember how old you might have been?

Well, it depends what-- which war are you talking about, see? The invasion of the Russians was peaceful.

Yes. And that was in what year?

In '39, 1939, when the Germans occupied the Western part of Poland. That was, to my recollection, peaceful. There haven't-- people haven't been hurt.

Were you affected, directly affected with that in some way?

Certainly. The amount of food became much scarcer. First, we had-- everybody start hoarding things in anticipation that there things won't be. But we had enough of-- we had enough of everything at that time.

Of course, the Russians just stayed with us for a year. In 1940, they turned over Wilno, which is now Vilnius to the Lithuanians, which became the capital of Lithuania.

During that year, was there contact with the Russians that you were aware of?

I suppose. They sent in many troops. And they-- many Russians start coming, shopping, because we had abundance of many things. And they used to shop.

And we used to speak to the-- mostly these have been military people from-- with their families, I suppose, some, when they came in. But they have been very congenial, very friendly. I mean, I such, had no problem.

My family, we haven't been any-- we didn't have any connections with any political-- we had no political--

So you were not strongly affected at that time.

No, at that time, if they would stay, they right away-- I went to school. I went to gymnasium. Of course, I learned everything in Yiddish. But there was no problem.

But you were about 12 in 1939, when this was happening.

Right, right.

Your brother was a good deal older.

Yes, my brother--

And how was he affected with this?

My brother was in different situation. My brother already served at that time in the Polish army. I can't recall how he-- if the army fell apart, or how he came back home. He came back home.

And then he left. He got a position in another city. He was, by training, a radio engineer, and he knew how to work on a radio station. He knew how to build a radio station.

Where did he get his training? Do you remember?

In Wilno. It was called polytechnikum, which is a-- I would say--

Polytech.

Yeah, a technical school. And he left. So he was not with us at that time.

My sister went to a trade school. She wanted to become a dressmaker. She did not specifically care for continuing to study. She was never-- she was a pretty good student, but not overly interested.

She was then about 16 or 17.

Yes, she was already in a trade school.

And you were still in school.

I was still in school. My dream was to pursue--

Education.

--education, and to-- at the time I dreamed of a career in health, in whatever I could achieve.

And what followed '40, 1940, after the Russians had left. They turned over Wilno to the Lithuanians.

Well, they did not leave, but the territory turned over Vilnius to the Lithuanians, which was also not bad at that time. Of course, we had-- the Lithuanians are very nationalistic, and everything became-- we had to speak in Lithuanian, which we didn't know. Otherwise, if you asked a policeman on the street something in Polish, he would not answer.

Or they spoke Polish. Most of them spoke. They spoke Polish. But they would not answer in Polish. You have to speak--

Was there a great difference in the languages [CROSS TALK].

Yes, yes.

Very different.

Yes, very different. Very different. And it was quite hard to learn. But we did. A little, we did.

All right. Then what--

And then came-- and then came '41, which took a couple of days.

And what-- can you describe what was going on in your town?

Well, we heard the bombs. They start the--

Was there a warning about this beforehand? Did you have some--

No. Well, from what you're-- I don't recall much. But I know that, you see, I think, from what I recall, Russia had a pact with Germany. Germany is not going to attack Russia. And this was, from what I recall, it was very surprising to the Russian troops too.

We did not see the Russian troops in the city as such, but they have been on the outskirts. They had barracks and things like that.

Was there a newspaper that you could read about what was going on in the outside world?

At that time, I suppose yes. I can't recall exactly, but we had newspapers, certainly, till 41.

And was there talk in your home, at home?

I don't recall much, but we didn't really know what was going on in that part. I personally didn't know what was going on in that part of Poland, which was occupied by the Germans, where the Jews already suffered.

Because at that time, we still could run. We could have run to Russia. If we would have made it or not, I don't know, because the German troops, once they-- from what I recall, it was just a couple days of bombing which I-- we lived--

Wilno was bombed?

Wilno was bombed-- not heavily by the Germans. But there have been some bombing on the outskirts. And so we used to hear the boom, boom, booms from the bombs. And just a couple days, and the Germans came in.

The troops actually came into the city.

Yeah, came into the city. You could see them coming, with the armor going by.

And the public was not informed as to what they should be doing, what they should not be doing?

Well, then, of course, right away, they gave out some regulations and somehow to-- the public has to behave, which I don't remember, which I was saying.

What I do remember is, which I can't say for sure, I remember that there came a rumor that a Jew shot at a German. For that, they're going to hang 10 Jews. And this, from what, looking back now, as this was their tactic, to submit the population right away to warn the population how to be, and what is coming. Of course, I was a child. I didn't realize much. This was the beginning.

Then, of course--

And did this actually happen? I haven't seen it.

You heard a rumor.

Yes. This is what is in my mind, what I remember.

And then-- I can't say when; I don't remember, again-- Jewish men, the men still went out into the streets. And so about after a couple of weeks-- I can't recall exactly the time--

Following the occupations.

Yes.

Where were the troops. Where were they located in relation to where you were living?

