

OK, go ahead.

My mother's-- her name is Mushke. The maiden name is Zuler. And then after, when she married the father, she becomes the last name Menyuk.

Mm-hmm, and Zuler was her maiden name.

Maiden name, yes. She was born approximately 1900 year. In the village, Komarowo. That's in-- it was Poland in this time.

She was born in 1900?

Approximately, yeah 1900.

Do you remember what month she was born?

I don't remember, no.

Did she ever tell you any stories about her childhood and growing up in Komarowo?

No, she was-- she got-- the child at the time, not very well. She was-- it was a poor family in a village. She was working hard to make the living. And one time, until-- I don't-- I know only what she was telling, she and the father.

The father was in the war, in the Russian-German war. She was by herself at home and waiting for the father, what he will come. I was born after that, when the father came from the war. And she got hard time. It was a big family.

It was your father who was in World War I?

Yes. Yes.

And he fought on the Russian side?

Yes, on the Russian side.

Do you know when your mother got married, what year?

No, it's hard to tell. Only I can tell you I was born in 1922. I think--

Maybe a few years before you were born?

A few years that I born. A few, maybe about three, three years. Because she married with the father. And the father was in the war. And then he came from the war. He was one year maybe, not a full year. He was in Germany and how it's called the-- [NON-ENGLISH].

Oh, was he a prisoner of war?

Prisoner of war, yeah, a war prisoner in Germany. And then he came. And after that, I was born. It was in a year.

OK, can you tell me a little bit about your mother's parents, your grandparents? Did you know them very well?

Yes, I remember only the grandfather. When I was in-- I was study in Sarna. And I was living my aunt, that mean that's my mother's sister family. And one time, we went to the uncle, the one to come to us in the village, to Komarowo. And he said we will come in a place where my grandfather lives. And I saw him. This one time, I saw him in a village.

Then we stayed-- I was a child. I didn't talk. He was this old, old man. And he was sick in this time. And we stayed maybe one night. And then we came to Komarowo to my home with my uncle from Sarna. That's what I remember, my grandfather. The grandmother I don't remember at all.

Do you remember what your grandfather did for a living before?

He was living-- at this time he was living in Liubytivs'ka. That's a place-- Liubytivs'ka, that's close to Rovno, Sarny. What he was doing, I don't remember this time. I saw him only when he was sick.

Did your mother ever say anything about what he had done, what his job was earlier?

I think he was work in the field, like in a village. But that's got his own cows and horses.

He was a farmer or something like that.

Like a farmer, like this.

Did your mother-- did she go to school when she was younger? Or was she-- do you remember? Or did she tell you?

As this time in Poland, we lived-- not a lot of people got to have education, some.

That's why I asked, because I wasn't sure if she did or not.

Most of them, people didn't got education. Most of them is three grade, four grade, this was the highest. Because people begin to work. And somebody-- for me, my parents tried to give me more education. They sent me to Sarna to study. And most of them, a couple grades, and that's it. And people go to work, some cook. Many different business.

That's what I think what she didn't get a high education. And the father got more education than the mother. The father, he begin to teach me Russian language. When the Russian came with this, he begin to teach me Russian language. I didn't know too Russian. I studied Jewish, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish. And Russian, I didn't know.

Go ahead.

That's it.

OK. Let me ask you about after you were born. Were you the oldest?

Yes.

You were the oldest?

Yes.

And how many children, or how many brothers and sisters did you have?

I got one sister.

One sister.

Yes, she was younger. The name's Rachel. And she was younger than me, maybe two years or one year. I don't remember exactly. She was the youngest and I was the older.

When you were growing up, what did your parents, like your father, what did he do for a living? And your mother, what

was she doing?

The father he was-- we got land, not a lot, but a little. And we got a cow, we got a horse. Most of them, we was-- the father was working and mother in own field. Then he managed a little-- it was-- how it's called, [NON-ENGLISH]. A man from-- he was living in Warsaw. And he got a lot of forest and the field in Komarowo. And he managed this place for [NON-ENGLISH]. How it's called?

The landowner?

Landowner.

A landowner. And the name was-- his name was Shelkowski. I remember his name, Shelkowski.

And he was from-- he was from Warsaw?

