

I'm Sara Weinberger. Today we are interviewing Ruth Lidawer, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. Mrs. Lidawer, could you please tell us how old you are?

I am 54.

And where do you live?

I live presently in Richmond Heights.

Are you working?

Yes, I am. I'm a full-time reference librarian at the Euclid Public Library.

How long have you been there?

20 years.

Oh, boy. And do you have children?

Yes, I do. I have two grown-up children.

Can you tell us a little bit about them?

The oldest one is my daughter, Annette, who presently she's an attorney in Chicago working for the American Hospital Association in their legal department. My son is a CPA working with Deloitte, Haskins & Sells, which is an accounting firm here in Cleveland.

Uh-huh. OK, we're going to go back now to before the war to about 1938. Could you tell us at that time how old you were?

I was about eight years old.

And where were you living?

I was living on the Czech side of Cieszyn. I was born in Moravska Ostrava. But then we lived in Cieszyn which was sort of a border city between Czechoslovakia and Poland. There was a Czech part of the city, and the Polish side of the city.

Could you tell us a little bit about your town and what it was like?

I don't recall too much about the other side of this one. In 1938, we had to leave the Czech side when the Germans came into Czechoslovakia. So in order to flee from the Germans, we moved to the Polish side. We lived in Poland then for a year. I remember my house there. It was a beautiful brand-new house, large windows. It looked very much like some of the buildings now here, the four or five-story apartments. Very beautiful home. We occupied the entire floor, meaning my father, my mother, and my sister, and myself of course.

And my father had this electrical equipment store in that city. And then in 1939, he was selected to go to the World's Fair in New York, having the experience and being in that business. That's why I guess, I mean he asked to-- he asked to go. And then they, of course, approved his departure for this one for United States for the World's Fair in New York in 1939. That's when we lived-- it was beginning of '39.

At the time, he did wish to take my mother along on the trip. It was to be his first trip to the United States. He's never been in the United States. He wanted to take my mother along. But by the same token, they suspected that things were going bad. The people above us were moving out. And they all felt that, I mean,

we were on the verge of a war or something. Things were going very bad. And people suggested to my parents to move, to leave, to leave Poland in order just not to remain there during the war.

But my parents, just like everybody else, felt nothing will happen. That's just scares. I mean, we were just being scared about it. In the meantime, my father did. So my mother refused to go with him to New York to the World's Fair because she felt that she wouldn't leave the two children, us two at home in case something happens. She was scared. She insisted on staying with us and refused to go with him.

So then shortly before his departure, he wanted me to go with him to the States. And I was refused a visa. They would grant a visa to his wife, but not to his children. I was refused a visa in Warsaw. I went with my uncle to Warsaw to apply for a visa. And they refused to give me one. Why? I never found out. I just came back. And then on April 11, 1939, my father left for the United States, leaving us two with my mother only.

And then I had family in Bielitz, in Cieszyn. I mean they were sisters and brothers of my father. So we had quite a large family still there.

Were there many Jews in the town where you lived?

Yes, there was a nice Jewish community in that city. We had, at the time I mean I was just going to start. I was starting school. I was going into second grade. And we had Jewish children did not attend really public schools. Attending public schools there at that time in Poland was not very safe. So there was a special, what they call a Hebrew school. But what it was really, the equivalent of a private school where only Jewish children attended.

We were taught German, Polish, and of course Czech, if we wanted to. And we had a few hours of Hebrew. But it was mostly just beginning really. And I attended that school for two years, and had a nice-- I was within walking distance to my house. I mean we were well off. My family was fairly well off. My mother was a teacher. She did not teach. But she was a math teacher.

My father was this one, my father was in electronics at the time. And we were fairly well off. And that's why they were able to afford to have us in a private school like that.

How old was your sister in 1939? My sister was exactly 2 and 1/2 years younger. So in '39, I was nine years old. My sister was seven. She wasn't quite seven, she was 6 and 1/2. She was born in '32, that's right. She was seven, six really. Were you going to ask me something?