Well, you could see some of them walking in the streets. Where they have been located, I don't know, because I stayed already inside. My mother would not let me leave the house.

You were not going to school.

Oh, no. There was no school.

That was finished.

That was finished. It was everything was finished. It was already a rationing of bread. The only person who used to go out to get bread was my mother because she did not look Jewish, as I said.

Was your father still going out of the house to do his work.

My father was not with us already.

He was not with you.

He was not with us. My father was warned from somebody, which I don't know till this day, that he is going to be shot, that he is going to be-- that somebody is looking for him, that somebody had a grudge on him. And my father

disappeared. Yes.

A local person had a grudge, or someone--

A local person. A local person. A Pole or so. Somebody had a grudge on him. And he disappeared.

As far as you know--

Oh, yes, my father wound up in Russia. Yes.

Your mother knew where he was.

My mother did not know where he was. One day he did not come home, and that was it.

But she knew what was going on.

Yes, she knew what was going on. In fact, they came. They came looking for him. Yes, they came looking for him.

These were Polish people? Poles?

I suppose so. I suppose so.

And your brother was already not at home either.

My brother was not at home. That's right. My brother was in-- the city is called Lida-- Lida. He worked on a radio station there. And he had a chance, see?

When the Russians gave back Wilno to the Lithuanians, Wilno became Lithuanian. But Lida, which my brother was, was still remained Russia, under Russian-- under occupation. And he had the chance, from the radio station, to leave with a truck for Russia. They took their employees, tried to evacuate them.

But he had, in the apartment where he lived, he had a pair of leather boots. And he did not want to leave the leather boots, because this was a substantial part of your attire. So he went back to get the boots.

When he came back, those people-- the truck left, and he was left. And he started to walk, and arrive, and get himself back to Wilno. And he came back to Wilno.

But your father was gone.

My father was gone, but my brother, he returned, Yes.

And in Wilno at that time, males started disappearing. The Jewish males started disappearing from the streets. That the rumor was that they're being taken to work. They would ask people walking the streets-- I don't know who it was-- Poles or Poles with Germans-- who you are or for your documents. And this way, I lost the majority of my cousins, young men, several young men.

They were just picked up and taken away.

Picked up from the street and taken somewhere. We never heard of them again.

You never heard--

Never, never. Of course, later on, we knew that they had been shot behind the city somewhere.

You mean they had been picked up to be shot.

Yes, because they never arrived anywhere. There was no trace of them again.

And then, I cannot-- and that was going on for a short time.

This was in '41, '42.

This was in '41 in Wilno. And very shortly, they created ghettos. They created the ghettos in Wilno.

So you are at home now with your mother.

Right. And my sister.

And your sister.

And my brother. My brother came [CROSS TALK].

Yes. when all of this is going on.

Yes, yes.

And he is concerned about his being picked up also.

My brother, no, not that much. I don't know. As I say, somebody had a grudge on my father. But my brother came back.

But they were not looking for him as a young Jewish male to remove him, your brother.

You mean my brother? No, no. The Germans created two ghettos in Wilno. And the Lithuanian police came to each apartment building and asked the janitor about the Jewish families, and came up to our apartment. And told us--

So everybody was cooperating with the Germans.

Oh, certainly.

So Lithuanian police.

Lithuanians.

Your janitor was--

Everybody. The Poles and the Lithuanians very much. Very much.

What was the talk at home with your mother, and your sister, and your brother, when these things were going on? Do you recall this?

I don't recall the talk. It was a worrisome time. You did not know what your future is. You did not know what will happen to you tomorrow.

You still had food.

We still had food for the home. Yes, we had food in there in the-- and we had some food in the house. And as I say, my mother, I acquired, in the beginning, she went several times and stood in the lines with Poles. But then she didn't want to do that anymore. She was afraid.

So the janitor was asked about who the Jewish families are.

Are. And they came up to our apartment. We have been the only family in that complex. And they told us to pack, like a school bag.

And luckily, from our apartment building, we could see across the street a gate being made and that was a gate to a ghetto. Some people, it really, at that time, it depended on your location, where you lived. Some people lived in the part of the city which was closer to a prison. Those Jews have been taken right away to the prison yard there.

And that became the ghetto over there.

To the prison yard. And they didn't-- these Jews disappeared. They have been shot.

The people who lived closer in the city, closer, where they created two ghettos, the ghettos, have been taken to the ghetto, to the ghettos.

There was no other reason for this distinction, who went to the prison, except they lived near there.

No, just the location.

And you lived near the ghetto.

Yes, which they did not want to bother taking people for farther distance from. We lived closer to the ghetto, we got into the ghetto.

Left your home.

We left our home. We left everything.

And there are four of you now-- your sister, mother, and brother.

Yes. My brother was in the ghetto already. He was from the street.

They picked him up.

Yes.

And the rest of the family, what were you hearing about the rest of the family?

The rest of the family, when we came to the ghetto, we met my mother's sister and her family. We met my mother's brother, who was a single man. And I think that we met my brother's father, and his family were still alive. Yes. And this was--

Your brother's--

My father's brother.