Yes, he was living in Warsaw. And in a couple of months, he came to Komarowo and look.

To see how things were going.

See how is everything going. And then he left. And he got a lot of land. It was not only in Komarowo. He got Kulykoviichi. That's across the River Styr. He got land in one place in Komarowo, his land. That's what my father and mother got a living from that.

You said-- when did you start-- you said that your parents sent you away to school in Sarna.

Yes.

When did when did you first go to school there?

They send me to school to Sarna, that's in 1934. And I begin-- I came to Sarna. And I went and I begin from the fourth grade. And I finished in Sarna eighth grade. 1938 I came back from Sarna.

When you went to school there, did you stay the whole year? Or did you just go for a week and then come back on the weekends?

No, only in the winter vacations and summer vacations I came home. And that's always I stay, because it's not very, very close. It was-- from our village to Sarna, it's 100, 110 kilometers. And my parents was not rich people to pay to come Sarna and go back.

By train.

And it's not a train. We got a train only to Chartoriysk. And then with horses we went to our village. And this take a long time.

Did your sister also go away to school?

No.

No.

She was study in the village.

In Komarowo.

In Komarowo.

And then you said that you came back to Komarowo in 1938.

Yes.

And how many grades did you finish by then?

Eight.

You were in the eighth grade.

Yes.

OK.

That was a school, eighth grade. And I came at home, maybe the parents were-- not the war, maybe the parents were thinking to send me some more to study. It's happening. But in 1939, it's come the war between Poland and Germany. Then Stalin came, the Russian. And I began to work and stopped my education.

So you started working after you came home?

Yes. came home, the first year, from 1938. And I was working at home to help the parents. And then when it's 1939, came the Russians. I began to work for the Russians. That we got all government jobs. We didn't got own jobs because they feel they take away everything we got. I begin to work and my father begin to work. And in a couple years, we're in the other war. That's 1941.

Can you tell me a little bit about-- did the Germans ever come to Komarowo?

Yes.

In 1939, did they make it that far?

Yes.

Yes.

In approximately in 10 days. You mean in 1939?

In 1939, yeah. Did they ever reach Komarowo?

No, in 1939, it's come not the German. Our place take Russia in 1939.

So you were in the Eastern part of Poland.

Yes, in the Eastern. And this was in the side after the Bug, the boarder start, the Germans start on the boarder on Bug. And the Russian came and they take our place. And then we begin to live in Russia, 1939. And we live until 1941, until begin the war between Russia and Germany. That was the war between Poland and Germany.

Was in 1939.

In 1939. And our place take Russia. And it's become Russia in 1939. We didn't leave until 1941. Until begin, again, during the war.

In the days after September 1st, 1939, when the Germans invaded Poland, what did your parents do? What were they thinking? Were they are frightened of the Germans? Were they apprehensive about what was going on? How did they feel at that time? Do you remember?

What I remember, what my father explained to me, he-- we here what is, what Germany killed a lot of people. And then people run away from Germany. Sometimes, the father was-- I remember he was talking. He was saying, I cannot believe what can happen that. He was a war prisoner in a time in Germany. And he said how the German was very good to Jewish people that were prisoners. And it was good. He say, I cannot believe what they can-- what Hitler changed the situation.

Because in this, when my father was in-- it was, I think, Wilhelm-- Wilhelm was the president in Germany. And then become when Hitler come to the power. And he changed. I remember when the German-- the war with Russia, he told me, no, he say, I cannot believe was will kill us for what. We people, we live in a village. We Jewish, we live good with all the people.

Because in the village was not a lot of Jewish people. It was maybe five families, not more. And we didn't know the difference between us and the people, the Ukraine people. Like everything was together, most to Ukraine people. And we didn't that when German-- the Germans came, we didn't know all this, the bad stuff they begin to do.

Did your parents think about trying to get away or move to the East? But I guess because your father wasn't that frightened--

Yes, we was talking. In this time, I didn't have life experience, like no in this time. And their father say, no, why will go? Where will go? Who knows how we-- we'll need to leave the home, you need to leave everything. Where will we live?

