

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ieremia Solomon conducted by Phyllis Freedman on June 3, 1996 in the museum. This is the A side of tape 1.

Tell me what your name was at birth.

The same name as you have-- Ieremia Solomon.

And when were you born and where?

I was born in Romania in a city named Dorohoi in Northern part of Moldova, because Romania was divided in some 10 regions, one of them being Moldova-- ancient one, because Moldovan Wallachia was formed many hundreds years ago. It's a long story, we won't comment on it. And I was born on the 3rd of November 1924. I lived in Dorohoi the first eight months of my life, because my parents divorced. So my mother and I went to her parents in a city named Falticeni in the same region of Moldova, where I lived until the age of 16.

You lived with your maternal grandparents and your mother?

Yes, I did. Yes, I did.

Tell me about your family life. What kind of work did your grandfather do?

My grandfather was a farmer compared to the professions we have here in North America. But because the Jews were not entitled to own land, he rented it from different people, especially from the ones which have a lot of big farms. And he exploited them in the sense that he cultivated and used the local people-- not family members.

Did you have a large family in Falticeni?

Yes. My grandfather-- I have to count them, but I don't want to waste our time-- some three sisters and at least one brother which I know offhand, which had there five, six, seven children with nephews, which grandchildren of theirs, which I knew. And my grandmother had also a big family. But the family itself, my grandparents, had 10 children alive when I was born, which I knew all of them. And of course, they had children-- my first degree cousins.

Was the household you grew up in a religious one?

Not really, but the tradition was alive. My grandparents, after the death of my grandfather, the grandmother kept all the Jewish traditions-- in the sense that we did not eat in the same plates milk and meat. For Passover we had completely different plates, and cutlery, and whatever needed.

Then all the Jewish Hebrew-- Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Passover-- I'm talking about the bigger ones-- were kept and followed to the law. I remember my mother being alone for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. She went to synagogue. I went also with this occasions, and sometimes more, because we lived in the same house with an uncle of mine who was not religious, but he kept it also as a tradition. But during the year, he went more times than those big holidays as I named them before.

Was there a large Jewish community in Falticeni?

Yes. All the Moldovian cities, if I can call this Moldova, Moldovian cities, especially in the north, which were closed to Poland, to Ukraine had big Jewish communities. And Falticeni, where I lived, and Dorohoi, you can say that at least 70% to 75% were Jewish.

What was your interaction, then, with non-Jewish members of the community?

Due to the fact that my grandfather, whom we lived, had these farms rented, we lived more or less in a kind of district

where most Christians lived. There were a lot of Jews also there, but mostly Christians. So it so happened that all of our neighbors across the street next to us were all Christians-- professor, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] teachers at the school, officers, clerks at the revenue service, and so on.

And they had children. They have grandchildren-- depends on their age. So we played together, because it was a city of 6,000, 7,000 people. And then in the school, the first four classes-- because the Romanian school was divided in three cycles. The first one was the primary, one to four, the second was the gymnasium, five, six, seven, eight, and then was lyceum 9 to 12.

In the primary school, I was at the Jewish school. They were calling it Romanian is [? Israelit ?] because in Romania, you call a Jew evreu from Hebrew, somehow derived. And Israelites, and was the religion mosaic-- this is how you call them. So the school was called Romana, or Israeli, or something like that-- I don't know how to translate it exactly.

And after the four classes, I passed an exam, as everyone, in order to qualify for the gymnasium. After the gymnasium, another exam to go into lyceum And of course, after the lyceum it was a kind of graduating exam, which entitled you to go to university-- direct or with another admission exam if you went to a Polytechnic school or the medicine school.

So when you went to the gymnasium, were you in school, then, with non-Jewish children?

No, no, no-- neither the gymnasium nor the lyceum It was a state school. Now, there were a lot of Jews. I had colleagues in my class and all the classes. But it was not specifically Jewish as the four primary were.

