

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,670

2

00:00:03,670 --> 00:00:06,430

This is the United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:06,430 --> 00:00:10,660

volunteer collection interview  
with Phillip Abraham conducted

4

00:00:10,660 --> 00:00:15,610

by Gail Schwartz  
on August 21, 2011,

5

00:00:15,610 --> 00:00:17,890

in Silver Spring, Maryland.

6

00:00:17,890 --> 00:00:21,310

This is track number one.

7

00:00:21,310 --> 00:00:23,810

What is your full name?

8

00:00:23,810 --> 00:00:30,530

My full name is Phillip with  
two L's, mid-name Ben Zion,

9

00:00:30,530 --> 00:00:33,660

and last name Abraham.

10

00:00:33,660 --> 00:00:36,250

And when and where  
were you born?

11

00:00:36,250 --> 00:00:38,760

I was born in a little  
town by the name

12

00:00:38,760 --> 00:00:50,690

of Podu Turcului in Romania

on August 10th, 1931.

13

00:00:50,690 --> 00:00:53,900

OK, let's talk a little  
bit about your family.

14

00:00:53,900 --> 00:00:59,930

And how far back does  
your family go in Romania?

15

00:00:59,930 --> 00:01:04,810

Well, the Romanian Jews,  
because this is a part of that,

16

00:01:04,810 --> 00:01:08,870

actually entered Romania  
from the invitation

17

00:01:08,870 --> 00:01:13,760

of, at that time, a prince  
of a portion of Romania.

18

00:01:13,760 --> 00:01:16,070

It wasn't called  
Romania yet at the time.

19

00:01:16,070 --> 00:01:19,670

He invited the Jews  
from Poland to come

20

00:01:19,670 --> 00:01:25,100

to Romania with their  
craftsmanship knowledge and so

21

00:01:25,100 --> 00:01:30,920

on and in being  
merchants and all that.

22

00:01:30,920 --> 00:01:36,770

And he gave them the  
idea that or he said

23

00:01:36,770 --> 00:01:41,880

they will be under  
his protection.

24  
00:01:41,880 --> 00:01:43,080  
So they came.

25  
00:01:43,080 --> 00:01:44,220  
So basically--

26  
00:01:44,220 --> 00:01:45,500  
What year was this?

27  
00:01:45,500 --> 00:01:48,640  
500 years-- 1500 something.

28  
00:01:48,640 --> 00:01:49,770  
OK.

29  
00:01:49,770 --> 00:01:55,830  
And they came, and  
my family was there,

30  
00:01:55,830 --> 00:01:59,040  
which there are two branches,  
so to speak, from my mother

31  
00:01:59,040 --> 00:02:02,130  
and father.

32  
00:02:02,130 --> 00:02:10,110  
And my grandfather on my  
mother's side was named Marcus,

33  
00:02:10,110 --> 00:02:18,000  
but my father on his side, he  
was a named Avram or Abraham.

34  
00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:23,190  
Marcus is a name that  
comes from the people--

35  
00:02:23,190 --> 00:02:26,340

the Jews who were  
in Italy and Rome

36  
00:02:26,340 --> 00:02:30,100  
after the destruction  
of the temple and so on.

37  
00:02:30,100 --> 00:02:35,040  
So they basically  
moved toward the East

38  
00:02:35,040 --> 00:02:38,820  
from there into Europe  
and perhaps to Germany.

39  
00:02:38,820 --> 00:02:42,780  
And so, for instance,  
one connection

40  
00:02:42,780 --> 00:02:47,250  
is that Marx, the famous  
or infamous communist--

41  
00:02:47,250 --> 00:02:47,970  
Karl Marx.

42  
00:02:47,970 --> 00:02:50,670  
Karl Marx-- was  
based on the fact

43  
00:02:50,670 --> 00:02:56,030  
that his people  
were called Marcus,

44  
00:02:56,030 --> 00:03:00,450  
but the Germans  
made it into Marx.

45  
00:03:00,450 --> 00:03:04,830  
So my grandfather, his  
family name-- his last name

46  
00:03:04,830 --> 00:03:07,440

was Marcus.

47

00:03:07,440 --> 00:03:11,100

So that was my connection there.

48

00:03:11,100 --> 00:03:14,820

This little town that I  
mentioned where I was born

49

00:03:14,820 --> 00:03:21,240

was actually a center of  
a lot of Romanian villages

50

00:03:21,240 --> 00:03:25,740

who were working the land,  
and they were raising crops.

51

00:03:25,740 --> 00:03:31,380

And this town-- there were  
400 Jewish people there,

52

00:03:31,380 --> 00:03:38,340

mostly merchants who  
actually brought and bought

53

00:03:38,340 --> 00:03:42,020

from other places to give  
to their customers who

54

00:03:42,020 --> 00:03:43,680

were from the villages.

55

00:03:43,680 --> 00:03:49,270

So my father had a  
store with fabrics.

56

00:03:49,270 --> 00:03:55,030

In those days, there were  
no ready-made clothes.

57

00:03:55,030 --> 00:04:00,400

You had to buy by  
the meter or yard,

58  
00:04:00,400 --> 00:04:04,630  
and you went to a tailor  
-- and so on or a--

59  
00:04:04,630 --> 00:04:07,330  
what they call it-- mistress.

60  
00:04:07,330 --> 00:04:15,250  
And so my father brought  
this stuff from other places

61  
00:04:15,250 --> 00:04:22,029  
and sold a lot of  
from silk and so on,

62  
00:04:22,029 --> 00:04:26,620  
even British cloth  
that came from England.

63  
00:04:26,620 --> 00:04:30,730  
And also a variety of  
fabrics that were actually

64  
00:04:30,730 --> 00:04:32,060  
made in Romania itself.

65  
00:04:32,060 --> 00:04:36,430  
There were a lot of  
factories that did that.

66  
00:04:36,430 --> 00:04:41,110  
So my father, who's story is  
also of interest, at least

67  
00:04:41,110 --> 00:04:45,340  
to me, he had been--

68  
00:04:45,340 --> 00:04:52,860  
during the First World War, he  
was about the age of 14, 15,

69

00:04:52,860 --> 00:05:00,180  
and worked in the store  
of an uncle of his,

70  
00:05:00,180 --> 00:05:05,220  
who kind of exploited him.

71  
00:05:05,220 --> 00:05:11,880  
So at one point, he  
decided to go on his own.

72  
00:05:11,880 --> 00:05:14,760  
And there was a war,  
and the Romanians

73  
00:05:14,760 --> 00:05:16,080  
fought against the Germans--

74  
00:05:16,080 --> 00:05:17,850  
the First World War.

75  
00:05:17,850 --> 00:05:23,250  
And he decided to go with  
a wagon and one horse,

76  
00:05:23,250 --> 00:05:27,930  
and he went and bought  
from the Germans

77  
00:05:27,930 --> 00:05:31,680  
and sold it to the Romanians  
and bought from the Romanians

78  
00:05:31,680 --> 00:05:33,000  
and sold it the Germans--

79  
00:05:33,000 --> 00:05:35,370  
food, basically, and so on.

80  
00:05:35,370 --> 00:05:40,170  
And he managed through  
three or four years

81

00:05:40,170 --> 00:05:42,060  
to make a lot of money.

82

00:05:42,060 --> 00:05:46,500  
Came back to this town where  
I was born, Podu Turcului,

83

00:05:46,500 --> 00:05:52,380  
and started a regular  
store with fabrics.

84

00:05:52,380 --> 00:05:57,780  
And that was his, and he became  
quite successful, basically

85

00:05:57,780 --> 00:06:00,780  
the most successful  
among other merchants.

86

00:06:00,780 --> 00:06:06,570  
And his philosophy was,  
if I can put that in,

87

00:06:06,570 --> 00:06:10,680  
was to buy as cheap  
as possible, meaning--

88

00:06:10,680 --> 00:06:12,360  
and how did you do that?

89

00:06:12,360 --> 00:06:18,000  
By putting the money on  
the spot, not on credit.

90

00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:20,610  
And he sold it to  
the older villager

91

00:06:20,610 --> 00:06:25,650  
that came there on credit,  
because they didn't have money

92



00:06:25,650 --> 00:06:26,580  
every time.

93  
00:06:26,580 --> 00:06:30,870  
Only after the crops came in  
they had the money to pay.

94  
00:06:30,870 --> 00:06:36,300  
And they came, and they were  
extremely good customers.

95  
00:06:36,300 --> 00:06:38,280  
They never defaulted.

96  
00:06:38,280 --> 00:06:42,610  
They came and paid and  
so on for many years,

97  
00:06:42,610 --> 00:06:47,220  
even during the Second World  
War that something happened.

98  
00:06:47,220 --> 00:06:48,560  
This little town--

99  
00:06:48,560 --> 00:06:50,560  
But we'll talk about the  
Second World War in a--

100  
00:06:50,560 --> 00:06:51,060  
All right.

101  
00:06:51,060 --> 00:06:53,190  
What was your father's name?

102  
00:06:53,190 --> 00:06:55,590  
Isaac Abraham.

103  
00:06:55,590 --> 00:06:58,200  
And he was born what year?

104  
00:06:58,200 --> 00:07:03,740

He was born in 1899.

105  
00:07:03,740 --> 00:07:04,860  
Oh, OK.

106  
00:07:04,860 --> 00:07:05,520  
Yes.

107  
00:07:05,520 --> 00:07:08,385  
And OK, so that's my--

108  
00:07:08,385 --> 00:07:09,510  
That's your father's story.

109  
00:07:09,510 --> 00:07:10,530  
My father, yes.

110  
00:07:10,530 --> 00:07:12,310  
And your mother's name?

111  
00:07:12,310 --> 00:07:18,058  
My mother's name was  
Chaya or Clara Marcus.

112  
00:07:18,058 --> 00:07:19,350  
And you know when she was born?

113  
00:07:19,350 --> 00:07:22,440  
Yeah, she was born actually  
about three or four

114  
00:07:22,440 --> 00:07:24,150  
years before my father.

115  
00:07:24,150 --> 00:07:29,530  
So she was-- and a  
little story there, too.

116  
00:07:29,530 --> 00:07:32,210

117

00:07:32,210 --> 00:07:33,270  
There were all sorts of--

118  
00:07:33,270 --> 00:07:36,030

119  
00:07:36,030 --> 00:07:39,640  
she was very beautiful and  
so on, and she was educated.

120  
00:07:39,640 --> 00:07:42,100  
And my father, on  
the other hand,

121  
00:07:42,100 --> 00:07:45,040  
had only two years  
of grammar school.

122  
00:07:45,040 --> 00:07:47,880  
But he was extremely  
good at math--

123  
00:07:47,880 --> 00:07:49,890  
arithmetic, I should say.

124  
00:07:49,890 --> 00:07:55,470  
And when he came  
back to the town,

125  
00:07:55,470 --> 00:07:59,550  
he said I want to  
marry Clara Marcus.

126  
00:07:59,550 --> 00:08:02,250  
And she didn't  
want to and so on,

127  
00:08:02,250 --> 00:08:10,850  
and then one of her brothers,  
who was older than she, said,

128  
00:08:10,850 --> 00:08:12,220  
you should marry him.

129  
00:08:12,220 --> 00:08:14,520  
He is going to be a success.

130  
00:08:14,520 --> 00:08:18,550  
And not only this, he gave  
her-- because there were--

131  
00:08:18,550 --> 00:08:22,480  
my mother's-- they were orphans.

132  
00:08:22,480 --> 00:08:29,770  
There had been 12 children  
and two separate mothers.

133  
00:08:29,770 --> 00:08:35,919  
One died, and then  
the father of her

134  
00:08:35,919 --> 00:08:39,039  
married another woman,  
which happened to have been

135  
00:08:39,039 --> 00:08:41,559  
the sister of the first one.

136  
00:08:41,559 --> 00:08:43,030  
Because that was  
the Jewish thing.

137  
00:08:43,030 --> 00:08:47,140  
She was not married,  
and when her sister died

138  
00:08:47,140 --> 00:08:49,480  
there were already six children.

139  
00:08:49,480 --> 00:08:51,970  
And she gave birth  
to another six.

140  
00:08:51,970 --> 00:08:54,340

But not all of them survived.

141  
00:08:54,340 --> 00:08:59,530  
So when this older  
brother, who by that time

142  
00:08:59,530 --> 00:09:04,600  
was also very successful,  
said I'm not going--

143  
00:09:04,600 --> 00:09:05,650  
there is nobody.

144  
00:09:05,650 --> 00:09:06,940  
The father already died.