Your father's brother.

Yes. The rest of the uncles or so, I don't know. I don't know.

Grandparents, older people?

Well, grandparents we did not have. We didn't-- I did not have any grandparents anymore.

Your neighbors? People from the neighborhood?

Yes, yes. Some people from the neighborhood too. Everybody was herded into that ghetto.

Was there any kind of resistance--

At that time?

--at the synagogue or in-- was this--

At that time--

--in the city hall?

--there was no resistance, as far as I know, because the people did not know yet what their future was. You see, people's mind tends to work that they don't want to think bad things.

Besides, of course I was a child yet. I didn't know the political situation. But let's say, as a child, my mother used to tell me about the First World War. And Wilno was at that time occupied by the Germans too. And there was no problem. The civilian population has never been hurt in any way.

So this was my recollections and this was my way of thinking. I mean, why-- I'm not a soldier. I'm not on the front. I'm not in the army or anything. Why should we be hurt?

And you see, I am sure that maybe there have been some people who knew what was going on on the other part of Poland where the Germans occupied already for two years. But I personally didn't.

Yes. And your non-Jewish neighbors, nobody tried to help during this period?

You see--

You were taken from your home?

Just a minute. My mother, in anticipation of that, tried to-- my mother had some clothes, which she considered more valuable, with a fur color and things like that.

In our apartment building, there was a small factory of candles for churches run by nuns. Took in very nice people, and I spent many pleasant hours there sitting and watching how they make wax candles, how it's being dipped. And they liked us very much. And of course, they liked my mother very much.

And my mother tried to get some things done through them. But she couldn't, because the janitor was watching our apartment, because he knew that this will be his after we leave.

You mean, your mother was trying to save some--

Save some things, because at that time, you still thought that this is only temporary, that you're going to come soon back to your home. So she really couldn't save anything.

But of course, I'm jumping the gun now. I'm going. Later on, one time from the ghetto, I took off the Star of David, which we all wore. And I got to that apartment complex where we lived. And I got to that janitor's apartment. And I could see, on the walls, all our kitchen things.

He had taken it.

Oh, certainly, certainly. And at that time I got to the nuns, and they gave me a piece of bread, and they gave me a bowl of soup. But they have been very scared. I could see they have been very nervous when I stopped there.

This was sometime after [INAUDIBLE].

That was already when I was in the ghetto, one time, when I went out to work.

What were conditions in the ghetto?

The conditions in the ghetto, when we got in into the ghetto, have been very-- what should I say-- congested, because you had four families in one room.

This was a building?

The ghetto? The ghetto was several streets. Several streets closed up with gates where it had-- where they wanted to separate the ghetto from the general-- from the rest of the city. There have been, I think, two gates. But mostly the one gate was used for people to go out to work and to come back.

And that gate was always controlled by, most of the time either some Germans stood there at the gate, or some Lithuanians. There was also Jewish police in the ghetto. There was a Jewish-- a regular government, a Jewish government in the ghetto.

In the ghetto.

In the ghetto, yes. There is a book here on one of your shelves, which describes the Wilno Ghetto in detail, quite to--

Exactly the way you remember.

Exactly the way I remember it. I read the book, and I wanted to read the book to see if it's really true, because it was written, I think by Dawidowicz, which--

Lucy Dawidowicz?

Yes, which was not a-- which is not from Wilno. She just gathered some sources and described it. And it's quite--

Accurate.

--accurate.

These were people-- they permitted people to leave the ghetto to go to work.

Yes.

To work for the Germans or--

To work for-- to work. Whatever. People worked. Like my brother worked at one time, they had to have trucks fixed. They had to have armor fixed. They had to have-- when I went out of the ghetto, he had, more or less, a job where he went every day to the same job for a certain period of time, till the job, let's say, finished.

Working for the Germans, this was?

Working for the Germans. I worked going to the airport, where we had to dig the ground for whatever. I don't know.

They laid lines or whatever they wanted to build there.

You were digging.

Digging, digging the earth, three women standing below having to pick up a heavy shovel, putting the earth into a little-- what do you call that? Caboose, like, which was going down on a railroad.

Your sister was doing this too?

My sister was doing that too.

You were about 14, 15.

Yes, yes, yes.

And this was watched over by--

It was watched over by Germans--

--German troops?

Yes, most of the time by Germans. Yes.

What was the treatment?

What was the treatment? It depends who was on watch that day. If it was somebody who had-- still had some humanity in him, everybody had to work, but you haven't been hit. If it was somebody who had a mean streak in him, you could expect whatever he wanted to do.

They had the right to do whatever they wanted, to hit you, certainly. I mean, they've always been in-- you're always in the wrong, so either you didn't work fast enough or you didn't work hard enough, or whatever.

Your mother?

My mother did not go out of the ghetto. My mother always stayed in the ghetto. See, in the ghetto have been two kinds of people-- legal people and un-- un--

Illegal.