But you played soccer, did you not, with the non-Jewish--

I played soccer, I played all kind of kids play at that time. It was non-Jewish and Jewish alike. There was no difference at that time between Jews and non-Jews. In spite in their houses, their families were calling the Jews names. But we didn't have problems.

What else do you recall besides the fact that Jews couldn't own property, and sometimes name-calling? Were there incidents of anti-Semitism prior to the war that you recall?

I do not recall them. But I know that my grandparents said that there were manifestations of anti-Semitism. I knew that Romania, Ukraine, Poland-- especially Ukraine and Poland-- were the cradles of anti-Semitism in the world. I know that the majority of Jews in Europe lived there because the Romanian Jews were the ones who quit the Ukraine and Poland because of the pogroms against Jews.

But as far as I remember, one of my grandparents, which I can't tell you exactly which of them, he or she was born in Romania at that time. But either the parents or the grandparents came from Poland.

What do you recall about the first knowledge you had of the rise of the Nazis in Germany? What were your grandparents saying? What was the sense in your family?

At that time, my grandfather was dead. He died in May 1930, and Hitler came to power 30th of January '33. But we were subscribers of the national newspaper, which came every day. And of course, I read because I was already in the third or fourth grade. And I read all the titles, not the articles. And I knew Hitler.

But for me as a kid at that age, and please note that I was given one year before my age to school. I don't know exactly the reason I heard several, but it's not important. So I was not very much interested at that time in politics, you know? But I knew, and then we heard all kinds of horror stories coming from Germany-- reading them. And at that time, the radio was introduced, and the houses in Romania.

And we heard news, which seldom gave this kind of news about Germany. But Romania itself did not need at this time any inducement in being anti-Semitic, you know?

So there was no sense that you recall that there was increased anxiety? This seemed to be more of the same?

I heard something in the house-- my mother, my uncle, and other relatives or acquaintances who came in talked about it during the year, because there are the laws. There was the Crystal Night, the night of the broken glass. And there were all kinds of stories already out from Germany. And after all, Hitler didn't make any secret about his policy he wanted to follow. So that was known.

Tell me about your schooling in Bucharest after you finished lyceum.

I didn't finish the lyceum because I had a cousin in Botosani, another city not far from Dorohoi and Falticeni where a part of our family lived. And he happened to be one year older than I am, and we were in good relations. So happened that we bear the same name off an uncle of ours who died in the First World War.

And he tried to convince me that it's not our place here. Our place is in Palestine, because we knew about Eretz Israel, but not the state of Israel that is known today. And there if you go, you have to have a trade. You can't go empty-handed. And it's better to learn a trade. So as my father told me when I was a couple of years younger than at that age, that if I had finished school, he's going to soon send me to Brezo, to Slovakia, at that time-- very well-known for the textile industry to learn textile and becoming a textile engineer.

So in my head, this was placed somewhere. And I insisted that I wanted to be textile worker, master, mechanic, whatever. My mother and my father were not very happy about this decision, because as all Jewish mothers wanted to have a son-- if not a physician, but at least an engineer. And in my family, her brothers, one was a lawyer and a chartered accountant. And the other one was a physician in France.

So I convinced them. So I went to Bucharest to learn. It was named È™coala ciocanului the School of the Hammer. It's a very free translation, but the school was named The Hammer in quotation marks.

What year was this and month that you went to Bucharest?

This was '39, September, when the school normally start. So I went there, and my uncle the lawyer, because I told about too, was in Bucharest. His two children did not have my ideas. They are also younger than I am. And by the way, his daughter is a physician in New York, and his son is a PhD here working for the government in Rockville. He is living in Rockville. He works in Washington. And he was a kind of tutor of the school. So I started school. I worked. I liked it very much.

So tell me, if you started school in September of 1939 was when Poland was invaded by the Nazis.

After. Because 1st of September, Poland was invaded by the Germans. I'm not going to call them Nazis, as you say, because the guilt is not only on the Nazis-- I mean, the members of the National Socialist party, but a lot of Germans too. Either they were or they weren't members of the Nazi party, you know?

