

OK. We decided that night is going to be the best night to walk out from this place and go to the other place.

You had to walk?

We all-- who's going to take us? We dressed as women the men, and with those little babushkas what the farmers wear, and baskets with eggs. Everybody has a basket, three eggs, whatever. If they catch us or something, the language we know. Germany, I could speak German to them. Polish, I can speak Polish to them. Were they going to cover my face to see I'm a Jew or not? Everything I have to just answer.

So we walk by. And of course, it's always a [NON-ENGLISH]. It's always somebody watches the-- where they had stations, like a station of so many soldiers, or somebody in certain places. We had to walk by something like this, regardless which part of the city we will go. There was all four corners.

And we walk by, and he come out and he said, stop. OK. Where are you going, in German. This was a German. And I says, we're going back to the farm. What do you have? Eggs. I was afraid he would come close to me. I cannot lie. He said, go. I couldn't eat your eggs. I would say kielbasa, or vodka, or something else, he would stop me.

And take it or something.

But eggs, go. They had plenty eggs.

Back to the people.

Back to the place, and we did the same thing. We take the same thing. And we moved into that place. And that was important for us.

Yes.

And we stayed there. We didn't have any contact with nobody. It was very primitive, old people, farmers. No newspaper, no radio, no anything. We couldn't send them to the city to buy papers, because it would be suspicious. Farmers know who is ignorant and who is not educated.

We lived the kind of life we possibly could live, very boring, very uncomfortable, short of money. My brother went out to a near farm, where he left all his clothes, all his necessary things with a friend of his. Since we so short, he was hoping when he survived, he needs the clothes. They didn't bother taking away from him. But since we were so short, and the farmer really didn't have enough money to buy even for the cattle food, so we felt for him.

So my brother, on a Saturday night, he went out to that other farm. And he said, I have a couple suits here. I have to take him and sell it. He said, I buy it from you. He said, OK. Whatever you want to pay me for it. He said, 30 zlotys. He said fine, 30 zlotys, and visit with a friend of his for a while, and walk back to us. Walking back, maybe a mile or whatever from there, he followed, took away the 30 zlotys and killed him.

We see one day he's not back. Next day he's not back. We thought he visit with those people because they were friends. One good day, the farmer come down he said, in the city, they say they killed another Jew. Because every day you could hear. And my mother immediately, for some reason, she felt like that that's the one. She said to him, they know who they killed? No, a young man.

She send him back to the city. She says, find out what kind of clothes he wear. Somebody will tell you something, and then come back. And he said with a jacket. Describe the jacket. That's how. Then we know that it's my older brother.

Who was it that-- was it his friend that bought the [INAUDIBLE]?

Yes. For \$30 they killed him for this. That's the way. That's the kind of time we live. And in a lot of cases, frankly, I

think the Polish people was as guilty as the Germans. They did more harm to the Polish Jews than the Germans. Germans took us to work, put us in the crematorium, because that was their fuhrer on them to do. And their claim they had to believe in his philosophy and the party people, even got paid him for it.

And time changed. But still they had their own explanation when they come to judgment. But the Poles didn't have any interest whatsoever to do anything like that, because after all, their country was already occupied by the Germans. And the Germans should be to them somebody, not a friend, but an enemy. Why help an enemy? That didn't do it to help the enemy. They done it for a lousy \$30.

OK.

That's another story. That's everything if we go back in history, and people are not ignorant, we know that we're all human. We all have some kind of evil time of life. That's what happened. So we lost one. That was already April 15, 1944.

We continued with the shortage. In January, Russia, the Russians start coming in to Poland, in '45, January '45. We heard the planes cruising around those farms and those little cities. We was wondering, being underground, what would planes doing on the farm. We know that the Germans have no reason now. They already took over Poland. They have no reason to be in that part of the country.

If we know the map, we know what part of the world they should be now. And knowing they was fighting with Russia, there should be far, far away from that part where we are. But who can tell. We had no newspaper, no radio. How can we even say? We asked the man if he heard anything, what's going on, the people on the farm, I'm talking.

And he said, yes, the planes was going through Warsaw. It was throwing bombs, and they say the Germans are losing the war. OK. It's good news. But how soon or what? One good day, he's knocking on our things. He said, folks, you're free. You can come out for me.

And my husband says, uh-uh. No [? Brzezinski, ?] we're not coming out. We thought they wanted to do something to us. He said, the Russians are here. So we opened a little bit. We said, [? Brzezinski, ?] from where you heard that news? He said, the Russians are in your city. Everybody on the farm is hiding, because we don't know what they're going to do to us.