--or illegal people. The legal people had a piece of paper--

[AUDIO TAPE STOPS]

--legal people have a piece of paper, which was called in German a Bescheinigung, which means certificate, or whatever you want to call it. That with that, you went out of the ghetto to work, that you worked in that place. The illegal people did not have that, and they did not work.

Who were these people that were not legal?

These have been people who went into the ghetto. They did not simply-- they did not give out that many certificates for people to go to work, you see.

So those illegal people did not leave the ghetto.

These people did, really, not exist, you see.

They used to be Jews as well.

These would have been the Jews, yes. But they supposed to not have been there, you see.

After a short time we have been in the ghetto, there was what they called a cleaning. They came one day in the morning. People went out to work. And the rest of the people who stayed have been peacefully called to the gates of the ghetto to come to go on trucks, that they are being taken to work somewhere else. There is not enough work here in the city for you. You're being taken somewhere else. And people went because conditions have been so bad, they figured we can work somewhere else, maybe it will be better.

But of course, these people disappeared. They have never been seen again.

And that happened. The first time, people went willingly, peacefully. Then we heard rumors in the ghetto, since people went out to ghetto, and-- from the ghetto. And they had connections with the Poles. And Poles said that they heard, some miles away from the city, shootings at night. And they would say, I know that there have been Jews killed there.

But of course people, did not want to believe that. This was the first time. Then, after some time, again they came. And people went. And that time, people did not go so willingly, already.

So they start rounding up people. And this is already, when they came into the ghetto, we knew they're coming to the ghetto. We have been illegal. And not only us. There have been many people illegal.

We had some friends in the same house where we lived, and middle aged man who said, I don't like the way people are being taken away. Let's hide. And in there--

You were in the ghetto when--

In the ghetto, in the house where we lived. When you went in, there was a little foyer. And let's say you went into the living room. And past the living room, there have been two doors, on the left and on the right.

In the living room, there was a big buffet. In Europe, they used to have very heavy, big buffets. He said, you know what? We'll take that one room, that door, and we'll close-- we'll conceal that door with that buffet. We'll push that buffet towards that door, against that door, and we'll all be there in that room behind that buffet. And we can do that buffet, whatever was there in the house.

So that you could live there. To be able to live in that room.

No, we just went into that room not thinking of just to hid, because we knew already that they're coming into the ghetto to pick up some people, and it's not good to go. It's not good to go.

We went into that room, maybe 30 people, with a small child.

And food?

Food, who doesn't have food? It was not of any concern.

And we hear the Germans. And mostly we heard the Lithuanians, drunk Lithuanians-- they used to give them a lot of whiskey before-- coming into-- going through the house, and talking, and moving furniture, and banging, and doing-- and then they left.

And we sat in that hiding place for three days without going out, without anything. That was one time. And then we did it once more. And the second time, the woman had to put a pillow over the child's mouth because the child starts crying.

So that was another experience.

Then I went to a third time of the same thing. And people, after that second time, they said that this place is not going to withstand anymore. It cannot withstand. That room had a balcony which was going outside into the court. And people said, everybody with some kind of a-- would see that there is something missing in that apartment. Where is the balcony?

So the third time we went up on the roof, usually between the house, between the roof, the ceiling and the roof, there is some space, like what you would call a--

Attic space.

Yes, attic space. Right. We went in. When we went in, we have been the last people. When we went in, we saw already the Lithuanian police coming through the court. And the man did not-- wanted originally to put something over that hole where we went in, but they didn't have the time anymore, because the police was already.

And they ran over roofs. They ran over apartments. They--

Looking for people.

Looking for people, yes. And two men stood at that hole when we went in. From what I remember, they said that we're not going to go-- at that time, we knew already what's going on, what's being done with people. Because after the second time, a woman came back to the ghetto two days after the people had been taken away.

And she said-- she came out outright, and she said, I have been on Ponary. Ponary is the place where they used to kill the Jews from Wilno. I have been in Ponary, and I have seen how they made people dig graves and would shoot them, tell them to run, and when they ran to the graves, they shoot them.

And she fell into a grave. She was only hurt in the arm. She was shot in the arm. She laid overnight in that grave, and she came out, and Poles hid her through the night, and she came the next day back into the ghetto.

But when she came back into the ghetto, the leadership in the ghetto, of course, knew what's going on. But they said, that woman is crazy.

This was Jewish leadership in the ghetto.

Yes, this was Jewish leadership in the ghetto. But the leadership in the ghetto, anybody who reads that book of Dawidowicz knows that Mr. [PERSONAL NAME] philosophy was to protect the ghetto as long and as much as he can. He will let them take some people as long as there are still people-- still people left. So it's better to save some than to have all gone.

And this woman who had been in the grave--

Yes, she came back, but she came back and she told her story to people who didn't know what--

What was happening.

--what was happening. So they had-- certainly they had to make her-- they had to make her story unbelievable, that she--

But we knew. We knew. I mean, especially-- I'll come back to that, that my family knew, because my brother, the Germans gave a order in the ghetto. They want to, for posterity, they want to preserve the city of Wilno in miniature. They wanted to make-- what do you call it? Like not only a plan, but build, really, the buildings and the whole city in miniature.