So was there any increased concern on your part, or your uncle, and your other relatives in Bucharest?

Yes, it was. But again, in '39, I was not even 15. So as all children, seeing that their-- I can't say ideal, but wishes fulfilling, and I am already in this school-- I didn't pay attention too much to other things.

Tell me a little bit about your relationship with your father. Because even though your parents were divorced, it sounds as though he was very much involved in your life.

Yes, he was, especially after I started the gymnasium. Because when I was a kid, I sometimes went to Dorohoi to see him. He was seldom in Dorohoi, because he had a farm not far from Czernowitz, a city in the north of Bukovin, which later was taken by the Russians, and now is part of Ukraine. But practically, Czernowitz was a part of the Austro-Hungarian and did not belong, neither language wise or not other to the Russians.

So he came to Dorohoi to see his parents. And at that time, I think my grandmother, his mother, died already. So only my grandfather was alive when he came to see him. After that, he used to come I think twice a year in Falticeni to see me-- once in spring, and the other one after school started. And of course, he was involved and he came when I started learning for bar mitzvah and when I had the bar mitzvah, he was in Falticeni.

But I was a little bit unhappy being with one single parent. Maybe not too much for the sake of the family, but I saw a lot of the kids were calling mummy, daddy, and I had only mummy to call. And most of the times, the fathers are getting better along with their sons, because they give them some money to buy a cookie, what else. But they are taking the kids to the city, bus, other things like that, which I did not have somebody to get those unimportant things, but very important for a kid my age.

And I started to talk to them, especially to my mother. But after I started this school in Bucharest, which I don't know if I mentioned it-- it was the school belonging to the Jewish community of Bucharest, this school-- a trade school, which so happened-- so it was not a thing which so happens was the school, and next to it was the soccer field off Maccabi. It was a kind of a club of gymnastics and all kind of sports also belonging to the Jewish community of Bucharest.

How long were you in school there?

I finished the second year, because I started already the second year. The first year was more theoretical. So they felt that after five classes of lyceum. Second cycle, and the first class of lyceum I have enough knowledge not to start the first class. So I started the second-- so I finished it, and I finished it well.

In spite lyceum I know I not the best of the pupils. Not that I didn't like to learn, but I liked very much to play. So that was more important for me than doing my homework. So I came back. And then that summer, my father told me, I'll take you to Czernowitz to the farm, and you'll see how I am living, this and that. And my mother agreed.

This was the summer of 1940?

Yes, 1941. And it was decided that I'm going to go for summer. School in Romania finished always on 25th of June. So July and August, I was free to go. But the Russians gave an ultimatum to Romania to give them back two regions-- Bessarabia and Bukovina-- the northern part of Bukovina. So when they gave the ultimatum, and they gave three days for the Romanians to retreat and they to enter, as always, the Russians didn't keep their word.

So they came right away-- I think in two or three hours, they were already within the borders of Romania. So my father had to leave by foot in order not to stay with the Russians, because he started to hear about communism. And their procedure was that people who have money or have a lot of money, their bourgeoisie, and this and that, because my father was not a worker, so I couldn't go.

I stayed in Falticeni. and on September 6, 1940, that was a kind of uprising in the higher circles in Romania. So the king was forced to bring to power a government, which was formed by the Iron Guard. And he put in charge a general named Ion Antonescu, who later became the fuhrer, the leader of Romania. And everything else is known.

When your father left his farming community, did he come back to Falticeni?

No. No. He went back to Dorohoi, where his father lived, where he has the house, where he lived all the time because he was born also in Dorohoi. So he came there. We did not have any connections immediately. He wrote me after that. So when it was back to school, it was a little bit difficult to go for Jews. I do not remember, but I think it was not necessary to get an authorization to leave the city, because I went there, and then my mother came, and then he came to Bucharest. So I do not remember if it was an authorization necessary. But in any event, both of them came to prepare us.