And it was a big mistake, our big mistake. And the father was saying, we'll go to Russia. And a lot of people, they escaped from Germany. And he didn't-- no, I don't know how it will be when we left. No, the father didn't want to leave. He say we stay-- we stay in our village.

People say German to work, we will work. We will cooperate for working. No, it was a big difference, not only to work. They began to kill us. That's what they begin the trouble. In couple-- the Germans come to us. In 10 days-- in 10 days--

And that's in 1941.

In 1941, in 10 days the German was in our village. I remember I see them, the Germans how they came, like it was-- the soldiers like in a [NON-ENGLISH]-- in a rest place, they came. They drank and ate chocolate. And it was no fighting. No, we feel this time as we will have trouble. My father didn't-- he speaked very well German. And he was talking with one-- the young people was very bad. The older Germans was much, much better.

And one German, I remember, the father explained to me, one German told him what-- he told him, are you Jewish? And he say, yes. You will have a lot of trouble, he told him. And no, it was late. The German was here. You cannot go anywhere. Then he told us, the father, yes, there are German men, soldiers. He said, but we told me that we will have a lot of trouble.

And after 10 days, when they came, we feel it, what was begin to done to us. And the helpers was the Russian, Nazi, what they got, they didn't want, what people live another nationality in the villages. It begin trouble and trouble.

Yeah. Can I go back just a little bit to when the Russians came into the town. Can you tell me a little bit about what happened then, how they came in? Did they seize property, and businesses, and things like that?

When Russia came to us, we didn't get no troubles. They came. We begin to work. They didn't say nothing. No nationalism. It was everybody like, we was feeling like the Ukraine people. It was not bad. We begin to work for the government. Any work, I was beginning to work. I got more education than other people. And the Ukraine people, they

vote for me to make me the head of government, business government-- how it--

The stores.

The stores. [NON-ENGLISH]-- called business-- government business. And they vote for me, what to make me-- I was in this time, oh, from-- I was maybe 16.

Retail?

16 years. And I was the head of the stores, what it was around the villages, Komarowo. This was maybe 12-- 12 or 15 villages. And I was the head of the stores.

You were the commissar.

No, commissar, that's a political--

Yeah.

No, I didn't know nothing about political.

Yeah.

I know only knew how to work. I didn't know how to begin to work. And one Russian guy, he was-- he came always from Kolki. He was looking-- he made-- in the beginning to make Russian government, people we were lived in Poland. We didn't know a lot of stuff, what is going on.

Yeah.

And I remember, he begin to teach me. I told him-- people-- I don't know how from what to begin. And he begins to teach me how to work. And I begin to work. And it was not bad. And they had from Kolki what was the higher grade officer, or how it's called. Oh, he tell me, oh, you work very well and good.

And then I came-- it's a meeting. I was the youngest person. It was most of them, the old people, 50, 40. And I came 17 years. They was looking on to me, why does a child come to us. And I was-- in this time I was not very tall. And I was beginning to work. And I was working until begin the war.

Up until 1941.

Until 1941. And it was a big mistake why I didn't-- why the parents, why we didn't leave this place and go to Russia. No, we got-- and when I take the money from the stores, I keep-- they bring all the money to me. And I put them in the bank, to Manevychi. I went to take. When it begin the war, I got money. I got the government's money.

Then they come to me at night time, the Ukraine people--

To get the money.

The money. I take-- over night left, I take the money with me. And we got-- it was more-- it was possible to have money. It's government's money. No, I can-- it's a war, I can. Then we didn't left. We stayed. And maybe in a couple days, they come to me at night time, the Ukraine people, and say give the money. And give the-- that was only a [NON-ENGLISH]. You have gun or you have-- I didn't a gun. I never got a gun. And they begin to do a lot, a lot of bad things with this. Terrible today have to remind this.

Did your-- you said that you worked for the Russians. Did your parents also work?

Yes. Yes.

What did your mother and father-- what were they doing?

The mother was working at home. Most of them, she--

Housewife.

Yeah, a housewife. We got, in this time, we-- when the Russians came, we got a cow. Then later, you cannot have. In the beginning, we got a cow. She was making the food and the house. And the father was working. He teach young people the [NON-ENGLISH]. How it's called--

It was related to the military. He used to teach Russian, yes.

Yes, Russian.