145  
00:09:06,940 --> 00:09:09,580  
My grandfather [INAUDIBLE] died.

146  
00:09:09,580 --> 00:09:14,560  
So there was no money  
to give as a dowry.

147  
00:09:14,560 --> 00:09:18,340  
So he said, Clara Marcus is not  
going to go without a dowry.

148  
00:09:18,340 --> 00:09:21,800  
My father never even asked  
or anything like that.

149  
00:09:21,800 --> 00:09:27,550  
So he came and gave her at  
that time 50,000 of currency.

150  
00:09:27,550 --> 00:09:31,270  
So in any case, it  
was a very successful.

151  
00:09:31,270 --> 00:09:36,070  
They loved each other  
throughout life and so on,

152

00:09:36,070 --> 00:09:42,160  
until 1973 when my mother died.

153

00:09:42,160 --> 00:09:44,050  
Do you have any siblings?

154

00:09:44,050 --> 00:09:55,450  
Yes, actually I should  
say one elder sister

155

00:09:55,450 --> 00:09:58,070  
who died several years ago.

156

00:09:58,070 --> 00:10:00,100  
And I have a brother in Canada.

157

00:10:00,100 --> 00:10:02,170  
What are the names  
of your siblings?

158

00:10:02,170 --> 00:10:07,480  
My sister was Rosa,  
or Varda in Hebrew.

159

00:10:07,480 --> 00:10:09,670  
She died in Israel.

160

00:10:09,670 --> 00:10:14,740  
And my brother was named  
Carol, because that's

161

00:10:14,740 --> 00:10:16,030  
the name of the king.

162

00:10:16,030 --> 00:10:16,700  
The king.

163

00:10:16,700 --> 00:10:19,870  
Right-- Carol Abraham.

164

00:10:19,870 --> 00:10:26,320

So he has been a citizen of  
Canada for quite a long time,

165  
00:10:26,320 --> 00:10:27,840  
but he was in Israel as well.

166  
00:10:27,840 --> 00:10:30,805  
It is another story, OK,  
with Israel and so on.

167  
00:10:30,805 --> 00:10:31,840  
Yeah, we'll get to that.

168  
00:10:31,840 --> 00:10:35,160  
Yeah, he's still-- we're  
in touch all the time.

169  
00:10:35,160 --> 00:10:36,860  
The difference in  
ages between you?

170  
00:10:36,860 --> 00:10:39,460  
He's about 2 1/2  
years older than I am.

171  
00:10:39,460 --> 00:10:40,450  
So you were the baby?

172  
00:10:40,450 --> 00:10:42,570  
I was the baby, yes.

173  
00:10:42,570 --> 00:10:45,760  
Yeah, so there had  
been four children,

174  
00:10:45,760 --> 00:10:50,410  
but the first born died when he  
there were some epidemics when

175  
00:10:50,410 --> 00:10:52,720  
he was one year and a half.

176

00:10:52,720 --> 00:10:56,380

It was something that  
my mother would cry when

177

00:10:56,380 --> 00:11:00,670

she mentioned that and so on.

178

00:11:00,670 --> 00:11:02,890

How religious was your family?

179

00:11:02,890 --> 00:11:07,600

Well, they kept kashrut,  
never anything in the house

180

00:11:07,600 --> 00:11:09,490

or anything like that.

181

00:11:09,490 --> 00:11:13,820

My father was a member of  
the synagogue and so on.

182

00:11:13,820 --> 00:11:17,290

And also the community,  
the Jewish community that

183

00:11:17,290 --> 00:11:24,130

took in this little town care  
of orphans and widows and so on.

184

00:11:24,130 --> 00:11:26,650

And it was very,  
very interesting.

185

00:11:26,650 --> 00:11:29,320

They didn't force  
people to donate.

186

00:11:29,320 --> 00:11:34,490

And so they got together,  
said, well, you should do this.

187

00:11:34,490 --> 00:11:36,730

And they too took



care of everybody.

188

00:11:36,730 --> 00:11:39,920

Nobody died of hunger  
or anything like that.

189

00:11:39,920 --> 00:11:46,690

If there was some problem  
in the winters and so on,

190

00:11:46,690 --> 00:11:50,410

people would go and cut wood  
for them-- for all these people.

191

00:11:50,410 --> 00:11:55,690

It was really civilized  
in that respect.

192

00:11:55,690 --> 00:11:58,690

We had a rabbi for life there.

193

00:11:58,690 --> 00:12:01,780

His son became the rabbi.

194

00:12:01,780 --> 00:12:05,890

And so it was very, very nice.

195

00:12:05,890 --> 00:12:08,800

And people would meet during  
the summer in the evening

196

00:12:08,800 --> 00:12:10,780

after all the  
stores were closed.

197

00:12:10,780 --> 00:12:14,080

They would meet,  
and actually would

198

00:12:14,080 --> 00:12:18,450

have outside on the sidewalks--

199

00:12:18,450 --> 00:12:20,590  
they put tables and so on.

200  
00:12:20,590 --> 00:12:24,640  
And friends would come, and  
they drank something cold

201  
00:12:24,640 --> 00:12:26,450  
and talked and so on.

202  
00:12:26,450 --> 00:12:29,090  
So there were all sorts  
of things of that nature.

203  
00:12:29,090 --> 00:12:34,180  
And so it was a happy childhood,  
until the Second World War.

204  
00:12:34,180 --> 00:12:35,680  
Did you live in a  
mixed neighborhood

205  
00:12:35,680 --> 00:12:37,990  
of Jews and non-Jews?

206  
00:12:37,990 --> 00:12:42,160  
There were very few  
Romanians in this town.

207  
00:12:42,160 --> 00:12:44,110  
The majority were Jews.

208  
00:12:44,110 --> 00:12:47,830  
But there was a  
church and so on,

209  
00:12:47,830 --> 00:12:52,690  
and it connected between the--

210  
00:12:52,690 --> 00:12:57,580  
not connections, but  
relatively speaking they

211

00:12:57,580 --> 00:13:01,250  
were a good friends and so on.

212

00:13:01,250 --> 00:13:07,250  
And I'll come to a point  
before the Second World

213

00:13:07,250 --> 00:13:10,340  
War in the '30s.

214

00:13:10,340 --> 00:13:11,480  
There was a mayor.

215

00:13:11,480 --> 00:13:14,030  
Ordinarily the mayor  
was a Romanian guy

216

00:13:14,030 --> 00:13:17,810  
who happened to be very,  
very good and, in fact,

217

00:13:17,810 --> 00:13:19,940  
very friendly with my father.

218

00:13:19,940 --> 00:13:24,080  
And he said in the '30s  
when Hitler came to power

219

00:13:24,080 --> 00:13:24,900  
in Germany--

220

00:13:24,900 --> 00:13:27,660  
and he kind of was a  
very intelligent man.

221

00:13:27,660 --> 00:13:29,570  
He was a lawyer as well.

222

00:13:29,570 --> 00:13:34,940  
And he said to my father,  
Isaac, why don't you--

223

00:13:34,940 --> 00:13:39,170

he knew that we were capable,  
because my father was

224

00:13:39,170 --> 00:13:42,440

rich by the Romanian standards.

225

00:13:42,440 --> 00:13:44,660

Just go to America.

226

00:13:44,660 --> 00:13:47,640

Take your family  
and go to America.

227

00:13:47,640 --> 00:13:51,090

And he didn't follow this,  
because he said, well,

228

00:13:51,090 --> 00:13:52,220

I have all my family--

229

00:13:52,220 --> 00:13:54,110

his siblings and so on.

230

00:13:54,110 --> 00:13:57,560

And so he didn't want-- his  
parents were still alive,

231

00:13:57,560 --> 00:14:01,520

my grandparents on  
my father's side,

232

00:14:01,520 --> 00:14:06,090

and a sister, and a  
sister-in-law and so on.

233

00:14:06,090 --> 00:14:08,580

So he didn't do it.

234

00:14:08,580 --> 00:14:11,120

And so we were there when they--

235

00:14:11,120 --> 00:14:12,980

But what I wanted  
to say is that there

236

00:14:12,980 --> 00:14:17,750

was kind of a friendship  
between the Romanian people,

237

00:14:17,750 --> 00:14:21,950

at least in this little town.

238

00:14:21,950 --> 00:14:23,540

Not everywhere it was.

239

00:14:23,540 --> 00:14:26,910

Oh, there were some  
antisemites as well in Romania,

240

00:14:26,910 --> 00:14:30,920

and we know that things  
happened during the war.

241

00:14:30,920 --> 00:14:35,990

But prior to the  
war, for instance--

242

00:14:35,990 --> 00:14:39,410

to give an example of their  
relationship, is that when

243

00:14:39,410 --> 00:14:44,060

they said to put  
the yellow thing on

244

00:14:44,060 --> 00:14:45,740

to show that you are a Jew--

245

00:14:45,740 --> 00:14:48,950

we put on our sleeve--

246

00:14:48,950 --> 00:14:52,700

the police were supposed

to enforce that.

247

00:14:52,700 --> 00:14:56,810

But they grew up with the  
Jews, so they never did.

248

00:14:56,810 --> 00:15:02,540

So it was-- you couldn't tell  
who was Jewish and was not.

249

00:15:02,540 --> 00:15:04,310

So that was the situation.

250

00:15:04,310 --> 00:15:08,105

And I went to  
kindergarten there.

251

00:15:08,105 --> 00:15:12,090

This was a public school  
or a Jewish school?

252

00:15:12,090 --> 00:15:13,910

No, it was a public school.

253

00:15:13,910 --> 00:15:19,040

They had also grammar  
school, all public.

254

00:15:19,040 --> 00:15:26,990

Until the war started,  
when suddenly in 1940,

255

00:15:26,990 --> 00:15:28,010

the order came.

256

00:15:28,010 --> 00:15:32,630

Romania at this that time  
was an ally of the Germans.

257

00:15:32,630 --> 00:15:35,420

And from the point of  
view of the Romanians,

258

00:15:35,420 --> 00:15:41,240

I want to say something  
that is not bad.

259

00:15:41,240 --> 00:15:49,130

Because they saw France  
defeated in three weeks,

260

00:15:49,130 --> 00:15:51,710

and Romania had just about--

261

00:15:51,710 --> 00:15:55,100

the older forces, they  
had cavalry against tanks

262

00:15:55,100 --> 00:15:56,640

and so on.

263

00:15:56,640 --> 00:15:58,980

And they said they  
couldn't survive.

264

00:15:58,980 --> 00:16:02,000

So they were from  
patriotism, they

265

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:07,220

said we have to go, even with  
the famous or infamous men

266

00:16:07,220 --> 00:16:09,140

in power at the time--

267

00:16:09,140 --> 00:16:13,340

General Antonescu.

268

00:16:13,340 --> 00:16:16,310

He said-- and he was  
a patriot himself--

269

00:16:16,310 --> 00:16:20,270

that we cannot

fight the Germans.

270

00:16:20,270 --> 00:16:24,350

In the First World War  
they did, but then France

271

00:16:24,350 --> 00:16:26,410

was not defeated,  
and all the others

272

00:16:26,410 --> 00:16:29,720

were attacking the Germans.

273

00:16:29,720 --> 00:16:37,040

So because of that, in  
the end when the war came,

274

00:16:37,040 --> 00:16:43,400

the Germans demanded from this  
general that the ambassador--

275

00:16:43,400 --> 00:16:46,520

the German ambassador  
to Romania--

276

00:16:46,520 --> 00:16:50,480

that they collect the Jews  
from the little towns,

277

00:16:50,480 --> 00:16:53,510

push them into the  
other centers so they

278

00:16:53,510 --> 00:16:56,960

would be there available for  
them to take and kill them.

279

00:16:56,960 --> 00:16:59,840

Of course, the Romanians at  
the time didn't know that--

280

00:16:59,840 --> 00:17:00,710

what was happening.



281  
00:17:00,710 --> 00:17:03,200  
That was quite secret--

282  
00:17:03,200 --> 00:17:05,490  
the Germans-- the  
way they did it.

283  
00:17:05,490 --> 00:17:12,710  
So the order came one  
day in the little town--

284  
00:17:12,710 --> 00:17:17,050  
this Podu Turcului  
tomorrow you have

285  
00:17:17,050 --> 00:17:20,260  
to leave and go to  
the larger town, which

286  
00:17:20,260 --> 00:17:23,589  
was about 20 miles away.

287  
00:17:23,589 --> 00:17:29,110  
So people had the stores.

288  
00:17:29,110 --> 00:17:32,150  
What to do with the stores  
and the merchandise?

