

I'm Sylvia Abrams. Our Holocaust survivor today is Mark Moss. This project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland section. Please tell us first your name and how old you are.

My name is Mark Moss, and my age is 62.

Where do you live?

At Beachwood.

Tell us your address, 44124 East Silsby Road.

Do you presently work?

No, disabled.

What kind of work did you do?

Commercial artist.

Are you married?

Yes.

What's your wife's name?

Rena.

Does she work?

No.

Do you have any children.

Yes.

Tell us their names and ages.

I have a son which was born in Israel. His name is Abe Moss. He's now going to be 35. He's a lawyer. He's in Corpus Christi making a nice living. Then we have a daughter which is born here. And her name is Simone Moss. And she finished university school in Columbus, Ohio. And she's a dental hygienist. A year ago, she got married. And her husband is still studying. And next year, in June probably, he's going to be a dentist.

Do you have any grandchildren?

Not yet.

Not yet. Let's go back in time. And we're going to go back to just before the war. Would tell us what your life was like before the war, what your name was at that time, and let's begin there. My name was Marek Mosowich.

I was a student in junior high, not even finishing junior high, because the war started in 1939. I was only 16 years old. And when the Germans start occupying Poland, on the third day they were in Warsaw--

You lived in Warsaw?

Yeah, I was born and lived in Warsaw.

OK, let's start with your town of Warsaw. Tell us a little bit about what Warsaw was like at that time, how large it was.

Warsaw was, the size of the city I don't know exactly. But all I know is there were 400,000 Jewish people in Warsaw at that time. And the situation, again, my perspective, we were doing a nice living. There was some which couldn't make it the way we did. But we made it very good.

Tell me about your family. First, how many brothers and sisters did you have, and who lived in your house?

My family was a big family. We were 10 children plus father and mother. And father, mother, and--

Tell me about-- what ages were the 10 children ranging from?

Oh, I was before the youngest. The youngest was Isaac, Itzhak in Hebrew. Itzhak was killed right after the war in Stuttgart. I found them there when I came. From all the 10 children, we have five left, only five. The oldest brother which was in England died four years ago.

So in an age range, what was the age range between the children, how many years? I would say the difference was between them two years, average.

I see.

You were older than 16 when the war broke out?

16 with some, plus.

Were you still living at home with your parents?

Yeah.

Were your other brothers and sisters living at home?

Yes, there was my sister, which is now in Canada, Karola, Carol. There was also the oldest sister, which in Paris. She used to live at that time, she used to live with us. My brother, which is now in America, which he issued papers for me. He's the oldest brother right now. And he wasn't at home. He had his own studio in Warsaw. And he lives all by himself.

Tell me how did your family make a living when the war broke out? We had until the war, as I said, we made a living, not a luxurious. We had a store, manufacturing goods.

What kind of goods?

It was mostly for dresses, shirts, mostly woman things.

Did your mother work in the store also?

Yes. Father and mother and my sisters, two sisters too.

Did you have to help your family?

No. I was too young. All I did is I helped my brother. He had his own studio on Zlota, Zlota Street. So I usually after school, I used to go there and help him. And in the same time, he taught me this.

You were telling me about your brother's studio. It was 1 and 1/2 rooms. And what kind of art did he do there?

Commercial art, advertising, papers, magazines. One of the finest magazines in Poland, like KINO, which is movie. We used to call it KINO. And he's also a humorist, especially a humorist weekly was Szpilki. Szpilki in English would be pins.

And he taught you the craft of being a commercial artist?

Yeah. He taught me, and also I helped him a lot. And finally when I had to do the job during the war, I knew a little bit and finally I sharpened my skill in Israel.

How would you describe your family's life? Who made the major decisions at home?

I would say both of us, both my parents. Because you're talking about woman [? sleep. ?] My mother used to be everything.

How did you get along with your parents and your brothers and sisters?

We didn't have any arguments. Of course, my father was Orthodox. My mother was Orthodox. But as far as we come out from school, 13, 14 years, everybody was on his own. He couldn't fight. He didn't fight. And he couldn't fight.

