

I'm Sally Weinberg. Today, we are interviewing Betty Berliner, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. Betty, we left off in our last interview, we were talking about when you and your sister left your town, which was in July of 1942. Could you tell us what happened-- you and the family.

Yes. Yes. When my sister-- we opened the-- it was covered. And she--

What was covered?

The truck was covered. It was a huge truck. You can imagine how big it was that the Gestapo gave us a ladder to walk up on it. And when I walked in, there were many-- I mean, almost every Jew from town was there.

In the truck?

In the truck already. And the only one that was missing was my brother-in-law, who managed to escape. I don't know why-- how. Before this-- I have to put this in. Before-- the minute the Gestapo walked into our house, we got up. And my sister immediately says, put on two skirts, put on shoes. I was incoherent. I was so scared. She says, put on shoes. Put on the best shoes and two blouses.

And my mother-- we washed that day. And my mother went to the-- and took a lot of sheets and whatever she could. And the minute I was dressed, I darted out through the door. And I was running. And one of our neighbors that we lived all our-- I mean, constantly there, he-- because all the neighbors were there.

Jewish?

No, Pole.

Non-Jewish neighbors, Polish.

With the Gestapo, the whole neighbor was there.

You mean standing in the street?

Standing and watching-- and not even in the street, in front of the door. And I ran out. And he sort of came around. He says, ha, you want to run away? I says, yes, let me go, I mean, like I would talk to. He says, oh, no, I will not let you go you. You had a good life, long enough. I said, what are you saying?

He says, you are going back. And I did. I mean, probably, this was my lucky break-- later on, I realized. But at that moment, I came back. And I stood with my mother, and my sisters, and the children, and we went up on the truck. When I ran out, it was-- the sun began to come out.

Behind us-- in front of us was a car with Gestapo. And behind us was a-- which was escorted so that you couldn't run. However, in one-- at one time, there was a huge Jewish house. It used to be a bar and a big one, a beautiful house, right in the center of the city-- of the village.

When you say Jewish house, you mean Jewish people lived there?

Jewish people lived there. I mean, this was-- everybody was connected with every-- it was like-- the whole town was like family because there were so few. So the Gestapo car in the back of us stopped to give some orders to the people that were already going inside there, some other Gestapo or private people. I didn't have a chance to see. But I took a split second.

And at that moment, my sister said, you go. And she threw me out. And the road was there. And by the road were those

deep ditches. She threw me. And I jump there. And I covered. I just put myself down. And the Gestapo flew by.

And they were just going past the-- I picked up my head. I knew where I am. And I started to go towards the fields, not where the population was, but into the fields. And I succeeded. Nobody saw me. I went in. And the dew was so heavy that my skirt was right away-- I was wet because I went between-- it was still-- it wasn't harvest time yet. So I went where the highest wheat and all the grains would go so I can hide.

How old were you at this--

At that point, I wasn't even 15 yet. And I knew approximately the direction where to go to one of my sisters, the one that her son is with me. This was about 20 kilometers from where I was and maybe more. I didn't know that time. I knew the name. And I knew the direction. That was all I knew. And I started to walk. On the way going there, I knew there were certain villages that Jews were living there from all the time. They had farms. They had stores.

They had-- so when I passed by one, I was afraid. First, I surveyed if the Gestapo isn't there. I walked into one. And I walk him out. I said, look, we were surrounded and taken out from home. I don't know if it's going to happen here. But I want you to know that this is it.

So panic, naturally, right away, and right away, the mothers-- would you like to eat something? I said, no, I'll take a piece of bread with me or something. But I have to go. I have to go to go to my sister to alert her what happened here.

So I walked out. And I started to walk. It was a hot day. And I was hiding. I couldn't get-- I was trying to go with fields where there wasn't a low cut anything, but wherever-- so that nobody will spot me from far. And I managed to go. And around noon, there was growing wheat and corn, where I could easily hide between the corn. And I heard somebody walk.

