

This session today is part of a project sponsored by the Cleveland Chapter Of the National Council of Jewish Women, videotaping stories of Holocaust survivors in Cleveland. Guests today are Mrs. Sophie Billys and Mr. Henry Billys. And they will be joined by their daughter Millie Goodman.

Korman.

Millie Billys Korman. Mr. Billy's, would like you to start to share with us, first, your experiences from your childhood.

OK. My name is Henry Billys, and I was born June the 30th in 1910 in Łódź, Poland, which is the second largest city, population 650,000. I had a very happy childhood. I had a sister, who was a year-- a year and a half older than I am, and a brother who was four years younger than I am-- I was.

We lived in a neighborhood, which was actually a mixed neighborhood, not in a ghetto, like, because many people lived in-- concentrated in a certain area of Łódź, where it was just Jews. We lived in an area where we had mixed population. I grew up in that city and lived all my life until 1939, when the war broke out and we had to leave Łódź, which was connected to Germany and was named Litzmannstadt.

While I was growing up in Łódź, going to schools and then to start to work, I met, in 1932, I met my wife. And we were youngsters at the time, went to school-- not the same school because we had no co-ed schools. We had girls schools and boys schools. But we went at the same time for schools. And we played together, tennis at the time and other things.

We married in 1937. And 18 months later, we were blessed with our only child, Millie. And then, when the war broke out in September 1939, Millie was 11 months old.

Mrs. Billy's, what do you remember of your childhood?

Well, I was a very happy child. And my parents were, I should say, in that upper middle class. So we really had a nice place to live. My father had a few factories. And each time they went someplace out of country, they bringing us beautiful presents. And I was crazy about collecting dolls. And once, I remember when I had about four years old, I got a big buggy with a beautiful large doll. And from then, the doll had to have children, and the children children. So anyway, I had a big space between two wardrobes where I kept all my dolls.

And my father was Orthodox, but my father-- my mother came from a small village outside of Łódź, where her father had a permit to sell liquors. And he also had a little farm, which was unusual later on, you know, for Jews, but at that time could. And also, we had Gentile friends. And later on, they really were a big help to us.

And just like my husband said, we met in 1932. But he didn't mention one thing. Since we were very much in love, but we didn't feel that it's only even proper to ask my parents to let us get married because he had older sister. So we just had to wait until the sister, at least, get engaged. But one day, he came to us and asked my mother if she will let me go with him on a skiing trip.

She took the calendar, and she says, when would you like to go?

Oh, sometimes in the middle of March.

Good. You can get married-- it was about three weeks before that. You can get married on Sunday, and in the evening you can take a train and go for how long you want to the mountains. And he said, OK. But later on, he realized-- for a few days, he just didn't know what to say at home. But we were lucky. His sister got engaged in the meantime.

So we were married. And we went skiing. When we came back, we stayed with my parents. They had a huge apartment, so they gave us part of that. And about a year later, I was pregnant. But we still liked to go

skiing at the same time, which we did.

When we came back, my parents moved to another, bigger, beautiful place. And we had our own large room. Well, I had a hard time to hold the pregnancy. I had to be in bed most of the time. And after I had the baby, the nurse forgot to take her away from my breast. And in Poland, you stayed 10 days in a hospital. And I was very sick when we came home.

I couldn't take care of the baby. And we were lucky. One day we hear a knock to the door, and came a little German girl. She was a nurse for 200 babies in Germany. But since she was born in Poland, she had to go back to Poland. And she went to Mount Sinai Hospital, asking if there will be any job for her. And they sent her to us.

And of course, we took her with open arms. And from then on, she was taking care of Millie. She had her own room. She didn't want any wages. What she wants, just the uniforms and be able to stay and live with us and take care of her. The coldest days, she taught me how to knit a little jacket for her. And with a piece of fur, she covered her up. And she was walking on the streets every single day.

How was your life then? What do you remember of life after you got married?

Well, I had a very good position. At that time, I was making much more money than all my peers. So we lived quite well. But as the war broke out soon after we got married, because it was--

But before the war broke out, what do you remember in terms of plans, thoughts that you had, plans for the future?

