

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,529

2
00:00:07,529 --> 00:00:08,029
All right.

3
00:00:08,029 --> 00:00:11,120
The following is an
interview with Eve Bergstein.

4
00:00:11,120 --> 00:00:14,630
This interview is taking
place on September 19th, 1984

5
00:00:14,630 --> 00:00:17,750
at the State Department
in Washington, DC

6
00:00:17,750 --> 00:00:21,830
at the faith in
humankind conference.

7
00:00:21,830 --> 00:00:25,520
Eve was a survivor, not
a rescuer the interviewer

8
00:00:25,520 --> 00:00:29,960
is Ellen Epstein of the
Center for Oral History.

9
00:00:29,960 --> 00:00:30,530
OK.

10
00:00:30,530 --> 00:00:36,000
I'd like to begin by asking
you your complete name.

11
00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:41,000
I was born Eva
Nisencwajg in Poland,

12

00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:48,600
a city called Staszow,
September 12, 1936.

13
00:00:48,600 --> 00:00:49,350
OK.

14
00:00:49,350 --> 00:00:50,270
And your parents.

15
00:00:50,270 --> 00:00:53,520
What were their complete names?

16
00:00:53,520 --> 00:00:57,470
My father was Abram
Moshe Nisencwajg.

17
00:00:57,470 --> 00:01:02,960
My mother was Hena
Weisbrod Nisencwajg.

18
00:01:02,960 --> 00:01:04,489
OK.

19
00:01:04,489 --> 00:01:06,350
Now if we had more
time, I would like

20
00:01:06,350 --> 00:01:08,690
to ask you about recollections.

21
00:01:08,690 --> 00:01:10,910
But since you were three
and you were very young,

22
00:01:10,910 --> 00:01:14,540
as you've told me, I think
we will skip directly

23
00:01:14,540 --> 00:01:18,860
into the period of the
war since you probably

24

00:01:18,860 --> 00:01:22,002

don't have too many
memories of your parents

25

00:01:22,002 --> 00:01:23,210

from that early age to share.

26

00:01:23,210 --> 00:01:24,620

Actually, I do.

27

00:01:24,620 --> 00:01:27,420

I have quite clear
recollections of my parents.

28

00:01:27,420 --> 00:01:27,920

OK.

29

00:01:27,920 --> 00:01:32,630

Well then tell me what you
remember about your father

30

00:01:32,630 --> 00:01:33,770

and what he looked like.

31

00:01:33,770 --> 00:01:38,090

32

00:01:38,090 --> 00:01:43,460

My father his appearance is--

33

00:01:43,460 --> 00:01:45,720

what would stand out, you
mean, in my mind about?

34

00:01:45,720 --> 00:01:46,220

Yes.

35

00:01:46,220 --> 00:01:49,550

He was, to me of
course, very handsome.

36

00:01:49,550 --> 00:01:54,320

And I remember, a very optimistic, outgoing man.

37

00:01:54,320 --> 00:01:56,660

A very loving person.

38

00:01:56,660 --> 00:02:00,620

I have very, very warm memories of my father.

39

00:02:00,620 --> 00:02:03,500

And my mother also.

40

00:02:03,500 --> 00:02:09,770

She was more of a softer person and very pretty, dark.

41

00:02:09,770 --> 00:02:13,730

I remember, a very soft, warm person.

42

00:02:13,730 --> 00:02:19,340

My father, I remember him as the strength in the family.

43

00:02:19,340 --> 00:02:21,650

What was his occupation?

44

00:02:21,650 --> 00:02:27,710

He was a manufacturer and quite involved in local politics as

45

00:02:27,710 --> 00:02:30,770

well in Staszow.

46

00:02:30,770 --> 00:02:32,090

Where is Staszow?

47

00:02:32,090 --> 00:02:33,530

What is the nearest big city?

48

00:02:33,530 --> 00:02:36,860
Krakow, not too far from Krakow.

49
00:02:36,860 --> 00:02:41,570
We used to spend our summer
vacations near there.

50
00:02:41,570 --> 00:02:46,250
My family was a very
close-knit family.

51
00:02:46,250 --> 00:02:51,830
There were 18 on both sides,
18 members in our family.

52
00:02:51,830 --> 00:02:55,340
Two survived, myself
and one brother

53
00:02:55,340 --> 00:02:59,720
of my father's, Henrik
Nisencwajg survived Auschwitz.

54
00:02:59,720 --> 00:03:05,040

55
00:03:05,040 --> 00:03:07,735
Now, you didn't have
any brothers or sisters.

56
00:03:07,735 --> 00:03:09,360
You told me yesterday,
is that correct?

57
00:03:09,360 --> 00:03:12,600
I did have a brother
who predeceased me.

58
00:03:12,600 --> 00:03:14,700
He didn't die during the war.

59
00:03:14,700 --> 00:03:19,080
However, my mother was

pregnant last time I saw her.

60

00:03:19,080 --> 00:03:21,087

And I understand--
now, this is what

61

00:03:21,087 --> 00:03:22,920

I heard from other
people who were with her,

62

00:03:22,920 --> 00:03:27,360

that she did give birth
in the forest somewhere

63

00:03:27,360 --> 00:03:30,810

outside Staszow to a baby boy.

64

00:03:30,810 --> 00:03:33,660

They both perished.

65

00:03:33,660 --> 00:03:36,840

The people who were
grouped together with her

66

00:03:36,840 --> 00:03:40,440

in a Partisan group in
the forest outside Staszow

67

00:03:40,440 --> 00:03:45,150

were taking turns to go
into town for supplies.

68

00:03:45,150 --> 00:03:50,460

And apparently on one of
her trips to the town,

69

00:03:50,460 --> 00:03:54,000

she was recognized by one
of the Poles in the city

70

00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:56,490

and handed over to the Germans.

71

00:03:56,490 --> 00:03:58,470

What happened to the baby?

72

00:03:58,470 --> 00:04:00,030

I don't know.

73

00:04:00,030 --> 00:04:04,620

I would presume that she either
threw the baby to someone

74

00:04:04,620 --> 00:04:09,180

or that he perished with her.

75

00:04:09,180 --> 00:04:13,860

So the irony of my story is
that I was saved by one Pole

76

00:04:13,860 --> 00:04:17,380

and my mother was
destroyed by another.

77

00:04:17,380 --> 00:04:17,930

OK.

78

00:04:17,930 --> 00:04:20,410

I want to come to your
story in one moment.

79

00:04:20,410 --> 00:04:23,500

But your parents were both in
the forest with the Partisans?

80

00:04:23,500 --> 00:04:24,000

No.

81

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:29,370

My father was able to get
papers and escape to Russia.

82

00:04:29,370 --> 00:04:33,420

My mother, he arranged
papers, Polish papers for her

83

00:04:33,420 --> 00:04:36,270

so that she could
pass as a Pole.

84

00:04:36,270 --> 00:04:40,110

Now, she went-- she decided
to go into the forest

85

00:04:40,110 --> 00:04:44,340

and try and connect with a
Partisan group in the forest.

86

00:04:44,340 --> 00:04:47,190

I don't know why she did that.

87

00:04:47,190 --> 00:04:48,780

Maybe it was too difficult.

88

00:04:48,780 --> 00:04:51,600

My family was quite
well-known in the area.

89

00:04:51,600 --> 00:04:54,990

Because she was pregnant
and expecting a baby soon,

90

00:04:54,990 --> 00:04:58,770

maybe it was too difficult
for her to be out in the open

91

00:04:58,770 --> 00:05:00,090

too much.

92

00:05:00,090 --> 00:05:03,880

So she decided to join these
other people in the forest.

93

00:05:03,880 --> 00:05:06,480

Friends, friends of theirs.

94

00:05:06,480 --> 00:05:11,400

And my father did
escape to Russia.

95
00:05:11,400 --> 00:05:14,760
But he was apparently
just haunted by the fact

96
00:05:14,760 --> 00:05:20,660
that he had left her on her own
and came back to look for her.

97
00:05:20,660 --> 00:05:23,880
He found out that she
was dead and he was soon

98
00:05:23,880 --> 00:05:28,110
picked up by the Germans
once he returned and sent

99
00:05:28,110 --> 00:05:34,290
to a camp in Radom, which
was a munitions camp.

100
00:05:34,290 --> 00:05:36,630
It was a labor
camp, really, where

101
00:05:36,630 --> 00:05:38,400
they were making munitions.

102
00:05:38,400 --> 00:05:44,370
And I was told by someone who
was with him after the war

103
00:05:44,370 --> 00:05:48,690
that he was killed
trying to escape.

104
00:05:48,690 --> 00:05:51,030
He was organizing
an escape party

105
00:05:51,030 --> 00:05:54,690

and killed during the escape.

106
00:05:54,690 --> 00:05:57,340
And the person who
told you this--

107
00:05:57,340 --> 00:05:59,940
how did you find this person?

108
00:05:59,940 --> 00:06:06,390
After the war, I was with
this one uncle who survived.

109
00:06:06,390 --> 00:06:09,150
He came and found me
with the Polish family

110
00:06:09,150 --> 00:06:13,320
that I was living with and
brought me back to Krakow.

111
00:06:13,320 --> 00:06:17,670
At that point, I had
a meeting with a woman

112
00:06:17,670 --> 00:06:20,220
who used to be my nanny.

113
00:06:20,220 --> 00:06:23,040
And she was with
my father in Radom,

114
00:06:23,040 --> 00:06:25,680
told me the story of my father.

115
00:06:25,680 --> 00:06:29,280
How I learned about my
mother was from people

116
00:06:29,280 --> 00:06:32,760
who were with her in the forest
and who survived the entire war

117

00:06:32,760 --> 00:06:34,140
in the forest.

118

00:06:34,140 --> 00:06:38,490
They are living in Canada
and they told me her story.

119

00:06:38,490 --> 00:06:42,090
So specifically what happened
to her, they didn't see.

120

00:06:42,090 --> 00:06:44,490
But this is what they heard.

121

00:06:44,490 --> 00:06:46,440
No one was with her
when she was killed.

122

00:06:46,440 --> 00:06:50,610

123

00:06:50,610 --> 00:06:56,150
Now, do you remember exactly
what happened the day that you

124

00:06:56,150 --> 00:06:57,970
and your parents parted?

125

00:06:57,970 --> 00:06:58,790
Yes.

126

00:06:58,790 --> 00:07:02,090
Yes, I'll never forget that.

127

00:07:02,090 --> 00:07:08,160
It was in the late
summer of 1941.

128

00:07:08,160 --> 00:07:12,620
The ghetto was--
there were rumors

129

00:07:12,620 --> 00:07:16,220

that the ghetto was going
to be closed very soon.

130

00:07:16,220 --> 00:07:21,180

My father still had a pass to
get in and out of the ghetto.

131

00:07:21,180 --> 00:07:23,093

Wait, were you in
the Krakow ghetto?

132

00:07:23,093 --> 00:07:24,260

Or were you in Staszow then?

133

00:07:24,260 --> 00:07:25,190

No, in Staszow.

134

00:07:25,190 --> 00:07:26,120

There was a ghetto.

135

00:07:26,120 --> 00:07:27,080

OK.

136

00:07:27,080 --> 00:07:28,370

Yes.

137

00:07:28,370 --> 00:07:32,480

The ghetto was actually on,
I remembered, [POLISH],, which

138

00:07:32,480 --> 00:07:35,210

was the street where
my grandparents lived,

139

00:07:35,210 --> 00:07:36,440

my mother's parents.