So in September of 1940, even though Antonescu came to power, you went back to school for the second year.

The third year-- the second year but the third grade.

And what brought your parents to Bucharest?

What my parents did in Bucharest?

Why did they come to Bucharest?

They came to Bucharest because I was there. In the first year when I was, they came to Bucharest. And in the second year, they came to Bucharest. And then I started to talk to them, because I wanted them to be together, and this, and that. So the second year, I practically finished my job, and they agreed before the year ended that they are going to be again together.

And both the civil law and the religious and law of the Jewish faith did not allow to remarry. So they had a kind of discussion how to do it. And in any event, the decision was to go back to Dorohoi to live together. So what was that year like? Was there increased anti-Semitic action?

Oh, yes, sure. The Iron Guard was very anti-Semitic. That was part of their program. They were the Romanian fascists, really. It was the same program as the Germans, and even a little bit more exacerbated because in their blood was running the anti-Semitism. While in Germany, I can't say that it was the same thing, in spite of this happening, because it was this crazy Hitler.

Can you give me any examples of specific things you saw or experienced from the Iron Guard that year in Bucharest?

Yes, sure. First of all, I was in a boarding school. So I slept overnight there. We had breakfast. We had the theoretical classes four hours in the morning. Then we ate in the afternoon. We had four hours practical and shops, and then we eat again. And we went home to do our homework. And a certain hour-- 9:00, 10:00, I do not remember-- was finished everything, they turned off the lights, and you went to bed.

And next day, the thing repeating themselves. So in the first year, because it was a lot of demand for this kind of school, the dormitories were not sufficient for the demand. So they rented another building where they set dormitories for us. So we went from the dormitories to the school and back home on our own-- was not a big distance-- but not after 1940 when the Iron Guard came on power. Then was not any more posi--

This is Side B, Tape 1.

Yeah to repeat a few words-- so in the second year after the Iron Guard came to power, they didn't allow us to go alone. So we went the entire group, we left all of us together. And it was a person from the administration which went with us to look that nothing will happen to us.

Was there a curfew that you could not go out in the evenings?

No, there was no curfew, but the Iron Guard members, legionnaires, we called them in Romania, they were provoking, and coming next to you, and pushing you, and then say, why did you push me? And started fighting, and beating, and taking to their organizations' houses. And there were cases they killed people-- beating them, not shooting them.

And there were some shooting cases, but my uncle feared very much about it. So he convinced my mother to take me back to Falticeni. So I went back after Christmas. Because for Christmas, both my parents were in Bucharest when plans to remarry were already established-- everything was arranged.

So that was December or January of '41.

It was something like that-- '41. So I went back to Falticeni. And from 21st of January '41, the Iron Guard wanted to oust the general Ion Antonescu to take power to make a Nazi regime like in Germany. And because Antonescu was a military man, he had the army, so he put up this rebellion. And the legionnaires were arrested, a lot of them killed, but not before they made several programs in the big cities of Romania.

And the majority of the cities-- so the bulk of the Jewish population was there. They broke windows, they devastated the stores, all kind of things like that. And then it was a curfew, but not for the Jewish population, because they didn't know who is pro or against. And I was already in Falticeni.

Did you go back to Bucharest after the uprising was put down?

No, because end of May-- I do not remember exactly the date, but it was the end of May, my parents married. And beginning of June, we went to Dorohoi to my father. And when we went to Dorohoi it was a law which prevented the Jews to travel freely. So we had to get them authorization. And because of this, and with a little bit of bribery, everything had been settled. And we arrived in Dorohoi a week, or maybe 10 days-- maximum 10 days before the Second World War started for Romania-- when the Germans, and the Romanians, and all the other armies went to Russia.

And what was the impact on you when your parents of that? What happened to you next?

After my parents married?

And you went back to Dorohoi.