So naturally, I sat down. And I heard-- I saw a woman walking with a little child. And the little girl asked the mother, naturally, in Polish. She says, Mother, why did Lajcia, which is like Leah, why did she cry so? She says, oh, don't ask. Something was wrong there. Let's go home.

So I realized, they talked about a Jewish child. And I-- naturally, I was sitting and hiding even tighter to the ground. And when they passed, they went away, there was a village. And I started to stir myself again away from the village, through the fields that I never in my life saw or was there.

And I sat down in one place. And I was so tired and exhausted. And I thought, I cannot fall asleep. Maybe somebody will come, and I won't see him or something. But I managed to sit there for a while. And then I started out again.

I knew the direction. It should be a church, where near that church, my sister-- would be my sister's house. And I saw the steeple from a church. And I said, this must be it. I mean, it has to be here. The sun started to go down. And I said, now, I'm much more safer, even for their sake, to come in into the house at night so that nobody will see me. And I saw the people going off the fields. And I saw the cows taken, going home from. And I started to stir myself towards the church steeple.

I came to my sister. I mean, I knew approximately. I didn't know because I was never there. She, too, moved from the city to a village, to a place where she felt she would be safer and easier-- food would be easier accessible to her. So I went there.

I looked at the church. And I knew around one way that there is going to be. And I came across. And I saw, this must be. When I opened the door, my sister was already dressed with the children. And my younger sister, who is now in Israel, she was with that sister because she had three little kids. So my mother said, OK, you be there so you can give her a hand. Because there was no way to get anybody.

And when I walked in there, my brother-in-law had already organized everything. He had them dressed. And he had places where they should go and start hiding. So when I walked in, when she saw me, the minute she saw me, she knew

what's what. And all she asked is-- she said, only you? I said, yes, only I am here. I don't know where they took them. I know, they talked about something.

But I don't know. I walked all day long in here. So my brother-in-law looked at me. He says, we have to put you in a place where nobody will know that you exist, which is going to be good for us. You going to be the contact. We will let where we are. You will know every name, every place so that in case of something, there won't be just nobody. But you will know what's going on.

He says, my sister is here. But she is going to be with us. But are you going to be on your own because nobody knows you. He went into a farmhouse. And he talked to somebody. He said, OK. He had over there probably 50% of all his worldly possessions dug under the house because they were very good sworn friends from way--

What did this brother-in-law do?

He had the--

Fabric?

--fabric store. And they took out. And they put everything under the house. They dug out holes and put them safely so that everything would be there when--

What kind of things did he put there?

Wool materials, like for suits, mostly expensive materials so that they can last and put in all kind of preparation so that they won't get spoiled if they're going to stay there, in wooden crates. And in the crates here, everything so that they stay whenever we need them.

And he said, you going to go there because nobody knows. And I don't want any of us to be there. They will put you there on the attic. And until you hear from us, you're not to go anywhere. You're not to show your face. And besides, those are good people. I wouldn't put you there.

He trusted them.

He trusted them completely. And they took me. They waited a little while. And then my sister and her three children went in one place. My youngest sister went with my sister's sister-in-law, with my brother-in-law's sister. And my brother-in-law went also in a different place. They divided everybody. But first, they took me because I didn't know where to go. And they put me there. And I was there. Naturally, they took me right away on the attic, which was part house and part barn.

What town was this?

This was Wysoka.

Do you know how to spell that?

Yes, W-Y-S-O-K-A. So when I went in there, she looked at me. She says, are you hungry? I said, I'm really very tired. She said, OK, come upstairs. And she put some linens on the straw there.

And she says, this is going to be the place. We will put a lot of bundles of hay and everything around you. I will bring you three times a day to eat. So don't worry. And you're going to stay here. And there below was a barn. She says, normally, you will have to go down. I will have a ladder there. And whenever you will have to go, you will go down to the barn. OK?