140

00:07:36,440 --> 00:07:39,530

We moved in with them
into their house.

141

00:07:39,530 --> 00:07:45,170

And my recollections are
of a very crowded house

142

00:07:45,170 --> 00:07:47,190

and with lots of people.

143

00:07:47,190 --> 00:07:51,770

But they are not necessarily
terrible recollections

144

00:07:51,770 --> 00:07:55,910

because I was with my
family and that was fine.

145

00:07:55,910 --> 00:08:01,040

So it was 1941 and I
was five years old then.

146

00:08:01,040 --> 00:08:04,160

And I remember one day
my father saying to me

147

00:08:04,160 --> 00:08:10,490

that he has to take me to
live with friends of his

148

00:08:10,490 --> 00:08:15,350

who I should stay with
on a very temporary basis

149

00:08:15,350 --> 00:08:18,890

until this whole madness
with the war is over

150

00:08:18,890 --> 00:08:20,630

and he will come and get me.

151

00:08:20,630 --> 00:08:24,560

So we prepared for the journey.

152

00:08:24,560 --> 00:08:30,290

We went on foot and into the
fields outside of Staszow.

153
00:08:30,290 --> 00:08:35,600
I had to say goodbye to my
mother there at the house.

154
00:08:35,600 --> 00:08:38,600
And my grandparents,
and aunts, and uncles.

155
00:08:38,600 --> 00:08:42,020
And it was a devastating
day for me, of course.

156
00:08:42,020 --> 00:08:46,460
I think the most traumatic
day of my life, probably.

157
00:08:46,460 --> 00:08:52,610
And we walked rather in silence.

158
00:08:52,610 --> 00:08:54,620
I was holding onto his hand.

159
00:08:54,620 --> 00:08:58,640
And somehow I sensed
on this journey

160
00:08:58,640 --> 00:09:00,930
that I would never
see him again.

161
00:09:00,930 --> 00:09:04,880
I can't tell you why, but I
had those feelings walking.

162
00:09:04,880 --> 00:09:08,450
I still remember them
quite distinctly.

163
00:09:08,450 --> 00:09:11,300
Am I ever going to

see my father again?

164

00:09:11,300 --> 00:09:12,560

My mother again?

165

00:09:12,560 --> 00:09:14,570

My grandfather again?

166

00:09:14,570 --> 00:09:16,220

I somehow knew I wouldn't.

167

00:09:16,220 --> 00:09:21,380

I saw such violence in
the streets, such hatreds

168

00:09:21,380 --> 00:09:24,380

in the eyes of the
German guards when

169

00:09:24,380 --> 00:09:30,200

we were walking out of the
ghetto, such degradation,

170

00:09:30,200 --> 00:09:31,565

humiliation of people.

171

00:09:31,565 --> 00:09:34,370

172

00:09:34,370 --> 00:09:38,360

I felt like I was
engulfed in some kind

173

00:09:38,360 --> 00:09:47,780

of terrible, terrible turmoil
that there was no way out of.

174

00:09:47,780 --> 00:09:49,640

When we met the Szumielewicz--

175

00:09:49,640 --> 00:09:52,490

Stach and Wiktoria

Szumielewicz were the friends

176

00:09:52,490 --> 00:09:56,270
that my father was taking me to.

177

00:09:56,270 --> 00:10:00,950
When I let go of
his hand, I just

178

00:10:00,950 --> 00:10:06,310
somehow knew that this was
the final farewell of death.

179

00:10:06,310 --> 00:10:10,600
I just sensed it is
all I can tell you.

180

00:10:10,600 --> 00:10:18,160
It was very
difficult. He promised

181

00:10:18,160 --> 00:10:23,950
that he would come back for
me very soon and we parted.

182

00:10:23,950 --> 00:10:25,330
I never saw him again.

183

00:10:25,330 --> 00:10:28,210

184

00:10:28,210 --> 00:10:33,660
I walked on with the
Szumielewicz to a farm

185

00:10:33,660 --> 00:10:35,520
that they were living
on at this point.

186

00:10:35,520 --> 00:10:37,710
This wasn't their
permanent home,

187
00:10:37,710 --> 00:10:40,710
but they were living
there at this time.

188
00:10:40,710 --> 00:10:45,690
And there was an
immediate rapport

189
00:10:45,690 --> 00:10:48,780
between me and Wiktoria.

190
00:10:48,780 --> 00:10:54,210
I felt her warmth, even though
it was a strange hand that

191
00:10:54,210 --> 00:10:55,830
sort of took mine.

192
00:10:55,830 --> 00:11:00,070
But I felt her warmth
and I trusted her.

193
00:11:00,070 --> 00:11:03,510

194
00:11:03,510 --> 00:11:06,030
She's a wonderful
woman, she really is.

195
00:11:06,030 --> 00:11:07,500
She was like a mother to me.

196
00:11:07,500 --> 00:11:10,200

197
00:11:10,200 --> 00:11:12,210
With her husband,
the relationship

198
00:11:12,210 --> 00:11:16,140
was a little different.

199

00:11:16,140 --> 00:11:21,390

Somehow, I felt a little
much-- a bit of an intruder,

200

00:11:21,390 --> 00:11:26,790

as if I were the cause
of anxiety between them.

201

00:11:26,790 --> 00:11:31,200

I sensed that with him and I
didn't feel as much at ease

202

00:11:31,200 --> 00:11:37,800

with him, if one can say
that one was at ease at all.

203

00:11:37,800 --> 00:11:41,580

And I can tell you about
this particular day

204

00:11:41,580 --> 00:11:45,120

that it was the end
of my childhood.

205

00:11:45,120 --> 00:11:49,740

A real metamorphosis
took place within me.

206

00:11:49,740 --> 00:11:53,440

I stopped being a
child, a trusting child.

207

00:11:53,440 --> 00:12:00,070

I became a shrewd survivor
from this point on.

208

00:12:00,070 --> 00:12:04,770

I knew that somehow,
I quickly acquired

209

00:12:04,770 --> 00:12:07,030

all kinds of skills of survival.

210

00:12:07,030 --> 00:12:09,750

I knew that I
couldn't say anything

211

00:12:09,750 --> 00:12:13,860

about being Jewish in
order-- if I wanted to live.

212

00:12:13,860 --> 00:12:15,360

I knew that.

213

00:12:15,360 --> 00:12:17,670

She was quite worried about me.

214

00:12:17,670 --> 00:12:19,950

Apparently, she tells
me now, you know,

215

00:12:19,950 --> 00:12:22,620

that I didn't even
speak a proper Polish

216

00:12:22,620 --> 00:12:26,430

because in my home,
Yiddish was always spoken.

217

00:12:26,430 --> 00:12:31,410

And she for quite a while had
to just keep me in the house,

218

00:12:31,410 --> 00:12:34,630

couldn't even let
me out on the farm

219

00:12:34,630 --> 00:12:36,210

because there were
workers there,

220

00:12:36,210 --> 00:12:40,770

and so on, lest they hear me
speak with this Jewish accent

221

00:12:40,770 --> 00:12:43,950
and give us away.

222
00:12:43,950 --> 00:12:48,750
So immediately, she would keep
me in the house for a while.

223
00:12:48,750 --> 00:12:53,400
While I stood by the window
and watched and watched

224
00:12:53,400 --> 00:12:57,840
these long columns of
people with bundles

225
00:12:57,840 --> 00:13:03,570
on their back walking in
the road next to the farm.

226
00:13:03,570 --> 00:13:06,202
And I knew they were Jews.

227
00:13:06,202 --> 00:13:08,880

228
00:13:08,880 --> 00:13:11,070
They were pushed
around with bayonets.

229
00:13:11,070 --> 00:13:13,230
They were shot at random.

230
00:13:13,230 --> 00:13:15,630
They were tortured.

231
00:13:15,630 --> 00:13:18,060
Some of them couldn't walk.

232
00:13:18,060 --> 00:13:20,580
And they were just killed
right there and then.

233

00:13:20,580 --> 00:13:27,630
And it was a terrible,
terrible experience, which

234
00:13:27,630 --> 00:13:29,700
I suppressed during the day.

235
00:13:29,700 --> 00:13:33,300
I just simply
watched in silence.

236
00:13:33,300 --> 00:13:38,730
And at night, I had
these terrible nightmares

237
00:13:38,730 --> 00:13:39,480
every night.

238
00:13:39,480 --> 00:13:43,230
Because at night, these
people all had faces.

239
00:13:43,230 --> 00:13:44,820
During the day, they didn't.

240
00:13:44,820 --> 00:13:47,010
I didn't really
look at their faces

241
00:13:47,010 --> 00:13:50,790
because I was afraid, in
case I recognized a face.

242
00:13:50,790 --> 00:13:54,360
But at night, I
visualized my grandfather

243
00:13:54,360 --> 00:13:57,480
being shot because
he wasn't walking

244
00:13:57,480 --> 00:14:01,920
fast enough, or my mother,

if I saw a pregnant lady

245
00:14:01,920 --> 00:14:02,790
during the day.

246
00:14:02,790 --> 00:14:06,060

247
00:14:06,060 --> 00:14:09,030
And these terrible,
terrible acts of violence

248
00:14:09,030 --> 00:14:13,470
did cause these
awful nightmares.

249
00:14:13,470 --> 00:14:17,700
And I'll call her Ciocia.

250
00:14:17,700 --> 00:14:22,590
Wiktoria is-- we decided
that I would call her Ciocia.

251
00:14:22,590 --> 00:14:27,060
She begged me to call me to
call her mother, but I couldn't.

252
00:14:27,060 --> 00:14:27,660
I just--

253
00:14:27,660 --> 00:14:29,010
What does Ciocia mean in Polish?

254
00:14:29,010 --> 00:14:31,440
Ciocia means aunt.

255
00:14:31,440 --> 00:14:35,250
So we settled on
aunt because I just

256
00:14:35,250 --> 00:14:37,780
felt that I couldn't

call her mother.

257

00:14:37,780 --> 00:14:41,790

I thought that would be
so disloyal to my mother.

258

00:14:41,790 --> 00:14:46,350

You know, it would be as if
I'm giving up on my mother

259

00:14:46,350 --> 00:14:47,760

being alive.

260

00:14:47,760 --> 00:14:51,630

You know, I have to hold on to
that, that my mother was alive.

261

00:14:51,630 --> 00:14:54,450

And I couldn't have
another mother.

262

00:14:54,450 --> 00:14:56,610

That was very important to me.

263

00:14:56,610 --> 00:14:58,320

So we settled on Ciocia.

264

00:14:58,320 --> 00:15:01,110

And she would be
right there for me

265

00:15:01,110 --> 00:15:03,840

at night when I would wake up.

266

00:15:03,840 --> 00:15:08,790

And say to me, you see,
you're really not Jewish.

267

00:15:08,790 --> 00:15:11,790

You're having these
terrible nightmares

268

00:15:11,790 --> 00:15:14,010
because you're seeing
these awful things

269
00:15:14,010 --> 00:15:16,290
in the street from the window.

270
00:15:16,290 --> 00:15:19,260
But you're not Jewish,
you're really my niece.

271
00:15:19,260 --> 00:15:21,400
Well of course, you
know what she was doing,

272
00:15:21,400 --> 00:15:24,300
she was trying to
brainwash me somewhat so

273
00:15:24,300 --> 00:15:28,340
that I wouldn't give us away.