He taught Russian.

He teach them how--

To the Polish children, yeah.

No, no, not Polish-- the children.

He did, because they didn't know Russian.

Oh, they didn't know Russian.

They didn't know Russian. And the father, he was in the Russian army. And he was a good-- maybe he was an officer. I don't remember. Because he got no-- from Czar's military, he got new crests. [NON-ENGLISH]. That's crosses.

Like a medal or something?

Yes, medals. No, when the Russian came, no to teach the records. And people say we know him. He was a good soldier. And he can teach us. And he know Russian language good.

Yeah.

And he begins to teach. And the government paid him money for this. And that was his living.

Yeah.

And I was working. We was not rich.

No.

Not rich, were not rich, poor, poor.

Yeah.

We didn't got a life like we live now in America.

Mm-hmm, so, your mother, she didn't work outside the house. She worked in the house and that was--

Yes, in the house.

OK. Can you tell me-- you started to tell me and I stopped you. Can you tell me a little bit more about the war starting when the Germans came in 1941? You said when they came into the town. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

When they came in the town, I told you, from the first day, from the first day, after 10 days, when they came in, the father tell, we'll go in the forest for a while. Maybe the first soldiers will go. And we'll go. And then maybe later it will be better to be not in the wrong time in the house.

So, he wanted he wanted to leave for a little bit.

For a little bit--

--let the soldiers leave and then come back?

Yes, and we went in the forest, in Komarowo village in the forest. We got a horse, yes. And we went in the forest.

And the whole family went to the forest?

Yes, all the family. And we came back maybe in a couple of days. They take everything out from our home. And we came, the home, it was empty, everything. And we cannot live in our home. And we live in the home where my mother's sister in the same village. And we stay together with the mother's sister family. Then and maybe-- they used us in village the worst work, but you can think they give the-- they tell us to do this.

We begin. They send us to clean-- it was officers, to clean toilets. We didn't got toilets. That was everything outside. And they keep us to clean what that. You cannot tell-- some was the worst jobs they give to us.

To the Jewish people.

To the Jewish people.

Yeah.

Then in a couple months, they take us to the ghettos. They take us to Kolki ghetto. They arrest the people-- their relatives-- they got relatives in Chartoriysk they took them--

Sent them to there.

--in other ghettos. And they was in Chartoriysk ghetto. And our family and the fireman's family, we was in Kolki ghetto. In ghetto, you want to explain to you Kolki ghetto?

Well, let me ask you a question and then I'll ask you about the ghetto.

Yes.

How many Jewish people were in your town? Do you remember? About approximately?

In what town you mean?

In Komarowo.

In Komarowo. In Komarowo, it was five families. Approximately in each family it was-- it was bigger-- it was six person a family. That's 5, 30-- 30 people, 30, 35 people was in the village, Komarowo. Kolki, it was-- most of them, that was Jewish people. Kolki I think it was 7,000.



How far away is Komarowo from Kolki?

That was 12 kilometers from Komarowo to Kolki. They didn't give us nothing to take with us, only what you can got. They give one-- what word? [NON-ENGLISH] What word? From the horse? A wagon with one horse, what you can put some.

Whatever you can put on the wagon.

Yes, for all of us, one. We go by foot. We walk to Kolki. And then we came to-- no we didn't got. They take us, everything what we got they take in Komarowo. Some things we take to Kolki, some clothes.

Yeah, do you remember what you took, other than clothes and things? Was there much to take?

No, we didn't got because they--

They took everything from the house.

They took everything from the house. It's only what we got with us and that's it. And that's it. Some little food we got, we take this to the ghetto. Because to the ghetto, in Kolki they give-- I don't remember-- one hour, you must to take everything what you want for one hour and come to ghetto.

Oh, they gave you an hour to collect things.

Yes, to come ghetto. It was two blocks in the city. And if you late to come in the ghetto, they will kill you where they will find-- after the time what they give for one hour, if you didn't come they will kill you in this place. Because everybody was trying to come faster in the ghetto.

They give you an hour to go from Komarowo to Kolki?

No, from Komarowo we got more.

OK.

No, I say that it's one hour in city Kolki. They give the time to come to the ghetto. In the ghetto, when we come to Kolki, in ghetto, in one room, was maybe 10 people in one room.