No, go ahead.

So we lived this one. We lived in that city until '39. And then in August of '39, my mother notified my father that we are going to be evacuated from that city, because they expect the Germans to attack the new border that they established now again, attack by September 1, '39. We were going to be evacuated. But my father couldn't do anything about it. He couldn't come back anymore. He had a visa and a ticket to go to the United States to New York to the World's Fair, remain in the United States only until the 20th of September.

On the 20th of September, he was supposed to return on the Queen Mary, back to Europe. In the meantime, of course, we were evacuated. We just whatever we could pack, and we still had our car at that time. And my father used to drive always. But then we took our-- we had a chauffeur, who was this one who was with us at the time still.

So we drove out, and we just packed up the car whatever we could put in the car, and started towards the center of this one, towards Krakow, in center of Poland, thinking that Krakow being a large city would be more safe. They won dare strike, I mean bomb, over there immediately. And they'd be stopped hopefully at the border. That's what everybody predicted that they were going to be stopped over there.

So we fled to Bochnia which is a small town outside of Krakow. And that's where we stayed for about a week, I think. We fled two weeks before. It took us quite a while to get there, no, not too long because we still had the car at that time. And we stayed in Bosnia until the 29th of August I think. I'm not certain. But I

think that's about the date, 29th of August. And then, of course, at that time they were saying that there were already this one bombing and crossing the border.

So then we started with the car. By then my uncle drove. The chauffeur was taken to the army of course by then. And none of my family was immediately taken into the army. Of course, my cousins, I don't know where they went at the time. But anyhow, none of my family was taken to the army. The Polish army at the time did not take Jews yet.

And that was one of the reasons I think. So anyhow, my uncle drove the car and we started driving out of Bochnia. Past Krakow, and we were going towards the center. We were going towards Warsaw, thinking that over there probably that will be the only place where you'll be able to mean remain safe. And they never expected that the Germans would come as far as Warsaw. Just a second.

Just as we got out of Bochnia, I think we drove for about two or three hours only. And shortly afterwards, the Polish army took our car away. So we had no car. So then there was another Jewish family who also was fleeing of course from Bochnia, and trying to go to the center of Poland. And they had a horse and buggy, and they let us put some of the things on that buggy. I think there were two horses actually.

So we traveled on that horse and buggy. And of course, most of us had to walk, with just turns to sit for a while. But we were actually walking the whole time after that, once they took our car. And then of course, just for about a day we walk liked that with all our packages and everything. And then they took away the horses too. So actually, the men start pulling the buggy themselves. And we could not-- we were just walking, continued walking.

And then while walking towards Warsaw, there was a train. I remember like today was passing. And they thought that they will be able to stop the train, and we'll be able to get on that train. In the meantime, as we were coming closer to the train and the train seemed to have been trying to stop, all of a sudden the planes started flying over us and start bombing. So instead of running, of course, towards the train, the safest thing was to run into the woods and remain safe there.

And I saw my aunt carrying, had two children in her arms running out of the train which stopped. And as part of a bomb, there was a shrapnel hit her arm. And her son was killed right in her arm. The little girl at the time-- no she was a year older than myself, my cousin Sonya survived. But the boy was killed and so was my aunt. She dropped her.

And I think that's the only thing that saved her really. And we, of course, ran for shelter in the woods. Not to be this, but that they killed so many people by the train, and people from the train running out that after that we never wanted to be close to a train, because those were the targets it seemed like at the time. But it was a terrible thing to see.

And while hiding over there, how we got out of there alive, I never-- I mean God must have just watched over us. Because I saw kids and adults being killed just a few feet away from me, just by a part of that bomb. I mean explosions everywhere around us, just in the center. We always somehow, I always was missed. And that went on for a few hours over there.