274
00:15:28,340 --> 00:15:32,870
And hard as it may seem,
perhaps for someone like you,

275
00:15:32,870 --> 00:15:37,580
who was brought up in the
security of this country,

276
00:15:37,580 --> 00:15:40,400
that I knew what she was
doing even though I was five.

277
00:15:40,400 --> 00:15:44,690
I knew that she was trying
to protect all of us

278
00:15:44,690 --> 00:15:47,420
by confusing me.

279
00:15:47,420 --> 00:15:52,640
And I played along with

her just so that she

280
00:15:52,640 --> 00:15:53,895
would have peace of mind.

281
00:15:53,895 --> 00:15:56,640

282
00:15:56,640 --> 00:16:01,950
Later on, when she finally did
realize that I wasn't a child,

283
00:16:01,950 --> 00:16:08,010
that I understood, and I
had this innate, I guess,

284
00:16:08,010 --> 00:16:11,040
understanding of what
she was trying to do,

285
00:16:11,040 --> 00:16:14,820
we had this tacit agreement
between us almost.

286
00:16:14,820 --> 00:16:18,720
She knew, really, that
she hadn't confused me

287
00:16:18,720 --> 00:16:19,530
or brainwashed me.

288
00:16:19,530 --> 00:16:21,660
She knew that I knew who I was.

289
00:16:21,660 --> 00:16:24,330

290
00:16:24,330 --> 00:16:26,160
But we didn't talk about it.

291
00:16:26,160 --> 00:16:28,500
We didn't admit

it to one another

292

00:16:28,500 --> 00:16:32,620
because I wanted her
to have peace of mind.

293

00:16:32,620 --> 00:16:37,020
And so eventually, she was
able to let me out on the farm.

294

00:16:37,020 --> 00:16:41,220
And this was all within
a matter of a few months.

295

00:16:41,220 --> 00:16:43,860
This didn't take a
long time at all.

296

00:16:43,860 --> 00:16:46,650
And then I was able to
be outdoors a little bit,

297

00:16:46,650 --> 00:16:49,860
and feed chickens, and
do things like that.

298

00:16:49,860 --> 00:16:52,320
Very short time.

299

00:16:52,320 --> 00:16:54,600
I think it was just
before Christmas,

300

00:16:54,600 --> 00:16:57,120
my two cousins joined us.

301

00:16:57,120 --> 00:16:59,910
This would be the
children of the uncle

302

00:16:59,910 --> 00:17:02,730
that I told you who
survived Auschwitz.

303
00:17:02,730 --> 00:17:05,490
That was Janek and Lucy.

304
00:17:05,490 --> 00:17:07,660
And I was thrilled.

305
00:17:07,660 --> 00:17:11,670
I was really thrilled
to have them with me.

306
00:17:11,670 --> 00:17:13,829
That was very
short-lived, though,

307
00:17:13,829 --> 00:17:16,140
because we were
now three children.

308
00:17:16,140 --> 00:17:21,240
And apparently, someone in--

309
00:17:21,240 --> 00:17:25,650
one of the workers on the farm
had reported to the Gestapo

310
00:17:25,650 --> 00:17:27,990
that three children,
probably Jewish children,

311
00:17:27,990 --> 00:17:30,560
were being hidden by
the Szumielewiczses.

312
00:17:30,560 --> 00:17:34,800
So one day, my uncle
Henrik showed up

313
00:17:34,800 --> 00:17:40,350
to take Janek away
because he had to--

314

00:17:40,350 --> 00:17:41,910
he couldn't come with us.

315
00:17:41,910 --> 00:17:44,010
We were being sent to--

316
00:17:44,010 --> 00:17:45,870
we call it and
Polish a cloister.

317
00:17:45,870 --> 00:17:47,550
I guess--

318
00:17:47,550 --> 00:17:48,330
A convent.

319
00:17:48,330 --> 00:17:50,640
We were being sent to
a convent, Lucy and I.

320
00:17:50,640 --> 00:17:53,490
But it was too
dangerous to send a boy

321
00:17:53,490 --> 00:17:56,070
because he was circumcised.

322
00:17:56,070 --> 00:17:59,650
And so my uncle came
to take him away.

323
00:17:59,650 --> 00:18:01,770
Lucy and I, in the
middle of the night,

324
00:18:01,770 --> 00:18:03,780
were taken by the
Szumielewicz-- we just

325
00:18:03,780 --> 00:18:05,850
abandoned the farm.

326

00:18:05,850 --> 00:18:12,560

And we were taken to a
convent in Klimowicz.

327

00:18:12,560 --> 00:18:17,940

There one day, Lucy
disappeared from the convent.

328

00:18:17,940 --> 00:18:20,220

By the way, the
nuns in this convent

329

00:18:20,220 --> 00:18:22,510

did not take Jewish children.

330

00:18:22,510 --> 00:18:24,660

We went with a cover story.

331

00:18:24,660 --> 00:18:28,380

Me, a five-year-old protector of
my little three-year-old cousin

332

00:18:28,380 --> 00:18:35,100

Lucy, making sure that nobody
knew we were Jewish children.

333

00:18:35,100 --> 00:18:40,930

So we stayed in the convent
for a short time together.

334

00:18:40,930 --> 00:18:42,480

One day, Lucy disappeared.

335

00:18:42,480 --> 00:18:44,130

I didn't know what
happened to her.

336

00:18:44,130 --> 00:18:47,280

I learned later
that my uncle came,

337

00:18:47,280 --> 00:18:49,410

her father came and got her.

338
00:18:49,410 --> 00:18:53,820
Now, there are two conflicting
stories about Lucy and Janek,

339
00:18:53,820 --> 00:18:57,360
which maybe I should tell
you about very briefly.

340
00:18:57,360 --> 00:19:02,220
Because my uncle, who
now lives in Brazil,

341
00:19:02,220 --> 00:19:06,930
actually blames Wiktoria
and Stach Szumielewicz

342
00:19:06,930 --> 00:19:08,310
for the death of his children.

343
00:19:08,310 --> 00:19:11,580
He says that he paid them all
the money in the world that he

344
00:19:11,580 --> 00:19:14,640
had-- and he was a rich man.

345
00:19:14,640 --> 00:19:16,530
To save his children.

346
00:19:16,530 --> 00:19:20,700
And that she called him
to come and get them

347
00:19:20,700 --> 00:19:25,530
and wasn't able to
do anything for them.

348
00:19:25,530 --> 00:19:29,520
When he came for
me after the war,

349

00:19:29,520 --> 00:19:32,760
he had intended-- he
came with a gun intending

350
00:19:32,760 --> 00:19:35,640
to kill them if I wasn't alive.

351
00:19:35,640 --> 00:19:40,020
He was, I think, probably
a very, very torn,

352
00:19:40,020 --> 00:19:44,910
confused person after the
experience of Auschwitz.

353
00:19:44,910 --> 00:19:50,220
And from my chats
with her, I think

354
00:19:50,220 --> 00:19:53,520
that that was psychologically
important to him

355
00:19:53,520 --> 00:19:56,010
was to blame someone else for
the death of his children.

356
00:19:56,010 --> 00:19:59,190
I think he could not accept
the responsibility that

357
00:19:59,190 --> 00:20:02,700
had he left them, maybe
they would be alive today,

358
00:20:02,700 --> 00:20:05,160
or at least Lucy.

359
00:20:05,160 --> 00:20:08,070
Because Lucy was in the
convent with me and he did

360
00:20:08,070 --> 00:20:10,170

come to get her.

361

00:20:10,170 --> 00:20:17,010

My Ciocia says that he acquired
American papers somehow

362

00:20:17,010 --> 00:20:19,560

at this point and
thought that he was still

363

00:20:19,560 --> 00:20:22,780

going to be able to
get out of Poland.

364

00:20:22,780 --> 00:20:24,870

So there are two
conflicting stories that

365

00:20:24,870 --> 00:20:26,850

have given me a lot of anxiety.

366

00:20:26,850 --> 00:20:28,740

Have you ever asked
him about that story

367

00:20:28,740 --> 00:20:30,420

with the American papers?

368

00:20:30,420 --> 00:20:31,540

Yes, yes.

369

00:20:31,540 --> 00:20:33,750

Because we've visited
back and forth.

370

00:20:33,750 --> 00:20:37,650

I've been to Brazil, he's been
here several times to visit me.

371

00:20:37,650 --> 00:20:40,630

He denies the story.

372

00:20:40,630 --> 00:20:44,640
He says that it's
absolutely not true.

373
00:20:44,640 --> 00:20:49,470
He claims that my
father and he both

374
00:20:49,470 --> 00:20:52,050
gave the Szumielewicz
every penny

375
00:20:52,050 --> 00:20:57,080
in the world that they have in
order to save the three of us.

376
00:20:57,080 --> 00:21:01,270
And I asked him, why did
she not hand me back?

377
00:21:01,270 --> 00:21:05,950
I mean, she looked after
me, she was wonderful to me.

378
00:21:05,950 --> 00:21:09,910
He says, because she
loved me very much

379
00:21:09,910 --> 00:21:12,940
and wanted me to
be her own child.

380
00:21:12,940 --> 00:21:15,820
As I say, there was an
instant rapport between us.

381
00:21:15,820 --> 00:21:20,180
And she couldn't have children
at this point in her life.

382
00:21:20,180 --> 00:21:25,640
So I was to be her child is
the way my uncle Henrik saw

383

00:21:25,640 --> 00:21:29,600

her reason for saving me.

384

00:21:29,600 --> 00:21:34,376

Now, I was in the
cloister by myself after--

385

00:21:34,376 --> 00:21:36,170

after that, I was
in the cloister

386

00:21:36,170 --> 00:21:39,950

by myself, well, amongst
other orphaned children.

387

00:21:39,950 --> 00:21:42,680

We were bombed.

388

00:21:42,680 --> 00:21:47,420

Somehow, in the midst
of this devastation,

389

00:21:47,420 --> 00:21:51,860

everything was in
shreds, she found me.

390

00:21:51,860 --> 00:21:53,510

Ciocia found me there.

391

00:21:53,510 --> 00:21:58,610

This was-- I was in that
convent for about a year.

392

00:21:58,610 --> 00:22:04,370

And one day, just lying there
in the midst of the rubble,

393

00:22:04,370 --> 00:22:06,920

I suddenly saw her face.

394

00:22:06,920 --> 00:22:10,100

She came and found

me, and I went back

395

00:22:10,100 --> 00:22:11,420
with her and her husband.

396

00:22:11,420 --> 00:22:15,560
And we moved from
city to city almost.

397

00:22:15,560 --> 00:22:19,070
Not really in touch
with anyone that they

398

00:22:19,070 --> 00:22:24,950
knew, not having any visitors
of their family around, no one

399

00:22:24,950 --> 00:22:26,340
at all.

400

00:22:26,340 --> 00:22:28,820
We just always lived
among strangers

401

00:22:28,820 --> 00:22:30,440
and I was their niece.

402

00:22:30,440 --> 00:22:35,900
Because I still couldn't call
her mother and him father.

403

00:22:35,900 --> 00:22:38,800
So I was their niece,
orphaned niece.

404

00:22:38,800 --> 00:22:40,010
This was who I was.

405

00:22:40,010 --> 00:22:44,840
And they, of course, gave me a
new name, a cover name, Ivanka.

406

00:22:44,840 --> 00:22:47,030
I was Ivanka during the war.