Well, we never thought of leaving Poland. Never thought of it. We had a nice apartment. We had good jobs. We were traveling. We were taking vacations a couple of times a year. And we had-- of course, you're born there, brought up, and you have all the friends and relatives. We were happy. We were happy.

What do you remember of those days, Mrs. Billys?

Well, my life went around mostly around the family. My father and my mother had a big family. At least once a year we were going to visit our grandparents, which they live outside of Łódź. But at that time, that was not the transportation, like to hire a horse and big buggy. And the whole family was going there and stay overnight. They had a huge home.

And a few times a year, all the family was invited to us. And I had many cousins in my age, where we could play together. And I recall even once, my little cousin, she was about four years younger, she didn't want to go home. And then my mother said, well, if you will go home, Sophie will give you the doll. And she took this for granted. She took my nicest doll, and I was crying. But at that time, I was a big girl already.

But still-- well, it happens that in 1920, they moved to Israel. And she wouldn't part with the doll. She took the doll with her.

You both mentioned family. How were you involved with neighbors and with the culture of the place where you were living at the time?

Well, we lived in an apartment. There were no single houses in Poland. And the apartment had, let's say, in our case was about 30-some suites. And two of my best friends were two Gentile boys from the same apartment. We played soccer together. We played a lot together. And we went to school together.

And I was invited to their house for Christmas Eve, and they were invited to our house for holidays like Passover. And if you think back to those days, this helped me afterwards, which we'll come to it, to live through the war the way we did. Because I was accustomed with all the ways of Catholic lives.

I went with them to church, to their church once in a while. And they came to our synagogue once in a while. So this was a very happy situation. It turned out to be, as we will underline it later.

What do you remember of the neighbors and of the relationships with--

Well, mostly the same way. We had a big store on a main street. And usually, in the summer time mostly, we were playing there. And there were some mixed Jews and Gentiles, that one-- one boy, even Greek. And he was usually helping carry my books when I was walking to school or going on a bicycle. And it was quite good relation.

And then after the marriage, you had your daughter and life was a normal life.

Oh, yes. That was normal life. Yes, and we were even planning, since when she was little I could leave her with my mother. And we went skiing to Zakopane when I bought her a nice fur coat, embroidered in the mountains. And we were making plans that when she gets a little bigger, we go for longer and that cruise of seven seas. And we might even stop to United States to see my husband's relatives.

But unfortunately--

It never came upon.

Never came.

The war.

When were you first aware of the war and what will happen?

Well, we-- Łódź is the western part of Poland, very close to Germany. The very first day, September 1st, on a Friday, the Germans were in Łódź. They parachuted, and they were in Łódź. So we lived through the very first day. We were within the whole war.

What do you remember of that?

Well, that was a day. My parents were renting a summer house about 20 minutes by streetcar from Łódź, where I had Millie and that maid. And that day we decided to go back home. And there are no streetcars. You just can't go. So I start walking, pushing the buggy and having big dog with me. And they hired a big wagon to get some of the other belongings.

And when we came home, the planes were already. And we found out that the war started. And my husband came home from work. We had very close to the market. And right away, he went shopping for flour and potatoes and just everything, was very much aware of what will happen.

That war was undeclared. We didn't know. All of a sudden, we are at war just like that. And as I say, the very first day, we were right within. And there was announced that all able-bodied men should leave Łódź and go in direction east, to Warsaw, which we did.

Well, this was an order. But as we came to the gate of Łódź, the Germans were there already. And I decided to turn back. Many continued going east. But I came back the same day. I came back in the evening because I said to myself, where I am going to go? I have here a wife with a little baby, and she will be left alone. So we came-- I came back.

But soon after, Łódź, the city was off limits for Jews. And there was an order that all the Jews have to move by a certain date out of their apartments and to a certain area in Lodz which was created a ghetto. Because of that, we decided not to go to ghetto because of Millie, because we knew that the children will not survive. We knew that right away.

And we decided to take on that risk to live, to leave Łódź and to start a different life in a different city. And the main reason, the main inducement was that we had a brother-in-law, her older sister's husband was a lawyer and Gentile. So we thought this will be the first step where we can really start off.

And we did. And it turned out to be great. We survived. We all survived. We moved to Krakow, where nobody knew us.

You're skipping that part.