After it was all over there, I mean they left, I mean there were very few survivors near the train. And there were Polish people and Jewish people. It was everyone was there. The civilian people were attacked like that. And we were told that the worst thing is to be either on a train or close to a train, because those were the main targets at the time.

We never did go, never got to Warsaw, because already then Warsaw was being surrounded. That's when they formed that Warsaw ghetto. And they told us, don't go to Warsaw. You don't stand a chance over there. So instead, we start going east, southeast of Poland. And we were heading toward a city named Łódź which had a lot of factories and we were hoping that the Germans won't get there, and my mother would be able to find a job maybe in a factory or someplace in order to survive. We were left without anything, just whatever clothes we had on us.

Of course, we had three or four layers of clothes. But that was all we had. We had nothing on us. So we continued walking. And while walking, of course, overnight we usually tried to stop in a village and get some room, rent a room or something in order to be able to sleep through the night, and not to sleep outside always. There were many nights we slept outside. But some nights we were lucky to get into this one, to a village on time. And the people would put us up for the night.

But then this one, we woke up in the morning and the Germans were in the town marching through the town already. So we were under the Germans. We stayed there for about two days. They wouldn't let us leave this village anymore. We left. We stayed there for two days. Two days later, the Russians walked in. And those villages, I mean they were just changing not borders, really but the occupation. You were one day under the Germans, one day under the Russians.

We were fairly close by then to Łódź, but not really in Łódź yet. And I remember my mother getting to a little post office. And she sent a telegram or a wire to my father asking him, shall we try to remain under the Germans or remain under the Russians? I mean at home, they spoke about it. I mean under the communists, it's no picnic. But the Germans might kill us out completely.

But at that point, my mother didn't know what was better. So she sought his advice, she sought his advice. And about a day later, so we stayed in that village another two days waiting for a reply from my father. And while staying there, of course, the Germans came in again. And they wouldn't let us go, leave the village anymore. The wire, the reply we received about two days later.

No, I think I'm wrong. We never received a reply over there. We continued walking. And we were nearly in Łódź when this one, when the reply came. And my father advised us to remain under the Russians. Wherever the Russians go, we should go, rather than under the Germans. So my mother also very doubtful and hesitant about it, took his advice.

So we got to Łódź. Of course, the Russians were already occupying that entire part of Poland. And still the Germans did walk in twice still. And they started in the middle of the city, shooting at each other sometimes. But it wasn't really. It was just trying to keep that city. It was a battle, a small short battle for the city itself.

Of course, a lot of civilians were always injured or killed even during that time. But so we got to Łódź in Poland, occupied of course with the Russians. My mother, of course, running out of money, already took a job in this one, in a factory. And we just stayed home as far as I remember. I wasn't doing any work or anything. But we stayed there only for about, I would say two, three weeks.

Two or three weeks later, some of our relatives, my mother's cousin and some other people found out that my mother was with us too in Łódź. And they came to visit us. And I never forget like today. They were warned they were giving her instructions, warning her that the Russians will come eventually. And they will ask us where we want to go. And they wanted my mother to take some money from them. They still had some money. My mother was too proud to accept it.

My mother didn't feel safe going with having money on her, and going with us, two small children. And they were trying to-- I didn't understand much of that conversation that night when the family was there. And then suddenly, they just disappeared.

I remember they were talking something about this one, about a black market that started over there. And they warned her, don't get involved. They try to involve you in it, but not to get involved in the black market because it was just another strike against you going to be.

I think it was on the third night after that visit from our relatives, they were all the people, as far as I remember, I never really met them before when we lived at home. But they found out that we were there, and they just came trying to advise her what to do.

And the third night after they left, at 3 o'clock in the morning we heard a knock on the door. And this one, and my mother right away warned us that must be the NKVD, I mean, at the time of course it was the NKVD, the Russian police coming. They kept on knocking. And we wanted to get dressed, but they wouldn't

let us. So they broke the door and got in immediately before we even had a chance to. We wanted to open it. We were just in our pajamas really at the time.