Yeah, we went back to the Dorohoi. We had the house of my father and my grandfather-- his father-- was still alive. And we stayed there. We didn't have much time because on the 22nd of June-- 21st or 22nd during the night-- we felt it. We saw a lot of army soldiers going back and forth, but we did not realize that it's going to start. He was taken as a hostage to be killed if the Jewish population would kill Romanian or German soldiers passing by who are staying in Dorohoi.

Your father was taken hostage?

Yes, my father-- a lot of other Jews from Dorohoi.

How did that happen? Someone stormed into the house? Or they issued an order that--

No, no, they sent a policemen-- at least was the case with my father. And they told him, OK, you have to go with us, because my boss told me to bring you there. So he went. He stayed, I think, some 10 days or 20 days-- I can't tell you exactly. And then he was taken to forced labor in another city.

Were you aware at the time of what was happening to him, or you found out afterwards?

No. While he was hostage, we prayed that nothing happens in Dorohoi, because nobody knew who is going to be among the ones or if all of them would be killed. But after they took him to forced labor, I think we received one or two letters from him. But it was not too much time, because on November 15, we were deported the same year for the one. We were deported to Transnistria. So then all kind of connections were cut.

Where was he taken to forced labor?

He was taking to forced labor in a quarry near Biruinta, which was another city in the southern part of Moldova.

How did you and your mother manage between the end of June when your father was taken hostage and your deportation?

Very hard, because we didn't have too much financial resources. Because when he left the farm, probably some money left there, a lot of money he didn't have because, this was circulating, and no income could come. He couldn't sell anything in order to have money. My mother didn't have either. She had a house in Falticeni, but she couldn't sell it. She sold it only a couple of days before he left in Transnistria, and she received the money but it was worth nothing at that

time. And I was taken almost daily to forced to work-- working the streets, unloading rail cars with flour or whatever they had to unload.

How did they come and get you? How were you assigned those duties? Did you have to go on register?

No, no, no. They knew where the Jews were, and they came and took us. And of course, we had those distinctive signs-- the yellow spot with the Magen David on it.

So every day, someone came and knocked on your door and said--

Yes, they said, OK, come to work.

Was your mother made to work as well?

No.

Your grandfather?

No, he was over 80 at that time. I don't know-- 82, 83. Unfortunately, but very fortunately for him, he died maybe two weeks before we were deported. Because if he would have been deported, he probably wouldn't make it beyond the cars, which were taking us to Transnistria.

So during this time just between June and your deportation, there was still food, and you had your clothing, and you lived in your own home.

We lived in our own home. We had clothing. Food was not abundance, but it was. They were the rationalized items like bread, oil, sugar-- maybe a few other things which I can't tell you now. So we get those rail tickets, and we exchange them for bread, let's say-- paying the cost of the bread. And in Dorohoi, maybe in other cities too, we're not allowed to go to buy bread wherever and whenever we wanted.

There are certain hours and certain places. So let's say if there were three or four bakeries in Dorohoi, we were allowed only to this one in this place between this hour and that hour. There were curfews too, but I do not remember them because I didn't go out.

Were there still do Jewish shop owners, or had--

Yes, there were.

So what happened when you were deported? How did they come and take you away? What was--

There were announcers on the streets signed by the mayor of the city. They said, according to the laws and whatever they've got from the higher-ups, the following streets are being evacuated, not deported-- are being evacuated. So everybody takes their belongings and comes no later than this time to the railway station.

Did they say where you were being evacuated to?

No, no, no. But we knew already, because we were the third or the fourth transport-- I don't remember exactly, I think the third transport-- and we knew, because the soldiers knew when they had friends, and friends told another friend, to a third friend, came to the ears of the Jewish people. But we didn't know what's going to await us there.

Did you ever consider trying to escape?

No.

So how many people were rounded up then when you arrived at the train station? How many of your neighbors would you estimate were there with you?

I can't tell you, but at least by the hundreds, because the train was long-- a lot of cars. And in each car, I don't maybe we were 80, maybe 100, because I didn't count them. The soldiers were saying, come on this, come on that. And let's say if there were only 10 cars, they were already between 800 and 1,000 people.