And they had a group of Jewish young men from the ghetto.

[SIREN]

These have been selected men, going down to the ghetto and taking measurements, and taking--

To reproduce.

To reproduce, yes, that. Of course, these young men, most of them brought in some armaments into the ghetto, which we didn't know, because we did have, in Wilno, the Wilno ghetto was connected with the partisan in the woods. And fortunately, my brother had to go to the woods. But he got sick, and he stayed in the ghetto.

And they tried. They knew that there was going to be a Final Solution, that the ghetto will be liquidated at one time. And they planned to put up resistance.

Who did? These were the--

The young people. These have been some young selected, some young.

And they were going to plan resistance.

Yes, to put up resistance. And they brought in those who could smuggle in--

Armaments.

--armaments into the ghetto. And he was one of them.

But the third time, as I say, when we hid up there, two men stood at that entrance, entrance, sort of we would call a hole. And they said that if there will be only two soldiers coming to that hole, they will try to kill them before they will take us.

And sitting in that hole, we could see the Lithuanian police watching on the roof and talking, drunk. They have been, because they always gave them to drink before.

Before they came to pick up people.

Pick people. And we heard them speaking. And one said to the other, we went there already. Let's go back. And they did not come to that spot, to the hole.

And we stayed three days, again, there. And then it quieted down. When the people-- see the people, they used to do it in the morning. The people who had their papers used to go out of the ghetto.

To go to work.

And then they-- to go to work. And then, after three days, the people back from work came back in. This was a means of making the ghetto smaller, making less people in the ghetto.

The second ghetto was liquidated already completely. They came one day, and liquidated that ghetto completely.

But they were still supplying the ghetto with food.

Yes, they have been supplying the ghetto with some food, of course. And unfortunately, all the time I have been in the ghetto, I was a illegal person in the ghetto.

Which meant you could get out of the ghetto.

Which meant that I did not have a paper, really, to get out of the ghetto. The few times I went out to work, that was when they came. And this have been groups of people which they would take just on daily work. These have not been people who had a more--

Regular.

--steady, regular place, or a regular work pattern. And my mother was very protective of me, especially. She did not let me out of her sight.

Were you all well? You and your sister, and brother, and mother were well during this period in the ghetto?

Well, I would say I was relatively well. My mother was very undernourished. My mother used to lie to us, and always, when we got some bread or something, she would say she's not hungry and always give it to us. She was very undernourished.

Of course, we have all been undernourished. My brother, in the beginning, the first year in the ghetto, used to be able, somehow yet, to accumulate some bread from when he was out, and so on, and bring us some, some little bit.

Of course, that was with a risk too, because when you came to the gate of the ghetto, you have been checked. They noticed that people are bringing in things into the ghetto. So people used to get beaten up at the entrance to the ghetto and taken away if they had food.

I remember that my sister, when she worked outside, was able to accumulate some potatoes. And she used to-- she wore a coat. She would put it between the lining in the coat on the bottom so it won't be seen. And she-- when she brought it in.

The first year in the ghetto, I would say, we didn't have enough to eat. But we still had some additional food. The second year was worse.

How long did you spend?

In the ghetto? Two years. I was in the ghetto two years, till they liquidated the ghetto in '43. They came. They closed up-- yes, they closed up the ghetto.

Who did that?

The Germans.

The Germans.

The Germans, the Lithuanians [INAUDIBLE] probably. And then they said that everybody has to go out, and they took us. They took us outside of the ghetto.

At that time, it was-- my brother came over to me and said goodbye. And he said-- I'll never forget that. My brother was also very protective of me in the ghetto. And if he had some extra food, it was I who got the first, anything.

He said, now everybody's on their own. Of course, at that time, I didn't know what it means.

They decided they could not-- they decided not to put the resistance up, because they did not have-- I don't know-- enough or whatever, for whatever reasons they did. But during the two years in the ghetto, they have been digging next to the sewage.

The people in the ghetto.

Some people. I was not aware of it. Being next to the sewage, a way out of the ghetto. [NON-ENGLISH], my brother, was one of them who went out from there and got into the partisan, into the woods.

And we have been taken behind the city to a open lodge, where they separated right away the man and the women. [INAUDIBLE] put that there. We sat through the night there.

The man, at the meantime, have been somewhere else. And I don't know. Some of the men, they took to-- they sent away to work. What they did with the rest, I don't know.

Us, the next day, they made the famous left and right, that there stood a--

A selection.

--official, a German official. And you have been told that you have to go. Well, we didn't know where we were going, of course. I and my mother-- my sister was not there anymore.

Where was your sister?

My sister also, as soon as we knew that the liquidation of the ghetto is, she disappeared. She disappeared. Well, I'll tell you about her later.

And we have been told that that selection, we have to go. Of course, people start jamming, pushing. I and my mother stayed behind in the back. We didn't know what's going on there.