How'd your family get along with the friends and neighbors in the area? Oh, we have friends, which are very good. We didn't see them too often. It wasn't like here in the United States. Because everybody is by himself and in his business. But whenever I have the time, we saw them. But were you friendly with both Jews and non-Jews.

Oh, yeah. In fact, I didn't know too much about non-Jews.

What would you say was a typical day for your family like?

It was Passover probably time where the whole family came together. It was also Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Shavuot These are the holidays, which was always recognized. But otherwise--

You mentioned your father was very religious. Did the family--

Not very. He was religious.

He was religious.

But he was not what they called a-- he wasn't like-- he was more of a businessman, but also religious.

Did your family belong to a synagogue?

Yeah.

Do you remember? Did it have a name?

Yeah.

It belonged to a rabbi. We didn't have here, names. It was a synagogue was a rabbi had the synagogues, and my father's rabbi was the [NON-ENGLISH]

Do you remember any other holidays? You mentioned Passover and Shavuot. Do you remember any special celebrations or special occasions in the family?

Oh, yeah. We had the Lag BaOmer. I don't know. You know Lag BaOmer?

Sure.

We had also Shavuot, which was a good holiday. Happy holiday. Every Saturday was a nice get together. In fact, my brother used to come over for dinner.

Let's talk a little bit about politics in the family. Did Zionism or any other political groups play any part in your family's life?

Not that I know. I myself was Betar when I was young, because I listened too often to Jabotinsky used to come to Warsaw. The last time before the war he came, and he warned all of us, get out. But nobody listened.

Were you a very active member of Betar?

No. I just liked him, that's all. I was in Maccabi.

What was the Maccabi? Maccabi is a sport, a unit, it's gymnastics sport. Usually used to go there for gymnastics and also play what they call it football, not that football, that's soccer.

Soccer. How about did socialism or any other political groups like that, was the family involved with any of them?

No. In fact, I disliked them, still up today.

Were there any other community organizations that the family was involved in?

Oh, we had all the organizations in Warsaw. I have it in my article. I write about it. We have PPS, we have the Bundists. We have the Hashomer Hatzair. You know them?

Yes. Did your family belong to any of them in particular?

No. Just the Betar group that you were involved with. I wasn't involved. I didn't belong. Just I liked to come there and listen to the programs and things.

I see. Let's talk about some of the other things about life in Warsaw and about life in your family. What was the main language people spoke in your home?

It was various. Because as I say, my father never, not that he could, but he rather let it go the way. Because he didn't want to argue with us. So the older children, I was one of the youngest. And my youngest brother the youngest which was after me, so we mostly we spoke my sisters, we spoke Polish. But with my father and mother, Yiddish.

So Polish and Yiddish were the two languages at home? What kind of books were in your house? Do you remember?

Yeah, I remember. It was Chaim Nachman Bialik, Herzl. And we have the Tanakh. We have Gemara. My father had a big thing with Gemara. As a matter of fact, he used to always teach some other people from the synagogue. They used to come Saturday and teach them. He was very, very intellectual.

Was there a theater or a concert Hall in your neighborhood? Was there a theater or a concert hall in your neighborhood?

Not far from us, it was on the Dzielna.

Did you go very often?

Oh, yeah. Bialy-- no Bialy, Bozek was there. And Dzigan and Schumacher, if you remember them. I saw it a couple of

times. Ida Kaminski, I didn't like her now. But--

But you saw her in Warsaw?

Oh, yeah. I saw her.

So that was mostly Yiddish theater that you went to?

Yiddish. But I've seen a lot of movies, good movies, American movies,

Do you remember any particular ones before the war.

Oh Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy two movies. I remember Eddie Cantor. I don't remember the names but I remember we used to go very often to movies.

Besides movies, was your family involved in any other entertainment or did you participate in sports a lot? You mentioned the soccer before.