Yeah.

It was very, very no [NON-ENGLISH] But you cannot-- you cannot live in a situation like that. It was very hard.

When did you arrive in Kolki? Do you remember the date?

The date was June. The date's approximately in August-- August month. No, the date, I don't remember the date.

But it was in August?

Yes, approximately it was in August. And we came in ghetto. They gave us to-- when we came from Komarowo they say us to put yellow [NON-ENGLISH]

Patches.

A patch?

Patch, one in front and one in back. And that's when--

With the Mogen David.

No, it's only the-- we got on yellows-- yellow patches with one in front, one. And if German want to try how he kill, he come in ghetto, how many people they kill, nobody care about this. He got the power in ghetto.

So, your family, then, you found a room together?

Yes, we stayed together. I remember only my mother and the father, there was crying all the time. It was looking after me, my sister, how we will be in this one. And a lot of times, they say the older people, no, you young people, you cannot live more. What can happen at every hour.

And we went to work some places. I work in one place. The father was working in another place. They took us to jobs, terrible jobs. No food. And you don't know if you will come back. They take us to job and we don't know if we will come back at home or not.

Do you remember how big the ghetto was?

The ghetto was approximately three, four blocks around, was the ghetto. Maybe. No, this was--

It's not cold? Because I opened a little bit the--

It's OK.

More people than you would-- there was a lot of people. Because they put in one room. They didn't watch bedrooms.

Yeah.

They put in each room, 10, 8, 12 people in one room. It was a lot of people. No, I think this was 7,000 Jewish people in Kolki in ghetto.

Do you remember what your mother was doing? Did they take her to work also?

They take her to work. She was working. They make a Germans farm. It was a farm. And they took her every day to work on the farm.

And she did whatever--

Different--

--yeah, different things.

Different jobs, different. In field and to clean. And different jobs. Every day was another, another job, every day. And nobody paid and nobody gave food. Hungry and the most situation is the morality, it was very, very bad. But you know what, now you work, and then one hour you don't know he will kill you or kill somebody from the family. And it was every day. They killed, they killed, killed, killed. Terrible situation, terrible.

How did your family get food in the ghetto? Did the Germans provide any food?

Any food, what is left from closure. The change comes from the villages, people. For a piece bread-- we give our suit for a piece of bread.

Yeah.

Who got the clothes, it was--

They sold the clothes for food.

Yes, for food. We didn't got-- some people, friendly people, they brought to us a little food. What we got, we changed. Then the Germans, when we was working, they begin to give us 100 gram for a person bread. 100 gram, that's a quarter-- a quarter pound.

Yeah.

This is like two slices.

Small slices. They begin to give us the bread. And that's what we live, hungry, and no clothes.

Yeah.

We stay in ghetto. Over wintertime, the wintertime they take us to hard jobs, that's to put the wood in the forest, and bridges, and to repair-- any jobs, any jobs. They need this. What they don't need, they keep us, what we will die. We was working. It's was very hard. It was a terrible time.

Was the ghetto heavily guarded? Was it walled in?

Yes. No, not with a wall. They got police always, day and time, they were going around and watching what nobody can come in ghetto, nobody can come out from the ghetto. And the people smuggling.

People came in and out.

Came in and out-- no, we were not allowed. Because if they catch somebody with Jewish people, they will kill. And if it's Ukraine, they will make them trouble. And if he brought some food, they can kill him too.

Yeah. Did you know people who were smuggling things in and out?

From the Jewish people?

Or anybody?

No, that's what-- we live together, we know what-- they smuggling. They went to brought something and brought some food. Everybody, he brought is for him. And he didn't brought something, a lot of stuff, food. It's a little, a little. And to keep for day, and for one day, two days. Ukraine people, I remember smuggling people from our village, bring some people to us, food. It's for one day, a piece of bread, or a little potatoes, or something more. No, it's good-- it was in this time good people and bad people. Some people was happy there are Jewish people in ghettos, killing you.

How long did you and your family stay in the ghetto?

A year.

About a year.

About a year.

And now in the next summer, when did-- what happened when-- did they liquidate the ghetto or did they start sending people away?