And so they let us just put on whatever clothes we had handy, put on, rather they put handcuffs on us. And we were taken to some kind of a barrack that they formed. And in that barrack, we were supposed to register ourselves. And they were promising us to give us a choice, whether we want to go to our homes back on the German side, or remain on the Russian side. And of course, my mother put down that she wants to go back home. We want to be on the German side instead.

She somehow felt more comfortable speaking German. We both spoke German, to stay on the German side, in spite of the advice from my father. But we were on the Russian side already, you see? That was just we suspect that it was just-- they were just promises that they will let us go. And then they loaded us. I mean, from our apartment over there, they took us on large army trucks and took us to those barracks. And then from those barracks, a day later or so after supposedly they took care of all the registration, or whoever wanted to go where, we'll be able to go.

They loaded us up on cattle trains. I mean not passenger trains, cattle trains. And of course, closed up completely. There were maybe on each train one little hole that you could see daylight. And they told us that this train was going West. Of course, we were not that stupid. We saw we were going East. And on that train, once a day, sometimes only every other day, they would let us out in order to go to a-- I mean to our necessary duties and would give us some bread and some water.

And we were on that train like cattle, not any different. My mother became very ill on the top shelf. I mean those trains were loaded. People were sitting one on top of another. We as children were sitting on top of two or three people. And my mother became very sick on the top shelf, you know where the luggage is kept usually. I mean those were just shelves for the cattles that were not for luggage really. But she was sitting there and she became very ill. So they let her come out of the train. Because you see adults were only every other or third day was were allowed to come out of the train.

The children, they would let us because they knew that we wouldn't try to run without our parents. We were on a train going towards Siberia. And it took us 2 and 1/2 weeks. I remember passing, but from a distance, far distance, passing Moscow. But we were on the last tracks of the train. And we were, of course, not allowed to stop over there at all. But through the little hole in the train we were able to see the city from the distance.

And we continued going until we got to two camps.

Do you remember?

Yes?

Do you remember what you were thinking on the train?

On the train, the only thing I was hoping, I was praying for, that my mother stay alive. I was terribly scared that she will die over there. I saw my aunt being killed. So the only hope I had that my mother will survive there and I said if my mother survives, somehow we'll meet my dad someday. But if she doesn't survive, we'll never be able to get there. I was scared of that.

I wasn't really scared of the responsibility yet. But I was scared that if she dies, I mean what will I do? I was nine years old. And it was terribly scary. And, of course, the hunger persists, start persisting. I never in my life before was hungry. They used to say, it was a favorite expression. We had nothing but birds' milk. I mean we were well off. They forced us to eat in order to grow stronger.

I guess we were built fairly strong at that time still. But I mean we started really being hungry. At night, we were dreaming about the nice good food we had at home. Here the only thing they gave us was the black bread, a square piece of black bread, and this one-- any they had those mugs of water that they were giving us.

So the real threat was the fact that my mother might not survive that trip. But thanks God she did survive the trip. I remember passing Ural Mountains. And there they let us stay. Once we passed European Russia, they no longer when we were going closer to Siberia and Ural Mountains, in the Ural Mountains the train stopped for sometimes for two, three hours. And we were able to walk around.

And actually, the scenery of Ural Mountains was very pretty. And I couldn't believe that in a beautiful area like that, we might be tortured someday. The way we were treated on the train that's all we expected to be tortured there.

And we continued going, never told us where we were going. But the direction of the sun and this one, there were some very intelligent people on the train. There were some doctors. There were some lawyers. It was a mixed group. No matter what you were, it didn't matter. You were just being taken to a camp.

And so when we finally arrived at that camp, it was about, I mean, the train, they unloaded the train. And we then they made march towards the-- not camp. Yes, it was a camp, but what do you call those single-- barracks. Those barracks. That's what they were. There was a camp with barracks.