289  
00:17:32,150 --> 00:17:38,560  
So most people took whatever  
they could in horses and wagons

290  
00:17:38,560 --> 00:17:39,100  
and so on.

291  
00:17:39,100 --> 00:17:42,820  
And so did my parents,  
with one exception.

292  
00:17:42,820 --> 00:17:45,670

293  
00:17:45,670 --> 00:17:48,910  
My father decided he  
couldn't take all of it.

294  
00:17:48,910 --> 00:17:53,020  
It was a large store  
with fabrics, and that's

295  
00:17:53,020 --> 00:17:59,020  
very voluminous, and how  
to carry this on a wagon

296  
00:17:59,020 --> 00:18:01,700  
with two horses, or  
something like that.

297  
00:18:01,700 --> 00:18:05,950  
So they took-- well, my  
parents took whatever

298  
00:18:05,950 --> 00:18:08,680  
is my most valuable and so on.

299  
00:18:08,680 --> 00:18:15,710  
And my father went and  
actually put all sorts of wood

300  
00:18:15,710 --> 00:18:20,290  
in the front part of the store  
and in the back and so on.

301  
00:18:20,290 --> 00:18:22,990  
And it was so  
effective that later,

302  
00:18:22,990 --> 00:18:28,880  
when I come in this story,  
nobody was able to enter there.

303  
00:18:28,880 --> 00:18:33,926  
Before we go on, let's go

back a little bit pre-war.

304

00:18:33,926 --> 00:18:37,020

What language did  
you speak at home?

305

00:18:37,020 --> 00:18:38,130

We spoke Romanian.

306

00:18:38,130 --> 00:18:43,400

My parents, of course, spoke  
Yiddish, but on purpose,

307

00:18:43,400 --> 00:18:46,660

because at the time  
they didn't know where

308

00:18:46,660 --> 00:18:49,650

what was going to happen to us.

309

00:18:49,650 --> 00:18:53,090

They wanted-- if  
you spoke Romanian,

310

00:18:53,090 --> 00:18:56,830

you had a chance to go  
have a good life and so on.

311

00:18:56,830 --> 00:18:57,920

Nobody would bother you.

312

00:18:57,920 --> 00:19:02,250

But if you didn't speak  
Romanian kind of immediately,

313

00:19:02,250 --> 00:19:06,050

you are a Jew.

314

00:19:06,050 --> 00:19:08,120

So they didn't speak  
Yiddish with us.

315

00:19:08,120 --> 00:19:11,270

I never-- to this day, I  
don't know much Yiddish.

316

00:19:11,270 --> 00:19:18,440

A few things, but ordinarily  
they talked with us in Romania.

317

00:19:18,440 --> 00:19:22,080

So you celebrated holidays,  
Passover, the Sabbath?

318

00:19:22,080 --> 00:19:22,580

All of that.

319

00:19:22,580 --> 00:19:23,092

Absolutely.

320

00:19:23,092 --> 00:19:24,300

Very observant in that sense?

321

00:19:24,300 --> 00:19:24,800

Oh yeah.

322

00:19:24,800 --> 00:19:25,700

Yeah, absolutely.

323

00:19:25,700 --> 00:19:27,410

With extended family?

324

00:19:27,410 --> 00:19:31,590

With extended family and so on.

325

00:19:31,590 --> 00:19:36,320

For instance, Yom Kippur  
we'd go for the children

326

00:19:36,320 --> 00:19:42,050

so we'd be out of the  
synagogue and play and so on.

327

00:19:42,050 --> 00:19:45,410

And lunch came, and oh,  
let them eat something.

328  
00:19:45,410 --> 00:19:47,540  
Take them home.

329  
00:19:47,540 --> 00:19:49,730  
Yeah, I remember that.

330  
00:19:49,730 --> 00:19:51,740  
OK, you were born  
in 1931 you said.

331  
00:19:51,740 --> 00:19:52,640  
In 1931, yes.

332  
00:19:52,640 --> 00:19:55,240  
And Hitler came in power in '33.

333  
00:19:55,240 --> 00:19:56,810  
Yes.

334  
00:19:56,810 --> 00:20:00,240  
I couldn't do anything about it.

335  
00:20:00,240 --> 00:20:02,460  
So again, pre-war.

336  
00:20:02,460 --> 00:20:05,300

337  
00:20:05,300 --> 00:20:08,750  
At what point or were you ever  
before the war started aware

338  
00:20:08,750 --> 00:20:11,120  
of a man named Hitler?

339  
00:20:11,120 --> 00:20:12,800  
Did your parents talk about it?

340

00:20:12,800 --> 00:20:13,650

Oh, yeah, sure.

341

00:20:13,650 --> 00:20:14,150

Sure.

342

00:20:14,150 --> 00:20:16,220

Yeah, they knew  
that it happened,

343

00:20:16,220 --> 00:20:21,920

but the number of-- there  
were newspapers, of course,

344

00:20:21,920 --> 00:20:24,170

as well that mentioned  
what was happening

345

00:20:24,170 --> 00:20:26,960

in Germany to the Jews?

346

00:20:26,960 --> 00:20:28,370

Not really.

347

00:20:28,370 --> 00:20:31,340

No, I don't think even  
throughout all of Europe--

348

00:20:31,340 --> 00:20:32,660

people were not interested.

349

00:20:32,660 --> 00:20:35,340

The Jews may have been  
interested i and so on.

350

00:20:35,340 --> 00:20:44,360

So I remember only later on when  
just close to the war, 1939--

351

00:20:44,360 --> 00:20:49,730

so in one of the newspapers  
there was a huge headline

352

00:20:49,730 --> 00:20:52,670

that the war is about to start.

353

00:20:52,670 --> 00:20:54,080

Something like that.

354

00:20:54,080 --> 00:20:55,460

Did your parents say--

355

00:20:55,460 --> 00:20:57,125

I mean, you were  
young, of course.

356

00:20:57,125 --> 00:20:59,000

Do you do you remember  
if your parents talked

357

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:05,060

to you about what was happening  
and who this man Hitler was?

358

00:21:05,060 --> 00:21:06,920

No, I don't recall.

359

00:21:06,920 --> 00:21:10,855

They may have done that,  
but I was kind of--

360

00:21:10,855 --> 00:21:12,280

You were a young child, I know.

361

00:21:12,280 --> 00:21:12,950

Yeah.

362

00:21:12,950 --> 00:21:14,840

It was 1939.

363

00:21:14,840 --> 00:21:16,890

You were eight.

364

00:21:16,890 --> 00:21:18,440

Yeah, I was 8.

365

00:21:18,440 --> 00:21:24,080

And I knew how to  
read this headline,

366

00:21:24,080 --> 00:21:28,280

and I remember that as if I  
am looking at it right now.

367

00:21:28,280 --> 00:21:35,280

But what we knew earlier,  
we had keren kayemet,

368

00:21:35,280 --> 00:21:41,720

a little box where we put  
money and so on all the time.

369

00:21:41,720 --> 00:21:44,750

And we're talking about  
Palestine, not Israel--

370

00:21:44,750 --> 00:21:46,370

Palestine.

371

00:21:46,370 --> 00:21:50,330

And I'm telling a story that  
I told my wife and everybody,

372

00:21:50,330 --> 00:21:53,330

and it's a true story.

373

00:21:53,330 --> 00:21:56,600

I said at the time when I  
was young, about six, seven,

374

00:21:56,600 --> 00:22:02,450

I said I want to be a  
general in Palestine.

375

00:22:02,450 --> 00:22:06,220

Well, I didn't become a general.



376

00:22:06,220 --> 00:22:09,720

I became a sergeant--  
first sergeant.

377

00:22:09,720 --> 00:22:10,220

Almost.

378

00:22:10,220 --> 00:22:11,494

Almost.

379

00:22:11,494 --> 00:22:14,270

Right.

380

00:22:14,270 --> 00:22:15,820

So I was a Zionist, because--

381

00:22:15,820 --> 00:22:18,430

And your family-- I was  
going to ask if your family--

382

00:22:18,430 --> 00:22:21,550

All the family-- all the people  
there were for Palestine,

383

00:22:21,550 --> 00:22:24,030

but they couldn't go there.

384

00:22:24,030 --> 00:22:26,320

Right.

385

00:22:26,320 --> 00:22:28,570

The British wouldn't allow them.

386

00:22:28,570 --> 00:22:34,420

Already 1921, 1922, they  
put a stop basically,

387

00:22:34,420 --> 00:22:37,930

just only a few people  
could go to Palestine--

388

00:22:37,930 --> 00:22:38,820  
Jews, meaning.

389  
00:22:38,820 --> 00:22:43,860  
Were your parents politically  
involved in the '30s at all?

390  
00:22:43,860 --> 00:22:49,000  
Only my father was a member  
of the Romanian party

391  
00:22:49,000 --> 00:22:55,150  
that was actually a party  
of the people living

392  
00:22:55,150 --> 00:22:58,790  
in the agriculture and  
the villages and so on.

393  
00:22:58,790 --> 00:23:03,170  
That was not against Jews  
or anything like that.

394  
00:23:03,170 --> 00:23:07,000  
They were quite good  
for Romania at the time.

395  
00:23:07,000 --> 00:23:11,770  
But later on, they  
lost in the elections,

396  
00:23:11,770 --> 00:23:17,270  
and other people came in and so  
on with antisemitism and so on.

397  
00:23:17,270 --> 00:23:20,680  
And at that point, my father,  
of course, was no longer,

398  
00:23:20,680 --> 00:23:24,130  
and nobody was interested  
in supporting them.

399

00:23:24,130 --> 00:23:27,370  
And they knew that there is a  
danger, but nobody believed.

400  
00:23:27,370 --> 00:23:32,590  
If Jews in Germany didn't  
believe, and in Romania,

401  
00:23:32,590 --> 00:23:35,500  
yes, they were antisemites.

402  
00:23:35,500 --> 00:23:38,440  
Did you yourself as a  
child every experience--

403  
00:23:38,440 --> 00:23:39,610  
As a child, yeah.

404  
00:23:39,610 --> 00:23:42,070  
One thing that I remember very--

405  
00:23:42,070 --> 00:23:45,790  
I may have been seven years  
old, something like that.

406  
00:23:45,790 --> 00:23:51,400  
I was in one of  
my uncle's garden

407  
00:23:51,400 --> 00:23:56,540  
in the back of the building  
where he had fruit trees.

408  
00:23:56,540 --> 00:24:00,065  
And I was getting some plums  
or something like that.

409  
00:24:00,065 --> 00:24:00,940  
And there was a gate.

410  
00:24:00,940 --> 00:24:02,850  
And I was just about--

411

00:24:02,850 --> 00:24:06,520

I wasn't exiting  
through again back gate.

412

00:24:06,520 --> 00:24:13,570

And there passes a Romanian  
little boy like me.

413

00:24:13,570 --> 00:24:17,620

And she shouts, zhid, zhid.

414

00:24:17,620 --> 00:24:21,910

So my reaction-- I remember  
it as if it was today--

415

00:24:21,910 --> 00:24:24,400

I picked up a stone  
and threw it at him.

416

00:24:24,400 --> 00:24:25,810

I didn't hit him, OK?

417

00:24:25,810 --> 00:24:28,150

He was running by that time.

418

00:24:28,150 --> 00:24:29,530

That was my reaction.

419

00:24:29,530 --> 00:24:31,960

Did you talk this over  
with your parents?

420

00:24:31,960 --> 00:24:32,670

Oh, yeah.

421

00:24:32,670 --> 00:24:33,170

Yeah.

422

00:24:33,170 --> 00:24:34,583

What did they say to a child?

423

00:24:34,583 --> 00:24:35,500

What do you say to a--

424

00:24:35,500 --> 00:24:37,420

They said don't do that.

425

00:24:37,420 --> 00:24:41,280

Don't do that, because then you  
put everybody else in jeopardy.

426

00:24:41,280 --> 00:24:46,390

And then this boy, if he  
were hit by this stone,

427

00:24:46,390 --> 00:24:49,030

he would go and cry and  
so on and his parents--

428

00:24:49,030 --> 00:24:51,460

oh, the damn Jews, or  
something like that.

429

00:24:51,460 --> 00:24:54,790

430

00:24:54,790 --> 00:24:56,770

How would you  
characterize yourself?

431

00:24:56,770 --> 00:24:58,285

Were you an independent child?

432

00:24:58,285 --> 00:25:00,950

433

00:25:00,950 --> 00:25:03,550

My letter history,  
it will appear

434

00:25:03,550 --> 00:25:08,560

that I was really more  
independent than my siblings

435

00:25:08,560 --> 00:25:11,450  
when I come to that point.