Yeah. That's all. I was 16 years plus. We didn't have that luxury which we have in the United States. At 16 years, you have to help your father and mother.

How about vacations? Did the family ever have enough money to go on one?

Yeah, this we had every summer.

Where did you go?

Not far from Warsaw, I don't know whether you would know, Otwock.

That was in the resort area?

Yeah. Otwock. Every year we have Otwock, the whole family.

How long did you go for?

During vacation time, the children were all the time there. But my father and mother used to come over the weekend.

What kind of a place did you stay at?

A very nice place. It's like a little water there, [NON-ENGLISH] was water, and barracks mostly, nice, clean, beautiful air.

And the children spent the summer there?

Yeah.

Let's talk a little bit about yourself personally. You've given us a nice picture of what your family was like. How do you remember yourself in those days? First, what did you look like?

Oh, I didn't know exactly who am I. You see, you have so many happenings there that you don't know exactly what you're going to say. Since I was busy with school, I was busy with Chumash. I had to know exactly my father when I was 10, 11, 12, 13. Later on he, gave up on me. And then I had to go after this my mother always, she always watched me that I should go and help Jerry, my brother is Jerry.

And she was very, very happy that I did. And that's all. Then I went, if I have a little time, I went to Maccabi, gymnastic, box. I boxed too a little bit, not much, amateur.

What did you look like?

You will see my picture there.

Do you have a picture of yourself in there? Why don't you show it to us, what you looked like. Is it in there?

Not here.

Oh.

I should have brung.

OK. Why don't you describe yourself what you looked like? Were you tall? Were you short?

No, I was 5'6", 5'6". 5'6", 5'7".

Were you a husky, thin?

Oh, yeah. Not husky, I was strong.

You were strong.

But skinny.

My son is the same as I did.

I see. And what color was your hair then?

Blonde, blue eyes.

Blonde with the blue eyes. You still have the blue eyes.

That's why I made it.

What did you think of yourself at that time? Did you think of yourself brave or sensitive?

We didn't think about these things. You didn't think of yourself as--

We're too young for that. And yeah, this is a picture which I came to Feldafing, to Munich, right after I deserted the army. This is the way it was.

Oh, so there we can see what you looked like. You were very handsome man.

I believe so.

Yes, I would say so. OK. Now that we all have a better picture of what you were like at that time, tell me, what schools did you attend?

Krynski on Miodowa.

To what grade did you go?

Mala matura, which means, here it would be probably the sixth grade here, sixth or seventh. And in Poland, it was like in England. You have it probably the fourth or the fifth.

Was this a Jewish school or a Polish school?

It wasn't a Jewish school.

It was a Polish government school.

Polish government, but the Jewish-- Jewish and Polacks together.

When the war broke out, had you already left school or were you still going to school?

I left school. No. I was in school.

You were still in school.

I couldn't continue.

But you had planned to continue school.

I probably would.

OK.

You never know but.

Who are your friends?

Oh, I have a whole bunch of friends. But they're not alive anymore.

Who were your friends at the time when you were in school there? Was there anybody in particular you remember?

Yeah, I remember the names. I don't know. My names are gone. Sevek, Lutek, Janusz. Marian.

Those are the gang of kids you hung around with in school?

Yeah.

What did you like to do together?

Always played on the street, not like here. After school, we used to go and play in the street, with I don't know what the-- kind of a measurement, you measure, you clip it, and measure.

And that was the game you used to like to do together.

Yes, more or less and then soccer.

Did you at that time plan to be a commercial artist? Was that your hope?

As I said, I went-- my mother always watched me. And I had to go to my brother and help him, and I learned. And that's all. At that time I didn't think what I'm going to do.

You didn't at that time?

No. But I am very happy that I did. Because if I wouldn't have that profession, I'd be in trouble during the war.

Let's talk now and turn a little bit to antisemitism in those days. Were you aware of any antisemitism before the war?

Oh, yeah. This we know.

What kinds of things were you aware of?