But he came to that spot, where that German which told you here or there. And that was left or right. And of course, when it came to me and my mother, who was pushed to the left-- at that time, we didn't know that, of course-- the right was the side to leave. The left was the side for the people who have been killed.

They have a certain amount of people they probably wanted to get to take to use for work. When they have been filled, probably did it. And your fate was-- or the looks. I don't know. If you have malnutrition.

So on the left, of course, from what I have noticed right away, the people on the right have been put out in lines, standing in lines. The people on the left right away. And then the Lithuanians, drunk, the police with guns, bayonets and guns, pushed the people, pushed the people farther.

And somehow I got the feeling this is not good, that this is the end. And my few words of Lithuanian which I knew, I-- I don't know. The police pushed me.

I said to him, I'm young. I want to live. Let me through. Let me back. Let me through. Let me back. Shook his hand, no, no.

And I start pushing myself, pushing myself, until I came to that point where that German was standing and selecting, which was already almost finished. And when I came to that German, he pushed me back to the left. And he pushed me. I fell. I got up again, and I tried again. Because I knew. I knew exactly in my heart that this-- this is death.

And I tried three times like that to get myself to the other side, till he beat me up so badly that I fell unconscious. When I came back to myself, the selection was over. That German left.

And there was somebody else standing there. And I-- when I came back to myself, and I tried to run back there. And he looked at me. And he grabbed my chin like that, and gave me a push on the right side.

Where was your mother?

My mother.

Was on the other side. Gone.

Gone. And this was the road to my survival. If I wouldn't have made it then, I would not be here today.

From there, these people in those lines have been taken to the railroad station, put in yellow cars. And there were more. And the cattle cars start growing. Of course, people jammed one on top of the other, that if, after three days, the cars will stop, and they'll give us food and drink. And they're taking us somewhere, believe, even after three days we don't get food and drink, and we are destined there.

And after three days the train stopped. And they called two of each train have to go down to get some bread for that train. And people pushed me down. People have been afraid to go. And I was a child, of course. So they pushed me down.

I went down. And I hear my name being yelled from far away. I was black and blue, swollen from the beatings which I got before, swollen eyes. And Sara, Sara, my sister yelled. She was down from another car.

See, when, in the ghetto, when they knew-- we knew that liquidation is-- this is the end, her girlfriend from school said to her, who was left already all by herself. Her whole family was taken away at one time when they had a cleaning, because she had a paper to go out to work. And 95 people of her family all hid in one place in a cellar. And they came, and opened up the cellar, and took out everybody. And she was left all by herself.

So since they have been friends since childhood in the ghetto. They have been certainly friends too. And she said to her, you know what? Let's take off the Stars of David. Let's try to get out of the ghetto.

Her father was a jeweler before the war. That he left some trays of watches and rings with some Poles. Maybe if we can get there, to those Poles, maybe for appreciation for that, they will--

Because we knew at that time-- this was 1943-- that the German armies are not doing that well anymore. People who went out of the ghetto and worked with Poles, and so got the news that the German armies are not doing so well on the Russian front anymore, and they are retreating. And the war is not-- and they're not probably going to be victorious to Germans anymore. It's just a matter of time. So she said, maybe they will be able to hide themselves and survive.

But on the street, a-- I don't know, a Pole or a Lithuanian went over to them and pointed them out to German soldiers, but these are Jewesses. And they have been brought already to the train station right away. They haven't been at the selection.

So she yelled my name. But here was time already to go back into your--

Car.

--car. And she went into one, and I went into another. But after several days of traveling, we arrived in Latvia, in Kaiserwald. This was a concentration camp. And there I met my sister and her friends, and said, [PERSONAL NAME], we have been-- wherever we went, we have been together.

And Kaiserwald was a concentration camp. I don't know if it's a-- there was a crematorium or not. But we have been quite aware. I think that there was one. From Kaiserwald, we have been selected and sent somewhere else. And we wound up in a working camp, in a camp which did not have a crematorium on the premises.

This was Strassenhof. It was in Riga, in Latvia. There we worked for a year, almost a year. There have been some people taken away from there too. They came. And they called out names, and whose name they called--

That was it.

That was it. And after a year being there, the rest of us who survived there, after many beatings, and after many hardships, have been sent to Germany, to Stutthof.

Stutthof was a crematoria camp. In Stutthof, when we came, you could see people already who have been there for some time. Have that [INAUDIBLE]. In Stutthof, I did not, from my recollection, I did not think that I--

Of course, all the time, I never believed that I am going to survive, that we are going to survive, because it just-- it was not--

The conditions were so bad.

You could not think that, because they have been taking away people to be killed. And who was not killed was so degraded that you lost your will to live. You have never-- you know that everybody had a number, and you have never been called anything else. If they called you, they did it by the number. Or you have never been called anything else than verfluchte Juden, which means damned Jews. Always a whole day, and from the best. And those even who didn't hit you that much, this was the name. This was the-- you damn Jews, damn Jews, damn Jews, always.

And the conditions have not been for living. The conditions, the durations have been just plain rations to starve you.