But if you Jews, you can go back to the city. And we said if you're hiding, why would they be so good to us? We hiding with you. Because another day, we got out from the bunker. And we had no clothes. It was the wintertime. It was the 17th of January. We had no clothes, able to walk, and such. And Poland is very cold in this time of the year. And the ice on the ground, we have no shoes, everything deteriorated in five years what we had.

So the lady, the old lady, one she was so poor, gave us blankets from the horses, torn, rags, you know something not worth even saving for a rag. But it's still something you cover yourself up. And we walked back to the city. We come back to the city.

Everybody was in turmoil because everybody was again afraid of the Russians. We're still not free. We're still enter some kind of-- we settled in a house, because everything was occupied by non-owners. But Germans supplied the houses for whoever worked for them, whoever did something for the German army, or whatever. So we couldn't get in our house. A postman was living there.

So we went to my sister-in-law's house. We moved in. Another couple coming in a day later, a single man come in. Grouped together, there was that particular city had 3,000 Jews. By the time they all got in the city, we have 17 alive.

17 from the 3,000.

From the 3,000, where they was hiding, was in bunkers, in camps, or whatever. We grouped all 17 in the same area. We was afraid to separate.

Did you know them?

Yes. A small city. We lived here for a while. Matter of fact, I went to my-- I was a very close friend with the mayor's sister. She was my age. And mayor over there was the burgermeister, if you know what that means. We lived close. I told you we lived in a good neighborhood. Across the street from us, we have an apoteka. A drug store, whatever you call it.

And his wife's sister was my best friend. So I left all my clothes, all my goodies with them. When I come back, I says, clothes, I have no problem because Francesca [NON-ENGLISH]

I will stop and she will give me back my clothes. I went in. And I though she's passed out seeing me. I didn't know the reason, because she felt sorry for me, the way I look, or the reason. I didn't know why. So I start-- I was waiting for a good answer. And she said you know something? I wouldn't want you to be here.

I said, I don't intend to be here. I'd just like for you to give me some of my clothes, also shoes something, so I can start getting dressed. She says, I'm sorry to tell you. There's no clothes left, nothing. Your jewelry, your clothes, your coat-- everything, the police took out from my house.

I said are you sure you have nothing left? And if she would be really a sincere person, she could have given me something from her clothes, if it's true. But that's what I'm trying to tell you. And I said, how the police know to take my clothes? She said, you was too popular. Everybody know what kind of clothes you wear. And they come in, they know-- the jealousy was so extreme-- know that what you wear.

I said, what can you give me? I cannot give you nothing. I want you to leave. I said, can you give me some potatoes? We're really hungry. She give me a couple potatoes. That was my best friend.

OK. So no reason for me to worry and stay in that city or do anything. I said to my husband, we have to move. We have too many friends here from the past, but they wouldn't want us. They don't want us period. Because they occupied in our homes. They have our goods. We stuffed up so many different friends with goodies, and goodies, and goodies. And everybody was afraid we want everything back, or want some back, or whatever.

So I said, it's no place for us. Let's go someplace else. I was even I was young. I was always capable to do something. I could sew. I could write. I could read. I could do anything. I want to do. We packed. And I stopped a Russian truck, and they took us to a different city, me and my husband.

I settled that city. I know that city from before. Sosnowiec, I told you. I went to that city. I start peddling around. I see in clothes is good there. This is three miles away from the German border. We could walk over from one place to another. It was open already. There was no-- of course there was always Germany and Poland had a border in Katowice, a [NON-ENGLISH], where we could go back and forth without worry about climbing or whatever.

I bought some clothes. I exchanged for food. I went on the Union Station. I bought food from the farmers in exchange for clothes. The people, they need food, because the big city had a very good shortage of everything. And from one to another, I make myself a little money. I opened a store, a grocery store. I don't know too much about grocery stores, but who cannot sell groceries? What is it? Food.

I worked in that store for a while. And I was very unhappy. And my mother, my brother, is still in that city. But my brother was a very capable person. For you have a fact already, that he took us out from camp by age 15. And now he's age almost 20.

So I was not comfortable. And I worried about. And I contact him constantly because I wanted him to move away from that city. He said, he's doing well financially. He was a good mechanic too, by 15 years, already he drove a car. He's fixing bicycles, cars, sewing machines, and he's selling it.