So I slept probably two days straight. I didn't know where I am. I didn't know. It was too much. I couldn't think. I

couldn't. But I was so over tired, physically and mentally, that I didn't move. And she used to come. She told me later, she would come three times. She saw me sleeping, she didn't even touch me. As long you slept, she said, I knew that you tired. And I didn't want to make any noises.

Finally, when I woke up, I heard-- I mean, the news traveled quickly-- that the Gestapo completely took every Jew in the vicinity, I mean, as far as I can-- whatever I knew-- the villages, the cities. Because they don't know-- oh, meanwhile-- no, this was next year. Because they need the place and they needed free from communists, and Jews, and what have you. OK.

So this started my ordeal of hiding. I didn't know anybody in the village. A week later, my sister, my younger sister came around to see me, to talk to me, to tell me something because I was cut off from everybody. She came around. She says, look, you won't be here too long because we are afraid to keep anybody because you know that our main existence that-- for the future, wherever we go, we have to pay our way. And this is where we will-- they will supply us with all the means.

Who is they?

The people that I was staying with. So you cannot-- we wouldn't jeopardize this place. Because anytime, our brother-in-law would need to come and get something, he would have to come to this place at night. And they would go down and dig out. And although we had-- for a little while, we had enough in money and in different materials so that he wouldn't have to touch, but they didn't want to jeopardize this place.

So she said, I will take you at night. I will come here. And you will go to a different village, to a son of this family. But he lives in a different village. He's married. There are no children. And you could be there. OK. So I got my things together, whatever. And she came at night, late at night. And we walked to the next village. They knew that I'm coming. So they were waiting for us. And I walked in. And she introduced me.

She says, OK, we know you're going to, again, stay. You're going to be on the attic. You see, the attic over there was my safe-- it was safe for me and safe for them because there was a door, an opening where they used to hold the hay. And they would put a big ladder against, even they didn't use it, sort of like if they find me there, I came through, they don't know. Because it was punishable to the people that hid the Jews as bad as the Jew himself.

So this was our best way. Nobody knows me. I don't know anybody. And coming through there, nobody can be responsible for it. So over there, I was from September till about beginning of December.

Of 1942?

Of 1942. Then my sister-in-law-- my sister came with her sister-in-law. And she said, you know what? We will leave this place too because we are afraid that there are some people are too nosy. That's what he-- my landlord told my sister, that too many questions are being asked from some of his friends. And even though nobody saw me and nobody could see me, but still, either he was afraid, for which I didn't blame him.

And he said, you will have to move. So where am I moving? She said, my brother-in-law's sister knew three boys. One of them was a dentist. One of them was a tailor. And one of them was-- or the two were tailors and one was a dentist. And they had a house working there.

And she said, nobody would suspect that there is somebody because it's on the road. And there are always people coming and going. There would be no suspicion. In fact, we talked with one of them. And he said-- not only one, but two of you can stay there, which was very good. And any time you in a spot that you don't have where to go, you can stay there.

These are non-Jews?

All non-Jews. So they took me there. And it was. It was a barren house, big rooms downstairs, where one had-- one was

a dentist. He worked there. And the other ones had a shop to do tailoring. And I was up there. My sister was for a while with me. But the question was how do we eat? I mean, they went home to eat.

So while we were talking with them, they said, each day, another one will bring something from home so that the home does not know that-- nobody at home knew that we are there. So they would have simply steal food and make sure that they bring once a day food to us so that we will have until the next day, which wasn't so bad because they went home a little earlier. And maybe they were a little longer home when the mother went out to do something. And they would bring us bread and sometimes even milk.

And it was normal, whatever they ate, they would sort of go to the kitchen and get cheese and bread. And that was good enough, as long as we had something to eat, that we weren't starving. And this was going on until January, January 11th. Oh, meanwhile, my sister was in a house that was in the fields, a single home, far away out.