436

00:25:11,450 --> 00:25:15,610  
And one other thing  
that happened,

437

00:25:15,610 --> 00:25:18,760  
I want to show that  
basically the people

438

00:25:18,760 --> 00:25:24,280  
in the town that were in  
power, so the mayor and so on.

439

00:25:24,280 --> 00:25:25,060  
The mayor's name?

440

00:25:25,060 --> 00:25:27,070  
Do you remember  
the mayor's name?

441

00:25:27,070 --> 00:25:28,590  
I don't remember now.

442

00:25:28,590 --> 00:25:30,340  
Because you were talking  
about him before.

443

00:25:30,340 --> 00:25:33,250  
A Romanian man, yes.

444

00:25:33,250 --> 00:25:38,050  
One day he came and  
told to the community--

445

00:25:38,050 --> 00:25:39,910  
Jewish community,  
meaning the people

446

00:25:39,910 --> 00:25:42,100  
who were kind of in charge.

447  
00:25:42,100 --> 00:25:48,340  
And they said, look, I heard  
news that the antisemites,

448  
00:25:48,340 --> 00:25:49,810  
and there was a group--

449  
00:25:49,810 --> 00:25:51,980  
In the town-- in the area.

450  
00:25:51,980 --> 00:25:54,220  
They could have  
been in the area.

451  
00:25:54,220 --> 00:25:59,380  
They intend to have a massacre--  
to come and attack the Jews.

452  
00:25:59,380 --> 00:26:05,940  
So he said you better go and  
prepare yourself to fight.

453  
00:26:05,940 --> 00:26:09,970  
And I remember that  
evening, particularly we

454  
00:26:09,970 --> 00:26:14,530  
went to one of their relatives  
that had a bigger store and so

455  
00:26:14,530 --> 00:26:16,810  
on, and the only family there.

456  
00:26:16,810 --> 00:26:20,050  
And other people did  
the same thing with axes

457  
00:26:20,050 --> 00:26:22,560  
and sticks and whatever.

458  
00:26:22,560 --> 00:26:23,800

Were ready to fight.

459

00:26:23,800 --> 00:26:25,370

It didn't happen.

460

00:26:25,370 --> 00:26:29,370

So but I remembered  
it exactly and so on.

461

00:26:29,370 --> 00:26:37,895

One of my cousins, as  
we were waiting there,

462

00:26:37,895 --> 00:26:40,210

suddenly we hear a noise.

463

00:26:40,210 --> 00:26:43,070

Something-- a big noise.

464

00:26:43,070 --> 00:26:46,580

Something fell on the  
ground in the store.

465

00:26:46,580 --> 00:26:48,500

This cousin was a  
little bit retarded,

466

00:26:48,500 --> 00:26:52,220

and he was sleeping  
on a bench and fell.

467

00:26:52,220 --> 00:26:56,930

So that was about all that--  
we always remember that.

468

00:26:56,930 --> 00:27:01,370

But it didn't happen, so until  
we had to move [INAUDIBLE]..

469

00:27:01,370 --> 00:27:03,650

OK, let's get to that point,  
because up to that point,



470

00:27:03,650 --> 00:27:07,610  
you were going to school.

471

00:27:07,610 --> 00:27:09,010  
I was going to school--

472

00:27:09,010 --> 00:27:10,900  
a Romanian school and so on.

473

00:27:10,900 --> 00:27:14,520  
And did the teachers--  
were the teachers--

474

00:27:14,520 --> 00:27:16,500  
No, they were not--

475

00:27:16,500 --> 00:27:17,030  
Antisemitic.

476

00:27:17,030 --> 00:27:18,740  
No, they actually were harsh--

477

00:27:18,740 --> 00:27:23,150  
much harsher on the children  
of the villagers and so on

478

00:27:23,150 --> 00:27:25,860  
or who were Romanians.

479

00:27:25,860 --> 00:27:28,350  
So in a sense, you  
had a safe childhood.

480

00:27:28,350 --> 00:27:29,480  
I had a safe childhood.

481

00:27:29,480 --> 00:27:32,360  
Yes, I cannot at all complain.

482

00:27:32,360 --> 00:27:34,700  
Except for that one

incident, you said.

483  
00:27:34,700 --> 00:27:38,030  
OK, so now, as you said,  
things started to change.

484  
00:27:38,030 --> 00:27:38,990  
Right.

485  
00:27:38,990 --> 00:27:44,000  
And so we were sent to another  
town, much larger than this.

486  
00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:46,270  
It was a real town.

487  
00:27:46,270 --> 00:27:47,940  
The name of that town?

488  
00:27:47,940 --> 00:27:53,210  
T-E-C-U-C-I. That's  
pronounced Tecuci.

489  
00:27:53,210 --> 00:27:56,000  
And all these still exist.

490  
00:27:56,000 --> 00:27:58,460  
Actually, we could look  
them on the internet

491  
00:27:58,460 --> 00:28:00,980  
to see their locations now.

492  
00:28:00,980 --> 00:28:02,310  
We did it here.

493  
00:28:02,310 --> 00:28:04,700  
And they have  
increased a little bit

494  
00:28:04,700 --> 00:28:06,260  
in population, all these places.

495  
00:28:06,260 --> 00:28:08,220  
Not that much.

496  
00:28:08,220 --> 00:28:12,110  
And so we moved there.

497  
00:28:12,110 --> 00:28:14,390  
Do you remember when this was?

498  
00:28:14,390 --> 00:28:19,790  
It was I think in  
the summer of 1940.

499  
00:28:19,790 --> 00:28:20,510  
OK.

500  
00:28:20,510 --> 00:28:25,570  
Oh, OK, war broke out  
September 1, 1939,

501  
00:28:25,570 --> 00:28:27,430  
when Germany invaded Poland.

502  
00:28:27,430 --> 00:28:30,580  
Did you-- OK, you  
were 8 years old.

503  
00:28:30,580 --> 00:28:31,570  
Were you aware of that?

504  
00:28:31,570 --> 00:28:33,560  
I wasn't aware of that.

505  
00:28:33,560 --> 00:28:34,790  
Yeah, my parents were.

506  
00:28:34,790 --> 00:28:36,260  
Yeah.

507  
00:28:36,260 --> 00:28:38,120

We had a problem  
there with radios.

508  
00:28:38,120 --> 00:28:40,640  
For instance, not  
everybody had a radio,

509  
00:28:40,640 --> 00:28:42,690  
because there was no power--

510  
00:28:42,690 --> 00:28:44,190  
electrical power.

511  
00:28:44,190 --> 00:28:48,290  
So the only-- I have some older  
cousins who were kind of smart,

512  
00:28:48,290 --> 00:28:50,750  
and they put together  
a radio with batteries.

513  
00:28:50,750 --> 00:28:53,840  
Not the little batteries, but  
the battery like a car battery

514  
00:28:53,840 --> 00:28:55,070  
nowadays.

515  
00:28:55,070 --> 00:28:56,630  
And we heard the news.

516  
00:28:56,630 --> 00:28:57,937  
I mean, they heard the news.

517  
00:28:57,937 --> 00:28:58,770  
They heard the news.

518  
00:28:58,770 --> 00:28:59,270  
Yeah.

519  
00:28:59,270 --> 00:29:01,970

520  
00:29:01,970 --> 00:29:04,290  
So 1940 comes, and  
you have to move.

521  
00:29:04,290 --> 00:29:09,150  
1940 comes, and then this is  
happening that we have to move.

522  
00:29:09,150 --> 00:29:09,650  
What month?

523  
00:29:09,650 --> 00:29:11,420  
Do you remember?

524  
00:29:11,420 --> 00:29:12,850  
I remember that must have been--

525  
00:29:12,850 --> 00:29:13,558  
From what season?

526  
00:29:13,558 --> 00:29:16,710  
What was the season, if you  
don't remember the month?

527  
00:29:16,710 --> 00:29:18,260  
It was in the summer.

528  
00:29:18,260 --> 00:29:19,370  
The summer.

529  
00:29:19,370 --> 00:29:22,970  
And the reason I know exactly  
that it was the summer,

530  
00:29:22,970 --> 00:29:27,170  
I remember we went with  
this horses in the wagon.

531  
00:29:27,170 --> 00:29:33,265  
And I was thirsty, and we  
didn't even take water with us.

532  
00:29:33,265 --> 00:29:35,390  
And we stopped at a fountain.

533  
00:29:35,390 --> 00:29:37,490  
And what happened  
that fountain--

534  
00:29:37,490 --> 00:29:41,020  
actually the water was polluted.

535  
00:29:41,020 --> 00:29:44,590  
An nobody else got  
sick, but I did,

536  
00:29:44,590 --> 00:29:49,810  
when we reached the place when  
they were put in this work.

537  
00:29:49,810 --> 00:29:53,980  
We found a place to live there.

538  
00:29:53,980 --> 00:29:59,100  
One day I had some fever.

539  
00:29:59,100 --> 00:30:01,540  
They didn't know what  
it was at the time.

540  
00:30:01,540 --> 00:30:07,040  
So they thought malaria  
or something like that.

541  
00:30:07,040 --> 00:30:10,740  
But aspirin,  
something like this.

542  
00:30:10,740 --> 00:30:14,200  
And one day, my mother--

543  
00:30:14,200 --> 00:30:16,200  
my father wasn't

there at the time.

544

00:30:16,200 --> 00:30:18,940

What happened?

545

00:30:18,940 --> 00:30:24,090

They took the Jews who  
came from this little town

546

00:30:24,090 --> 00:30:28,140

and other little towns  
that were brought in--

547

00:30:28,140 --> 00:30:30,240

were told to move.

548

00:30:30,240 --> 00:30:35,840

They took those  
men to labor camps.

549

00:30:35,840 --> 00:30:42,190

And they didn't take the men  
that were the residents--

550

00:30:42,190 --> 00:30:45,490

Jewish residents in this Tecuci.

551

00:30:45,490 --> 00:30:48,330

None of the men  
there were taken,

552

00:30:48,330 --> 00:30:50,020

but there were Jews who--

553

00:30:50,020 --> 00:30:51,960

The refugee Jews  
in the other towns.

554

00:30:51,960 --> 00:30:52,930

Right.

555

00:30:52,930 --> 00:30:55,960

They were sent to  
some labor camps.

556  
00:30:55,960 --> 00:31:01,450  
And that could have been  
bad, and for some people

557  
00:31:01,450 --> 00:31:03,100  
may have been bad.

558  
00:31:03,100 --> 00:31:07,480  
But if you had money, you  
could bribe the guards there,

559  
00:31:07,480 --> 00:31:11,440  
and they would say,  
Mr. and so on--

560  
00:31:11,440 --> 00:31:15,180  
treated you with respect  
because they were getting money.

561  
00:31:15,180 --> 00:31:22,570  
And that's one characteristic  
of the Romanian people.

562  
00:31:22,570 --> 00:31:26,170  
They like bribes,  
but they actually

563  
00:31:26,170 --> 00:31:31,720  
produce what they  
take the money for.

564  
00:31:31,720 --> 00:31:36,280  
Other places-- Hungary  
and so on, the Ukraine--

565  
00:31:36,280 --> 00:31:38,930

566  
00:31:38,930 --> 00:31:42,700  
they took the money, and



actually, in many instances,

567

00:31:42,700 --> 00:31:46,440  
they were going to move them  
over the border and so on.

568

00:31:46,440 --> 00:31:50,010  
They killed them and took  
everything they had left.

569

00:31:50,010 --> 00:31:53,250  
Or even if they  
didn't kill them,

570

00:31:53,250 --> 00:31:55,410  
they take anything they  
had and left them there

571

00:31:55,410 --> 00:31:57,330  
and didn't move them.

572

00:31:57,330 --> 00:31:58,610  
That was--

573

00:31:58,610 --> 00:32:03,060  
What did your parents tell  
you why you had to move?

574

00:32:03,060 --> 00:32:04,770  
What do you tell an  
8-year-old child?

575

00:32:04,770 --> 00:32:07,710  
You've got to leave your  
home and go to another town?

576

00:32:07,710 --> 00:32:12,300  
Orders came from above me.

577

00:32:12,300 --> 00:32:14,370  
There was no time even to talk.

578

00:32:14,370 --> 00:32:15,420  
Were you frightened?

579  
00:32:15,420 --> 00:32:18,760  
Oh, I don't know if I  
was frightened, but--

580  
00:32:18,760 --> 00:32:20,480  
Well, you were going  
with your family.