They make to pogroms. The first pogrom, when they make that was after that-- in August, approximately in this time. In August was the first pogrom. They take us, me and my father, they took-- and more, maybe 40 people or 50, I don't remember how much. And they closed us one night-- they took us in the evening and put us in a warehouse and locked up. We didn't know what-- we was thinking was they would kill us. And we stay all the night in the warehouse.

In the morning, they open up us. And take us. That was maybe-- they opened us maybe by 12:00 in day time and take us to the ghetto. When we came to the ghetto, we see that nobody's in ghetto, no people. And they kill all of the people. They put us in trucks. And they take them out from the city.

When we came the first night, I and my father, we come to the house where we was living. We came. It was a big building. We came in the apartment, in the room, nobody. We begin to cry. I cannot express to you how the situation. And I came-- I will never forget what this-- how I came in the basement.

[CRYING]

I am sorry.

It's OK.

Just-- you know what, if you don't talk about this, it's--

Just--

Just-- thank you. If you don't talk, a person believes life has come on every day. And if you begin to remind mind with this, the time, it will be never forgotten, never. And the moments, there are moments for any person, for any, if it's a hard time, you can-- the time was when I explained to you, I came at home with my father.

Father would begin to cry. I began to cry. And called mother, mother. Nobody answered. We understand. What they brought us and they tell us, the Germans with the police, they told us to take all the stuff, what is in the apartments, in the houses. And we begin to do this. A lot of people we saw what was killed in the apartments and outside. And they tell us to take the people, what they shot--

The bodies, yeah.

The bodies, we take them in the wagons. And they take-- somebody take them to this place where they kill. It was outside. And they stay-- the Germans, the police, say what we doing. We cannot-- they say faster, faster, faster. We was-- everything what it was, they take everything. And from some things, what it will be, take it. And don't leave nothing. In boxes or in the wagons put them.

And we do that job. And it's left. I told you, that's 50 or 60, I don't know exactly how many persons. Then they tell us, now you can live in these buildings. We will not touch you. It's left, all people. They killed some in the families, children, or they killed their parents, the children left, or the husband they killed, the wife left. It was not-- any family, what came, all the family alive.

And we begin to stay in this place again. And he was working the same-- in the farmer, the German farm. They take not only to the farms. The Germans, they take us to clean out where their horses stay, to clean the toilets--

The stables.

--also, this, yes. In one time, a lot of-- it not was a lot of people, but they left-- from Germany, when they left from Poland, they came to Russia. And now there was a lot of people. A couple people lived in this city where it was the ghetto. One night came, the guy telling me, you know what, the Germans came. He was a good jeweler, but he make jewelry. And he take-- he meaning the German take all this stuff. And he tell me maybe something can happen today, or tomorrow, or after tomorrow. It was why he came in to take this.

Large ditches.

Large ditches, very large ditches.

Or trenches or something like that.

Yes. And they bring the people, take off the clothes from them, and they shot them, shot. And we stay, maybe after that, when after the first pogrom, what they said, you will live. And you need to work. And we was working. And it passed maybe three weeks, maybe 20 days, I don't exactly know. It's a short time. And people come, people come back from the forest.

Because in the forest it was very hard because the Ukraine was killing in the places. And they come back in the ghetto. And come again a couple hundred people. And one day, I and the father, we work in the farm. And we didn't go to sleep in the ghetto after this, what the guy say, what the German take from him, all the stuff, the gold stuff, what he need to work and that.

And we were sleeping in the farm. One night we stay with the father in the farm. And we hear in morning it's quiet. Everything is-- nothing happened in the farm. And it was straw, yes-- straw, hay, we sleep in this place. And I get up. And I said to father, get up. And we come.

It was there in the barn, you have--

A loft.

Uh-huh, in the top. And we begin to come out. We see and nobody. Is quiet. And we come only to see down somebody, and the Germans, the police, they come very quiet. They was knowing what somebody is inside. When they see us, "verfluchte Jude, los!" That's in German. And we, with the father, we come down, from the ladder, come down. And there is a German, one or two, I don't remember.