That's the younger sister?

No, my sister with the three children. You see, the worst part were the children. How do you make a baby not to cry? OK, you can make him not talk. But cry? So this was a house, and the people were poor. And somebody said, maybe from the people that they trusted, maybe they would take you in. And you don't have to worry that the children cry because nobody comes there, especially winter. It's isolated.

So she went out there. And as I said, my sister, when she put on a long skirt, a flowered skirt with a blouse, with a babushka, nobody could say that she is Jewish, I mean, under no circumstance. So she went one day there daytime. And she talked to the people. And she said, sure. We love children. Why not? You can come here.

So she took three children. And she went-- no, two children only because meanwhile, they had a place for my nephew, who was with me. He was the oldest. They prepared them that he is not Jewish, that if somebody ask, that he is a cousin or this is his uncle if they catch him. And he was supposed to be with their children together. So she fitted him out with clothes, and shoes, and winter clothes, and everything possible.

Who did that?

My sister. And she let him be among those people. I mean, it was a family with two other children. And he was another child assuming from his brother's son or something. But that child was so afraid that when he saw a mailman walking, he would hide, instinctly. He would run away, hide someplace so that nobody would see him. But she left him there just the same. At least he wasn't hungry. And she had only two children to take care. So she was in that house alone with those two children.

Is it-- were they both boys, the other two also?

No. They were-- nobody was there. They didn't have children, those people. But she went with the two children, the younger-- yes, the daughter and the little child. And she was there alone. But my sister, my younger sister, knew where she is. My sister-in-law knew where she is. So they used to go there at night to be with her to let them know what's going on, to bring her certain things. She was there until January 11.

And January 11, three men came in-- not German, Polish men. And they caught her and the two children. And at that time, my sister and her sister-in-law were with her. So they caught them all five. And they put them on a sled with horses.

She told them. She says, what do you want? Tell me what you want. Just let me go. They said, sure. We know you have furs. We know you have. We want you to give us this. So she said, OK. One of us will go and bring it. He said, no, you all coming with us. And you will tell us where the things are. And we will take you there. And then we will let you go. Well, they did take him there.

Where did they take them?

They took them. She had-- in one place, she had her furs, in her sister-in-law's-- and some other things. And she walked in there. And they gave her. Because those were people that we trusted completely. They gave her the things. And they put them on the sled.

And now, they said, we take you back. It started to be night. And she saw, they going in a different direction. And she told them, she said, why are you taking us? I gave you whatever-- so they said, just be quiet. Don't worry. My younger sister was sitting with her. And she had the baby on her hands. And the other, the sister-in-law held the other child on her hands.

And my sister was free. And she was sitting on the sled. It's quiet because a sled doesn't make any noise on the snow. And they were bundled up, the people. And she leaned to my sister. And she said, I am going to push you out. And you go run to my son. And take him away from there. Because if they will know that I am not alive, they will take the child to the police. Please, run and take him. Whatever happens to me, let it-- let not happen to my child.

And she threw her out. When they were passing by in the village where I was hiding, people were talking. Oh, they found Jews, Jewish women with children. And they knew my sister because a lot of people there were her customers. This is how we connected where to be. Because those were people that knew them.

And I-- it was at night. And the woman where I was hiding came in. And she said, I have something to tell you. I said, oh? She said, you know, your sisters and everybody was caught. And they took them to the German-- to the Gestapo. I don't know where your brother-in-law is. She said, he wasn't there. And that's it.

I knew where my nephew is. I mean, I didn't know the people. But I knew approximately in which village he is. And she said, I don't know what you're going to do now. I don't know if you should stay here. Maybe the people that told them about your sister will come and tell about you, if they know that you in existence. Maybe you should leave here.

Well, the world came to end for me. I didn't know where to go. I didn't know. Where can I go? I don't know anybody. But I had to go. You see, I-- no matter what-- of course, my life was at stake all the time. But I couldn't make people keep me because I felt why. I mean, they risking their life for me. They don't know me. Why should they do it?