And of course, over there, was one little office with a tall tower, a wooden tower on which a Russian guard of course, always sat, at least two or three of them. And that's when they told us that's where we're going to live now. That's a camp for us that we shouldn't make ourselves too comfortable. Because there will be other people coming.

And we stayed in that camp. And of course, right away the adults had to start registering for work. And my mother was made to go to work right away the next day. The work they were doing was they had to go into the forest and cut into the stem of the forest, and I mean cut deep enough in order to get-- I don't know what you would call it, the juice from the tree, or the whatever it is. And then you had to-- I mean you get the juice, and pick up from that and put a bucket underneath once you cut that deep in, deep enough into the tree. The juice would come out and you would get it into-- you would put the bucket underneath.

And unless you could fill up bucket like that full, you wouldn't get food that night, or you were not allowed to walk into the barracks. That was the first that you had to meet a certain norm of how much you had to have. And that was the norm, a bucket of that juice from the tree. So my mother could never manage. It was too difficult for her. And then of course, that was the morning job. And then the trees, which were already used for that, had to be cut down.

So she was cutting. By noon they start cutting the trees. If the tree was cut down, then the tree, then she was assigned to that tree to cut the tree into narrow-- I mean the stem was cut into narrow-- what would you call it? Not segments, but narrow of the tree, you know. And then that what do you call it?

I mean the tree, a big tree like that laying on the ground, and cut into I would say 10 inch, 10 inch-- yes 10 inch wide strips like. And then the strips had to be each layer then had to be cut into blocks of wood. And those blocks of wood then towards the end of the day, they would come with a truck and she had to load the truck with those blocks of wood. They would let them dry out.

And later on, while staying there later, later on I found out what they were using the wood for, those blocks of wood. Anyhow, my mother could never meet the norm, could never cut enough wood in a day. So they called her into the office and told her if the next day she won't do it, she will have to be put in a cell because she has to meet the requirement that everyone else has to meet.

So there was just no choice. I had to go with my mother and work with her to help her meet the norm that she was assigned each day. So we didn't give them a chance at that time to put her in a cell, a jail cell, where it was really. So I kept on going with my mother for quite a few days.

And then about a week or two weeks later, she was called into the-- they called it the kommando, the man in charge of the barracks, of the camp there, to the Russian commander's office she was called. And she was told that I mean that they just found out that her husband is an imperialist, this one living in the United

States, in New York. Why didn't she admit it when she was registering? They didn't know that they had capitalist families in that camp.

And she told them, she wasn't asked. That's why she didn't mention anything. But they were worried. So that night, they put her in a jail, in a jail cell in water up to her neck. And of course, I kept running over there, this one. They kept her there like that in solitary confinement in the water for about three days.

After three days, they said they won't succeed with any more. They wanted more information about my father. In the evenings or early in the morning, they would let her come out. They put handcuffs on her, on her feet, on her arms. And directed to the office and tried to find out more about my father, about my father's whereabouts, and everything, what he's doing and everything. They were just trying to dig. And being a wife of a capitalist was the worst thing.

It wasn't because we were Jewish. It was because she was the wife of a capitalist. So then after those three days, after three days being in that cell, they let her free. She came back and was with us in the barracks. But again, starting with the norm, for those three days that she was there I didn't have to go to work. But in a way, that was so much worse not having it with us. I was ready to give anything and work in order to have her with us. Excuse me.

Then three months later, she was again called into the office that they received in the nearest post office, not in the camp, not in the camp grounds. But in some nearest little town, they received a letter and possibly some money from my father. But that she is not allowed to leave the camp grounds. So instead, they decided that I being nine years old, should be able to go and pick up the mail from my father.