And the-- I, being a man, decided not to be together. And I went east. And there was-- Lithuania, at the time, was still free and neutral. And there were rumors that, from over there, you can get out from Europe. And it was true.

We went to-- we went, my brother and myself, we went to Vilna, Lithuania. And we tried to get visas. There was an American Consul. There was a Russian Consul-- and to get a transit visa through Russia. But as we didn't have the money, we did not make it.

Some did. They left Lithuania. They went through Russia. They went through Vladivostok and Kobe, Japan, and they came to the United States. We didn't do it. We couldn't make it. So we were sent out of from Vilna by the Lithuanian authorities to Siauliai, to Shavl.

And over there we were helped by UNRRA. So they supplied us with food and shelter. And we did very little. We couldn't do anything. We didn't have the right to work. We did some manual work once in a while to make a couple those liras, whatever it was over there, the money. And we lived over there in private homes, bouge homes. We were invited for dinners to these people, and they helped us a lot.

In June of '41, Germany attacked Russia. And they were right-- also, unannounced of course. We were in the restaurant, and all of a sudden there are bombs. It was war. And we found ourselves under the Germans again.

So you were for, about two years--

2 and 1/2.

I was about, yeah, a little better than two years.

And during that time you were back.

And she was in--

I was-- yes.

In Krakow.

How was your life there?

Well, after Henry left, that was November 11, 1939, just like he mentioned that my sister was married to a Ukrainian who converted Jewish because otherwise my parents wouldn't allow her to marry him.

Excuse me, please.

And he was--

I have to go. Can I go out?

And when my sister met him, he worked for Polish Government. And then he finished his study. He became a lawyer, and he went, oh, not far, about 50 kilometers from Łódź, a small town, [NON-ENGLISH]. And he opened his office there. And they had two children, a boy and a girl.

But everybody knew that it is Jewish family. When the war started, they just have to leave the town. So they

all packed and came to me. And Henry was gone by then. And he applied for a job in Polish government, which was outside. Warsaw was the main town. And he got a job doing what he did before he became a lawyer. And they left.

A few days later comes his nephew. He was in Bereza Kartuska, arrested for wanting Ukraine back against Poland. And when the Germans came, they opened the gates. And all the people could leave. So he only knew my address. He came to us. And he says, where is my uncle? Where is everybody?

And I told him. And I said, well, if you will help me to go to Warsaw, I will see that you can make a few dollars, that you can look for your brother and anybody else. So I went to ghetto. And I just was soliciting for something to take. And of course, everybody gladly gave me money and jewelry to take to Warsaw because they were hoping one day they will go there. And they were giving me addresses where to drop this off.

And all night we were packing whatever we could. I took the big curtains, make sacks, and put all this belongings. And--

[DOOR CLICKS SHUT]

You can go through. And in the morning, we went by train. Oh yes, and he also asked me to get a chain with the Holy Mother, which I did. He was holding the baby. When we go through the gate to go to the train, the German asked me, [GERMAN]? And he answered. He's a tall, blond man. He says, oh, nein. And that's our baby. So they let us go.

And the train was so packed that he had to run first to the train, and baby and the luggage and everything went through the window. But safety we arrived to Warsaw. In Warsaw, I had address of a far distance my mother. And we all went there.

They were very happy to see us because they were very poor. They didn't have any money, even for coal. The apartment was awfully cold. And so I could help them. And we delivered everything we were supposed to. And of course, he took my jewelry too. By the way, this is the ring which I got when we were engaged. But I put a red nail polish over, and I didn't take off since it was 47 years ago.

And in Warsaw he left, and I was left alone with the baby. The money didn't last long. And I just have to look how to survive. So I had idea. There were several stores on a main street in Warsaw. They were selling candies. The name was Wedel, very famous.

But since I had a baby, I didn't have to stay in the line. They let me first. I was buying candy. The money, I just had enough to buy it. And then I rushed to the next store. And there were five of them, open only two hours daily. When I had everything, and I put under the cover of the buggy, and I went to the Jewish neighborhood.

Whatever I pay, they pay me double. But right away, it wasn't much to buy daily food. Every day I bought one egg, a little piece of butter, a little sugar, some flour, some noodles, just enough so the baby could eat. But what I had? They had an so-called lebensmittel card that the Jews were getting-- no. At that time-- excuse me-- I didn't live as Jews. They were giving us more bread and sugar and coffee. The coffee was terrible, but that's what I was eating-- and jam.