And you were crammed onto these cattle cars?

Yes, yes, yes.

Just everyone together?

What does it mean?

I mean men and women together, children?

Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah.

And how long did the trip take?

A couple of days-- two, three days, because there were a lot of bridges over Dniester, because they sent us in Transnistria, which means over Dniester. At Otaci, this was the name of the city which was bordering the river, they took us out from the cars, and they told us, OK, now you're going to cross with some boats. They were special boats-- two boats and a kind of a platform, because the military-- they went in chariots with horse-carried.

Tell me more about just the train part of the trip until you got to the Nistria. Did people die along the way?

I do not remember hearing about death in the cars. Could be. It wouldn't wonder me if somebody would tell me, yes, there were several people dying. But I know for sure, and I saw, after we crossed Dniester, until we reached Shargorod I'm talking about myself and the group. There were people which died on the road, and relatives, they just wanted to stay with them-- either children with their parents, parents for kids, or whatever other relatives in the family.

And they were not allowed. They were driven and beaten by the soldiers to go. And so they left there. And probably nobody knows even today after 50-something years-- 55 years-- if they were buried or the dogs or other animals--

You went on foot from after you crossed the Nistria to Shargorod.

Yes, it was, I think, 40, 50 kilometers.

How many days do you think it took you to walk that distance?

I think it took us some two days, because they were forcing us. The soldiers went by foot as long as they wished, or because they were fed, and they had those horse-driven chariots. But we didn't have this.

So they didn't feed you along the way at all?

Oh, no, no, no.

And you were carrying your belongings. What did you bring with you?

We found out what happened in the first transports, so we were a little bit more aware of what's going on. So we took one rucksack-- a sack on our shoulders shoulders. And in this sack, we put whatever we thought we need-- of course, the best of the things. But I remember both myself and my mother, I wear on me two suits-- a pair of pants and on top of



it another pair, and two jackets. And I had two overcoats, one of them being with a fur coat of my father-- upholstered with fur inside.

So I have, as you can see, an eye effect. At that age, the physician said that if I wear certain glasses, correction glasses, on my left eye, which was the one this [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] a blank lens with just a little hole in the very center, the eye position would correct itself. So this being in the sack, I lost them, which was, I don't know, how important was it? But what they had on us was this we left.

What did you have in your rucksack?

Shirts, underwear--

Jewelry, money?

No, no, no. This had been settled before, and I'll tell about it. We are not allowed-- and these announces on the streets said that all the money, Romanian leu, leu was the money, had to be given to the national bank. And we were going to receive a certain number of rubles for a certain number of leus. In any event, it was practically nothing, because the level had a value, but the ruble, the Russian, had no value, because it was occupied land.

And of course, there was the leu the master, not the ruble. And then everything else as jewelry was supposed to be given to the national bank, and they're going to pay something. Neither my mother nor myself wanted to take chances, because, of course, everybody who was going to be caught with money, or jewelry, and this, and that was going to be shot on the spot. So I didn't want to take this chance, especially my father was away.

So I went to the bank, and I gave them the money and this. And as I told you, my mother had the chance or no chance to sell the house, and she received the money two, three days before this happened. So all the few leu which we had there, because and that times, she couldn't sell it at the price. She got whatever she got, and she was happy that she finished with it.

So I took this money and all the jewels we had-- and we had I don't want to say a lot, but we had good ones. For example, I remember my father had a pocket watch all in gold with four covers on top and behind, everything in gold, and all kind of rings. And he had a pearl-- my mother told me the story with this pearl. And when I went there, they took all this jewelry-- I don't know, I think there were some 2 kilograms, meaning 4.5 pounds or something like that, put on the scale on which you would weigh, let's say, potatoes.