So this one, so then that morning, the following morning, they put handcuffs on my hands and my feet. And three Russian soldiers with this one, with guns and bayonets on them, walked with me to that village 14 miles away, with the bayonets constantly over me. I mean I was very small. I looked more like a five-year-old or six-year-old. And this one, and the three soldiers walked with me those 14 miles to that village to that post office. I, with the handcuffs on my hands and feet.

Many times I felt I couldn't make it. I just couldn't with those chains on my feet were cutting in so badly. But they made me do it. And that day, no not that day, but I think it was prior to my walking to the post office with them, I saw a priest being dragged by a horse by his collar. And shortly afterwards, I saw him being covered already. I mean he was, this one, he didn't survive. He was laying there dead. And I saw that. I saw a rabbi being dragged by his beard by a horse.

So then when they made me go, I didn't know what to expect. I was afraid they might do the same to me. So I tried to behave and follow his instructions and walk. But it was quite difficult. So we finally got there, to that post office. Of course, they chained me by the post office. They didn't let me go in. The three soldiers, they picked up-- no, the one went in, and the two stayed behind with me, scared that I might run away. How a person could run away from there it's beyond my imagination even now.

But anyhow, they brought the letter out and I had to sign it. Actually, they took me just for that signature that I received that letter. That letter was all torn up. There were single words cut out from that letter. I mean it was censored. We never made out, my mother, neither did I, and a friend of my mother's in the camp, we all tried to read the letter. We couldn't figure it out because it was really destroyed.

And there was some money in that letter. But the money was immediately taken out. It was something like the amount of money that was supposed to have been there was 150 rubles. How much that was in dollars, I have no idea because it was changed into rubles the moment it arrived evidently. So that night we got back. I mean we started early in the morning. I got back late at night, not finding my mother anymore in the barrack, just my sister, and my sister crying.

What happened? They had her back in the cell again in that water. So it was pretty bad. The worst thing was, then one of our people actually became an assistant to one of the camp guards. And he was special privileged for helping him. And he told my mother, you should have never admitted. Your husband should have never let them know that you have this because you'll always suffer because of that.

And really, my mother was getting the worst treatment in the camp. Of course, the others had husbands and wives together. They could meet the norm. My mother herself couldn't do it. And of course, the fact that my father was in the United States, we suffered for that quite a bit. And that's the way life went on over there.

The view sometimes was very pretty. I remember once at night, I had to go, get out of the barrack. The moon was so bright, and the snow of course, it was 35 below 0. My mother made me cover up my face and this one. But of course, I had to go out. And you could almost read a book from the light of the moon.

What kind of clothing did you have to wear?

Just barrack clothing they put. It was mostly from sacks material, you used for sacks. And this one, we had some socks, some heavy socks on our feet, and just whatever clothing we had that was really what we came on. We had the same clothes. And we were washing it in at night, and putting it on the next morning. They did let us have some extra socks.

And I mean it was just-- that was the life in that camp. Hardly a day went by, no, I wouldn't say a day, a week went by, that someone didn't disappear from the people that were there. It was, the food was just-- I mean there was hardly any food, twice a day, no once a day at noon supposedly the big meal was supposed to get the potato soup. What is was, it was water from the warmed up water from the peels of potato soup.

And just that black bread always, which was so heavy. I mean it wasn't baked through or whatever. But we got used to eating it. When you're hungry, you'll eat anything. Then I remember once, after about three or four months, they announced that we can form lines. Because they brought some meat to the camp, for the camp, for the people in the camp. So we stood in line. And one person, a man in front of us, finally asked what kind of meat are we standing for?

And the Russian evidently forgot himself because we saw afterwards that he disappeared. He was no longer in that camp. He said it was horse meat. So of course, some people remained in the line. My mother and us left the line. We'd rather not have eaten it, then have to eat that horse. But some people were so hungry that they did stay, and accepted that horse meat.