And during the day, I was going to the Jewish [NON-ENGLISH]

YMCA.

Yes. And they were giving us a bowl of soup. And that was how we survived until May of 1940. At that time, my sister was already established with my brother-in-law near Krakow. And she came to take me over there.

Now, you were newly married, and your husband is away. And you're trying to support your daughter. Do you remember what goes through your mind and what you feel about all that in those days?

Well, I will tell you. At that time, I just believe that you just have to live. You have to go on and just don't look back from one day to another. And now, that came the most important part, that one day, instead of, let's say, 1000 gram of sugar, I get only 300. So I go to the landlord and ask him why. Oh, because the Jews got reduced rates.

I says, but I am not Jewish. And I showed him my passport. It happens that my first name was Zophia, not Zisa, how it should be in Jewish, but Zophia, real Polish name. My maiden name was Pacanowska, which was also Polish. And Bialystok, last name, it didn't mean a thing. So he said, still, you have to give me your birth certificate.

So what I did, I left the baby with my cousin, where we were living before. And I went to Łódź. I could go to Łódź because I was born in Łódź, and in my passport says. Then they let me go. When I arrive in Łódź, we had to change trains. In the meantime, I bought some potatoes, some eggs. And it was late, and I didn't know that they have curfew.

But I was lucky. The Jewish policeman was walking behind the wires. And he asked me, what are you doing here? I says, I just told him, I came to visit my parents. He just looked around that there were no Germans around. He opened up the wire gate and let me in. And he even took me to my parents' house.

Well, they were living in a small apartment of two rooms. One room was my husband's parents, and in one room where my parents. So whatever I had with me, I divide among them. And that was the last time I saw my mother. Have.

Well, early in the morning, I went out. And the ghetto was already closed. That was May in 1940. And I know I have to get on a streetcar. How will I go? It was a bright day, and I can't go through the wires anymore. The Germans will catch me. And luckily, I saw one of the Jewish boys who used to play on a street together, and he was a policeman.

And I whisper to him. I says, do something that I can go on a streetcar. He said, OK. He stands right in front of it, so the streetcar had to slow down. I jumped on, and I could leave. And I came back to Warsaw.

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't tell you the most important thing. During the day, I went to the Pravoslav Church and asked the priest-- told him that my mother-- my father is in Lithuania, and I show him my passport. But I can't join him because I have to have a birth certificate, which I don't have it.

And he said, are you sure that you are baptized in this church? I said, I think so. But he says, maybe you belong to the Greek Catholic Church. I didn't even remember that they are a different faith. I says, well, I was there. They are redecorating church, so I can't go there. And I have to be-- and they will be closed for two weeks. And I only have for five days, permit.

OK. So let's take a look what I can do for you. He opened the big book. And in the book, I found another Zofia. But the Zofia last name was Iwaczenko. [NON-ENGLISH]

Iwaczenko.

Iwaczenko. But she was born the same day I was and the same year. And I told him that I promise, as soon I go home, I will tear this and throw away and only will help me to go to my husband. He took one zloty, he make a copy out of it, and thus I had-- birth certificate. Oh, yes, I left-- I have at home.

And I went back home to Warsaw. And I didn't want to show this to the landlord anymore. I moved right away to the Polish neighborhood. And that's where we stay. And like I was going to the candy stores, until my sister picked me up and took me with her to Bochnia. It was near Krakow.

What did you hear at that time from your husband?

Well, once I-- well, evidently I had-- oh, yes. When we were in Łódź, somebody was coming back and

brought a little note with the address. And when I was in Bochnia, I wrote him where we are. Then one day I received a note that they are-- they are sitting on the attic because they are afraid that the Russians might take them to Siberia or someplace. Then afterwards, just little postcards-- they were not permitted to send big letters.

And that was in a postcard that they form in ghetto, that they would be very happy if I can send him some papers that they can get out from there. And I started working on this. My brother-in-law told me that, from the hometown when he was born, which was Przemysl, there is an old priest, and he wouldn't remember anything. Just ask him. Because I told him what I had for myself. He might do the same thing for you. He just opened a book and make a copy or anybody.