581  
00:32:20,480 --> 00:32:22,320  
Yeah, I was with my  
family and so on.

582  
00:32:22,320 --> 00:32:25,980  
I wasn't frightened, because  
I had my parents with me

583  
00:32:25,980 --> 00:32:27,930  
and so on, and my siblings.

584  
00:32:27,930 --> 00:32:31,680  
Were you able to take things  
special to you as a child--

585  
00:32:31,680 --> 00:32:33,580  
with you?

586  
00:32:33,580 --> 00:32:34,920  
I don't recall now.

587  
00:32:34,920 --> 00:32:35,970  
Like toys or books?

588  
00:32:35,970 --> 00:32:39,590  
No, because we had to  
do it fast, and so on.

589  
00:32:39,590 --> 00:32:44,190  
And there were all night long  
and so on to do all this.

590

00:32:44,190 --> 00:32:48,060

And it was difficult to  
find a wagon and horses,

591

00:32:48,060 --> 00:32:49,560

because it was a small town.

592

00:32:49,560 --> 00:32:51,810

So they had to go  
to the villages

593

00:32:51,810 --> 00:32:54,270

and say, OK, for money.

594

00:32:54,270 --> 00:32:55,170

So they came.

595

00:32:55,170 --> 00:32:59,070

And my father had friends  
in all these villages

596

00:32:59,070 --> 00:33:03,180

because they liked him--

597

00:33:03,180 --> 00:33:06,745

the way he dealt with them.

598

00:33:06,745 --> 00:33:08,900

So now you're in the new town.

599

00:33:08,900 --> 00:33:09,960

We're in the new town.

600

00:33:09,960 --> 00:33:15,000

We found a place to rent,  
actually, because we

601

00:33:15,000 --> 00:33:17,190

had money at the time.

602

00:33:17,190 --> 00:33:20,400

That was for us the  
beginning and so on.

603  
00:33:20,400 --> 00:33:23,050  
Later on it became  
more difficult.

604  
00:33:23,050 --> 00:33:25,980  
And so my father was taken.

605  
00:33:25,980 --> 00:33:33,900  
So my mother had the money  
and so on, and we lived in--

606  
00:33:33,900 --> 00:33:37,020  
what really happened to  
everybody in the population

607  
00:33:37,020 --> 00:33:38,590  
there at that point.

608  
00:33:38,590 --> 00:33:44,760  
And the food became  
scarce, because they

609  
00:33:44,760 --> 00:33:47,475  
were giving to the Germans.

610  
00:33:47,475 --> 00:33:48,600  
They were giving and so on.

611  
00:33:48,600 --> 00:33:53,710  
And the Germans crossed through  
Romania to attack the Russians.

612  
00:33:53,710 --> 00:33:59,816  
So everything was like you got--

613  
00:33:59,816 --> 00:34:01,100  
what is--

614  
00:34:01,100 --> 00:34:02,580

Ration?

615  
00:34:02,580 --> 00:34:04,320  
Rations and so on.

616  
00:34:04,320 --> 00:34:08,380  
And the beef wasn't--

617  
00:34:08,380 --> 00:34:10,080  
you didn't want to buy beef.

618  
00:34:10,080 --> 00:34:12,190  
It wasn't kosher anymore.

619  
00:34:12,190 --> 00:34:14,820  
And so on.

620  
00:34:14,820 --> 00:34:16,710  
But we survived and so on.

621  
00:34:16,710 --> 00:34:19,710  
My mother was a very good cook.

622  
00:34:19,710 --> 00:34:25,179  
During the time in Podu  
Turcului, we had two servants--

623  
00:34:25,179 --> 00:34:27,969  
one that cooked, one that  
took care of the children.

624  
00:34:27,969 --> 00:34:31,500  
Because my mother was in the  
store with my father and so on.

625  
00:34:31,500 --> 00:34:34,650

626  
00:34:34,650 --> 00:34:37,389  
But she was a good  
cook in any case.

627

00:34:37,389 --> 00:34:44,588

So she managed to do for us, and  
we survived throughout the war.

628

00:34:44,588 --> 00:34:46,380

You stayed in that town  
throughout the war.

629

00:34:46,380 --> 00:34:49,760

We stayed in town  
throughout the war.

630

00:34:49,760 --> 00:34:52,560

OK, let's talk a little about  
your life during that time.

631

00:34:52,560 --> 00:34:55,139

632

00:34:55,139 --> 00:34:56,909

Did you go to  
school in that town?

633

00:34:56,909 --> 00:35:00,750

Right, but another  
thing happened.

634

00:35:00,750 --> 00:35:04,140

The government said that  
Jewish children cannot go

635

00:35:04,140 --> 00:35:06,230

to the public schools.

636

00:35:06,230 --> 00:35:09,320

So they did as a favor.

637

00:35:09,320 --> 00:35:10,600

Why?

638

00:35:10,600 --> 00:35:13,120

Because the Jews said, well--

639

00:35:13,120 --> 00:35:17,420  
they started a high school--

640

00:35:17,420 --> 00:35:19,270  
the gymnasium.

641

00:35:19,270 --> 00:35:22,720  
The Jews started  
a Jewish school.

642

00:35:22,720 --> 00:35:23,963  
Right, the Jewish school.

643

00:35:23,963 --> 00:35:24,880  
And they allowed that.

644

00:35:24,880 --> 00:35:26,710  
They didn't care about that.

645

00:35:26,710 --> 00:35:28,480  
And who were the professors?

646

00:35:28,480 --> 00:35:29,890  
One was a pharmacist.

647

00:35:29,890 --> 00:35:32,530  
One was an engineer.

648

00:35:32,530 --> 00:35:37,510  
One actually studied  
in France and so on so

649

00:35:37,510 --> 00:35:39,500  
was the French teacher.

650

00:35:39,500 --> 00:35:43,870  
And so we had a  
much better school.

651

00:35:43,870 --> 00:35:44,920

Education.

652

00:35:44,920 --> 00:35:45,650

Education.

653

00:35:45,650 --> 00:35:48,310

654

00:35:48,310 --> 00:35:50,140

Until the end of the war.

655

00:35:50,140 --> 00:35:50,930

OK?

656

00:35:50,930 --> 00:35:59,170

And we studied, of  
course, religion--

657

00:35:59,170 --> 00:36:01,040

Jewish and stuff like that.

658

00:36:01,040 --> 00:36:02,670

I mean they--

659

00:36:02,670 --> 00:36:04,740

Was there a synagogue  
in that town?

660

00:36:04,740 --> 00:36:06,460

Yeah, there were  
several synagogues.

661

00:36:06,460 --> 00:36:07,810

Oh, yeah.

662

00:36:07,810 --> 00:36:09,610

You felt free enough  
to go to service.

663

00:36:09,610 --> 00:36:10,180

Yes.



664

00:36:10,180 --> 00:36:11,980

Yeah, there was no problem--

665

00:36:11,980 --> 00:36:12,800

OK with that.

666

00:36:12,800 --> 00:36:17,680

So that's why I'm saying we  
didn't suffer that terribly.

667

00:36:17,680 --> 00:36:25,450

And also after I said my oldest  
men were taken to defend,

668

00:36:25,450 --> 00:36:29,790

their family stayed behind,  
after two years there,

669

00:36:29,790 --> 00:36:35,220

1942 something like that, they  
allowed them to come home.

670

00:36:35,220 --> 00:36:36,900

And they came home.

671

00:36:36,900 --> 00:36:37,710

That was that.

672

00:36:37,710 --> 00:36:40,610

Had you had any contact with  
your father in those two years?

673

00:36:40,610 --> 00:36:42,360

Yeah, letters.

674

00:36:42,360 --> 00:36:45,460

They allowed to send  
letters and so on.

675

00:36:45,460 --> 00:36:47,660

And they--

676

00:36:47,660 --> 00:36:48,600

Where was he taken?

677

00:36:48,600 --> 00:36:49,800

Do you know?

678

00:36:49,800 --> 00:36:52,590

I don't remember now.

679

00:36:52,590 --> 00:36:56,430

I think there is  
information, because somebody

680

00:36:56,430 --> 00:37:02,010  
from Podu Turcului put together  
a book, which they actually

681

00:37:02,010 --> 00:37:03,530

sent to me--

682

00:37:03,530 --> 00:37:07,540

one copy with all  
the names and so on.

683

00:37:07,540 --> 00:37:09,150

So I could answer this.

684

00:37:09,150 --> 00:37:13,060

The only problem is, I sent  
it to my brother in Canada.

685

00:37:13,060 --> 00:37:15,390

He still has it.

686

00:37:15,390 --> 00:37:21,000

So I'll ask him to  
send it back to me

687

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:24,120

so I can comment more details--

688

00:37:24,120 --> 00:37:25,920  
the actual details.

689  
00:37:25,920 --> 00:37:28,545  
Because they did a search of--

690  
00:37:28,545 --> 00:37:36,020  
in all these little towns,  
they had the people--

691  
00:37:36,020 --> 00:37:39,600  
all the information  
about the births

692  
00:37:39,600 --> 00:37:43,360  
and so on in the town's  
records and so on.

693  
00:37:43,360 --> 00:37:50,950  
So they could go, and since  
there were so many survivors,

694  
00:37:50,950 --> 00:37:52,250  
people remembered.

695  
00:37:52,250 --> 00:37:54,870  
So they put together this book.

696  
00:37:54,870 --> 00:37:57,650  
I'm not sure that  
there is a copy of it.

697  
00:37:57,650 --> 00:38:02,550  
Maybe [? Micheline ?]  
may be able to.

698  
00:38:02,550 --> 00:38:06,630  
And I had it in my hands at the  
time, and I looked through it,

699  
00:38:06,630 --> 00:38:10,620  
and my father appears  
there and so on.

700  
00:38:10,620 --> 00:38:13,930  
And many other Jews.

701  
00:38:13,930 --> 00:38:18,010  
So during this time  
during the war, again,

702  
00:38:18,010 --> 00:38:20,040  
how aware were  
the adults of what

703  
00:38:20,040 --> 00:38:23,700  
was happening in the other  
countries and even in Romania--

704  
00:38:23,700 --> 00:38:26,550  
terrible things in  
other parts of Romania?

705  
00:38:26,550 --> 00:38:30,330  
Yeah, I'm sure they knew,  
for instance, that bad things

706  
00:38:30,330 --> 00:38:32,310  
happened in Bucharest.

707  
00:38:32,310 --> 00:38:39,340  
There was this so-called  
Legionnaires at a party--

708  
00:38:39,340 --> 00:38:42,460  
the green and so on.

709  
00:38:42,460 --> 00:38:50,340  
And they had a massacre of Jews  
in several places in Bucharest.

710  
00:38:50,340 --> 00:38:54,990  
And then they got this General  
Antonescu sent after them,

711

00:38:54,990 --> 00:38:57,300  
caught them and killed them.

712  
00:38:57,300 --> 00:38:59,880  
And those who survived--

713  
00:38:59,880 --> 00:39:06,330  
[INAUDIBLE] ran and they  
left and went to Germany

714  
00:39:06,330 --> 00:39:10,150  
and stayed there during the war.

715  
00:39:10,150 --> 00:39:13,090  
You hadn't mentioned  
wearing yellow.

716  
00:39:13,090 --> 00:39:14,050  
When was that?

717  
00:39:14,050 --> 00:39:19,960  
That was when this  
Tecuci, I suppose.

718  
00:39:19,960 --> 00:39:26,080  
But I remember for  
the same reason,

719  
00:39:26,080 --> 00:39:27,080  
You didn't have to wear.

720  
00:39:27,080 --> 00:39:32,320  
[INAUDIBLE] Yeah, they  
didn't pursue that, probably

721  
00:39:32,320 --> 00:39:34,600  
because of bribing the police.

722  
00:39:34,600 --> 00:39:37,635  
And the police would say what  
do I care that, too, for them.

723

00:39:37,635 --> 00:39:38,980  
Wear a yellow band, yeah.

724  
00:39:38,980 --> 00:39:40,600  
It was not a Romanian thing.

725  
00:39:40,600 --> 00:39:43,480  
It was done because  
of the Germans.

726  
00:39:43,480 --> 00:39:44,620  
Yeah.

727  
00:39:44,620 --> 00:39:48,940  
So what do you remember  
from those years of ward?

728  
00:39:48,940 --> 00:39:53,600  
Was it a very frightening  
time for you as a child?

729  
00:39:53,600 --> 00:39:57,880  
You were 14 when war was over.

730  
00:39:57,880 --> 00:40:00,010  
I mean, you were getting  
older and more aware.