Well, in Warsaw, for instance, especially before the war it started, as far as I realized it started before me, I guess in 1936. I remember that they wouldn't let the Endeks. You know the Endeks? The Falanga. Polacks wouldn't let Jewish people go into the stores. And you couldn't do anything. Finally, they came to the-- it was not far from us was what they call it, a park. Saski Park. The name was Saski.

A lot of Jews were there and Polacks too. But lately, they started all kinds of pogroms, until some Jewish people clobbered them. And that's that. But that was terrific. It was very good. Do you remember any particular plans to fight this antisemitism, or just the incident in the park?

Well, all of us were active, whether you like it or not. You have to be active.

Now, the war broke out in Poland in September 1, 1939. What happened when the war first broke out? How were you aware that there was a war?

We heard all the time it was a foreign minister, a Polish foreign minister, Jozef Beck, actually he was a spy for Germany. He was from German inherent. And we knew exactly that the war was going to start. But when we saw-- we didn't have television but we heard on the radio, that Molotov and Ribbentrop met, and we knew that they're were going to start the war.

Because Chamberlain used to go back and forth. You remember these things?

Yes.

Peace, brought peace to all the generations.

You mentioned that you were aware of incidents from 1936 on in Warsaw. When the war began, what actually happened to your family? What was going on?

My family, first of all, the second day they bombed this area. It wasn't Jewish, typical Jewish. But for some reason they bombed it. After two days they bombed the real Jewish area, which was Nalewki, Pawia, Sliska. This is the Jewish area, but Ogrodowa wasn't so much Jewish. But they bombed completely.

I'm going to just interrupt you a minute then. Ogrodowa, your street, was not in the main Jewish section of Warsaw?

No, no.

OK.

There was a few Jews here and a few there. It was the better neighborhood, I mean whatever it is. So they start bombing and everything was ruined. In fact, my mother bought-- I don't remember exactly but she had quite the food. And when they bombed, we didn't have any food. So we run, run, and everybody runs. And then we start, and still bombed and shrapnels from there and everything.

And then we found out that my mother is not anymore with us. And my oldest brother, which came from the other

neighborhood he thought he is going to be saved. As I said before, and he was not with us anymore. We start looking. I with my sister, which she is not alive, anymore Sara. Running from one gate to another gate, and the bombs coming in.

And finally, we found out that everything was ruined. Finally, we found out that in our neighborhood was a big hospital, [NON-ENGLISH] street. Then we found, we go. We went there. We went there. And finally, in every room there was people dying. And everybody instead of asking them, they ask me, where is my sister? I'm dying. Tell them.

So finally, we found out one thing that when my mother and my oldest brother ran away, they ran. They couldn't run too far. So they ran to [NON-ENGLISH] which is not far from us. And we start looking in all the gates. As I said, the big gates.

You had mentioned that the apartments were set with courtyards and gates.

Yeah.

So that they were enclosed yards for each of the buildings.

Yeah, and this gate inside, and we went to every gate. And finally found my brother and my mother.

They were hiding in another apartment courtyard?

No, they were killed.

Oh, they were killed. So you found their bodies?

Yeah. What date was this?

And we buried them on the backyard.

In the backyard of that particular--

Yeah, we couldn't go to the cemetery. After the war, after the war, after they quiet down when the Germans came in, we took him out from what they call it?

From this yard where you had buried the bodies?

Yeah, from the backyard, and move them over to the cemetery, to the Jewish cemetery.

What day of the war was this then?

At the start, September the 1st.

So this was on the first day?

The second day.

On the second day?

Was Yom Kippur too.

Yeah, it was Yom Kippur. So your children, you children found them?

Yeah. I and my sister. She's not alive. Yes, my brother-- my older brother which is not alive either, he lost a leg. And then finally they killed him. So this beginning to the war that meant you children were left without a mother, with just

your father and 9 children. So what happened to you?

So my father, he was a smart man. And my mother was not alive anymore. And my sister which is now in Paris, and she lived also through on Aryan papers. She is a good dressmaker and a designer too. And she had a good clientele among Polacks, and among most of them were officers from pre-war, the wives. There was an area in Warsaw, which was called Zoliborz. I don't know whether you heard about that.