The begin to-- they beat us, they beat me, with the father. The father begin to talk to them in German. They didn't want to talk at all. And I see he beat the father and beat me. In a couple of minutes, he became to keep a lot, a lot of people. But they didn't go, a lot of people-- when they left, they didn't go to ghetto too.

Then they take us-- again, brought to the ghetto again. When we come to the ghetto, we see this trucks, and police, a lot of police, and Germans. The Germans was in forms. It was what kind of soldier, I don't know. It was in black forms.

SS.

In black. A color like that, that was the SS. The SS and green colors, uniforms. And we see what they stay around the ghetto. They took us in the ghetto. And we stay in the house. How many people they can put in one room or two rooms in the buildings, they put us.

Then, maybe by 1:00 or 2:00 at daytime comes the first truck to the door where they can take the people. And they make like a corridor. They stayed, the Germans, the police, with--

Clubs?

No, like the police have--

A truncheon or something.

And they begin to beat us. They take from the house into the corridor.

And you had to run through.

Run to the truck. Because the truck is open, you need to run. In house, I told you what it was, what there, the guy, what he told us, and he was a couple more. What they say we have a gun. Then we'll go with the young people, we'll go in the truck. Maybe we can save our lives. He said, I will begin to shoot and everybody will help me.

I come to my father and tell him, let me-- we will go together. That's when he was inside in the house. Maybe we'll have a chance to run away. He told me, you know, son, I don't want to go. I don't want to see your death. And you will not see mine.

And I went. I and a couple people more, we come ourselves to the door. They hit us. And we come on the truck. They put us in the truck. If you sit, you're straight up, your feet straight, and on your feet sit another person. I got the chance to sit-- it was my-- in the back truck in the corner.

They put us and I see what they sat maybe five policemen inside and a couple Germans in the inside, in the truck. And they take us outside the city. Outside, we see that the guy, what he has, the gun. He begin-- he take to shot. It didn't work, the gun. And they kill him straight. When they kill him, I was sitting in left side. And I jumped from the truck on the floor.

I hit my face. It was blood. And I begin to run, run from the truck. It was different people. It was people what they-- just got a sympathy to the Jewish people. They didn't want to do for them like that. It was a different people too, it was a difference what they said one.

And they begin to say [NON-ENGLISH]. That's mean one Jewish guy, he's running. The policeman run away. I was jumped to [NON-ENGLISH]-- two fences.

Fences.

Fences. Now when somebody to jump this fence, tell you can kill me, I will not jump. And this time it was so-- and then you saw what to life, to be in life. And he began to shot after me. He shot me two, three times. And he didn't shot me. And I come in a barn-- a barn. It was a pig. And I jumped where the pig-- I know what somebody is running after me.

And I see what to do. In Poland or in Russia, it was where the pigs, it was a small barn. Then you can go up. In stays straw or something more, hay. And I jumped. It's only when you're young, when you're physically fast what you can do that. That's seconds, second.

Because and I jumped in the barn. And I come in the-- it was straw. And I come in the corner. And I put on me straw. And it take maybe not more-- maybe two minutes, three minutes, maybe not more. And I hear what it's open, the barn is open. And the policemen-- how many it was, I don't know, the policemen and the German. As they said here jumped-- a Jewish guy jumped inside.

Then I hear this. I think that's it.

Yeah.

When I jumped from the truck, my face was all in blood. I hit my nose. I don't know. I was thinking what he shot me. And I am wounded. And I stayed. And I hear when the policeman comes up. And begin to look for me. And I was lucky, from God or how I can I say. I was in the corner and he take from the middle a couple, the straw. You know what it's called.

The bales.

I don't know how it's called, a bale. And he take them one side, then the other side. Believe me, I didn't know how I was not in life and not dead, I don't know. And I see what he say, [NON-ENGLISH] in Ukraine. He's not here. And he

comes down. And they left. And I stay in this.

And then I hear the trucks, the wagons, what they think these Jewish people in. And it was the place where they shot. It was not far away, what I hear all the guns, was working, shot and shot all the time. Then the children, women, they take them to walk-- walk [NON-ENGLISH].

A circle.

A circle with soldiers. And how long-- and it was-- the barn was on the-- on the way that they put to the place. How long I will live, I will never forget the voices, the crying, the children, women, the men. I will never forget. What I can do, I cannot do and help them. I cannot, nothing to do to help.