407
00:22:47,030 --> 00:22:50,340

408
00:22:50,340 --> 00:22:54,540
The end of the war, we
were liberated in Opatow,

409
00:22:54,540 --> 00:22:57,135
a city called Opatow.

410
00:22:57,135 --> 00:23:01,800
I should tell you, too, that
during the course of the war,

411
00:23:01,800 --> 00:23:08,100
I actually saved Wujek,
which is uncle in Polish.

412
00:23:08,100 --> 00:23:13,020
I really saved him from being
taken into the German army

413
00:23:13,020 --> 00:23:18,570
at the very last maybe
month of the war.

414
00:23:18,570 --> 00:23:21,030
The Germans were coming
around door to door,

415
00:23:21,030 --> 00:23:25,140
looking for any Poles,
to conscript them

416
00:23:25,140 --> 00:23:27,540
into the German army.

417
00:23:27,540 --> 00:23:30,600
And I don't know whether they
would have even been officially

418
00:23:30,600 --> 00:23:32,910
in the army, but just to
help them fight the Russians.

419
00:23:32,910 --> 00:23:35,400
They were very
desperate at this point.

420
00:23:35,400 --> 00:23:39,660
And we decided, or the
only thing we could do

421
00:23:39,660 --> 00:23:42,480
is that he decided
he's going to be sick.

422
00:23:42,480 --> 00:23:43,890
Well, everybody was doing that.

423
00:23:43,890 --> 00:23:44,580
They were sick.

424
00:23:44,580 --> 00:23:46,140
All the men got into--

425
00:23:46,140 --> 00:23:48,930
whatever men there were
around were in bed very sick.

426
00:23:48,930 --> 00:23:52,710
So Wujek also, he was in bed.

427
00:23:52,710 --> 00:23:57,930
And a young German soldier
was coming through the door

428
00:23:57,930 --> 00:24:01,680
and shouting, where is
the man around here?

429
00:24:01,680 --> 00:24:04,860

They had seen a man, and they
know he's here, and so on.

430
00:24:04,860 --> 00:24:07,230
And he was just about
to enter into the room

431
00:24:07,230 --> 00:24:11,520
where Wujek was in bed, when
I don't know why I did it,

432
00:24:11,520 --> 00:24:13,110
or where I even
had the strength,

433
00:24:13,110 --> 00:24:15,880
but I was standing
right by the door.

434
00:24:15,880 --> 00:24:18,720
And I slammed the
door really hard

435
00:24:18,720 --> 00:24:21,720
and knocked this poor
soldier right out.

436
00:24:21,720 --> 00:24:25,380
And then of course, we ran away.

437
00:24:25,380 --> 00:24:28,950
And we don't know
what happened to him.

438
00:24:28,950 --> 00:24:32,080
And I don't know whether he
was seriously injured or not.

439
00:24:32,080 --> 00:24:35,280
But he was totally knocked
out and we could get away.

440
00:24:35,280 --> 00:24:39,840

So we went in the
underground then.

441
00:24:39,840 --> 00:24:42,840

The last nine months
of the war, actually, I

442
00:24:42,840 --> 00:24:48,960

spent in a dugout hole
underneath a building,

443
00:24:48,960 --> 00:24:52,300

where we were just
covered in earth.

444
00:24:52,300 --> 00:24:58,213

You know, it was almost
like a dungeon grave.

445
00:24:58,213 --> 00:24:59,130

It was where we were--

446
00:24:59,130 --> 00:25:00,550

Were other people
there with you?

447
00:25:00,550 --> 00:25:02,010

Yes, there were people.

448
00:25:02,010 --> 00:25:03,750

We were just sitting
on the ground

449
00:25:03,750 --> 00:25:06,360

and waiting through
the bombings.

450
00:25:06,360 --> 00:25:11,820

And finally one day, you
know, we were liberated

451
00:25:11,820 --> 00:25:14,700
and we could come out of there.

452
00:25:14,700 --> 00:25:17,910
After that, we moved--

453
00:25:17,910 --> 00:25:24,480
after we were liberated,
we moved to Bydgoszcz.

454
00:25:24,480 --> 00:25:31,500
And Bydgoszcz was the place
where Ciocia was from.

455
00:25:31,500 --> 00:25:32,820
This was her hometown.

456
00:25:32,820 --> 00:25:39,139
So for the first time in 1945--

457
00:25:39,139 --> 00:25:40,290
should I go on?

458
00:25:40,290 --> 00:25:45,990
For the first time in 1945, I
met her family in Bydgoszcz.

459
00:25:45,990 --> 00:25:49,890
And I don't know what
she told them about me.

460
00:25:49,890 --> 00:25:53,040
All I can tell you is that
they did not know I was Jewish.

461
00:25:53,040 --> 00:25:56,130
She did not trust
them, even then in '45,

462
00:25:56,130 --> 00:25:59,610
with the fact that I
was a Jewish child.

463
00:25:59,610 --> 00:26:01,530

But they accepted me.

464
00:26:01,530 --> 00:26:08,370
And I with me--

465
00:26:08,370 --> 00:26:12,210
I became-- during the course
of the war and the time

466
00:26:12,210 --> 00:26:16,800
I spent in the Catholic
convent, but before I even

467
00:26:16,800 --> 00:26:18,420
went into the
Catholic convent, I

468
00:26:18,420 --> 00:26:20,400
had had some
religious instruction.

469
00:26:20,400 --> 00:26:22,440
And then following the war also.

470
00:26:22,440 --> 00:26:24,690
This was in Catholicism.

471
00:26:24,690 --> 00:26:29,970
And sometime during the course
of the war, I took communion

472
00:26:29,970 --> 00:26:33,720
and I became a very
fervent Catholic.

473
00:26:33,720 --> 00:26:34,800
When the war was--

474
00:26:34,800 --> 00:26:37,290
Excuse me, but I just can make--

475
00:26:37,290 --> 00:26:43,670

When the war was
over, and Ciocia

476
00:26:43,670 --> 00:26:45,620
had told me what had
happened to my parents--

477
00:26:45,620 --> 00:26:47,510
she was the first to tell me.

478
00:26:47,510 --> 00:26:50,030
She couldn't give me
details, but she told me

479
00:26:50,030 --> 00:26:54,080
that my mother and
father were dead.

480
00:26:54,080 --> 00:26:57,890
I decided I didn't
want to be Jewish.

481
00:26:57,890 --> 00:27:02,180
I decided that I wanted
to remain with her

482
00:27:02,180 --> 00:27:05,300
and be her child as
long as I could still

483
00:27:05,300 --> 00:27:10,260
call her Ciocia, not mother.

484
00:27:10,260 --> 00:27:12,810
And she said that was fine.

485
00:27:12,810 --> 00:27:18,700

486
00:27:18,700 --> 00:27:24,140
She didn't press me about
Catholicism or religion at all.

487

00:27:24,140 --> 00:27:26,360

But I needed it very much.

488

00:27:26,360 --> 00:27:30,170

And I didn't want to be Jewish,
I wanted to be Catholic.

489

00:27:30,170 --> 00:27:37,160

I thought that our God
didn't protect Jews.

490

00:27:37,160 --> 00:27:40,490

I also became
convinced, as a result

491

00:27:40,490 --> 00:27:47,390

of my learnings in the Catholic
church, that Jews were bad

492

00:27:47,390 --> 00:27:50,150

and maybe we deserved
this punishment.

493

00:27:50,150 --> 00:27:55,520

Why did God allow us
to be so punished?

494

00:27:55,520 --> 00:27:58,880

I started very strongly
to sort of devise

495

00:27:58,880 --> 00:28:02,570

this whole philosophy,
you know, of Jesus

496

00:28:02,570 --> 00:28:05,690

protecting the Christians.

497

00:28:05,690 --> 00:28:08,540

And we were not
protected by our God.

498

00:28:08,540 --> 00:28:12,110
So perhaps Jesus
was the real God,

499
00:28:12,110 --> 00:28:14,570
and the true religion
was Christianity.

500
00:28:14,570 --> 00:28:17,080

501
00:28:17,080 --> 00:28:19,930
And I really lost
faith in being a Jew.

502
00:28:19,930 --> 00:28:22,450
I didn't want to
identify with Jews.

503
00:28:22,450 --> 00:28:26,450
When I met Jews, I
kept my distance.

504
00:28:26,450 --> 00:28:29,110
I didn't want to go near them.

505
00:28:29,110 --> 00:28:31,690
Then my uncle showed
up a year later.

506
00:28:31,690 --> 00:28:35,290
Year after the war, my
uncle Henrik showed up.

507
00:28:35,290 --> 00:28:38,270
And I didn't want to
go in and see him.

508
00:28:38,270 --> 00:28:38,950
I didn't.

509
00:28:38,950 --> 00:28:40,870
Had you remembered who he was?

510
00:28:40,870 --> 00:28:42,460
I didn't even want to see him.

511
00:28:42,460 --> 00:28:47,410
Ciocia came and said to me
that uncle Henrik is here,

512
00:28:47,410 --> 00:28:49,540
he survived the
war, and he wants

513
00:28:49,540 --> 00:28:54,280
to take me back to be
Jewish is what he told me.

514
00:28:54,280 --> 00:28:56,260
And I said, no, I
don't want to see him,

515
00:28:56,260 --> 00:28:58,930
I don't want to be Jewish.

516
00:28:58,930 --> 00:29:01,510
And apparently, he
told me, later on,

517
00:29:01,510 --> 00:29:03,150
years later when
we talked about it,

518
00:29:03,150 --> 00:29:07,000
that he made three trips
to Bydgoszcz to get me away

519
00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:07,930
from them.

520
00:29:07,930 --> 00:29:10,150
As I told you, he had
intended to kill them,

521

00:29:10,150 --> 00:29:14,920
he came with a gun, if I wasn't
there, he didn't find me.

522
00:29:14,920 --> 00:29:18,160
When he found me, all he
wanted was to get me back,

523
00:29:18,160 --> 00:29:20,050
and I didn't want to go.

524
00:29:20,050 --> 00:29:23,140
Anyhow, apparently, when
he came for the third time,

525
00:29:23,140 --> 00:29:24,730
he did threaten
them with the gun

526
00:29:24,730 --> 00:29:26,800
if they didn't hand me over.

527
00:29:26,800 --> 00:29:32,290
And that was why Ciocia insisted
that I at least talk to him.

528
00:29:32,290 --> 00:29:35,770
Well, he told me that--

529
00:29:35,770 --> 00:29:39,190
he told me that my mother
and father were alive

530
00:29:39,190 --> 00:29:41,710
and waiting for me in Krakow.

531
00:29:41,710 --> 00:29:44,200
But they were both
not well and couldn't

532
00:29:44,200 --> 00:29:47,300
come for me themselves.

533

00:29:47,300 --> 00:29:48,640

So I was very torn.

534

00:29:48,640 --> 00:29:51,310

Because you know, by
this time, I had really

535

00:29:51,310 --> 00:29:53,620

learned to trust Ciocia.

536

00:29:53,620 --> 00:29:56,530

And I knew that she
wouldn't tell me a lie.

537

00:29:56,530 --> 00:29:58,870

On the other hand, how
could I take the risk?

538

00:29:58,870 --> 00:30:00,220

You know, he was my uncle.

539

00:30:00,220 --> 00:30:03,370

You know, I remembered
him so differently

540

00:30:03,370 --> 00:30:04,810

than the way he was.