Yeah, that was a very exclusive area.

Yeah. And my sister had a baby. Their husband left, went with the army, the Polish army. My older brother went with the Polish army. And my sister took the baby, the baby was only maybe two months or so, and put them among the officers, of the wives of the officers in Zoliborz. So that nobody would know. But it so happened that they found out, the Polacks found out. They took away the baby and she didn't see it anymore.

So she had on another neighborhood, not ours, her neighborhood was still not ruined. So we moved in there for the time being.

So, the whole family was moved into the married sister's home.

There wasn't too much family because.

How many were left at home then? Me, my sister which is now in Canada, who else was there? My sister and my father.

The three of you moved in with the married sister?

Yeah, and my youngest brother.

So four of you moved in with the married sister. The other brothers had already been called into the army.

The other was killed, injured.

And one was killed.

And the other ones were in the army?

Yeah.

Did you discuss what you should all do at this point?

No. We didn't discuss these things. These things came spontaneously. You always think all the time, you don't--

So there was no way to make any plans? There was no way to make any plans?

No, we didn't make. How would you make plans? We didn't know the Germans are going to attack today, or tomorrow, or whether they're going to attack at all. All we knew there's Ribbentrop-Molotov. Then I said even, some of my friends I said, this is the end. This is the war. And that's how it was. Because if Ribbentrop and Molotov could meet, these are the two biggest enemies. They made a big deal.

Tell me how long was the family then living with the sister. What happened next? So now I'm coming to it. That my sister moved out, the one in Canada. She moved out to a friend of hers, which she knew before the war and he was in Bialystok on the other side where the Russians were. She went there. So I thought I'm not going to go. I'm going to stay.

Then all of a sudden, I was living-- my oldest sister which in Paris, she suggested to me that I should put some coats, some be like an Aryan, like a Pollack. And I did this. And I know the language, the Polish language good. And then at

that time also I picked up the identification card from a friend of ours, which he was killed. The name was Marian Nowakowski.

Tell me tell me a little bit about that. Were you with him when he was killed?

Yeah.

Tell us about the incident where the shelling--

You see, the young people, and I was at 16. He was 16, at the same age. We had to be in charge of watching, because they were bombing all the time and shrapnels and bombing. That anyone who is not from Warsaw or not from that street could come in, and take away things or food, mainly food. So we had to watch these things, and close the gates closed. And all of a sudden, I hear both of us at the same time. Zzzzzzz, and very close.

I start running. He was running. And he got it. And I didn't.

Do you remember when this was, what month? Was this still in September?

That was still in September. It was probably the 5th or the 6th of September.

So it was in the first week? This all happened very fast, one thing right after the other.

Yeah, very fast.

And then when he died, you took his name then.

Not that I took, I called the parents. Because they're on the same-- and I told them. And they were very angry and all that. Finally, they took him upstairs. And it was dark. And then finally I saw something, some papers. I can use it. So I took it.

And tell us where you went with the papers. What happened to you then?

Papers, I went to be on the Aryan. First of all, the ghetto didn't start until the end of '41, I believe, '41 or I don't remember names.

Yeah, they closed it toward the end of '41.

Yeah. So at that time, I was running from one place to another, selling something, selling this, all that you can make a few dollars. And then my base was my sister, which was on [NON-ENGLISH]. And finally, when they closed up the Jewish neighborhoods, and they opened up-- they put that wall 10 feet wall, and start a ghetto. So I said, I'm not going to be in the ghetto.

So I run away, and run here and there. And finally somebody saw me. And you were carrying this Nowakowski's papers with you?

Yeah, yeah. Somebody saw me, and he didn't know even German, son of-- he was a Polack. He didn't know even German, but all he knows is Jude. The German Gestapo was all the time. They used to give you soups in the street, probably.

There were public soup kitchens.