So I said, OK. At night, I'm going to go out. But I-- the woman that I was there was so poor, she didn't have a clock in the house. She didn't even have a rooster to make me aware that it's early in the morning, nothing. The night fell.

And it's so early winter, the night, it's 4 o'clock or so. And I was up. I was trying to put on whatever I had. And I was waiting for a time until it gets completely quiet, and get out the house, and keep going in the direction to the village where I know that my nephew is. But who is going to trust me? Who knows me?

My sister, when she left the child there, told them that one of my sisters is here from home. But I will not tell you. However, if anything happens, and she comes and claims the child, give it to her. But I didn't know where to go. I didn't know where they live. I knew that they are a son of one of the people that I used to hide. But I didn't know where they live.

So I was waiting at the-- they went to sleep already, the people. She says, you just walk out and close the door. Don't worry. And keep going. I did. I put on a big, black shawl, what she gave me. And I walked out. The house was near a school.

So I walked out. I knew I have to cross the street and keep going into the fields. And while I walked out, the snow was falling. And I didn't know what time it is. I just-- the village was quiet. Everybody was sleeping. I walked out. And I saw the custodian from the school cleaning the sidewalk. So I thought, it's early in the morning. It's already time that she is cleaning for the children to go to school. And I walked out.

One of the houses I passed by, I used to hide in the beginning. So I knew approximately where I am. So I-- it was so cold, bitter cold. And the snow was crunching under my feet because it was so dry. And I walked by this house. And I

don't know what made me.

There was a little-- like a shack near the house. And I just walked in in the house because the wind was blowing and just to gather my mind to know, what am I going now? I mean, I'm here. Where am I going? While I hid there, I heard footsteps, which, of course, put me right away on the defensive. I crawled into a corner. And I heard the footsteps. However, it wasn't footsteps like a person that goes sure of himself, a two footsteps and nothing.

So I thought, a thief? I mean, who could it be? And I put on that-- I thought, if they come in and find me here, it's going to be worse. Mine as well go. They won't-- by the time they will realize, I can run. I can go. I didn't realize. But something pulled me out of there. And I kept going up a little hill. And I saw somebody hiding there.

I was so scared that I probably heard my heart in my ears, the knocking of my heart. But I thought to myself, it couldn't be a man because it looked more like a small-- like a woman or something. I said, what am I afraid of? Whatever happen, happen. And I kept going towards that shadow that I saw. And that shadow came closer to me. I came closer.

And I hear, she-- a voice calling my name. I looked around. I said-- this was my younger sister. She knew where I am because she knew every place. She came when my sister threw her out from that sled. She came running.

But she also waited someplace until it got dark so to pick me up, to take me away, and to go both of us to get the child. Because she knew where the child is also. I mean, this was something that it's hard to describe. So we went back to that shack to start making plans. What are we doing? She says, look, we have to pass a cemetery. I didn't even--

How old was your sister then?

13.

You were 15 and she was 13?

Yeah. She said-- she was that time getting to be 14 already. She said, you know what? We have to pass a cemetery. I don't know what time. I said, neither do I. But I know that the janitor was cleaning the snow. It must be early in the morning. She says, I don't believe it. But we have to go and come there before the village starts to walk around. And we will go and talk to where Irv is-- his name was, she said. And we will see what they have to say.

So we got up. And hand in hand, we walked through snow, blinding snow. We came to the cemetery. She says, we have to cross. I said, no. This was something I couldn't. She says, don't worry. What are you afraid of? I mean, you afraid of living people? Do you afraid of a cemetery? So we crossed the cemetery. And we walked maybe three kilometers.

And we came to the village. We heard the first rooster. So we knew it's 4 o'clock in the morning, maybe 2 o'clock. Anyway, but we knew it isn't yet so that we should. So we went through all kind of roads.