731  
00:40:00,010 --> 00:40:03,913  
Right, I was aware that there  
was danger and so on, and be--

732  
00:40:03,913 --> 00:40:06,730

733  
00:40:06,730 --> 00:40:08,290  
Were you afraid of being Jewish?

734  
00:40:08,290 --> 00:40:10,710  
Did that bother you?

735  
00:40:10,710 --> 00:40:12,070

No, I was Jewish.

736  
00:40:12,070 --> 00:40:12,900  
I was Jewish.

737  
00:40:12,900 --> 00:40:15,080  
Were you Romanian  
or were you Jewish?

738  
00:40:15,080 --> 00:40:16,470  
What did you feel?

739  
00:40:16,470 --> 00:40:17,340  
Of course, Jewish.

740  
00:40:17,340 --> 00:40:17,890  
Jewish.

741  
00:40:17,890 --> 00:40:19,440  
You did not feel Romanian.

742  
00:40:19,440 --> 00:40:23,223  
I didn't feel Romanian,  
even though that was

743  
00:40:23,223 --> 00:40:24,390  
the language I was speaking.

744  
00:40:24,390 --> 00:40:24,840  
Yeah, yeah.

745  
00:40:24,840 --> 00:40:25,340  
Yeah.

746  
00:40:25,340 --> 00:40:27,180  
But I was reading.

747  
00:40:27,180 --> 00:40:29,550  
I was reading a lot in Romanian.

748  
00:40:29,550 --> 00:40:31,920

Incidentally, one good  
thing about that--

749  
00:40:31,920 --> 00:40:38,030  
they translated from  
other languages books.

750  
00:40:38,030 --> 00:40:45,060  
And in this Tecuci place,  
they had a huge bookstore

751  
00:40:45,060 --> 00:40:46,890  
that went like several--

752  
00:40:46,890 --> 00:40:49,800  
all the way, had  
to go on ladders.

753  
00:40:49,800 --> 00:40:54,990  
And they had translated from  
French and English and even

754  
00:40:54,990 --> 00:40:56,540  
Russian books.

755  
00:40:56,540 --> 00:40:59,310  
And they were kind of cheap.

756  
00:40:59,310 --> 00:41:01,860  
So I was able to  
read through the--

757  
00:41:01,860 --> 00:41:02,385  
Classics?

758  
00:41:02,385 --> 00:41:03,510  
Is that what you're saying?

759  
00:41:03,510 --> 00:41:05,550  
Yeah, the classics.

760  
00:41:05,550 --> 00:41:12,142



And that was my real  
passion-- to read.

761  
00:41:12,142 --> 00:41:13,225  
Were you active in sports?

762  
00:41:13,225 --> 00:41:16,170

763  
00:41:16,170 --> 00:41:18,630  
Yes, to some extent,  
but you couldn't call it

764  
00:41:18,630 --> 00:41:19,950  
sports like here.

765  
00:41:19,950 --> 00:41:22,010  
You know, we played--

766  
00:41:22,010 --> 00:41:26,610  
if we played,  
let's say baseball,

767  
00:41:26,610 --> 00:41:30,540  
it was a ball made  
of pieces of old--

768  
00:41:30,540 --> 00:41:31,520  
String or something?

769  
00:41:31,520 --> 00:41:32,180  
Yeah.

770  
00:41:32,180 --> 00:41:32,940  
Yeah.

771  
00:41:32,940 --> 00:41:38,320  
So we played the games  
like that and so on.

772  
00:41:38,320 --> 00:41:40,480  
But after the war

it was different.

773

00:41:40,480 --> 00:41:42,530

Yeah.

774

00:41:42,530 --> 00:41:45,750

So did your family stay  
in the same apartment

775

00:41:45,750 --> 00:41:47,370

that they had rented?

776

00:41:47,370 --> 00:41:48,710

We stayed there until--

777

00:41:48,710 --> 00:41:49,210

yeah.

778

00:41:49,210 --> 00:41:51,240

You stayed in one  
place the whole time.

779

00:41:51,240 --> 00:41:52,590

One place, right.

780

00:41:52,590 --> 00:41:54,510

What were your parents' frames--

781

00:41:54,510 --> 00:41:58,590

do you remember what your mother  
or father's frame of mind was?

782

00:41:58,590 --> 00:42:02,520

Well, they were worried, but  
they wouldn't all the time

783

00:42:02,520 --> 00:42:04,830

let us just--

784

00:42:04,830 --> 00:42:07,630

we still were--

785

00:42:07,630 --> 00:42:08,160

Children.

786

00:42:08,160 --> 00:42:09,090

Children, yeah.

787

00:42:09,090 --> 00:42:11,592

788

00:42:11,592 --> 00:42:13,800

Did you talk things over  
with your sister and brother

789

00:42:13,800 --> 00:42:17,140

about what was happening?

790

00:42:17,140 --> 00:42:20,860

I don't recall that we  
talked about that, OK?

791

00:42:20,860 --> 00:42:24,910

Maybe that was done on purpose  
not to make the little boy--

792

00:42:24,910 --> 00:42:25,410

yeah.

793

00:42:25,410 --> 00:42:27,940

794

00:42:27,940 --> 00:42:31,390

But we knew that it  
was dangerous times.

795

00:42:31,390 --> 00:42:34,040

Did you see German soldiers?

796

00:42:34,040 --> 00:42:38,650

Toward the end of the war,  
and I'll tell you the story.

797

00:42:38,650 --> 00:42:44,300

The end of the war  
came and 1944 for us.

798

00:42:44,300 --> 00:42:48,500

The Germans were  
retreating from Russia,

799

00:42:48,500 --> 00:42:56,530

and they actually came  
toward our own town, Tecuci.

800

00:42:56,530 --> 00:42:59,780

And then retreat.

801

00:42:59,780 --> 00:43:06,210

After them were coming the  
Russians to attack them.

802

00:43:06,210 --> 00:43:10,520

So I remember this very clearly.

803

00:43:10,520 --> 00:43:21,090

It was August, 1944, and  
I was 13 at that time.

804

00:43:21,090 --> 00:43:23,940

And this is when they retreated.

805

00:43:23,940 --> 00:43:25,730

Did you have a bar mitzvah?

806

00:43:25,730 --> 00:43:27,740

I had a bar mitzvah, yes.

807

00:43:27,740 --> 00:43:32,690

And my father  
actually wasn't yet

808

00:43:32,690 --> 00:43:35,900

home at the time  
for my bar mitzvah.

809

00:43:35,900 --> 00:43:38,730

He came a few weeks later.

810

00:43:38,730 --> 00:43:45,770

And so an uncle  
of mine, and I was

811

00:43:45,770 --> 00:43:49,520

studying for the bar  
mitzvah with a teacher.

812

00:43:49,520 --> 00:43:53,770

And bar mitzvah there  
wasn't the kind of thing

813

00:43:53,770 --> 00:43:55,870

that it is nowadays here--

814

00:43:55,870 --> 00:43:58,370

a festivity and all this.

815

00:43:58,370 --> 00:43:59,580

You went to the synagogue.

816

00:43:59,580 --> 00:44:00,800

He didn't give a speech.

817

00:44:00,800 --> 00:44:05,720

You just came to the Torah  
and you read and so on, things

818

00:44:05,720 --> 00:44:08,630

that you learned and so on.

819

00:44:08,630 --> 00:44:11,850

I was the only one who  
read it in Hebrew, not

820

00:44:11,850 --> 00:44:14,510

in Yiddish pronunciation.

821

00:44:14,510 --> 00:44:16,730  
Because I didn't know Yiddish.

822  
00:44:16,730 --> 00:44:19,910  
So my teacher  
taught me in Hebrew,

823  
00:44:19,910 --> 00:44:23,210  
and that was good  
for me later on when

824  
00:44:23,210 --> 00:44:26,990  
I started learning Hebrew.

825  
00:44:26,990 --> 00:44:29,180  
You had said that your  
father wasn't home,

826  
00:44:29,180 --> 00:44:31,860  
but I thought you said he  
came home after two years?

827  
00:44:31,860 --> 00:44:34,320  
I think that I was  
wrong about that--

828  
00:44:34,320 --> 00:44:35,360  
the two years.

829  
00:44:35,360 --> 00:44:40,250  
I think that maybe they were  
taken later or not immediately

830  
00:44:40,250 --> 00:44:42,140  
when they arrived in the town.

831  
00:44:42,140 --> 00:44:45,280  
So my dates are a little bit--

832  
00:44:45,280 --> 00:44:45,855  
OK.

833

00:44:45,855 --> 00:44:46,355  
OK.

834  
00:44:46,355 --> 00:44:50,240  
And so in any case, yeah.

835  
00:44:50,240 --> 00:44:58,860  
So we-- on this trip to Tecuci  
and so on, I got all this.

836  
00:44:58,860 --> 00:45:02,960  
And my father  
wasn't there after.

837  
00:45:02,960 --> 00:45:12,940  
So one time after, my mother  
was left with me in this house

838  
00:45:12,940 --> 00:45:14,810  
that we were renting.

839  
00:45:14,810 --> 00:45:21,570  
And my father-- that was maybe  
a year after that and so on.

840  
00:45:21,570 --> 00:45:24,470  
I kept having  
attacks of malaria.

841  
00:45:24,470 --> 00:45:25,900  
That's what they called it.

842  
00:45:25,900 --> 00:45:33,310  
So one day, my mother--

843  
00:45:33,310 --> 00:45:38,710  
my siblings were sent to our  
relatives, because I was--

844  
00:45:38,710 --> 00:45:39,570  
Sickly?

845

00:45:39,570 --> 00:45:40,100  
Yeah.

846  
00:45:40,100 --> 00:45:41,020  
Yeah, right?

847  
00:45:41,020 --> 00:45:46,480  
So if I had something for them  
to not to catch it from me.

848  
00:45:46,480 --> 00:45:49,280  
And I had a high  
fever and so on.

849  
00:45:49,280 --> 00:45:54,640  
And she had to go, and  
she locked the door

850  
00:45:54,640 --> 00:45:55,570  
and said, stay here.

851  
00:45:55,570 --> 00:45:56,440  
Don't go anywhere.

852  
00:45:56,440 --> 00:45:58,990  
And I couldn't go out, and  
she didn't want other people

853  
00:45:58,990 --> 00:46:00,790  
to be able to enter.

854  
00:46:00,790 --> 00:46:11,150  
And I had fever, and  
somehow I remember this,

855  
00:46:11,150 --> 00:46:13,630  
because it really happened.

856  
00:46:13,630 --> 00:46:17,180  
There was a window, and  
the window was open,

857



00:46:17,180 --> 00:46:19,910  
but the window had bars.

858  
00:46:19,910 --> 00:46:25,280  
So I felt like I was in the  
room, and it was also warm.

859  
00:46:25,280 --> 00:46:28,010  
I wanted to go out into the air.

860  
00:46:28,010 --> 00:46:34,400  
So I managed to go  
to between the bars

861  
00:46:34,400 --> 00:46:39,030  
to get there, climb  
up and down into the--

862  
00:46:39,030 --> 00:46:45,285  
and my mother comes and  
screams, Phillip, Phillip!

863  
00:46:45,285 --> 00:46:46,910  
Then she would call  
me [? Phillamel. ?]

864  
00:46:46,910 --> 00:46:49,400  
That was my name--

865  
00:46:49,400 --> 00:46:51,860  
little Phillip.

866  
00:46:51,860 --> 00:46:57,280  
And so I was in bad shape.

867  
00:46:57,280 --> 00:47:02,060  
So she took me in, and  
she called a Jewish doctor

868  
00:47:02,060 --> 00:47:07,520  
by the name of Dr.  
[? Sheinwitz. ?] And he came.

869

00:47:07,520 --> 00:47:10,790

It was an interesting  
story with that man.

870

00:47:10,790 --> 00:47:17,090

He was suffering with his heart,  
and he was a devoted person

871

00:47:17,090 --> 00:47:20,090

to do everyone--  
all the patients.

872

00:47:20,090 --> 00:47:27,500

And so he came, and he found  
out that it wasn't just malaria.

873

00:47:27,500 --> 00:47:30,380

I had typhoid fever.

874

00:47:30,380 --> 00:47:35,980

So there was a rule  
that anything that was--

875

00:47:35,980 --> 00:47:39,250

if a person is sick  
with something like this

876

00:47:39,250 --> 00:47:43,600

that is a catching thing,  
that they should be

877

00:47:43,600 --> 00:47:46,600

taken to the public hospital.