And they conducted quite-- a quite well-organized psychological warfare, which make you feel so degraded that you did not want to leave. And once you came to that stage, in your mind, that it doesn't matter anymore. I'm not going to make it anyway. Then you didn't make it. Then forget it.

I have seen people left and right awfully dying by losing, in their mind, that we'll-- that I still have. Because in Stutthof, if you couldn't get up from your place where you laid, then they shot you on the spot. Or some have been taken to other barracks.

You saw this.

I saw this, yes. Others have been taken to other barracks, which they call the Krankenstube, which means the sick house. And from there have been taken to the crematorium.

So you had to work on your mind. You always had to work in your mind. You had to work on your mind. And a little bit of--

To live.

To make yourself want to live, because, now in there, once we came to Kaiserwald, our clothes was taken away. We have been given a dress, the striped dresses. It was only one dress, which I have for two years.

The lice which have been crawling on us, because if your body is malnutritioned, if you wear clothes which is never washed-- we did not have any undergarments. I had a coat. If you had been lucky, you got a coat which was long. Then it protected your [INAUDIBLE], your legs.

The shoes, I got a pair of shoes with wooden-- most of the people, with wooden soles which fell off from the shoes, which I kept together with strings to keep the bottom to the top.

In Strassenhof, there was an order. They cut off our hair. It was a blessing, and a-- I wouldn't say a curse, but it was a blessing in a way that the lice didn't have where to stay on. This was Strassenhof.

In Stutthof, after that year in Strassenhof, they sent us to Stutthof. Stutthof was a crematoria camp. There I worked, and people have been glad there to work, because otherwise you went off your mind. Either you stayed for days in rows

outside for punishment.

You have always been punished. No matter what, you have always been punished. For hours in rows outside in the cold, in the snow, in the wet. And there was no difference.

In the camps, usually, even in the working camps, when people went out to work at 6:00 in the morning, they had to get up at 4:00, and then they got some what they called coffee, dirty water, a little bit hot water in the morning, and to stay two hours outside till you went to work, because what-- it didn't matter to them. They sat inside in the warm rooms, and we stood outside till they counted us, you know, to work. We went out to work.

Well, anyway, in Stutthof, we have been some time. And we saw, as I'm telling you, have skeletons of people, women with mouth, black lips, black from under. This is when you're lacking certain vitamins. Your [INAUDIBLE] sets in.

And I worked on putting piles of shoes together. These have been people who had been burned, taken away the shows and their clothing. They saved everything. Nothing went--

To waste.

--went to waste, right. After some times, in Stutthof, they did take some people to work outside. Some people went away to work. But again, we have been-- when they came, and they called for people to work, we have been so afraid to go because we knew that there are crematoria, and there are-- before you went to work, what they called-- that was called delousing. They took you through showers, and you have been showered, and gave them different-- given different clothes, and have to go out with [INAUDIBLE].

And we have been so afraid, me and my sister, of that, because you never knew if they take you to work, or they just say they're taking you to work, and they're taking you there into-- where it's not going to be water. It's going to come out gas.

Anyway, the conditions have been so bad that one time somebody came and said that they need people to work on a farm. It was harvest time. And our friend, my sister's girlfriend, said, I don't care anymore. No matter what, I'm going, because we saw that we are going to starve there too.

And when she said she is going, and she went. When they called people, she went. And my sister, we have been so together all the time, didn't want to go. But somehow she said, let's go. And she pulled me, and we went. And I think we have been the last three. We went into that group.

And it was true, we went to a big farm. And we worked there for three months digging sugar beets-- pardon me-- which was very hard work. Sugar beets sit very deep in the soil, and it's very hard to get the root out, and you had to walk all day long, bend down to do that. But as bad as the conditions have been, it was paradise comparing to concentration camps.

Many people worked there at the farm. Poles worked there. People who have been taken from Poland-- this was in Germany-- to work. And of course, the Jews got the food last, after everybody else got, but it was still soup. And the portion of bread was better.

And we tried to, from the fields-- sugar beets are very hard to eat. They are very sweet. And with the stomach, with a malnourished person, you can kill yourself eating sugar beets.

But we did get some extra potatoes, which we, over the weekend, on Sunday, we had a half a day off, we somehow managed to do something with it, potatoes and some carrots and things like that, which have been really tremendous, because after three months, coming back to Stutthof, many of the girls which came with us at the same time have not been there anymore.

From Stutthof, they evacuated us later on to another camp. Praust. That was a small camp. And there we worked in

mainly construction at airfields, and saw barracks for soldiers and things. It was very hard there. It was very hard there. We had buried the--

What year was this?

--leadership.

Praust was already-- Praust was already the last. I have been freed in March '45. Praust must have been the very end of '44. I don't know. I can't recall anymore how long we have been in Praust. But just a month, not that long.

From Praust, they took us on a journey, which we heard that they were going to sink us in the ocean on a ship, because the Russians have been already coming close by. This is what the soldiers used to tell us.

The German soldiers.