541

00:30:04,810 --> 00:30:10,180

He was such a, you know,
loving and outgoing man the way

542

00:30:10,180 --> 00:30:11,140

I remembered him.

543

00:30:11,140 --> 00:30:14,290

And here he was, this
broken man that--

544

00:30:14,290 --> 00:30:19,000

he looked barely, barely
like the uncle I remembered.

545
00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:21,220
And he was so angry.

546
00:30:21,220 --> 00:30:23,560
And he frightened me.

547
00:30:23,560 --> 00:30:25,570
He really frightened me.

548
00:30:25,570 --> 00:30:28,300
But the things that
he was saying to me,

549
00:30:28,300 --> 00:30:29,365
I couldn't ignore.

550
00:30:29,365 --> 00:30:38,080

551
00:30:38,080 --> 00:30:44,050
So I took the risk and
went with him to Krakow.

552
00:30:44,050 --> 00:30:48,610
Of course, my parents
weren't there.

553
00:30:48,610 --> 00:30:51,310
And I was devastated
with disappointment.

554
00:30:51,310 --> 00:30:55,360
All I wanted to do was
to go back to Ciocia.

555
00:30:55,360 --> 00:30:58,420
That was the only
security I knew.

556
00:30:58,420 --> 00:31:02,020
He wasn't the

uncle I remembered.

557

00:31:02,020 --> 00:31:04,690

We were crowded in a small room.

558

00:31:04,690 --> 00:31:06,880

He wasn't even with my aunt.

559

00:31:06,880 --> 00:31:09,760

He was with this other woman
who also survived Auschwitz,

560

00:31:09,760 --> 00:31:12,190

who I didn't remember.

561

00:31:12,190 --> 00:31:15,310

And we were all
crowded in one room.

562

00:31:15,310 --> 00:31:17,800

And the scene was terrible.

563

00:31:17,800 --> 00:31:20,320

We were all having
nightmares all night long.

564

00:31:20,320 --> 00:31:22,690

And it was awful, just awful.

565

00:31:22,690 --> 00:31:27,790

Then he explained to me
one day that he couldn't

566

00:31:27,790 --> 00:31:31,510

get out of Poland legally, that
the only way he could leave

567

00:31:31,510 --> 00:31:35,200

was just to sneak across
the border some night.

568

00:31:35,200 --> 00:31:37,150

And he was with
this other person,

569
00:31:37,150 --> 00:31:41,080
Luta, who he later married,
that became his second wife.

570
00:31:41,080 --> 00:31:43,330
And he and Luta were
going to do that,

571
00:31:43,330 --> 00:31:46,870
so he had to put
me in an orphanage.

572
00:31:46,870 --> 00:31:49,930
And the orphanage was
being run by Youth Aliyah.

573
00:31:49,930 --> 00:31:52,360
You know, the Youth Aliyah
soldiers were going literally

574
00:31:52,360 --> 00:31:54,040
door to door looking
for children,

575
00:31:54,040 --> 00:31:56,890
Jewish children, who
perhaps were saved by Poles

576
00:31:56,890 --> 00:31:58,690
or wherever they
could find them.

577
00:31:58,690 --> 00:32:00,530
They were putting them together.

578
00:32:00,530 --> 00:32:01,870
So this is where he put me.

579
00:32:01,870 --> 00:32:04,630
And I begged and I cried,

and please let me go back

580
00:32:04,630 --> 00:32:05,930
to Bydgoszcz to Ciocia.

581
00:32:05,930 --> 00:32:08,340
And no way, he
wouldn't allow that.

582
00:32:08,340 --> 00:32:11,030
He promised he would be
in touch with me later on.

583
00:32:11,030 --> 00:32:13,990
And when he got out of Poland
and I got out of Poland,

584
00:32:13,990 --> 00:32:16,030
we would reunite
and go to Brazil,

585
00:32:16,030 --> 00:32:18,640
where two brothers were living.

586
00:32:18,640 --> 00:32:20,230
My father had two
brothers who went

587
00:32:20,230 --> 00:32:21,850
to Brazil long before the war.

588
00:32:21,850 --> 00:32:24,900

589
00:32:24,900 --> 00:32:28,700
So I traveled with the
orphanage out of Poland

590
00:32:28,700 --> 00:32:31,100
to Czechoslovakia.

591
00:32:31,100 --> 00:32:33,980

And from there, we
went through Germany

592
00:32:33,980 --> 00:32:37,640
to a town called
Schirmeck in France.

593
00:32:37,640 --> 00:32:41,900
All the time, I was trying
to make contact with Ciocia

594
00:32:41,900 --> 00:32:43,780
to go back to Poland.

595
00:32:43,780 --> 00:32:46,420
And I couldn't, the
orphanage wouldn't allow it.

596
00:32:46,420 --> 00:32:49,460
And I don't think my letters
were mailed, because she

597
00:32:49,460 --> 00:32:50,870
didn't know where I was.

598
00:32:50,870 --> 00:32:53,060
In France, we
finally made contact.

599
00:32:53,060 --> 00:32:54,860
She finally wrote
me back in France

600
00:32:54,860 --> 00:32:58,700
and said that that was the first
letter she had had from me.

601
00:32:58,700 --> 00:33:02,270
And it was very, very difficult
because I couldn't get back

602
00:33:02,270 --> 00:33:06,350
to her, she couldn't get

out of Poland to get me.

603
00:33:06,350 --> 00:33:08,900
By this time, I hadn't
even heard from my uncle.

604
00:33:08,900 --> 00:33:10,970
I didn't know where he was.

605
00:33:10,970 --> 00:33:15,890
But an aunt from Canada
made contact with me.

606
00:33:15,890 --> 00:33:17,840
What he did was--

607
00:33:17,840 --> 00:33:22,670
he couldn't get into
Brazil legally either.

608
00:33:22,670 --> 00:33:25,730
His brothers had to bribe
some officials in order

609
00:33:25,730 --> 00:33:27,230
to get him some papers.

610
00:33:27,230 --> 00:33:32,750
So he notified my
mother's sister in Canada

611
00:33:32,750 --> 00:33:37,250
that I was at this
orphanage in France.

612
00:33:37,250 --> 00:33:42,290
And she arranged for
me to come to Canada.

613
00:33:42,290 --> 00:33:44,450
From there, I traveled
to Canada, which

614

00:33:44,450 --> 00:33:45,920

I didn't want to do, either.

615

00:33:45,920 --> 00:33:48,080

That was also against my will.

616

00:33:48,080 --> 00:33:50,750

Because I was in a
home, a Mizrachi home

617

00:33:50,750 --> 00:33:53,120

there in Schirmeck.

618

00:33:53,120 --> 00:33:58,910

And I was slowly accepting
my Jewishness again.

619

00:33:58,910 --> 00:34:03,500

The home was very religious, the
Mizrachi home, very Orthodox.

620

00:34:03,500 --> 00:34:06,620

It brought back a
lot of warm feelings

621

00:34:06,620 --> 00:34:11,699

to me of my Jewishness,
of my home before the war.

622

00:34:11,699 --> 00:34:16,400

And not that I ever
became religious.

623

00:34:16,400 --> 00:34:20,270

I have a lot of problems
with religion to this day.

624

00:34:20,270 --> 00:34:24,830

But it brought back the ambience
of my own home quite a bit,

625

00:34:24,830 --> 00:34:27,590

just in the religious
ritual, of course.

626
00:34:27,590 --> 00:34:29,600
Nothing else.

627
00:34:29,600 --> 00:34:33,560
The children there
were-- we were all

628
00:34:33,560 --> 00:34:35,280
being prepared for Israel.

629
00:34:35,280 --> 00:34:38,480
So we were being given
religious instruction and Hebrew

630
00:34:38,480 --> 00:34:40,409
language.

631
00:34:40,409 --> 00:34:42,330
However, and you know, in '40--

632
00:34:42,330 --> 00:34:47,280
this was 1946 to '47,
the doors of Israel,

633
00:34:47,280 --> 00:34:49,820
then Palestine,
were closed to us.

634
00:34:49,820 --> 00:34:52,460
So we were waiting.

635
00:34:52,460 --> 00:34:56,929
Some children from other
areas apparently did sail.

636
00:34:56,929 --> 00:34:59,360
And as you know, from
books like Exodus,

637

00:34:59,360 --> 00:35:01,580
they ended up in Cyprus.

638
00:35:01,580 --> 00:35:05,150
So what happened at this point--

639
00:35:05,150 --> 00:35:10,520
whoever was claimed by a
relative anywhere in America--

640
00:35:10,520 --> 00:35:16,280
Canada was included-- was just
being shipped to that relative.

641
00:35:16,280 --> 00:35:18,050
They didn't ask
us any questions,

642
00:35:18,050 --> 00:35:19,910
where do you want to go?

643
00:35:19,910 --> 00:35:22,070
They just felt that
they had to-- you

644
00:35:22,070 --> 00:35:26,420
know, one less mouth to feed and
one less child to worry about.

645
00:35:26,420 --> 00:35:31,490
Because no one knew whether
the doors of the Palestine

646
00:35:31,490 --> 00:35:35,270
at that time would
ever be open to us.

647
00:35:35,270 --> 00:35:38,000
And all the journeys
there were illegal, too.

648
00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:40,850
So here we were,

about 300 children

649

00:35:40,850 --> 00:35:46,730

gathered from all over Europe
waiting to go to Palestine.

650

00:35:46,730 --> 00:35:49,280

And we couldn't go.

651

00:35:49,280 --> 00:35:52,820

And this is how I
came to Canada was--

652

00:35:52,820 --> 00:35:56,450

I was sort of
shipped like a parcel

653

00:35:56,450 --> 00:35:59,650

via an association called JIAS.

654

00:35:59,650 --> 00:36:01,446

I don't know if you're
familiar with that.

655

00:36:01,446 --> 00:36:01,946

HIAS.

656

00:36:01,946 --> 00:36:02,900

HIAS.

657

00:36:02,900 --> 00:36:07,550

It was called HIAS then, they
call it JIAS, I think, now.

658

00:36:07,550 --> 00:36:14,000

And I arrived in Canada
in August of 1947.

659

00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:14,970

Just--

660

00:36:14,970 --> 00:36:16,220

To my aunt.

661
00:36:16,220 --> 00:36:17,790
--what happened
when you arrived?

662
00:36:17,790 --> 00:36:20,427
Did you know-- did she know
who she was looking for?

663
00:36:20,427 --> 00:36:21,260
I mean, how did you?

664
00:36:21,260 --> 00:36:24,900
Oh, yes, I guess so.

665
00:36:24,900 --> 00:36:29,630
I had sent her a
picture from France.

666
00:36:29,630 --> 00:36:34,250
And it was it was a very
difficult thing, again,

667
00:36:34,250 --> 00:36:36,650
for me to be with
total strangers, so

668
00:36:36,650 --> 00:36:38,180
many different transitions.

669
00:36:38,180 --> 00:36:40,790

670
00:36:40,790 --> 00:36:44,810
Coming to an aunt,
my mother's sister,

671
00:36:44,810 --> 00:36:46,670
but I had never seen her before.

672
00:36:46,670 --> 00:36:47,180

You know?

673
00:36:47,180 --> 00:36:50,450
She left Poland
before I was born.

674
00:36:50,450 --> 00:36:55,850
And adjusting to life in Canada
was difficult, very difficult

675
00:36:55,850 --> 00:36:56,750
in the beginning.