And we came. She knew where the house is where my nephew was. We knocked on the door. And he came to the door. He says, I expected you. But he says, there is no way that you can take that child and not to be visible. Where are you going to go? Which was a marvel. We said, but we have to.

He said, look. Through the day, he is going to be here. I'm going to try to hide him. He won't be in the front. He won't be playing with the children. But at night, I'm going to bring him in a sack on my back to the village. And we're going to-- you know where my brother is living. I'm going to bring him there, you're going to take him over from there. Wherever you go, I don't want to know. But I am going to bring him that way.

What can I ask more? We picked ourselves up. And we went back to a place where he used to say, whenever you in a very tight, you can come in for the day, but no more. So we walked. And we knocked on the door. He opened the door. He says, oh, my. What happened? He says, yes, I know about your sister.

Anyway, go into the barn, stay there. And be there until-- we will bring you something to eat. And at dusk, you leaving.

We said, yes, we have to. Because we had a rendezvous with the child. From the place where I left my sister, the woman was very willing to have us.

But, she says, I don't know what to do. She had three kids-- I mean, teenagers. The oldest son was maybe more than a teenager. But the girls were teenagers. She said, I have to be aware that they-- I'm afraid. I don't know if they won't talk. And you know what that would mean for me.

I would gladly keep you. I owe your sister a favor. I remember, one day, I walked in. And I didn't have money. And your brother-in-law was busy. He said, oh, forget it, stop it. And your sister said to me, you need material for a skirt. I'm going to give it to you. Whenever you're going to have, you're going to give me back.

She said, this I never forget. And I will never-- and this is why I want you here. There is no other way. Yes, I need the money. But my life and my children's life means a lot to me. But for her, being so nice to me, I'll never forget it. And this was the place where we survived. That woman kept us through the entire time.

In what village was that?

This was in Sonina.

How do you spell that?

S-O-N-I-N-A.

And she was Polish?

She was Polish. And she was a widow, very poor. And she-- so we told her.

Do you know her name?

Yes.

What is her name?

Stanislawa Dudek. Sure, I will know the name. So we came when we had-- in the evening, we started to walk towards the village. And he brought the child. He really brought him. However, they took all his clothes because my sister gave him the best, the biggest so it lasts for a while. And they gave him clothes from their children-- I mean, a pair of shoes. His feet were frozen swollen, like that because they gave him small shoes.

And also, I mean, I didn't see anything. We took the child. And we went to that Mrs. Dudek because we had no choice-- either to go to the Gestapo and-- or where? Or somebody will take us there. We came at night. And we knocked on the door.

And she-- oh, Jesus Christ, with a child? What are you talking? I said, look, overnight, just leave us overnight here. I don't expect you to be here. But please, give us a chance for the child. So she said, I have-- again, she had a barn without a cow.

She says, you know what? But it's so cold. She said, you know what? Go in there. Oh, we didn't know she had a cow because somebody was evacuated from far away. The woman came to the village. She had a place where to live. But she didn't have a place for the cow. And she didn't have the cow. So she said, put the cow in my barn. And all you will give me is maybe a quart of milk or some daily.

And that was. And we didn't know that there is a cow in the barn. She said, there is a cow. I want you to know. And early in the morning, the woman comes to milk the cow. So I said, so where? She said, don't worry. I'm going to put you in a place. There isn't much room. But you're going to have to make sure that the baby doesn't cry. I mean, he was that--



How old was he?

Three and a half years old, that he doesn't cry, that you don't breathe, that nothing. She says, well, noise, normally, the straw under the feet-- a cow making, but just that he doesn't cry. We walked in in that barn. And she had those lanterns. And she walked in a little bit later. She brought us some bread. And she said, you can stay here. I didn't see the child for all that time because I never was with him together.