Buys an old one, a broken one, fixes it, sell it. So he was doing pretty good for a while. But for me being so restless, not having him close to me since I have nobody, I lost everybody. And that's the only thing I have, my mother and my brother. It's the whole family from 96 people. It was a family of 96. He decided he's going to move. Find them a place there.

And he, matter of fact, he come to see the place. And he's supposed to move on a certain day. He came to see the place. He bought a lot of stuff to take home with him from Katowice. Well, he brought everything home it was May 1, 1945. It was already four months after liberation. Coming home at the truck with goodies, going into his house, the AK stopped him and killed him. It was four months after. He was 20 years old. So I lost another one.

I went back to that city, packed my mother. And I took her with me to Sosnowiec. And decided that there's no room for us, not in Sosnowiec, not in [PLACE NAME] We have to go someplace else. We have to forget about that country. We have to forget about that part of the world. There was choices. It was two choices. You can go with a visa to the United States, or to Israel.

Israel was not having yet a country. That was '45. But they accepted people. It took a long time. Like you have to register. And who is coming from, it takes a year, or two, or three, whatever. But it's a question when you get your visa. Our visas come in, in 1952-- no. Pardon me. But in the meantime, I have to move away from Poland. This is number one.

We packed again what we have. We moved to Germany.

You moved to Germany?

We moved. We took a road, wherever we go and get stopped or hold back, we stay. We was traveling. We was in Czechoslovakia. We was in Linz. We was in cities, all through the road till we finally come across in Linz some people from a neighbor city we know. And they say they're going to Regensburg. Who is in Regensburg? We don't know. We heard it's a city. Let's go.

We went. The whole group from that camp over there in Linz went to Regensburg. We went with them. We settled in Regensburg. That was in '45, September. Such a fast transactions in life.

Yeah. How did you get there, by train?

By halting Russian trucks, stop. Take me. Three miles, six miles, 20 miles, whatever. Rest of it, we have to walk. We walk. We walk through forests, because it was both-- it was [NON-ENGLISH]. In some places, you couldn't pass through without a passport. Where are you going? Who are you? We said, that's a very uncomfortable time when one country take over the other one. They don't trust anybody. It could be espionage. It could be anything.

The fact is that we went through, we walked, and whatever, however. We smuggled out through. We arrived in Regensburg. In Regensburg was an organization that was helping survivors already established. They give us temporary-- we all was one place. But food was available. Clothes was available.

It was an organization. You go in. You can find a dress. Dress yourself. It's all new, whatever. Just something cover your body. And so we had, like they have here, those stamps. We have those kind of stamps. We go and get-- we get cheese. We get milk. You get whatever.

And we lived a month or two, and then we got a little apartment for us, for me and my husband. My mother was not with me. The two of us went, because we didn't know. We couldn't drag an older person with us. Wherever we would go, finally if we have a destination we stay, then I go pick up my mother. I did so after three months being. In Regensburg, I went back. I didn't have enough money to travel like a human being by train, went back to Sosnowiec, picked up my mother and brought her to Regensburg.

We stayed in-- we all applied for the United States, because my husband had an uncle in New York. We was hoping to

him our visa will come a lot faster. But [NON-ENGLISH], he was too old to sponsor three people. So we had to wait for the Federation, UJA, whatever you call it now, for them to help us in that respect. What they absolutely did, last quite some time.

In the meantime, since we was in Regensburg, and waiting, we had to do something. We opened a business. In the beginning, we worked on different things. I was doing a lot of sewing, a lot of everything, and trying to make dollars and cents. And my husband was trying to buy whatever he possibly could. We had good connections. We had languages, in that respect.

We went to all factories, but also places whatever was not sellable, or was not-- and brought it into the city. And then we got-- we was got the opportunity from the city to get the stamps. When you need clothes, you need stamps. You need shoes, you need stamps. There's no such things in those years you can buy for [? tracked ?] for money. Everything in the city is assigned to you.

We got the opportunity. We ran a store. We did that type of-- my husband was pretty capable and I had the languages, and I didn't worry about whatever, write, read, or whatever, was not like some survivors. At that time, they couldn't help themselves as far as-- not as I was so knowledgeable. But I was good enough to do all those things.

And through this, we had a store. We make good money. We was pretty good off in no time. We had everything, what a human being would expect, and my son was born in Regensburg.

Of course, 1950, we gave everything. I had a partner to that business. We took in also a Jewish man, a German from our state from Hanover. He was from Hanover. She was from Prague, the wife. We took them in as partners. So, we left them the business.