676
00:36:56,750 --> 00:36:59,540

677
00:36:59,540 --> 00:37:01,760
People didn't want to
hear about Holocaust,

678
00:37:01,760 --> 00:37:03,560
you know, at that time.

679
00:37:03,560 --> 00:37:07,430
It was almost as if
they wanted to deny it.

680
00:37:07,430 --> 00:37:15,290
And there was a very, very
strange atmosphere and attitude

681
00:37:15,290 --> 00:37:16,850
to Holocaust survivors.

682
00:37:16,850 --> 00:37:19,080
I couldn't understand it.

683
00:37:19,080 --> 00:37:23,660
I kept thinking, well, do I
have something to be ashamed of?

684
00:37:23,660 --> 00:37:27,770

You know, where
my expectations--

685
00:37:27,770 --> 00:37:29,840
I can't even tell you
what my expectations

686
00:37:29,840 --> 00:37:31,700
were because I don't know.

687
00:37:31,700 --> 00:37:35,780
I didn't come expecting any
kind of tremendous welcome

688
00:37:35,780 --> 00:37:38,820
or anything like that.

689
00:37:38,820 --> 00:37:43,300
But I also didn't
come with any feelings

690
00:37:43,300 --> 00:37:46,580
of having to be sort of
a second-class citizen,

691
00:37:46,580 --> 00:37:50,780
or some poor refugee,
or something like that.

692
00:37:50,780 --> 00:37:53,960
Like that kind of
stigma that was attached

693
00:37:53,960 --> 00:37:55,910
to the survivor at that time.

694
00:37:55,910 --> 00:37:59,840
You know, as if we were
these poor refugees that

695
00:37:59,840 --> 00:38:02,120
had something to be ashamed of.

696

00:38:02,120 --> 00:38:05,040

That really bothered me.

697

00:38:05,040 --> 00:38:10,150

And the attitude
eventually changed.

698

00:38:10,150 --> 00:38:12,410

But when I was
only 11 years old,

699

00:38:12,410 --> 00:38:14,240

that was hard to deal with.

700

00:38:14,240 --> 00:38:17,250

Not that anyone ever said
anything derogatory to me.

701

00:38:17,250 --> 00:38:19,490

But the way they
talked about others,

702

00:38:19,490 --> 00:38:23,490

you know, survivors
of the camps.

703

00:38:23,490 --> 00:38:26,210

There was a very
derogatory attitude

704

00:38:26,210 --> 00:38:32,270

is all I can say that I
picked up on from people here.

705

00:38:32,270 --> 00:38:34,200

Did your aunt have
other children?

706

00:38:34,200 --> 00:38:34,820

Yes.

707

00:38:34,820 --> 00:38:37,805

And how was that with you
coming into the family,

708
00:38:37,805 --> 00:38:38,555
with your cousins?

709
00:38:38,555 --> 00:38:41,060

710
00:38:41,060 --> 00:38:42,620
She had two sons
that were already

711
00:38:42,620 --> 00:38:44,990
married and out of the home.

712
00:38:44,990 --> 00:38:51,410
She had a younger daughter,
the girl was only five,

713
00:38:51,410 --> 00:38:55,880
who was a tremendous
behavior problem.

714
00:38:55,880 --> 00:38:58,490
She had had her
rather late in life.

715
00:38:58,490 --> 00:39:02,240
And the child was
prone to tantrums.

716
00:39:02,240 --> 00:39:05,590
And so I came not
knowing a word of English

717
00:39:05,590 --> 00:39:07,880
and seeing this hysterical
child, you know,

718
00:39:07,880 --> 00:39:09,620
banging her head on
the floor every time

719
00:39:09,620 --> 00:39:10,940
she didn't get her way.

720
00:39:10,940 --> 00:39:14,420
And she had a difficult
time with her.

721
00:39:14,420 --> 00:39:16,170
It was difficult for me.

722
00:39:16,170 --> 00:39:21,740
I didn't have anyone to relate
to at all in that household.

723
00:39:21,740 --> 00:39:27,050
I was really alone, more
alone than in the orphanage.

724
00:39:27,050 --> 00:39:30,680
In the orphanage
in France, we all

725
00:39:30,680 --> 00:39:32,540
formed little families, almost.

726
00:39:32,540 --> 00:39:36,890
Those of us who didn't
have brothers and sisters

727
00:39:36,890 --> 00:39:39,270
created our own
families, if you will.

728
00:39:39,270 --> 00:39:42,030
You know, we became very
close to one another.

729
00:39:42,030 --> 00:39:44,120
Are you in contact with
any of those people?

730

00:39:44,120 --> 00:39:46,640
We couldn't keep in contact, no.

731
00:39:46,640 --> 00:39:50,930
Because-- I have been in contact
with some when I visited Israel

732
00:39:50,930 --> 00:39:54,020
because I made it my business
to find some of the children

733
00:39:54,020 --> 00:39:55,730
that I was with.

734
00:39:55,730 --> 00:40:00,110
But we lost contact after
that because they were all

735
00:40:00,110 --> 00:40:04,520
shipped out before they
could have my address.

736
00:40:04,520 --> 00:40:06,680
They left Schirmeck.

737
00:40:06,680 --> 00:40:09,680
A lot of them
ended up in Cyprus.

738
00:40:09,680 --> 00:40:12,830
They couldn't stay
there much longer.

739
00:40:12,830 --> 00:40:15,560
Conditions there in the
orphanage after the war,

740
00:40:15,560 --> 00:40:18,080
I should tell you,
were quite bad, too.

741
00:40:18,080 --> 00:40:19,850
There was not enough to eat.

742
00:40:19,850 --> 00:40:23,720
I know the Americans felt they
were doing a tremendous amount

743
00:40:23,720 --> 00:40:26,270
for all of us refugees,
but believe me,

744
00:40:26,270 --> 00:40:30,500
we were hungry, just as hungry
as during the war years.

745
00:40:30,500 --> 00:40:32,660
When I arrived in
Canada, I was covered

746
00:40:32,660 --> 00:40:35,690
with malnutrition sores.

747
00:40:35,690 --> 00:40:38,420
And I didn't have
them during the war.

748
00:40:38,420 --> 00:40:43,730
That was all during that
year I spent in Schirmeck.

749
00:40:43,730 --> 00:40:47,690
The children who were
very, very ill were given,

750
00:40:47,690 --> 00:40:50,000
you know, a little
bit more food.

751
00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:53,960
Like an egg was a
nutritious meal, you know.

752
00:40:53,960 --> 00:40:56,210
And there weren't enough
eggs for all the children.

753
00:40:56,210 --> 00:40:59,380
What was a typical
meal in the orphanage?

754
00:40:59,380 --> 00:41:01,520
Do you know, I can't
remember exactly,

755
00:41:01,520 --> 00:41:03,830
except that stands
out in my mind.

756
00:41:03,830 --> 00:41:04,970
The egg.

757
00:41:04,970 --> 00:41:07,520
You know, that some of the
children who were very, very

758
00:41:07,520 --> 00:41:10,010
ill were given an egg.

759
00:41:10,010 --> 00:41:12,320
I don't know why it
stands out in my mind.

760
00:41:12,320 --> 00:41:14,390
But it does.

761
00:41:14,390 --> 00:41:17,840
And I know that you had to
be quite sick to get an egg.

762
00:41:17,840 --> 00:41:20,540
And some kids would pretend
that they were very sick

763
00:41:20,540 --> 00:41:21,800
so that they could get an egg.

764
00:41:21,800 --> 00:41:25,137

765
00:41:25,137 --> 00:41:26,720
I know you want to
get to the session.

766
00:41:26,720 --> 00:41:29,990
I'd like to just ask
you two questions.

767
00:41:29,990 --> 00:41:34,760
I wish we could spend
about another five hours.

768
00:41:34,760 --> 00:41:37,550
Why were the Schmulevitch,
is that how you pronounce it?

769
00:41:37,550 --> 00:41:38,155
Szumielewicz.

770
00:41:38,155 --> 00:41:39,230
Szumielewicz.

771
00:41:39,230 --> 00:41:41,520
Why were they moving
from place to place?

772
00:41:41,520 --> 00:41:42,890
I mean, did he--

773
00:41:42,890 --> 00:41:44,510
was it to escape the Nazis?

774
00:41:44,510 --> 00:41:45,920
To prevent being discovered?

775
00:41:45,920 --> 00:41:52,640
Or did he not have a occupation
that tied them to one city?

776
00:41:52,640 --> 00:41:54,650

And was this a normal
course of things

777
00:41:54,650 --> 00:41:58,400
that people who were hiding
people would pick up and run?

778
00:41:58,400 --> 00:42:02,930
That's what I understood
after the war, that--

779
00:42:02,930 --> 00:42:04,280
or even during the war.

780
00:42:04,280 --> 00:42:08,720
If people became suspicious,
they felt we had to move on.

781
00:42:08,720 --> 00:42:11,840
Occupation-- people didn't
work in normal occupations

782
00:42:11,840 --> 00:42:13,350
during the war.

783
00:42:13,350 --> 00:42:16,100
Now, how he lived, maybe
uncle Henrik is right.

784
00:42:16,100 --> 00:42:20,060
Because we always
manage to buy some food.

785
00:42:20,060 --> 00:42:24,050
Not much, but a little.

786
00:42:24,050 --> 00:42:28,070
And food cost a great deal
of money during the war.

787
00:42:28,070 --> 00:42:32,630
So perhaps they had
money from our families.

788
00:42:32,630 --> 00:42:33,920
What did he do every day?

789
00:42:33,920 --> 00:42:36,920
Did he work on the farm
when you were on the farm?

790
00:42:36,920 --> 00:42:37,760
Was he--

791
00:42:37,760 --> 00:42:39,290
I don't remember him working.

792
00:42:39,290 --> 00:42:42,770
He would be busy doing
paperwork at his desk.

793
00:42:42,770 --> 00:42:46,280
And I really can't
tell you what he did.

794
00:42:46,280 --> 00:42:51,170
He did not have an occupation
during the war as such.

795
00:42:51,170 --> 00:42:57,020
And your aunt-- the day to day
existence of you and your aunt,

796
00:42:57,020 --> 00:42:58,910
before she would let
you out on the farm.

797
00:42:58,910 --> 00:43:02,680

798
00:43:02,680 --> 00:43:04,360
You remember standing
at the window.

799
00:43:04,360 --> 00:43:05,020

What else?

800
00:43:05,020 --> 00:43:07,390
I mean, there was no baking
or cooking, I assume.

801
00:43:07,390 --> 00:43:08,780
People didn't have--

802
00:43:08,780 --> 00:43:10,510
There wasn't much to
bake and cook with.

803
00:43:10,510 --> 00:43:11,010
Right.

804
00:43:11,010 --> 00:43:17,650
Well, my day to
day thing-- well,

805
00:43:17,650 --> 00:43:24,270
after I was allowed to go out,
I would feed the chickens,

806
00:43:24,270 --> 00:43:28,140
do a little chores
around the farm.

807
00:43:28,140 --> 00:43:30,030
I remember doing that.

808
00:43:30,030 --> 00:43:33,960
I remember a little bit of
cooking, sitting and cook,

809
00:43:33,960 --> 00:43:35,340
standing in the
kitchen, watching

810
00:43:35,340 --> 00:43:39,390
her make porridge,
maybe, things like that.

811

00:43:39,390 --> 00:43:46,410

She was preoccupied with
doing a bit of housework

812

00:43:46,410 --> 00:43:49,020

and giving me lessons.