So I said, well, that will be a good idea. But in the meantime, I met Ukrainian girl. And she asked me to join her and go to Krakow. And why should I be here with the children? I should go to Krakow and get a job at the post office. They pay well. And there is a nice way of living.

So I did. I listened to her. Only I had one problem-- I didn't know German. I was taking French at school. But one day I brought a basket of eggs to the teacher, and she accept me. She said, OK, you can stay. But you have to go through the examination.

So it wasn't too difficult. She showed me a map, and I have to point at where is that river, where is that city. It was very easy. So anyway, they let me stay. And I had a room, and I got a permit to have child with me.

In Krakow?

In Krakow. Yes. And that was a big house. There were 200 girls, mostly younger than I was. And for three months, they were teaching me how to type, how to work on a blind typewriter so I can send the telegrams to different cities.

And in the beginning, the work was from 7:00 till 1:00. So I was taking, since Millie was trained, thanks to that girl who was sent from Germany, I could place her in a little nursery. And she didn't know a word of Polish. Her first words were a crying Ukrainish. Ukrainian or-- yeah.

And in the afternoons, I took care of her. But we had work one in the morning, one day in the afternoon, one night. When the night fell on Friday, we always had three days free. So those three days, I decided to see what I can get from that priest from Przemysl.

And I went to Bochnia. I left Millie with my sister and went to Przemysl. And before that, I bought a suitcase with all full of goodies at that time, like sardines, cheese, bread, sausages, which they, for no money, nobody can get. And I went there. I found out that the priest I was looking for, he isn't living anymore.

So I says, well, where is the next church here? Because I'm very tired and I have to rest. So they pointed to me. And one man whom I was asking, he had a hay on a wagon. He said, I can take you there.

So we went there. And what happened? The priest was giving wedding to somebody. But the wife says, well, let's go for a walk. I walk you over to him. And while walking, I was telling him a story that my husband and his brother is in jail in Russia, in Lithuania-- I don't remember what I said. But I have to send the papers because where they were born, all the papers burned down.

And I was on my way to my uncle, to Lvov, which was farther than Przemysl, but the train was stopped because the soldier had the priority to go there. But since I didn't know where to turn in, so I came to Przemysl.

And she said, and what the uncle is supposed to do for you? I said, well, if he could give me any birth certificate, so they can come home. She says, well, my husband is priest. Maybe he can do something for you. So they invited me for dinner, and I gave him all that suitcase. I said, since I was taking this for my uncle and I really don't need it, then you can have this all. OK. So they took this.

And after supper, he says, well, I decided to help you. But you will have, with your own hand, write this in a book because I don't want to have any part. I can only make a copy out of. That's what it was. All right.

He opened the book and I told him right away, if you care for me. Why should I have false paper? I can say exactly. It's easier to remember. So I told him, put this down exactly when my husband was born. I mean, not where, but date. Only that was the name of the village was Majkowice. And I put down June 30, 1910 because, at that time that man who did that in a book, he was diseased already. So I copied, more or less, his handwriting and put this down. It was easier to do for my brother-in-law because he was born when the war started in 1914. And just with the pencil, I had enough room to put his name. And just he asked what's the name of mother or the name of father. So I would just making up. And he made a copy for us.

And we spent a very nice evening, very nice evening. And I stay overnight there. And in the morning I left. And I showed him all my papers, all my [GERMAN], that I was allowed to walk during the night. But one thing I didn't mention. I didn't mention my brother-in-law name because they knew-- everybody in Przemysl knew that he married a Jewish girl. So this I was afraid to mention.

I never said anything that I had my sister here. And I gave him the address where I live in Krakow. Not long later, I received a call. Somebody in Krakow would like to see me. It comes because the Ukrainian priests, they are married and they have children. Their youngest son was going to study in Vienna, and he had to stop to Krakow. But he couldn't find a place where to stay overnight. So he came.

He said, I am the only one I knew. I said, well-- I was at work at that time. I told him where I live. I said, but if you want to have-- we have one guest room-- but you have to find that girl who is in charge, but only relatives can stay. So if you want to say you're related to me, maybe she'll let you go.