We walked out, with just what money we had. And we moved to Kansas. We was assigned to Kansas, according to the visa. We didn't Kansas City. And we didn't know what Kansas City is. We were actually going to New York, but didn't give us the privilege of going to New York, because they say a lot of people are settling in those years in New York. Like, it's over doing.

So they send us to Kansas City, very nice. A lady from the UJA was waiting for us, and picked us up in a car. We was people already back to life. Somehow, nothing is forever, not the good, not the bad. We have a good almighty what always watches us. It's not true, some people feel like why God let this happen. If it's really such an injustice, that sometimes even a good father is being shot.

If you don't live the right way, you have obligations to deliver what your religion tells you, and you go against you lose those opportunities. Somehow, the same thing what's happened now. If we don't watch out, and we don't look, this we all equal, this we don't worry about one is black and one is blue. One has more money, one has less money. We should all be equal, because we're all God's children.

I raised my children this way. And I hope they will continue to be what they are now, that they will be some kind of benefit to the world. Because they're good children, and they believe what I believe. Prejudice is not going to bring us no place, or it's Jewish, or it's another religion, or whatever it is. If we're not going to teach the children and bring them to a point to understand, don't think a Jew have horns, or don't think a black is dirty, and filthy, and whatever. You give him the opportunity.

He can wash himself as well as you can do. He can be as good as anybody else. You don't have to be pure white to be the best person. You can be anything can be a good person. Just think of what the world, why are you here. Why? We are all God's children. We're all here for a purpose. So let's think about it. Let's do the right thing.

Yeah.

That's what I can tell you about my life.

Do you still have contact with the people who hid you?

I had contact till two years ago. He passed away. The wife is still alive.

Is that the farmer or the friend?

No, I never had contact with the farmer.

Just with the friend who helped you.

That's right. I was sending him money from Germany when I lived in Germany. I will send him money from the United States. Whoever went to visit Poland I send money with them. My cousin from Canada went. I sent with him. He sent me beautiful pictures of him, his wife, and children. And he wrote me letters. We was in contact constantly, constantly.

In the beginning, it was difficult to send money. So I sent packages from Chicago from [NON-ENGLISH]. At the time, they had for Christmas, I had half a dozen packages, the wurst and [NON-ENGLISH] and clothes. I was buying those coupons. They was selling for a suit, three yards of coupons, [NON-ENGLISH], for so-and-so much. I always send three or four coupons. He sold them, and made some money.

And whatever was available, every connection I had to send them something, I sent. One time a nephew of ours was there to visit him. And he said, [NON-ENGLISH]

Of course, I told him. I says, [NON-ENGLISH], I want you to leave him the money. That's the reason I send it. And he left it. He said to him, [NON-ENGLISH]

Of course, he was the angel of life. Let's face it.

Yeah, sure. It could be both ways. Or God send him, or it's just he was so righteous to achieve something like this. That's a good question. Because he's in heaven. I know. He has to be rewarded for something like this.

What else can I tell you?

Because there is a back story, and there's a front story. And it was going on. Certain things that come to me after I walk out from here, because it's just like I remember a story. We was like girls, and we had the typhus start in the city. And they picked up a number of girls. We was eight, nine girls. Most of the time, the ones, the kids with the more educated understand, and they can read, and they can go through certain alphabetical things to find out, what to do in a case like whatever it is.

And we was given-- the and we had just the armband, the star, the Jewish star. We had the Red Cross on top, and able to go to those sick people, and help them. Because they was afraid to go, that would kill. But was afraid-- typhus is such a disease that they would catch it.

So they assigned us catch this, good for us. There was some, and from those, there was nine girls. From those nine girls, I'm the only one alive. Every week, somebody else was killed from that nine, just taken out and killed for some reason or another. There's so many things comes to me after.

Sure. Sure. What about when you were living underground?

There is no-- no actually, it's no way that a human being can even have the feeling or understand, unless-- my kids don't even understand. If I tell them how sick I was, and when I had-- that was [NON-ENGLISH].

For that reason, very few people survived with medication. And I had none. And you're not supposed to drink water for this. You don't supposed to-- everything has to be boiled, cooked, and whatever, and cleanser is very, very important. We had no cleanser. We had no bed. We have no hot water. I had no tea. I had to drink the water from that well from the

outside. And the bread sometimes she brought down was molded and so.

She didn't give us the bread which she baked today or yesterday, what was left through the week she put another batch of bread. So she gave us the old one. And that bread I had to eat and my time was six weeks I had [NON-ENGLISH].