And said, oh, 2 kilograms-- 2 kilograms, how much? So many leus. So they gave us leus. It's exactly like you would give me, I don't know what jewelry-- important you have on you-- and I'll give you \$0.50, because it's only 100 gram or 200 grams. So that was a robbery. And this pearl, I saw he threw it away. And I said, this you don't weigh? He said, no, this is a false one. But it was because it was especially one-- it was not a culture pearl. So as much for jewelry, and money, and other things.

So basically in your rucksack, then, was more clothing.

Only.

So in this forced march to Shargorod you said that you were with a group. Did you band together with them?

Those people from Dorohoi, which went to the rail cars, and we went together.

So what happened when you went to Shargorod? Did everyone from that group go to Shargorod?

I think so. I know that a lot of people from Dorohoi stayed in Magurele, and some of them went to Murfatlar. But how this happened, I do not know, because my head at that time was not there. Secondly at 17, I did not realize the gravity of the things. Certainly, my mother was 40-something, and at that age, she was suffering with a liver.

I had to carry a good part of the time her sack. So I didn't think about it. But we are stopped on the field on our way to Shargorod during the night. And I think they gave us an hour-- very little time either for us to rest or for the soldiers to rest. And when I arrived in Shargorod, it was a disaffected synagogue without windows, without doors.

And we stayed there. I think we had hundreds of people. It was practically you couldn't put anything on the floor. Everything was occupied. And some people tried to make some fires in order to warm up, especially elderly one. It was 20-something of November in Ukraine, and that year was very, very cold-- snow and everything. And '41 was a very bitter winter in Ukraine and Russia from the front.

Did they give you anything to eat when you got to Shargorod?

No, no, no.

Well, how did you survive?

We had something from the house, because we found out that the voyage, the trip was going to last two, three days. And we ate sparingly in order to have it for more days, hoping that when we were going to arrive, we were going to be fed somehow-- because even the prisoners were fed with warm water, but still fed, which was not the case.

How long did you stay in this old synagogue?

I think a couple of weeks, because my mother found this group of people to house the Ukrainian, because we had a certain surface allotted for us for the ghetto. But if they were Christians, Ukrainians, they weren't stored away. But the Jews who are outside this, they are put in. So at the border of this so-called ghetto, or camp, or whatever you want to call it, it was a Christian family.

And they had one of their rooms which I don't think was bigger than that-- maybe not-- with two windows and a door which didn't go out, because it was a little quiet door. And this door-- over no nothing in. And we stayed there-- 14 or 16 people there. I have to count to give you an exact figure. But they gave us some straw, and we slept on the straw. And because it was so many people in such a small room from the breath the walls got-- I don't know how to tell you-- the wall start falling because it was a lot of moisture and this fell down.

Why did this Ukrainian family give you this room?

For money.

Well, who had money?

We didn't have money, but we had things on us. I gave a suit, which let's say was worth two, three months to stay there and to be bargained. OK, I'm giving you this, I want to stay two, three months.

Who were the other people that you shared this room with? People you knew from Dorohoi?

Yes, some of them were far-related people to my father.

And how did everyone get along? It must have been very trying.

Yes, it was. But look, at that time, we didn't steal from each other. We didn't have food to say, I can't eat because she or he is going to take it from me. Because we went with a shirt, for example, and we got two or three slices of bread. And we kept this bread for a number of days.

Within the area that was defined as the ghetto, could you move around freely?

Yes, freely. You could move. If we saw a soldier or somebody from the Romanian administration, we avoided them. We entered no matter where, and nobody would tell us, why did you come to my room? Because the houses there were not houses like here. They are poor houses. All the Jewish stayed, because Shargorod was a rail city with a lot of Jews.

Was there any cultural life in the ghetto? Where their religious observances?

Maybe religious, but no culture. And maybe the religious gathering-- I mean, the minyan the 10 people for the prayers was kept in secret. I don't know why didn't we hear some celebrations of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, let alone the Sabbath.

So there was a Jewish administration also, right?

Yes, the Romanian administration established the administration of the ghetto was going to be Jewish. And out of these documents, which I brought them to you, one of them, of course, it's written all in--