Yeah, a big line and all of a sudden he saw me there. And he didn't say anything. He goes there, and I looked after him. And he said he goes a German. He said, Jude.

Now, this was in 1941.

1941, yeah, '41. So for two years you had managed to sell and make a living, and go back to your sisters using these Aryan papers?

Yeah, yeah.

And you were 17, 18 years old. You were going to all these different places in Warsaw. In all those two years you got away with it.

Yeah. Well, I used to sell a few things. I don't remember exactly. I also did some artwork, a little bit, signs for Germans, the [NON-ENGLISH].

So now in 1941, this man tries to pick you out.

Yeah.

So what happened to you?

He ran after me with that SS, couldn't reach me. I went ran away, ran away, and then finally I saw a train I didn't know where the train goes. Finally, I found out the inside it goes to MaÅ,kinie. MaÅ,kinie is the border. MaÅ,kinie was a small town you said.

Yeah.

That was closer to the Russian border.

It's on the Russian border.

So when you ran-- you didn't run--

It's on the Russian border. It's in Poland. But at that time it was on the Russian border, because they came from the other side.

From the war.

But when you say you ran, you didn't run just a short time then. You ran quite a long ways to get to there, didn't you?

No, it took me no more, not even a day. When you run, you know how to run. Yeah. So you got to MaÅ,kinie. And then what happened to you? MaÅ,kinie I start going a little further, because MaÅ,kinie was at the end of the line.

Of the train, of the train line?

Yeah. And then on the other side was a train, and I started looking for the train further inside. I didn't know the Russians. I didn't know that deal between Russia and Germany. You know that Poland is Poland? LwÅ³w was Polish. Bialystok was Polish. So finally, I went a little more East From MaÅ,kinie and came to a little station. Three-- I don't remember even. They came for no way. Davai. The Russian soldiers.

And they arrested you?

Yeah.

Before you continue there, I want to go back to one thing. In Warsaw, when you ran off, did your family know that you had left?

I was always in contact with them.

So they knew that you were going to run. You got time to go back and tell them.

Yeah, I always have signs with my sister. My sister gave it to my father.

So they knew that you were going?

Yeah.

And did you make any way that you were going to get in contact with them or not?

We didn't plan on these things. If I can make a contact, I'll make it. But you never know.

What kind of advice did they give you?

The only advice is my sister gave me is go. I have a child, and I have the father taking care. You go. Because the youngest sister, which is in Canada, she's older than I am. She sent her too to East. And she had a boyfriend before the war. And she found out that the boyfriend is in Bialystok. So she went also through all kinds of ways, and she came there.

So did you ever get in contact with them again? Or that was the last you saw of them?

Yeah, that's what I'm going to tell you now.

OK.

When they arrested me, I didn't know that with that train, that Russian train, I didn't know that when stop on the Russian territory, real Russian territory, the track is wider.

You know that?

They had different gauges to the tracks in Russia than in Poland.

Yeah, not Poland. It's all over Europe the same. But Russian is much wider. So we had to wait on the border, the old border. I didn't know exactly where it was, because nobody told me, and I was also closed down. And we went six weeks until we got to Novosibirsk.

Now you mentioned on this train, were you the only one who was picked up, or were there other people on the train?

No, others were.

Were they mostly young men?

They picked up from all kinds of places. And they put together. When they have what they call a [NON-ENGLISH], you know what's a [NON-ENGLISH]?

No, you have to tell.

Echelon.

Yes, an echelon. OK.

Echelon.

Now this was a group then of all kinds of Polish people?

Yeah.

That had been picked up by the Russians?

Spies, Polish, kulakis, you know what kulaki?

Yes. I am a spy and a kulak. But that's how their thinking is.

Now, as far as you knew there were no Jews in the group but yourself?

No. There was some.

There were some Jews in the group?

Yeah, but I only knew in my wagon, there was a whole bunch of wagons.

And yet, you were on this train six weeks going to the border?

6 weeks.

Did they give you food or water?