My son asked me one time, what is [NON-ENGLISH]. I said, it's red. I don't want to tell him. Oh, that's a joke.

How did you-- did you need to be quiet during the day?

Oh, yes. Oh yes, there was no conversations, no nothing. That [NON-ENGLISH], the one who was looking after us, he brought us every once in while a paper. Of course, the papers didn't give us that much. But at least we had something to read. And I was doing a lot of crocheting, sewing for the people, for that family.

She brought me materials from the city. And I cut, matter of fact, I had a couple of nightgowns, beautiful nightgowns I took it with me. And she liked it. But she didn't-- she was tall woman, and I was a little short girl. So she wanted me to make community dresses for the-- she had a little girl, three years old. So I cut them through, and make it for them, with little ribbons around, by hand.

And you could do that without talking?

By hand, yes, and matter of fact, we had a light-- a three-- if you ever talk to your father, he will understand what I'm saying. They had those little lights, a number three. That met kerosene inside. And there were little things sticks out, what do you call it?

A wick.

Yes, a wick.

That you would light.

And this couldn't stay lighted, because there was no air. This was covered. We seven people had no air. The light went out. Sometimes I was sewing and in the middle of everything the light is out. You don't open the window, because no window.

Yeah, there's no window.

You don't open it, open it because you're afraid. As long we can talk about it, we alive. And we're happy we can tell the story. What my father could tell, what my mother could tell, what my brother's-- they're not around to even hear that story. So I'm left by myself.

What about your father? What happened to him?

He went to Treblinka.

He went to Treblinka.

Yes, 1993-- I had a friend, what she was in the same train. That's the reason I know. The 6th of January, in '93 the train went to the chimney.

1943. So that was after you--

'43. My father didn't see me from the day he left. I didn't see him.

So you took care of your mother? And she came with you to Kansas?

Came to Kansas City. She died here 25 years ago. She was a sick woman, but we took care. We did the best we could.

Sure. I'm sure she was very glad to have you.

She was a beautiful person.

She was so talented. She could do everything. It was unbelievable, unbelievable. She got herself a little house in Kansas City.

Really?

And she put in her own roof.

You're kidding.

Old sick lady. She put all the screens in the windows by herself. She was going around buying little hooks, and all those things, and make sure that when the dime stores, all the children. She could do anything. She could sew. She could-- there was nothing she couldn't do. She was very talented. But she suffered. She had heart trouble since you come out from the bunker. So.

It's not surprising.

We was young.

Terrible, yes.

Younger people, and I think what killed her is when she lost that second son. They killed him after the liberation. After this, she was totally like almost gone.

That was so unexpected too.

Yes.

That's why.

Yes.

You thought everything was fine, liberation.

It could happen, a car accident could happen, a sickness. That someone's going to kill you after something like this, and for no reason. They didn't want anything from him. It's just we don't want you. That's all. Yes.

All those stories, like I say, people give you all those testimonial things, whatever. But there's really no way that anybody can remember, maybe to them this is important. But there's so many more important things. And it's important-- it's most important is to tell the world to watch out.

That's true. That's true, because you could see-- you can see things happening in the world.

Yes, and you-- we all should feel the same way. We should support education. We should support all those organizations what they're doing this, because this is the only survival. And people are stupid or uneducated, or don't know why. And somebody come in like Hitler, I will give you food, I will give you everything. Scream, yells, and everybody says, OK. Heil Hitler. Heil Hitler, not knowing what is the consequences.

Yeah, what it means.

Yes. All right? Yes.

I've taken up a lot of your time.

It's OK. It's OK. At least I don't know how important that story is to you.

It's very important.

Will I get some tape? I'm interested to know what I said. Because a minute later, I don't remember, and I start talking.

And you know when you listen, it will-- more things will come to you too.

Yes. Oh sure.

But it's I think like you said. It's very, very important to do it. It's very important.

It's a difference. It's a different story than a lot of-- there's quite a few survivors from bunkers. From-- some was in the forests, in a place like this. But the bunker story was really critical, very critical. The life was so-- the camps was uncomfortable. We know this. And there was nothing like-- and danger and everything else.

But to be not to have the opportunity even to look out and see. Is it sunny? Is it rainy? When is a holiday? When is it? We didn't know anything.

Anything at all.

My mother had a book with her, a religious book. And we was trying to establish when is a holiday. Went out, trying to see is it stars, is it moon, it's what? All right.

Well, thank you very much.