878

00:47:46,600 --> 00:47:50,865

But public hospital  
meant death in anybody

879

00:47:50,865 --> 00:47:52,860

that was brought like that.

880

00:47:52,860 --> 00:47:56,430

Not because they were  
Jewish, but the hospitals

881  
00:47:56,430 --> 00:48:00,680  
weren't the way they should be.

882  
00:48:00,680 --> 00:48:06,350  
My luck was that they  
didn't take me there.

883  
00:48:06,350 --> 00:48:14,480  
The major medical guy in the  
town-- in this Tecuci place--

884  
00:48:14,480 --> 00:48:17,520  
was a friend of my doctor.

885  
00:48:17,520 --> 00:48:19,370  
They had both studied in France.

886  
00:48:19,370 --> 00:48:22,670  
They got their degrees  
there in medicine.

887  
00:48:22,670 --> 00:48:30,020  
So Dr. [? Sheinwitz ?]  
told to this doctor--

888  
00:48:30,020 --> 00:48:34,130  
said, look, if he goes to  
there, he's going to die there.

889  
00:48:34,130 --> 00:48:35,750  
So but here.

890  
00:48:35,750 --> 00:48:37,970  
And the man said, but look.

891  
00:48:37,970 --> 00:48:40,980  
If he is not under--

892  
00:48:40,980 --> 00:48:43,340

what do you call it?

893

00:48:43,340 --> 00:48:44,090

Quarantine?

894

00:48:44,090 --> 00:48:51,000

Quarantine-- then I can't let  
him stay at any other place.

895

00:48:51,000 --> 00:48:55,850

So the doctor said there is  
nobody else except his mother,

896

00:48:55,850 --> 00:48:57,940

and nobody can enter and so on.

897

00:48:57,940 --> 00:49:00,140

He is truly quarantined.

898

00:49:00,140 --> 00:49:04,400

So this doctor, the  
medical officer,

899

00:49:04,400 --> 00:49:10,100

came with Dr.  
[? Sheinwitz ?] to the place.

900

00:49:10,100 --> 00:49:13,880

And then remembering  
again, I was in bed.

901

00:49:13,880 --> 00:49:19,880

I had high fever above  
106, something like that.

902

00:49:19,880 --> 00:49:27,040

And he sat next to me  
on this bed and so on.

903

00:49:27,040 --> 00:49:30,590

He saw they were  
clean and so on,

904

00:49:30,590 --> 00:49:33,770

and my mother was  
there, of course.

905

00:49:33,770 --> 00:49:38,420

And he let me stay there,  
and that saved my life.

906

00:49:38,420 --> 00:49:39,353

Saved your life?

907

00:49:39,353 --> 00:49:40,200

Yeah.

908

00:49:40,200 --> 00:49:42,240

And my mother--

909

00:49:42,240 --> 00:49:49,580

I had to have ice all over on  
myself to get down and so on.

910

00:49:49,580 --> 00:49:56,010

And at that time, there were  
no medications like nowadays.

911

00:49:56,010 --> 00:49:59,640

So somehow they  
managed, and so on.

912

00:49:59,640 --> 00:50:07,230

I remember I wasn't allowed  
to eat solid food and so

913

00:50:07,230 --> 00:50:11,820

on, so my mother made everything  
else was and so on, and cooked.

914

00:50:11,820 --> 00:50:15,510

And so many times  
during the night,

915

00:50:15,510 --> 00:50:19,240

she changed the ice  
sheets and so on.

916  
00:50:19,240 --> 00:50:25,090  
And they had ice on my stomach,  
and ice on my hand, and so on.

917  
00:50:25,090 --> 00:50:25,728  
And I survived.

918  
00:50:25,728 --> 00:50:26,270  
You survived.

919  
00:50:26,270 --> 00:50:31,830  
Yeah, so due to my  
mother and to luck.

920  
00:50:31,830 --> 00:50:33,030  
I'm trying to find out--

921  
00:50:33,030 --> 00:50:36,390  
I know that the man has  
died, Dr. [? Sheinwitz ?]..

922  
00:50:36,390 --> 00:50:39,480  
But wonder if there was any--

923  
00:50:39,480 --> 00:50:40,830  
I don't think he had children.

924  
00:50:40,830 --> 00:50:42,930  
He was married.

925  
00:50:42,930 --> 00:50:47,190  
So I would like to put his  
name among those people who

926  
00:50:47,190 --> 00:50:49,740  
saved and so on.

927  
00:50:49,740 --> 00:50:52,230  
We had been talking

about as a child

928

00:50:52,230 --> 00:50:55,460

when you saw a German soldier.

929

00:50:55,460 --> 00:50:57,030

Yeah, I'm sorry.

930

00:50:57,030 --> 00:50:58,870

What reactions you had.

931

00:50:58,870 --> 00:51:01,290

Oh, yeah.

932

00:51:01,290 --> 00:51:05,220

As I said, they  
started retreating.

933

00:51:05,220 --> 00:51:09,770

And the Germans, they  
hadn't been there.

934

00:51:09,770 --> 00:51:17,160

They came from the east,  
but there was a whole army.

935

00:51:17,160 --> 00:51:21,120

So they started going  
through this town,

936

00:51:21,120 --> 00:51:25,830

and they thought they were  
going to exit through the road

937

00:51:25,830 --> 00:51:28,560

away from the  
coming the Russians.

938

00:51:28,560 --> 00:51:32,820

So they started doing  
that, and lo and behold,

939

00:51:32,820 --> 00:51:34,890  
the Russians had been  
smarter than they,

940  
00:51:34,890 --> 00:51:36,960  
and they were waiting  
for them there.

941  
00:51:36,960 --> 00:51:40,230  
So there was a little  
bit of skirmish,

942  
00:51:40,230 --> 00:51:43,170  
and then they retreated  
back, and they

943  
00:51:43,170 --> 00:51:46,230  
went through another  
road, they thought.

944  
00:51:46,230 --> 00:51:49,260  
Well, they were caught again.

945  
00:51:49,260 --> 00:51:56,100  
So we heard the sounds  
of firing and all this.

946  
00:51:56,100 --> 00:52:01,650  
Somehow I found myself  
outside the house.

947  
00:52:01,650 --> 00:52:05,670  
My parents were there, but  
everybody was worried, OK,

948  
00:52:05,670 --> 00:52:07,600  
what's going to happen?

949  
00:52:07,600 --> 00:52:13,390  
So I got out of the  
house and took a walk.

950  
00:52:13,390 --> 00:52:14,610



And what do I see?

951

00:52:14,610 --> 00:52:19,598

I see a German soldier  
on his back dead--

952

00:52:19,598 --> 00:52:24,370

a face like the  
yellow, dark yellow,

953

00:52:24,370 --> 00:52:28,050

and blood coming from his head.

954

00:52:28,050 --> 00:52:29,250

I looked at that.

955

00:52:29,250 --> 00:52:32,640

I didn't start running  
or anything like that.

956

00:52:32,640 --> 00:52:36,130

And that was one  
of my experiences

957

00:52:36,130 --> 00:52:38,010

in seeing and so on.

958

00:52:38,010 --> 00:52:40,920

959

00:52:40,920 --> 00:52:43,260

I wasn't scared.

960

00:52:43,260 --> 00:52:50,280

So that was my reaction.

961

00:52:50,280 --> 00:52:56,460

And then to finish  
the story about this,

962

00:52:56,460 --> 00:52:58,380

they got some prisoners.

963  
00:52:58,380 --> 00:53:02,700  
They didn't kill them all,  
they meaning the Germans.

964  
00:53:02,700 --> 00:53:05,490  
So some were caught.

965  
00:53:05,490 --> 00:53:10,350  
They were put behind barbed  
wire in a camp and so on,

966  
00:53:10,350 --> 00:53:11,500  
but they weren't killed.

967  
00:53:11,500 --> 00:53:16,380  
So that's not what the  
Germans did to the Russians.

968  
00:53:16,380 --> 00:53:19,300  
They killed prisoners and so on.

969  
00:53:19,300 --> 00:53:21,430  
It's well known.

970  
00:53:21,430 --> 00:53:27,420  
And so that was one of my  
experiences at the time.

971  
00:53:27,420 --> 00:53:32,040  
Then the Russians came  
passing through the city.

972  
00:53:32,040 --> 00:53:37,470  
And now that this skirmish  
is finished and so on

973  
00:53:37,470 --> 00:53:42,270  
and some Germans escaped and  
so on, the Russians I mean

974  
00:53:42,270 --> 00:53:46,860

came more in bulk.

975

00:53:46,860 --> 00:53:53,110

And once more, I was coming,  
getting out of the house.

976

00:53:53,110 --> 00:53:55,560

I had to see where the  
Russians were coming.

977

00:53:55,560 --> 00:53:57,900

They were on the  
boulevard and so on.

978

00:53:57,900 --> 00:54:02,670

They were passing with their  
tanks and trucks and all that.

979

00:54:02,670 --> 00:54:09,690

So I went there, and I saw  
indeed this tremendous group

980

00:54:09,690 --> 00:54:10,830

of men.

981

00:54:10,830 --> 00:54:15,390

They were just going, and  
they were shouting now Berlin,

982

00:54:15,390 --> 00:54:17,470

to Berlin.

983

00:54:17,470 --> 00:54:24,540

So as I was there, this  
is something that I did.

984

00:54:24,540 --> 00:54:27,690

I'm not sure that is  
a proud thing to say,

985

00:54:27,690 --> 00:54:33,630

but I saw some people  
coming from a building that

986  
00:54:33,630 --> 00:54:36,090  
was a government building.

987  
00:54:36,090 --> 00:54:37,580  
The government at the time--

988  
00:54:37,580 --> 00:54:43,680  
Romanian government-- had  
the power to sell tobacco.

989  
00:54:43,680 --> 00:54:46,320  
Nobody could sell  
tobacco, so everything

990  
00:54:46,320 --> 00:54:50,280  
came to this warehouse  
that was government.

991  
00:54:50,280 --> 00:54:53,430  
And the tobacco was  
not cigarettes--

992  
00:54:53,430 --> 00:54:59,010  
just packages with tobacco  
that you made a cigarette,

993  
00:54:59,010 --> 00:55:01,980  
and so on.

994  
00:55:01,980 --> 00:55:05,090  
And I knew about that.

995  
00:55:05,090 --> 00:55:13,060  
And that was 1944, so  
I was 13 years old.

996  
00:55:13,060 --> 00:55:15,530  
And I look.

997  
00:55:15,530 --> 00:55:19,600  
I let me go, and I saw people

coming out with boxes--

998  
00:55:19,600 --> 00:55:21,960  
wooden boxes.

999  
00:55:21,960 --> 00:55:25,620  
And I go inside, too.

1000  
00:55:25,620 --> 00:55:30,770  
I was dressed in shorts  
and sandals and a cap.

1001  
00:55:30,770 --> 00:55:37,170  
I go in and I see people taking  
this and go out with boxes.

1002  
00:55:37,170 --> 00:55:40,560  
And then I hear shouting.

1003  
00:55:40,560 --> 00:55:41,760  
I was still inside.

1004  
00:55:41,760 --> 00:55:45,210  
I hear shouting, and then  
a shot or several shots

1005  
00:55:45,210 --> 00:55:48,070  
to the ceiling.

1006  
00:55:48,070 --> 00:55:50,210  
The Russians had come and they--

1007  
00:55:50,210 --> 00:55:52,590  
oh, tobacco?

1008  
00:55:52,590 --> 00:55:54,210  
They wanted tobacco.

1009  
00:55:54,210 --> 00:55:56,250  
They call it tabak.

1010

00:55:56,250 --> 00:56:03,120

And so the people who were  
there who were adults--

1011

00:56:03,120 --> 00:56:04,490

Romanian, probably.

1012

00:56:04,490 --> 00:56:08,220

I didn't know anybody there.

1013

00:56:08,220 --> 00:56:09,210

They got out.

1014

00:56:09,210 --> 00:56:11,190

They were afraid to be killed.

1015

00:56:11,190 --> 00:56:15,810

I wasn't afraid, so

I took a box myself.

1016

00:56:15,810 --> 00:56:17,790

It was heavy.

1017

00:56:17,790 --> 00:56:20,670

And I couldn't carry it.

1018

00:56:20,670 --> 00:56:21,510

I rolled it.

1019

00:56:21,510 --> 00:56:24,440

It was a kind of a cube.

1020

00:56:24,440 --> 00:56:26,040

Like a barrel?

1021

00:56:26,040 --> 00:56:27,430

Not a barrel, no.