813

00:43:49,020 --> 00:43:51,630

She was a teacher by profession.

814

00:43:51,630 --> 00:43:54,210

And she would be giving
me my lessons as if--

815

00:43:54,210 --> 00:43:56,160

we would pretend
it was school time

816

00:43:56,160 --> 00:44:00,670

and we would have
lessons, things like that.

817

00:44:00,670 --> 00:44:02,820

And I would be involved
in helping her.

818

00:44:02,820 --> 00:44:04,830

Whatever she was doing
around the house,

819

00:44:04,830 --> 00:44:09,300

so mending or cleaning dishes.

820

00:44:09,300 --> 00:44:10,295

I just-- just the day--

821

00:44:10,295 --> 00:44:11,670

And when she picked
up and moved,

822

00:44:11,670 --> 00:44:13,980

you had what, a suitcase

full of clothing?

823

00:44:13,980 --> 00:44:16,410

I mean, did you have
anything to take with you?

824

00:44:16,410 --> 00:44:18,300

Next to nothing.

825

00:44:18,300 --> 00:44:20,730

Very little.

826

00:44:20,730 --> 00:44:22,990

That I would personally
have, or you mean all of us?

827

00:44:22,990 --> 00:44:26,010

Well, both, really.

828

00:44:26,010 --> 00:44:27,480

You know, I don't
remember details

829

00:44:27,480 --> 00:44:30,520

like that, as to how much
luggage and stuff like that.

830

00:44:30,520 --> 00:44:31,110

That was--

831

00:44:31,110 --> 00:44:35,340

Would you walk from town
to town when you moved?

832

00:44:35,340 --> 00:44:39,480

No, somehow we would
be transported.

833

00:44:39,480 --> 00:44:42,510

But we weren't moving
every month, let's say.

834

00:44:42,510 --> 00:44:47,490
We would be a year or
several months in one place.

835
00:44:47,490 --> 00:44:49,570
And then the war
lasted four years.

836
00:44:49,570 --> 00:44:50,340
We were in about--

837
00:44:50,340 --> 00:44:53,630

838
00:44:53,630 --> 00:44:54,210
OK.

839
00:44:54,210 --> 00:44:56,960
We were in [PLACE NAME]
and in Klimatow.

840
00:44:56,960 --> 00:45:00,470
And after that,
I remember a town

841
00:45:00,470 --> 00:45:02,700
called Ostrowiec and Opatow.

842
00:45:02,700 --> 00:45:06,740
So that's four different places
in the four years of war,

843
00:45:06,740 --> 00:45:08,840
'41 to '45.

844
00:45:08,840 --> 00:45:11,270
It was really 3 and
1/2 years, wasn't it?

845
00:45:11,270 --> 00:45:13,700
Because it was
the summer of '41.

846
00:45:13,700 --> 00:45:16,580
And in the convent, did
you have lessons there?

847
00:45:16,580 --> 00:45:19,473
Did you play with
other children?

848
00:45:19,473 --> 00:45:21,620
Your sort of every day, what--

849
00:45:21,620 --> 00:45:23,480
What kind of way did--

850
00:45:23,480 --> 00:45:24,980
how did I spend my days?

851
00:45:24,980 --> 00:45:27,740
You know, I've tried
to think of that.

852
00:45:27,740 --> 00:45:31,640
I remember there being a lots
of lineups for everything.

853
00:45:31,640 --> 00:45:34,440
For food, there was a line up.

854
00:45:34,440 --> 00:45:39,260
Waiting, and waiting,
and standing in line.

855
00:45:39,260 --> 00:45:42,200
And lessons I don't
remember other

856
00:45:42,200 --> 00:45:45,470
than praying, a lot of praying.

857
00:45:45,470 --> 00:45:48,890
I don't remember actually being
taught to read or to write

858
00:45:48,890 --> 00:45:51,290
or anything like that.

859
00:45:51,290 --> 00:45:56,870
And playing, just being
with other children,

860
00:45:56,870 --> 00:46:01,790
not organized activity
the way you would think.

861
00:46:01,790 --> 00:46:04,580
And the same question
for the underground.

862
00:46:04,580 --> 00:46:07,730
I mean, how many people
were in this grave,

863
00:46:07,730 --> 00:46:08,660
as you described it?

864
00:46:08,660 --> 00:46:10,820
The earth and--

865
00:46:10,820 --> 00:46:12,710
It was like--

866
00:46:12,710 --> 00:46:13,700
And how large was it?

867
00:46:13,700 --> 00:46:15,980
--A pit.

868
00:46:15,980 --> 00:46:19,640
I remember I was able to
stand up, but Ciocia wasn't.

869
00:46:19,640 --> 00:46:21,590
It was quite small.

870

00:46:21,590 --> 00:46:24,060

And people went out to get food?

871

00:46:24,060 --> 00:46:26,060

Yes, yes.

872

00:46:26,060 --> 00:46:29,570

In fact, one day, I took my
turn to go out to get food.

873

00:46:29,570 --> 00:46:35,330

And I went with another little
girl who had become my friend.

874

00:46:35,330 --> 00:46:38,270

And she was killed
right beside me

875

00:46:38,270 --> 00:46:44,300

because the bombs were
falling and the shrapnel was.

876

00:46:44,300 --> 00:46:48,100

I was wounded a little bit that
day with shrapnel in my leg.

877

00:46:48,100 --> 00:46:50,960

But she was killed
right beside me.

878

00:46:50,960 --> 00:46:53,960

And we just crawled on our
stomachs to the bakery.

879

00:46:53,960 --> 00:46:57,410

And when we got to the bakery,
we found a loaf of bread.

880

00:46:57,410 --> 00:46:59,030

The store had been abandoned.

881

00:46:59,030 --> 00:47:01,640

And I brought
bread back with me.

882
00:47:01,640 --> 00:47:02,570
But she died.

883
00:47:02,570 --> 00:47:06,480

884
00:47:06,480 --> 00:47:09,350
And you were about nine?

885
00:47:09,350 --> 00:47:11,540
At that time, I was
a little bit younger.

886
00:47:11,540 --> 00:47:14,810
I was 9 in '45.

887
00:47:14,810 --> 00:47:18,600
This wasn't '44 yet.

888
00:47:18,600 --> 00:47:21,420
And in terms of
bathroom facilities

889
00:47:21,420 --> 00:47:23,100
underground, I mean,
what do people do?

890
00:47:23,100 --> 00:47:26,320

891
00:47:26,320 --> 00:47:28,390
There was a corner where
we went to the bathroom.

892
00:47:28,390 --> 00:47:32,860

893
00:47:32,860 --> 00:47:36,895
And how many people were living

there beside you and your aunt

894

00:47:36,895 --> 00:47:38,770
and uncle?

895

00:47:38,770 --> 00:47:41,470
I don't remember us
being so crowded that we

896

00:47:41,470 --> 00:47:42,860
were on top of each other.

897

00:47:42,860 --> 00:47:45,580
But there were a lot of people.

898

00:47:45,580 --> 00:47:48,370
And did people sort
of divide up the tasks

899

00:47:48,370 --> 00:47:50,860
and organized who was going
to do what, who was going to--

900

00:47:50,860 --> 00:47:53,170
No, there was no organization.

901

00:47:53,170 --> 00:47:54,460
There was real terror.

902

00:47:54,460 --> 00:47:59,200
People were just sitting,
listening to the bombs falling.

903

00:47:59,200 --> 00:48:00,610
For a year-- nine months?

904

00:48:00,610 --> 00:48:02,020
Nine months we were there.

905

00:48:02,020 --> 00:48:04,210
Yeah.

906

00:48:04,210 --> 00:48:07,750

You know, we came out now and then, as I said, for supplies.

907

00:48:07,750 --> 00:48:10,840

But that was our home for nine months.

908

00:48:10,840 --> 00:48:11,780

We couldn't come out.

909

00:48:11,780 --> 00:48:15,730

We also didn't know what I had done to that German soldier.

910

00:48:15,730 --> 00:48:18,370

And so immediately after, we knew

911

00:48:18,370 --> 00:48:21,100

they were looking for us once they found him.

912

00:48:21,100 --> 00:48:29,260

913

00:48:29,260 --> 00:48:31,600

To hear these stories, it's so unbelievable

914

00:48:31,600 --> 00:48:35,450

that anybody is alive who went through that.

915

00:48:35,450 --> 00:48:36,910

That's what strikes me every time I

916

00:48:36,910 --> 00:48:41,350

talk to somebody like you, is that anybody survived.

917

00:48:41,350 --> 00:48:50,930

Well, sometimes I
think that people

918

00:48:50,930 --> 00:48:52,640

can survive almost anything.

919

00:48:52,640 --> 00:48:55,940

You know, when I think
back on my own survival,

920

00:48:55,940 --> 00:49:00,380

the thing that's difficult is
dealing with it afterwards,

921

00:49:00,380 --> 00:49:05,210

and coming to terms with this
kind of upheaval in your life,

922

00:49:05,210 --> 00:49:10,970

and trying to lead
a normal life after.

923

00:49:10,970 --> 00:49:15,840

This kind of, I don't know
what you want to call it,

924

00:49:15,840 --> 00:49:24,220

the interlude of madness,
a vortex in your life.

925

00:49:24,220 --> 00:49:28,030

It's afterwards, when
the war was over,

926

00:49:28,030 --> 00:49:33,675

and particularly when
I came to Canada and--

927

00:49:33,675 --> 00:49:35,050

there weren't any
other children,

928

00:49:35,050 --> 00:49:37,600
you know, in '47 who
arrived when I did.

929
00:49:37,600 --> 00:49:42,580
And my friends at school were
all Canadian-born children

930
00:49:42,580 --> 00:49:44,350
from very secure homes.

931
00:49:44,350 --> 00:49:47,300
And I wanted so much
to be like one of them.

932
00:49:47,300 --> 00:49:51,430
I wanted to pretend that what
happened to me never happened.

933
00:49:51,430 --> 00:49:55,550
And that was very important
to me, just to be one of them.

934
00:49:55,550 --> 00:50:00,520
And I started to really
suppress all my memories.

935
00:50:00,520 --> 00:50:04,120
After a while, I didn't even
have nightmares anymore.

936
00:50:04,120 --> 00:50:09,430
I was pretending that all
of this didn't happen.

937
00:50:09,430 --> 00:50:11,230
And I forgot Polish.

938
00:50:11,230 --> 00:50:15,350
I couldn't speak a word of
Polish after a couple of years.

939
00:50:15,350 --> 00:50:18,160

And I guess it was
a psychological sort

940
00:50:18,160 --> 00:50:22,240
of suppression of all of
these events in my life.

941
00:50:22,240 --> 00:50:26,560
Because if I dwelled on them,
if I thought about them,

942
00:50:26,560 --> 00:50:28,570
I couldn't live a normal life.

943
00:50:28,570 --> 00:50:30,910
And I wanted to very
much because that

944
00:50:30,910 --> 00:50:33,080
was the survivor in me.

945
00:50:33,080 --> 00:50:35,200
And can you speak Polish now?

946
00:50:35,200 --> 00:50:36,040
I can now.

947
00:50:36,040 --> 00:50:37,690
But you know,
when-- first time we

948
00:50:37,690 --> 00:50:40,030
brought Ciocia for
a visit from Poland

949
00:50:40,030 --> 00:50:43,120
was right after my
oldest daughter was born.

950
00:50:43,120 --> 00:50:45,820
I couldn't speak
a word of Polish.