In the evening, I came home. I find out she let him stay. She gave him the room because he said he is my cousin. So we have already relatives. And she also gave him a package to her brother. It happens that her brother was also in university in Vienna. That was one paragraph.

But I have to send the papers to my husband. So I put them in the envelope, and I send it on the address I had. About a few weeks later, I happened to be in Bochnia. A mailman came with the big envelope, didn't say anything, and left. On the other side, it says [LITHUANIAN] in Lithuanian. It means that they won't deliver that letter to the Jews. And the letter came back I didn't even mention to my brother-in-law.

I took the letter back with me to Krakow. And I found out that one man was going to Berlin. So I changed the envelope, and I asked him, please, mail these papers. I mean, just mail the envelope from there. And in the meantime, oh, it took few months after I was able to send it because I had to write to my husband, and he had to send me an address on the other side of the ghetto.

Maybe I'll pick it up from here because that's what happened.

Maybe go a little back, your life there.

When the war broke out in Lithuania in June of 1941, as I mentioned, all the Jews were ordered to go to ghetto. And I also move to the ghetto. At that time, I was working in a factory, in a shoe factory, doing some manual work. And the people, they knew me over there. And they knew that I'm not a laborer, and I know accounting. I was like a CPA in Poland.

And they told me to come to the office over there because the Lithuanians were taking over and Germans were taking over. This was a big shoe factory. And the head of the bookkeeping department, a Jew by the name of-- his name was Schultz. He made me his right man because-- his right-hand man because I knew Lithuanian, I knew German, and I knew Russian. So I was the [GERMAN] man, and I could translate to everything.

And I made friends with two Lithuanian brothers. [NON-ENGLISH] was the name of the apprentice. And when they got rid of all the Jews in the factory, I remained over there. I still remained. And they were very good to me. They brought their lunch, and they brought lunch for me too every day, but more than enough



for myself. I used to take it back home in the evening when I went together with my brother and my friends, I shared with.

And these two brothers and one of the wives of the brothers said, Henry, you cannot remain here. You cannot remain here. We know the plans what are going to be. The Jews will be out. What will happen to them, we don't know. But they will be out here.

So I said, well, I wrote to my wife to send me some papers. Said, you know what? You give our address to be sent to us. And we will make out the permit for you to leave Lithuania. When the papers came back the second time around, and this was probably January of '41-- yeah, late January-- cold, very cold up north. I got the papers, and they gave me a permit to leave and a ticket, train ticket-- you couldn't get a train ticket without a permit of leaving the town-- and tickets for me and for my brother. And I said to my brother, Andrew, now we are not Jews.

We leave the ghetto tomorrow. We have a train ticket. We are going back to Poland and see what-- join our parents, our wife. He was not married. And we went out. I was more brave somehow. I was inspired, probably because of the family.

I don't know. It's amazing how sometimes you are being pushed, and that's what exactly what it was. We left Lithuania, went to the train. And we came to a city, Bialystok, which is my name, but I was never before over there. And over there, this was already under Polish jurisdiction. We were in Poland.

So I called her up, and I said, I cannot leave this city for Krakow unless if I have a job assured. And she went over there to the personage, that I meet, to the people who hire and said, I have a brother-- I have a husband and a brother who are in Bialystok. And they want to come here. Could they have a job?

And say he needed personnel. And especially being Ukrainian, we had the advantage. They-- we had the advantage of being Ukrainian. He said, yes. And within a day or two, we got the telegraph--

And I sent it away the telegram.

--and a permit that we are considered employed at the post telegraph in Krakow. So we left for Krakow. And we arrived one night in February of '42 in Krakow. And she was in Bochnia. And she was at the station. No, she was not at the station.

No, they came home in Krakow.

And I've seen her when she was 11 months old, and here she was 2 and 1/2 years old.

No, more than that-- 3 and 1/2.

What's the difference?

You didn't see her 2 and 1/2 years.

And we stayed with my sister-in-law, a full house. Now, we have to go to Krakow to get the job. I come to Krakow. I applied for the job, and I was accepted right away, my brother as well. Now we get a card. We have to go to the doctors for examination. And the main thing was TB and VD. These are contagious things. And this is very important.