The German soldiers who watched over us. From Praust, we walked. We had to walk. And at night, we stopped in shacks to sleep. We walked for days without food. People who couldn't walk, who stayed behind, have been shot on the spot. In the morning, when we stayed in a shack, whoever couldn't get up was shot on the spot. And that was going on for several days.

And they did not make to-- and this is actually what they wanted to do, get us to sink us. And after several days like that, my sister developed typhus. We had to drag her. Me and my friend used to drag her because she couldn't walk, so she wouldn't stay behind, because nobody wanted to be in the back, because we knew once you cannot walk as fast as the others, that this might be her end.

And after several days, one morning, after in the shack, we got up in the morning. There was nobody around us. No Germans around us.

They had left.

We went out. And the Russian-- we saw a few Russian armored vehicles. They told us, you're free. You can go wherever you want to and do whatever you want to, which we couldn't do much.

And this is how it was. This is only a capsule. I tell you the details of-- but this is the story of my life-- which I've never told my children.

Mrs. Kohane, would you want to tell more details of all of this. Would you be able to tell more?

You mean on a daily basis, what was going on a daily basis?

Yes, yes.

Right now I have enough.

[INAUDIBLE]

Have enough.

What are your feelings today about all this?

I feel [INAUDIBLE] that if I wouldn't go through it, I would not be able to comprehend it. It is impossible for a human person to comprehend such misery, such degradation, a human race, people with such a high culture--

I don't say that there is always-- and there always was, let's say, antisemitism. There was always people trying to feel

themselves better than others. But such degradation, such inhumanity is impossible to understand by a normal human being, that after all, I mean, these soldiers, they have been family people. They have families. They used to-- some in a better mood, that sometimes used to tell us that they can't wait to go back to their-- how could they? How could they? To stand and just--

I have seen in Strassenhof a man being stomped to death by the German commandeer just because he stood up to him and said something. The commandeer said something to him. And that man did not know yet the German beast. Answered back something to him, probably, maybe something but what he didn't-- the other one didn't like. He started beating him until he bat him to death.

And many, many cases, women, German women, have Polish women, sadists. Sadists beating, beating for nothing.

When we used to go to work in Riga, in Strassenhof, our girlfriend-- I don't know. One of the guards probably didn't like her looks or something, had-- I don't know what provoked him in her. But he always, whenever he passed her by, and they had those rubber-- what do you call those? Policemen.

To beat.

Policemen carry sticks. He always beat her over her head with a stick. She has a bump. She has a spot without hair here in the middle of her head somewhere. For nothing. She walked in the line like everybody else going to work.

I mean this, this is a little thing what I'm telling you. But I mean, unnecessary, punished-- constantly punished, constantly beaten, constantly denigrated. This was a policy. How could you just-- how can a human being just think of killing others? Why? Why? I don't say you have to be friends or you have to love or something. But to kill? To kill.

And it is just like at Yom Hashoah, this Sunday night.

The observance.

The observance. That man, from all the Yom Hashoahs which I attended, touched me most, this man. Like, he said, the degradation, the degradation of the human being was the most beastly thing. The starvation and all those other things could not accomplish that much as degradation.

You did not-- after all, I have been a child, that if I would have survived, maybe you would go on maybe another year. I wouldn't think of myself as a human being. You come to think of yourself that you don't deserve anything, that you don't deserve anything better.

Somehow, the normal way of living becomes something unrealistic to you. It's not coming to you anymore to be a human being.

You begin to think of yourself in those terms.

That's right. That's right. That's right. And this is the most what they accomplished.

So you see, my brother died in the partisan. They have been-- they went out on a mission, what they called. They had to destroy some things. And he was a very capable young man. They had one machine gun. He carried the machine gun.

Seven boys going back to their place in the woods. They had to pass by probably a German post or something. Not one thing, to trying not to have any contact with the Germans there.

They asked a farmer they saw going through a river-- and it was in the winter-- if the ice is hard. He said, yes, he just passed with a horse and body. And they start walking through that river. And he had a machine gun. I suppose he was more heavier than the others. The ice broke under him and he went under the ice.

And my only-- and this was three months before Wilno was freed by the Russians. My only consolation, is my brother did not have die from a German gun.

How did you find this out later?

Oh, I met people. I met people who have been with him. I just attended a dinner in Florida this winter where I have seen people who have been with him all the time.

So I mean, this is-- I think I told you enough. I could go on more and more. But I really think that somebody should tell, if they didn't-- I don't know; I have no way of knowing-- what a day was like in a concentration camp. What a day was like in the ghetto.

What a day was in the camp where you never knew, that you had no possessions-- nothing. That you have nothing. You did not possess anything. You just had a bowl for your soup. And that you never knew, if you left it in the camp and went out to work, you never knew if you're coming back to that camp. You had nothing. You didn't own anything. Nothing.

[CLAPBOARD]

Well, OK.

Yes, I feel you have a lot more to say.

I could. But--

You're not up to it.

No. I think I won't sleep tonight, but that's part-- goes with the territory, OK?