Milk, sugar, we haven't seen for the entire year and a half that we were there. Then, yes it was year and a half that kind of a life. And most of the time, just with some exceptions, some days I didn't have to go with my mother. She felt better and she just felt that she might be able to make it. Or sometimes one of the friends would help her. Or right away that one night when the Germans came in, or before they were loading us on those trucks, the Germans were on one side. And one of the Germans was really an Austrian guy in a uniform, who recognized my mother, having been at school in Vienna with her.

And he told her, try to stay on our side and we'll help you. I'll help you, whatever I can do for you. But of course, the Russians walked in. So we never remained on that side. Anyhow, after a year and a half, we were told all of us, a big speaker from this one, from some city in Russia, I never did find out what city, came to speak to us. Because it was the I think the October Revolution holiday. Is is October 7 or November 7? So he came to speak to us.

And he told us I mean how well, that there is a war going on. But we are so lucky not to even know about the war. The Germans, also they made a pact with the Germans. And they don't trust the Germans. And that they will fight. That they're beginning to fight the Germans. But the capitalists are not doing anything that they have to fight the war on their own, and all kind of propaganda speeches they gave us at that time.

And shortly after that speech, about two or three months later, we found out, we were told that the Czech and Polish temporary embassy in Australia was demanding from Russia that the West will send them help. I mean from Poland, and from this one, that they will help the Russians if the Polish and Czech citizens-- but it was mostly Czech, I think-- they didn't want to let the Polish go-- If the Czech citizens are released from those camps and allowed to go any place in Russia they would like, they would want to go.

So it took few weeks afterwards, but we were told. And they did let us even see the letter that came to our



commander asking, I mean requesting the release of Czech citizens. And that was, of course, all settled by the Czech and Polish temporary embassy in Australia at that time. That was towards the end of '41. That's right, October, that was the holiday when this one.

Towards October '41, towards the end of '41, with this one, we were supposedly released from this one, from Russia. And they told us that they will, this one, that they will transport us. This time it wasn't just like cattle supposed to be, not supposed to have been. But that they were going to transport us all to Asiatic Russia, in the Southern part of Russia, meaning like Pakistan, Uzbekistan, those republics which are in the warm part of the country, I mean the Southern part.

So we were getting away from the cold winter. Of course, by then over there was already snow and very cold weather. Our feet, our hands, everything was frozen. We had frostbite. It was terrible. So they released us from there and put us on those were again, they were not passenger trains. Those were cattle trains. But they were open. Do you follow me? Without a top. And on those open trains they transported. This one, they start transporting us from Siberia down to Uzbekistan.

That trip was also very difficult. We were able to-- we were stopping every day for a few hours. And we were able to converse at times with other people from the other wagon, from the other trains. And one day, we even ran across a cousin of my father's. But he didn't want to, this one didn't want to let on that he knows us, because he was afraid because of my father again.

So anyhow, my mother was again very sick on that train. She was bleeding. She was this one. It was just-- it was a terrible thing. anyhow, with that train, we got to Uzbekistan. We got to Samarkand. We got to Samarkand.

Now, I don't remember exactly where it was before we landed in Samarkand, or on the way and someplace where the train stopped. One of the guards, one of the Russian soldiers came up to my mother. And one of the men, a Jewish man who was helping the Russians. I mean, to be on a good side, he was able to have special privileges. And he came and explained to my mother that my father was able to send visas for her and for both of us to Manila in the Philippines. And visa and passports for us to this one, for us to leave from Manila for the States.

So the papers were all waiting there in Manila. And we were told-- shall I stop? And we were told that we have to cross the border before the 31st of December, '41. I mean the visa would expire otherwise. The visa was issued around the 1st of December. No I'm sorry it was issued in November. We were told around the 1st of December when we arrived there. We had a month to cross the border, and all the transportation was taken care of as far as getting to this one, getting to Manila.

And from there, of course, I mean we were supposed to arrive in Manila at the American embassy, where they had our visas and passports. We're supposed to arrive there. And from there we would eventually get to the United States. Should I stop here?

Why don't we stop and take a break right now?