No, no. Water. [NON-ENGLISH]

So they only gave you water, as you went through. And did they let you get out and exercise as the train stopped?

No.

Nothing at all?

No.

Slumped in 60 people in a wagon, no toilet, no nothing. People died there, yeah, some of them.

What happened when you got to the Russian border?

Well, the Russian border they started that echelon, which they picked up from Poland all kinds of-- and then they brought them over to the Russian border, and that they created a big echelon.

That's a unit, actually. They tried to make a military unit out of all of you?

No, just arrested to Siberia, to the camps.

Because you told me you were put in a Russian jail there? Was this is where this was?

Yeah.

OK.

After we came, after six weeks, we came to Novosibirsk, directly to a jail, a big jail. And there was again, very little

food. Rats were going. This I never saw in my life that kind of rat. And they were-- not they were not afraid of us. And nobody was afraid of them.

And finally, sitting there for about a week, two weeks, yeah, in the meantime, in the middle of the night they would call me in a basement, dark, lights on the table. Tell me, where were you spying? I said, I am not a spy. All they wanted is to sign it, so that they have a paper to send to Moscow that they arrested spies.

But I would never sign it. Finally, they took me out and they sent me to a camp.

What camp was this?

Camp [NON-ENGLISH], Irkutsk Oblast. You know Oblast?

You'll have to tell me exactly where it is. Irkutsk is Vladivostok.

So it was near Vladivostok. But that's quite a ways into--

Near is not it's not like here, near.

But this is in Siberia.

It was 1,000 miles from Vladivostok.

So this is in Siberia, oh far.

Very close. That's right in the Asian part of Russia?

It was white nights, bears.

So this was already-- this all had started in September. And this was 1941. You're well into 1942 in the winter by then?

Yeah.

OK. Did they give you--

Yeah, '42 I in that camp.

It was in the winter when you were in Siberia then?

Terrible.

Did they give you warm clothing?

No. They didn't give you anything. As I said before, they don't care about people.

So in this camp, who was in the camp, people who they thought were spies?

Russians.

Yes.

They wouldn't give me with Polacks.

So you were with the Russians. You didn't speak any Russian though.

No, but I learned. I had to learn. Now I know Russian. But see, they are murderers. They wouldn't put you together with a Polack or with a Jew. Always you have to be separate. You cannot make any scandals or, protest. So that's how it was.

How long were you there?

When the war started in '42, the Germans attacked in June?

Yes, they started the attack on-- I think no, '41, in the winter of '41 the Germans began to attack Russia.

'42.

But then in '42, they were really trying to get Russia.

'42 I remember. Because in '42, we didn't know exactly. But all of a sudden, it was in '42, in June, I believe it was not far from winter. It must have been October. Somebody came. I don't know, from Novosibirsk or somewhere. And they talked to me. He had a meeting with me, because I was the only Polack there.

So everyone else in that particular camp were all Russians. And you were the only Polish person? How did they know you were there?

Oh, they know. They know papers. They have the papers. He came and said, you're going to be free. You are Slovak. We are brothers. Russians and Polacks, and we have an army.

So tell me exactly what he told you and we'll wind up this tape with where he's come to you. He told you you're Slovaks and brothers.

And I'm going to go to war against the Germans, the beast, the Germans beast. And I saw, listened to all that, and I said, to heck, you're preaching me. Finally, it was better than Siberia and the camp. Then finally the next day he comes around and he said, soon you're going to have transportation. Because we didn't have transportation there. It was all in the middle of nowhere.

It was sani, sani. That's horse. Yeah specially came for me. And he went, oh about I would say three hours to the train. And they called up the train from Vladivostok to stop in a certain city and pick me up.

So at this point you're 20 years old.

Yeah. You've just spent the winter in Siberia in this camp, the only Pole with these Russians, and you're now going to go to fight the Germans.

Yeah.

And on the next tape, we'll find out what happened to you.

OK. Now before-- all right, finished? Now what I missed here's one thing. I missed--

OK. We'll get it on the second tape.