951

00:50:45,820 --> 00:50:49,480

And after about three
days when she was here,

952

00:50:49,480 --> 00:50:51,380

it started to slowly
come back to me.

953

00:50:51,380 --> 00:50:54,070

That's how much I
blocked it all out.

954

00:50:54,070 --> 00:50:58,027

And at that time,
I was already 23.

955

00:50:58,027 --> 00:50:59,860

And was that the first
time you had seen her

956

00:50:59,860 --> 00:51:01,100

since you had parted?

957

00:51:01,100 --> 00:51:01,600

Yes.

958

00:51:01,600 --> 00:51:03,070

That was our first reunion.

959

00:51:03,070 --> 00:51:06,450

And what was that like?

960

00:51:06,450 --> 00:51:09,220

It was quite traumatic.

961

00:51:09,220 --> 00:51:10,400

It was quite traumatic.

962

00:51:10,400 --> 00:51:13,630

It was very difficult.

I had difficulty

963

00:51:13,630 --> 00:51:18,520

coping with day-to-day
life after she left.

964

00:51:18,520 --> 00:51:21,430

When she was here, I was fine.

965

00:51:21,430 --> 00:51:25,420

Polish came back to me and we
were able to talk and converse

966

00:51:25,420 --> 00:51:28,150

in Polish after a few days.

967

00:51:28,150 --> 00:51:34,180

And I was just thrilled to
have, you know, like a mother

968

00:51:34,180 --> 00:51:38,350

again to give me a little
advice and so on with the baby.

969

00:51:38,350 --> 00:51:43,800

And when she left, I had
a lot of difficulties.

970

00:51:43,800 --> 00:51:45,370

I couldn't sleep nights.

971

00:51:45,370 --> 00:51:48,610

I kept thinking-- I kept
going in and checking

972

00:51:48,610 --> 00:51:51,010

the baby, you know, to
see if she was breathing.

973

00:51:51,010 --> 00:51:53,050

I thought for sure
someone was going

974

00:51:53,050 --> 00:51:56,440

to take away my child from
me and I'm going to lose her.

975
00:51:56,440 --> 00:51:59,770
I was terrified that I
was going to lose my baby.

976
00:51:59,770 --> 00:52:03,190
And she was perfectly
healthy baby, normal.

977
00:52:03,190 --> 00:52:10,090
And so I didn't have any real
reasons other than, I guess,

978
00:52:10,090 --> 00:52:15,110
all my insecurities came back
to me at that point in my life.

979
00:52:15,110 --> 00:52:17,620
And it was a difficult time.

980
00:52:17,620 --> 00:52:20,950

981
00:52:20,950 --> 00:52:23,180
And your husband, you
met him in Canada?

982
00:52:23,180 --> 00:52:23,990
Yes.

983
00:52:23,990 --> 00:52:25,360
And he is Canadian?

984
00:52:25,360 --> 00:52:26,680
Right.

985
00:52:26,680 --> 00:52:28,720
And when you told
him your story,

986

00:52:28,720 --> 00:52:31,540
was this an eye-opener to him?

987
00:52:31,540 --> 00:52:34,840
Or had he known anything about?

988
00:52:34,840 --> 00:52:38,710
You know, at that
particular time, all

989
00:52:38,710 --> 00:52:41,380
that he knew about me was
that I survived the war.

990
00:52:41,380 --> 00:52:45,070
When I first met
him, I was only 16.

991
00:52:45,070 --> 00:52:48,310
And I would never talk
about my experiences.

992
00:52:48,310 --> 00:52:51,400
Not with anyone
and not with him.

993
00:52:51,400 --> 00:52:54,310
And it wasn't till years
and years and years

994
00:52:54,310 --> 00:52:58,720
later that I ever really
told him my story.

995
00:52:58,720 --> 00:53:00,710
We didn't talk about
it then at all.

996
00:53:00,710 --> 00:53:02,920
I couldn't talk
about it to anyone.

997
00:53:02,920 --> 00:53:04,810

It took a long time.

998

00:53:04,810 --> 00:53:08,320

Was when I had Heni,
and my eldest was born,

999

00:53:08,320 --> 00:53:12,050

and we brought Ciocia, that
part of my life came back to me.

1000

00:53:12,050 --> 00:53:16,290

And I started to do some
writing then at that point.

1001

00:53:16,290 --> 00:53:20,700

And that was a bit of a release
for me, too, the writing.

1002

00:53:20,700 --> 00:53:24,430

1003

00:53:24,430 --> 00:53:30,220

And I've dealt with
it as best I can.

1004

00:53:30,220 --> 00:53:32,080

Sounds to me like
you've dealt with it

1005

00:53:32,080 --> 00:53:33,670

better than most, frankly.

1006

00:53:33,670 --> 00:53:36,160

I mean, on the outside, anyhow.

1007

00:53:36,160 --> 00:53:39,700

Well, I've just in the
past maybe 10 years

1008

00:53:39,700 --> 00:53:43,150

gotten a little more involved
in Holocaust teaching.

1009

00:53:43,150 --> 00:53:45,970

I've organized a
seminar in our area

1010

00:53:45,970 --> 00:53:47,920

for teachers, high
school teachers.

1011

00:53:47,920 --> 00:53:49,580

And it was very successful.

1012

00:53:49,580 --> 00:53:50,800

That was just last June.

1013

00:53:50,800 --> 00:53:54,170

1014

00:53:54,170 --> 00:53:58,490

I have always searched for
a meaning to my survival,

1015

00:53:58,490 --> 00:53:59,920

I really have.

1016

00:53:59,920 --> 00:54:06,045

And I do feel an
obligation somehow.

1017

00:54:06,045 --> 00:54:11,680

1018

00:54:11,680 --> 00:54:14,080

I don't know even
how to phrase it.

1019

00:54:14,080 --> 00:54:18,730

I mean, sure, marrying
and recreating

1020

00:54:18,730 --> 00:54:22,120

our family was, I
think, the thing that

1021
00:54:22,120 --> 00:54:25,010
was most urgent in my life.

1022
00:54:25,010 --> 00:54:27,220
I wanted to do that
desperately, you

1023
00:54:27,220 --> 00:54:31,330
know, just to have a family
again, my own family.

1024
00:54:31,330 --> 00:54:32,870
So that was important.

1025
00:54:32,870 --> 00:54:34,660
And I did that at
a rather young age.

1026
00:54:34,660 --> 00:54:38,290
When I was only barely
20, I got married.

1027
00:54:38,290 --> 00:54:42,370
And I had three children.

1028
00:54:42,370 --> 00:54:44,470
I felt that that
was important that I

1029
00:54:44,470 --> 00:54:50,950
continued the link, the
continuity and to have

1030
00:54:50,950 --> 00:54:53,020
a Jewish family.

1031
00:54:53,020 --> 00:55:01,700
That my grandparents, my
parents will have continuity,

1032
00:55:01,700 --> 00:55:05,700

even though they were
so brutally killed.

1033
00:55:05,700 --> 00:55:10,660
But as their descendant,
I felt this obligation

1034
00:55:10,660 --> 00:55:12,700
very strongly to continue.

1035
00:55:12,700 --> 00:55:14,680
Even though at times,
I thought, do I

1036
00:55:14,680 --> 00:55:16,240
want to have children
and bring them

1037
00:55:16,240 --> 00:55:17,750
into a cruel world like that?

1038
00:55:17,750 --> 00:55:21,100
And these thoughts, of
course, crossed my mind.

1039
00:55:21,100 --> 00:55:27,130
But I decided, no, that that
was one obligation that I had.

1040
00:55:27,130 --> 00:55:30,700
How often are you in touch
with your aunt these days?

1041
00:55:30,700 --> 00:55:33,520
We keep a regular
correspondence going.

1042
00:55:33,520 --> 00:55:36,480
And of course, I've helped her
over the years financially,

1043
00:55:36,480 --> 00:55:40,720
also, whenever possible.

1044
00:55:40,720 --> 00:55:42,600
During these difficult
times, particularly.

1045
00:55:42,600 --> 00:55:45,700
You know, in Poland, when
there was a shortage of food,

1046
00:55:45,700 --> 00:55:49,750
I made sure that she
got all her parcels

1047
00:55:49,750 --> 00:55:53,890
of food and so on through
the International Service.

1048
00:55:53,890 --> 00:55:56,800
And your uncle in Brazil?

1049
00:55:56,800 --> 00:55:58,330
His wife is still alive?

1050
00:55:58,330 --> 00:56:00,340
His wife-- this was
his second wife.

1051
00:56:00,340 --> 00:56:01,970
He had a new family
after the war.

1052
00:56:01,970 --> 00:56:02,470
He did.

1053
00:56:02,470 --> 00:56:04,690
With two children
again, a boy and a girl.

1054
00:56:04,690 --> 00:56:10,840
Unfortunately, another tragedy
struck him and he lost his son.

1055

00:56:10,840 --> 00:56:12,250
He died of meningitis.

1056
00:56:12,250 --> 00:56:15,280
The child was born
with a heart defect.

1057
00:56:15,280 --> 00:56:19,090
He contracted meningitis
at the age of 14.

1058
00:56:19,090 --> 00:56:22,360
And he died and that was
a devastation to him.

1059
00:56:22,360 --> 00:56:24,970
My aunt never recovered from it.

1060
00:56:24,970 --> 00:56:31,190
She is really quite mentally ill
after Auschwitz and everything.

1061
00:56:31,190 --> 00:56:35,510
And then losing a child
of 14, a brilliant boy.

1062
00:56:35,510 --> 00:56:39,460
He was a very
talented violinist.

1063
00:56:39,460 --> 00:56:40,870
Was too much for her.

1064
00:56:40,870 --> 00:56:43,960
I visited them in Brazil
just three years ago.

1065
00:56:43,960 --> 00:56:47,910
And she's not well,
I'm sorry to say.

1066
00:56:47,910 --> 00:56:49,650
She was fine up until.

1067
00:56:49,650 --> 00:56:51,750
Had she had a family
previous to Auschwitz?

1068
00:56:51,750 --> 00:56:55,740
She was married, but very young,
and didn't have any children

1069
00:56:55,740 --> 00:56:56,970
yet.

1070
00:56:56,970 --> 00:56:59,820
She lost a husband.

1071
00:56:59,820 --> 00:57:03,245
And she's--

1072
00:57:03,245 --> 00:57:05,120
Have you interviewed
him about his experience

1073
00:57:05,120 --> 00:57:07,310
in Auschwitz at all?

1074
00:57:07,310 --> 00:57:08,360
Does he talk about it?

1075
00:57:08,360 --> 00:57:09,830
No, not on tape or anything.

1076
00:57:09,830 --> 00:57:13,370
No, the interviews that I have
done were for Dr. Kestenberg.

1077
00:57:13,370 --> 00:57:16,760
And they were of child
survivors like myself.

1078
00:57:16,760 --> 00:57:18,860
That's her specialty.

1079

00:57:18,860 --> 00:57:21,980
Children who were no more than
13 when the war broke out,

1080

00:57:21,980 --> 00:57:25,180
that's what I've
been doing for her.

1081

00:57:25,180 --> 00:57:26,630
Now I have to meet
my sons, sorry.

1082

00:57:26,630 --> 00:57:28,710
Thank you very much.

1083

00:57:28,710 --> 00:57:32,170
I really appreciate you
giving your time today.

1084

00:57:32,170 --> 00:57:37,000