My brother said, he's not going to a doctor. And again-- and again, I don't believe anything. But something was watching over me like, and something was pushing me, and it said go. Go. Go. Like somebody would be telling me exactly. Sometimes you hear people who say that they were reborn or something like that. It sounds strange, but really, I experienced that.

And I went to the doctor. And he examined me. Lungs you could examine by X-rays right away. And I was in my briefs. And he said, do you have any-- do you have any VD disease, or have you ever been sick on it?

No. He didn't ask me anything. He didn't examine me.

[INAUDIBLE] the child.

And I had a very good position. I was in charge of trouble. And this was a very important thing in communication, in telephone and telegraph. And I had under my supervision, as an engineer, I had under my supervision four technicians and 14 monitors.

And in the morning, we got a list of testing all the military lines in the first place. And any interruption, any trouble, we send out the people. And the private people had to wait until everything else is done. So they came-- so they had to wait sometimes three, four days, a week until the telephone was fixed. And they were looking for a way to get to me to take care of their telephones and stuff like that.

So it came to a point where they brought me stuff, like bread, milk, butter, whiskey, just to see that their lives are being taken care of. I shared that with my employees over there. What I want to bring out, with our rations plus this, we never suffered any hunger. We had everything in abundance, really. As a matter of fact, we brought lots of things to her sister. For instance, for Christmas, fish is a very important thing for Christmas, fish.

You couldn't get any-- probably couldn't get any fish for no money. I had lots of fish because I had those connections. And I was considered Ukrainian. But there-- some Ukrainians are pro-Polish and some were nationalistic and chauvinistic. I was working with the Poles very, very good. We were friends.

And when they were collecting money for people who were arrested and sent to camps, they were collecting money, they came to me also. This indicated that they had trusted me because this was not allowed. And this happened to be very good.

I had a very good relationship with the workers. And the Germans were in charge, of course. And we have seen what's going on. If you look through the window over there, you seen over there the transports, which were being sent to Auschwitz. Every day we've seen it. And I had just to nod and also agree, whatever they say. I was not vocal about that. But I was listening to what the people, and I had to say, yes. Sure. Sure.

So in other words, I've seen every day people being transported. We knew what is happening. Everybody knew that.

We'll come back to that after the break. But do you remember anything from those days, Millie?

I remember having a wonderful life. I enjoyed myself very much. And on the heavy side, I do remember looking out our window-- we lived upstairs-- and seeing the Jews being marched down the street in their uniforms. And I remember-- I believe I was with my friend, and we were laughing and calling them names. On that respect, I do remember.

You remember when your dad came back and how was life?

I don't remember when he came back. But I just remember being a little girl and going-- and going places together and always hanging on to his-- this, the index finger. That was just about right. And in fact, I wanted to marry him.

And she said she's my girlfriend, my fiancée. My fiancée, she said. She was so tiny. She was--

I have a picture of one of the postcards that my mother sent to my dad when he was in Lithuania, just to show you that I certainly was not underprivileged. And this was the day that my mother had gone to the doctor with me, and he said she's overweight. So I didn't know there was a war going on.

Your mom was taking good care of you.

I really did not know a war was going on.

But that was one thing I forgot to mention to you. I had a younger sister, and she was staying behind in ghetto.

The older sister. An older sister.

I mean older from me, but younger from the oldest-- a middle sister. She was about six years older. And she decided to stay with my parents. Even I also give her some papers to go out. And she was telling us later, in April 1942, my mother had to have a gallstone removed. And my father was partly paralyzed. When he found out that she died under the knife, he passed away. And since my sister's husband was working as the policeman there, he could get a street cart wagon. And they took them to the Jewish cemetery.

And after the war, we find out a little note where they are both buried in one grave. So we put a big monument for them.

So you know where.

Yeah. We know exactly.

Yes. But that was another- my sister had a girl, seven years old. And we knew-- I knew, first of all, sending those telegram, what was going on. And we were trying to get her out. So how we managed, I decided to stay with my sister's children. She and her husband went to Łódź. And I give them an address of our Greek friend, we used to live and play together.

He went with them, with the little [NON-ENGLISH], the buggy with the horse covered. And I told her more or less where to go.

That's the end of this-- It's the end of the tape.

Oh.

OK. We'll stop here, and then we'll come back.