1022

00:56:27,430 --> 00:56:34,140

Just a box-- a wooden box

with a shape of a cube.

1023

00:56:34,140 --> 00:56:40,260

So I managed to get down the  
steps there on a side street.

1024

00:56:40,260 --> 00:56:43,050

The boulevard was here,  
and this was a side--

1025

00:56:43,050 --> 00:56:44,670

small street.

1026

00:56:44,670 --> 00:56:47,370

And there was nobody  
there, because everybody

1027

00:56:47,370 --> 00:56:49,590

was in their houses  
by that time when

1028

00:56:49,590 --> 00:56:52,030

they heard the shots there.

1029

00:56:52,030 --> 00:56:58,230

And I started rolling it,  
and I brought it home.

1030

00:56:58,230 --> 00:57:02,070

And my father said,  
what did he do?

1031

00:57:02,070 --> 00:57:04,800

1032

00:57:04,800 --> 00:57:07,440

But I was there with that.

1033

00:57:07,440 --> 00:57:09,610

That meant money.

1034

00:57:09,610 --> 00:57:10,740

Why?

1035

00:57:10,740 --> 00:57:14,220

Because when they  
opened up and so on,

1036

00:57:14,220 --> 00:57:18,090

there were all these  
packages of tobacco.

1037

00:57:18,090 --> 00:57:21,990

And so my brother, who was  
two years older and so on,

1038

00:57:21,990 --> 00:57:25,890

said he was going to  
take a bag of this

1039

00:57:25,890 --> 00:57:29,370

and sell it to the Russian  
soldiers for rubles.

1040

00:57:29,370 --> 00:57:31,080

And he did that.

1041

00:57:31,080 --> 00:57:37,320

And with that money, my father  
started a business again

1042

00:57:37,320 --> 00:57:42,480

in this town and  
managed to recover.

1043

00:57:42,480 --> 00:57:45,060

1044

00:57:45,060 --> 00:57:47,220

That's our family  
history, right?

1045

00:57:47,220 --> 00:57:51,700

Just my brother reminded  
me just a few weeks ago.

1046



00:57:51,700 --> 00:57:55,320

We were talking on  
the phone about that.

1047

00:57:55,320 --> 00:58:03,130

And it wasn't-- ordinarily my  
parents would have said to me,

1048

00:58:03,130 --> 00:58:04,770

well, this is stealing.

1049

00:58:04,770 --> 00:58:09,240

But that was then.

1050

00:58:09,240 --> 00:58:12,900

What other memories do you have  
at the end of the war in '44?

1051

00:58:12,900 --> 00:58:14,550

Do you have any other memories?

1052

00:58:14,550 --> 00:58:16,980

Well, at the end  
of the war, yes.

1053

00:58:16,980 --> 00:58:20,850

It was in the very--

1054

00:58:20,850 --> 00:58:26,310

basically since we were  
liberated by that time.

1055

00:58:26,310 --> 00:58:29,580

The war ended basically in '45.

1056

00:58:29,580 --> 00:58:30,600

Yeah, yeah.

1057

00:58:30,600 --> 00:58:33,540

But in '44 we are liberated.

1058

00:58:33,540 --> 00:58:36,810

We started hearing about  
what happened in Germany.

1059  
00:58:36,810 --> 00:58:38,560  
That was going to  
be my next question.

1060  
00:58:38,560 --> 00:58:41,315  
Because up to that  
point, did your parents--

1061  
00:58:41,315 --> 00:58:42,690  
do you know if  
your parents knew?

1062  
00:58:42,690 --> 00:58:43,852  
No, we didn't know--

1063  
00:58:43,852 --> 00:58:44,560  
You did not know.

1064  
00:58:44,560 --> 00:58:46,950  
--what was happening there.

1065  
00:58:46,950 --> 00:58:50,670  
We knew that there was bad  
for the Jews-- something.

1066  
00:58:50,670 --> 00:58:52,800  
But we didn't know details.

1067  
00:58:52,800 --> 00:58:55,920  
Suddenly the news  
are opened, and they

1068  
00:58:55,920 --> 00:59:01,080  
said, in fact, the  
German soldiers who had

1069  
00:59:01,080 --> 00:59:05,560  
been in the town during the--

1070

00:59:05,560 --> 00:59:07,390  
there was an airport there--

1071  
00:59:07,390 --> 00:59:09,120  
a big airport.

1072  
00:59:09,120 --> 00:59:13,440  
And the German Air Force had  
there, and also the Romanians

1073  
00:59:13,440 --> 00:59:17,040  
that were forced to  
fight with them against--

1074  
00:59:17,040 --> 00:59:19,650  
and there was a little  
story about that, too.

1075  
00:59:19,650 --> 00:59:26,640  
But the Germans used some  
soap that some people, Jews,

1076  
00:59:26,640 --> 00:59:29,210  
bought them soap.

1077  
00:59:29,210 --> 00:59:36,740  
They didn't know that this  
soap was made in Germany

1078  
00:59:36,740 --> 00:59:39,570  
from the fat of Jews.

1079  
00:59:39,570 --> 00:59:45,310  
It said so with letters.

1080  
00:59:45,310 --> 00:59:47,020  
I forget-- Rhine--

1081  
00:59:47,020 --> 00:59:52,760

1082  
00:59:52,760 --> 00:59:56,450

pure Jewish fat.

1083

00:59:56,450 --> 00:59:58,460

Something like that.

1084

00:59:58,460 --> 01:00:01,170

And whether that was--

1085

01:00:01,170 --> 01:00:06,440

in any case, we had

the city, this town.

1086

01:00:06,440 --> 01:00:11,540

We had taken this from

everybody that may have had it,

1087

01:00:11,540 --> 01:00:13,440

and went to the cemetery.

1088

01:00:13,440 --> 01:00:20,440

And they were putting

as dead people.

1089

01:00:20,440 --> 01:00:24,370

And rabbis were there and so on.

1090

01:00:24,370 --> 01:00:26,200

You buried the soap.

1091

01:00:26,200 --> 01:00:28,800

Buried the soap in the cemetery.

1092

01:00:28,800 --> 01:00:30,060

Did you go to that?

1093

01:00:30,060 --> 01:00:31,410

Did you go to that service?

1094

01:00:31,410 --> 01:00:32,730

Yeah, I remember that.

1095

01:00:32,730 --> 01:00:37,080

Yeah, so all of  
us-- all the Jews.

1096

01:00:37,080 --> 01:00:38,010

They went to that.

1097

01:00:38,010 --> 01:00:41,440

I mean, it was a big shock.

1098

01:00:41,440 --> 01:00:42,210

Went what?

1099

01:00:42,210 --> 01:00:42,930

And so on.

1100

01:00:42,930 --> 01:00:45,910

And we didn't know all the  
other things that happened.

1101

01:00:45,910 --> 01:00:52,160

But it was something that was--

1102

01:00:52,160 --> 01:00:53,150

the soap.

1103

01:00:53,150 --> 01:00:57,490

You know, the soap  
was incredible.

1104

01:00:57,490 --> 01:01:06,490

And then on the positive side,  
during the war, as I said,

1105

01:01:06,490 --> 01:01:09,870

because it was an  
airport there--

1106

01:01:09,870 --> 01:01:15,970

military airport-- the Germans  
were in with their planes, air

1107

01:01:15,970 --> 01:01:23,090

force, and also  
some Romanian also

1108

01:01:23,090 --> 01:01:29,890

were forced basically to  
fight against the American

1109

01:01:29,890 --> 01:01:31,970

and British and so on.

1110

01:01:31,970 --> 01:01:36,100

So they came, their pilots  
and officers and so on.

1111

01:01:36,100 --> 01:01:38,980

And there was no room enough  
in their hotels or anything

1112

01:01:38,980 --> 01:01:40,060

to put them.

1113

01:01:40,060 --> 01:01:41,760

So why did they decide?

1114

01:01:41,760 --> 01:01:48,700

The Romanian side said OK,  
let's put these pilots--

1115

01:01:48,700 --> 01:01:51,170

put them in Jewish homes.

1116

01:01:51,170 --> 01:01:55,130

So we got an officer  
who is a pilot--

1117

01:01:55,130 --> 01:02:01,250

a fighter pilot-- a man  
named [? Lungulescu ?],,

1118

01:02:01,250 --> 01:02:04,340

which means tall.

1119

01:02:04,340 --> 01:02:05,550

Tall.

1120

01:02:05,550 --> 01:02:12,240

And he was indeed tall and so  
on and he was a very nice man.

1121

01:02:12,240 --> 01:02:13,640

He knew we were Jewish.

1122

01:02:13,640 --> 01:02:18,580

So one room was given  
to him and so on.

1123

01:02:18,580 --> 01:02:21,880

And he came from  
all part of Romania

1124

01:02:21,880 --> 01:02:23,630

that had never met Jews.

1125

01:02:23,630 --> 01:02:27,370

It heard all the stories  
about the Jews killed Christ--

1126

01:02:27,370 --> 01:02:29,760

Christ Jesus, and so on.

1127

01:02:29,760 --> 01:02:34,450

And suddenly he sees  
people like him and so on,

1128

01:02:34,450 --> 01:02:36,400

and he behaved very nicely.

1129

01:02:36,400 --> 01:02:38,920

He would bring us coffee.

1130

01:02:38,920 --> 01:02:45,610

That was something that  
we didn't have, and so on.

1131

01:02:45,610 --> 01:02:52,600

And he was not  
married, or he had

1132

01:02:52,600 --> 01:02:57,730

somebody or a friend who later  
came to stay there with him.

1133

01:02:57,730 --> 01:02:59,340

But he liked me.

1134

01:02:59,340 --> 01:03:01,000

I was the youngest there.

1135

01:03:01,000 --> 01:03:08,300

So one day he decided  
to show me what he does.

1136

01:03:08,300 --> 01:03:13,730

He takes me to the airport  
and puts me in his plane--

1137

01:03:13,730 --> 01:03:15,710

in the pilot plane.

1138

01:03:15,710 --> 01:03:20,000

I mean, it was something  
that is so unusual.

1139

01:03:20,000 --> 01:03:22,520

Of course he knew I  
was Jewish and so on.

1140

01:03:22,520 --> 01:03:25,640

And he puts me there.

1141

01:03:25,640 --> 01:03:29,560

And the pilots when they  
want to shoot something,

1142

01:03:29,560 --> 01:03:33,760

there is a stick with a button.



1143  
01:03:33,760 --> 01:03:36,220  
He doesn't take aim.

1144  
01:03:36,220 --> 01:03:39,010  
He takes the full plane.

1145  
01:03:39,010 --> 01:03:44,830  
So I was almost ready  
to push the button.

1146  
01:03:44,830 --> 01:03:47,470  
Don't touch it.

1147  
01:03:47,470 --> 01:03:49,390  
So it was lucky, and so on.

1148  
01:03:49,390 --> 01:03:50,590  
Did you go up in it?

1149  
01:03:50,590 --> 01:03:51,650  
Did you go up?

1150  
01:03:51,650 --> 01:03:53,070  
No, you stayed on the field.

1151  
01:03:53,070 --> 01:03:53,945  
Stayed on the ground.

1152  
01:03:53,945 --> 01:03:55,540  
Just on the ground and so on.

1153  
01:03:55,540 --> 01:03:57,820  
But I remember this.

1154  
01:03:57,820 --> 01:04:02,950  
And so this man later  
on and during the war--

1155  
01:04:02,950 --> 01:04:05,500  
that was not the end of the war.

1156

01:04:05,500 --> 01:04:10,570

Actually, he was an excellent pilot in terms of fighting.

1157

01:04:10,570 --> 01:04:15,670

He had actually downed quite a few planes,

1158

01:04:15,670 --> 01:04:18,710

British and American.

1159

01:04:18,710 --> 01:04:22,690

But he ended up in the ground dead, OK?

1160

01:04:22,690 --> 01:04:24,690

He was shot down as well.

1161

01:04:24,690 --> 01:04:25,260

He was?

1162

01:04:25,260 --> 01:04:26,260

Yeah.

1163

01:04:26,260 --> 01:04:31,270

And that was the end of his life.

1164

01:04:31,270 --> 01:04:33,190

And he was against the Germans.

1165

01:04:33,190 --> 01:04:37,960

He really was, but he couldn't do anything.

1166

01:04:37,960 --> 01:04:39,430

He was kind of forced.

1167

01:04:39,430 --> 01:04:41,380

You don't do that, we'll shoot you.

1168

01:04:41,380 --> 01:04:43,110

Period.

1169

01:04:43,110 --> 01:04:44,000