I saw the child. I look. And he said, my feet hurt. And I looked at his feet swollen. And I looked at him. He had lice. Can you imagine? I mean, of all the things. I said, oh, my god. Here, we were going to get him. What am I-- how can I clean up that child?

My sister looked at me. She says, you know what? It's warm. I mean, the barn was warm. The cow, and the hay, and everything. She says, you know what? We will undress him. Cover him with whatever you can. We will take his clothes and put it on the cow. And they might leave the shirt what he wears and go. And that's what happened. We undressed him. And we covered him with what. And we put the clothes-- naturally, not all went out.

But now, I have a problem. The next day, the woman walks in after that. She came to milk the cow-- the strange woman. And she took the milk and walked out. Didn't see us, didn't hear us. Good. Then our lady comes in. And she-- I said-- she said, so where are you going? I said, there is nowhere I can go. We have nowhere to go.

She says, I'll tell you what. I really feel sorry for you. I'll take you on the attic. You're going to sit over there on the attic. I have moss, you know what they put between when they build a house, wooden house, they put between? She said, I have a lot of moss on the attic because we didn't finish the house yet. You can sit there for a while until you will find a place. Good. Wonderful.

So again, she put him in a sack, took him in. And we just dressed up. Nobody would see us. It was just from one door to the next. We walked and we walked upstairs. Then starts the-- now, if I'm already there, she had very little-- I mean, really very little. But she was willing to share.

She said, you will give me money, whatever I can-- ah, money. Money is something else. Where are we going to get the money? My brother-in-law where he was hidden heard the same thing what we did. That's what happened to his wife, and to the children, to his sister. My sister said, wait till night. I'm going to go see our brother-in-law. And we will see what we can do, if he has something with him, or he will bring us something. We have to have means to give her enough.

She knew where he was hiding.

Yes. She knew where everybody-- because she knew the-- she was there. So I went. We were on the attic sitting. And he had the child. I can't touch his feet, they swollen full of-- and looking at him, he was hungry. And he was cold. And he had lice. So we told the lady, I said, I need something to clear him from the lice. That's first priority. She says, well, what can I give you? I remember, among others, that they used to buy-- what is it, not gasoline, but what you put in lamps, what--

Kerosene.

--kerosene. I said, I know you have kerosene a little bit. All I need is a little bit of kerosene. I'm going to put the kerosene all over him. And I knew, they used to say that this kills the eggs and everything. She was kind enough. She gave me a rag. She dipped a rag with-- in the kerosene. And I put it all over him. And I said, please, take those-- the shirt, and the underwear, and that little shirt. And wash it. Boil it for me. And she did it. So I-- slowly but surely, I got rid of the. Meanwhile, we stayed there. My sister went to my brother-in-law. He had materials. And he told us where he had other clothes.

And this was his son that you're hiding.

This was his son. And he said, I'm powerless. What can I do? But he said, I'm going to wait for a while until everything will quiet down. And then I'm going to go again to those people that have my materials to get materials. But meanwhile, he said, I brought-- he had winter pants and high boots, leather high boots, and a fur coat, good thing.

He says, take this with you. If worse comes to worse, only one thing, the people are very poor. Everybody knows it. They cannot wear your clothes. If she wants the money, tell her to go three villages away, someplace to sell it there. Let her take the money.

But she cannot wear. Because this is going to be the cop out. That's it. They will know where did she come to. And right away, this was a normal thing. And that's what-- my sister brought all that clothes. And she said, look. I have this. I gladly give it to you. I had a skirt. Her daughter need a skirt. I took it off. Here is the skirt, a better one. Shoes, take my shoes. But please, you cannot wear that clothes because I mean, a blind person would--

Give away. They would give it away.

She said so I need money. I don't have even money enough for salt. So I said, you know what? Get dressed. Make a bundle. And go to-- I knew there is a rich village, very rich people, I mean, big landowners. I said, go in. Don't tell them where you are from. Don't tell them your name. Them that you're from a different and sell it. Tell them that you got it. And you bought it.

And this is your mean of-- and she did. She listened to us. And she took such an exuberant price, she couldn't believe it. She says, you mean to tell me for the boots, when they saw the boots, they didn't know what. And they gave her butter, and cheese, and all kind besides the money. Wonderful. We got rid of this. You have the money. And now, please, let us sit here.

Well, it was-- she says, my god. How am I? The kids, the kids-- when I walked in, her younger daughter screamed. She says, I never saw Jews. Now, would you believe that? I said-- she said, well, it-- look, she looks like you. But Jews.

I said, look, let me talk to you. You can come and sit. We will talk. You see-- you understand what I'm saying. I understand. And slowly, I got them. They use-- when they had spare time, they would come on there. And we would lie quietly. And I would tell them things that they never knew or saw.

And I would tell them that I can sew. I can knit. I can crochet. I can do everything, sure, in the dark, on the attic, without light, without anything. I said, you just see that you get yarn or something. I'll make you a sweater. I'll do something, whatever you need to do if you-- to mend, I'll do everything.

Well, that was wonderful. So I was occupied. I had the baby and my sister. And we were there. We were for a couple of months there together. My sister said, you know what? I don't think that this is a good idea that we all three of us should be together. We have to part again.

I said, OK. Where am I going? Because I knew, as long she didn't say anything about the child, I said-- and she said time is getting closer to spring where the food is getting less and less. Because they prepare in fall for winter. And come spring, either you buy it or you don't have it. She said, one less mouth to feed, which wasn't much, believe me, but still, a piece of bread. And we always made sure when she brought us the food that a piece is put away for the child. We had to keep him living. And we had to keep him quiet. So this--

How did he manage through all this?

He was sitting. The roof for all--

For all these months, he just sat?

Listen, the roof was so low that on the highest point where he couldn't come was as high as he was, which was-- it was a

slanted roof. And we were sitting in the middle because the hay-- the moss and the hay was all around us. And there was-- where the wood comes together, there was a crack.

And he would sit by that crack and look outside. And he would come back to me and say, why is that white chicken white? And if I would say, because it's white, he says, no-- I mean, nervous, hungry, confined to nothing, without nothing.

I said, you know what? I'm going to teach you prayers. We will teach you prayers. And you're going to. And we did. I said, before we go to sleep, we're going to say them. In the morning when we wake up, we're going to say them. And those are Hebrew prayers. You're not to talk about it. You're not to say it, only when you're with us.

And then I had a small knife, a knife that you can put together. I had it always with me in case I need something. So I said, we will take pieces of wood. And we will make something. So we were sitting like that. It was dark, you can imagine. But while your retina got used to the darkness, so it wasn't any more dark. And we could sit and do something. So we would take a piece of wood, wherever-- I used to tell the kids from downstairs to bring me a piece of wood, or a piece of twig, or something. So no toy, no pencil.

I had a pencil and paper to write what goes through-- names, dates. But I had to put it-- take it away. One of them took it away from me. They were afraid that if I'm caught, there is going to be corpus delicti-- where I was, even though I didn't give the exact names. But it was similar so that I know what was going on.

I didn't have anything-- no paper, no pencil, no newspaper, no book, nothing. And this is how-- the only thing what I knew by heart, I taught him poems from elementary school and the prayers. And this was our pastime, and fear, and hunger.

And how long did you live like that there?

From 1942 till 1944, until I was freed.

You stayed in this home?

No, not exactly in this home. But he was in that home. Yes.

Oh, he stayed in that home. He and my younger sister stayed in that home. And I was the one that was going from place to place, just so that not to be a burden to her. Because the most important person was the child to me. And we kept it as cool as possible, not to ever-- to give any impression that there might be somebody.

So you moved around while they stayed there?

Right, right, whoever wanted me or let me in the door.

All right. We'll come back to finish your story, Betty.

Good.