And I was staying in this barn. In a couple hours, it stopped. They stopped the shootings. They finished the job. Stopped the shooting. Then the owner, his wife, I think, or who this was, because it was a lady too, they come in the barn and they said, the policemen, the Germans, they killed-- they killed a couple more people and their bodies stay on the way. And they told to take them and to bring in the place where they killed them.

The owner from--

He buried them.

No--

Buried them.

Yes. The owner take the horse and take them, and a couple times, went up, took a while, maybe a half hour, 40 minutes, or hour. I don't know how long it was. He come back. And he begin to explain to the wife-- I think this was a wife-- what he saw, terrible he said. They shot them. They take off their clothes. It's terrible to stay to see them, what they're doing. And he couldn't come.

Then I begin to think what I can do. I stayed that. I need to wait. When it will be the night come, then where to go, I don't know. If I will go back to the cities, they will kill me. Then I decided I will go in my village where I was born, where I know the people and somebody maybe will help me out.

And I come out at night time. To come out at night, begin to open the door. The owner, he locked the door from outside. I cannot come out. Then I find [NON-ENGLISH] that's what-- it's--

A pitchfork.

Pitch?

Pitchfork.

Pitchfork.

Yeah, it looks like a fork.

Pitchfork. I find, I think somebody leave it, happened with me. I will be dead anyway.

Yeah.

How to go-- I take-- I went back up where I was. And it was-- they cover with straw. In the villages, they put straw. And I make a hole in the-- in the-- no, it's not the roof.

The roof.

No, down the roof. And I come down. And you know what, you do with that, the work, and you have so afraid. And I see, stay in my mind what Germans what the police, what did. And then I come out. I left across the way. And its maybe, to the forest, was maybe half kilometer or what, approximately this. And I begin to run to the forest.

In the time what I was running, maybe 1,000 times I was falling, falling, and then come back and run. When I came to the forest, I came to the forest, it was easier. In the forest, nobody shot after me. And I came. And I was very tired. You know, when you're in fear, in fear, already very-- become--

Stronger.

Not strong.

Very weak.

Very weak. Very weak. And I came in forest And I sit on the floor, on the ground. And believe me, my hair on my head comes like get up from fear.

Yeah.

I didn't know what to do. I decided let me go to-- I can watch the way. If I will go anywhere, I can lost in the forest. As I was watching the way, and I will go not with the way, with the highway, what is going to my forest. I will go around. I will go-- it's the River Styr. I will go by the River Styr. And then I will come to the nearest I know, the places I was knowing very well.

And I begin to run, run. And I know what I need-- until the day will come, I need to be in another forest in my village. Because if they will catch me in this place, I don't know the people, I don't know to whom to come. In the daytime, they will see, they will kill me.

At nighttime I came to the village, to Kulykovychi. And it was something wrong, what I didn't mean to do. I came the first house, nighttime. And I have my how it's called-- what you--

The pitchfork.

The pitchfork. I can't remember it. And I knock on the door at nighttime. A lady answered. What you want. I say, take me over the river.

Across.

Across the river, take me on the other side. She got afraid too, more than I am. I stayed in-- I feel afraid. And she got afraid too. Who knows who is. And she said, you know what, I have small children. I am afraid. I will not go. I say to her nothing. And I run away to the other one. And the other house, it's happened the same, nobody want to go in the night time out. And I don't know to whom I can come.

In one house they say-- they tell-- the husband tell me, open my-- he didn't come out. He said only, open my [NON-ENGLISH]. That's--

Barn.

No, a place where he has--

Keeps his boat.



No, the boat is in the river.

And the boat slats.

Oh, the oars.

Yes. And that's how it's called--

The oar.

What you--

What you paddle with.

Yeah.

It's called an oar, yeah.

Open, and you will take-- stay in the river, my boat. I opened this door. And I am afraid. Who knows who will come. No, I didn't find nothing. What I was thinking, I got my--

The oar.

The oar. I will think I will take some clothes and put them to fast there because the river is going very fast, the water. So it will take me very far away. I came to the river. All boats is locked, locked, locked. I cannot have. I see what the time is passing. I begin to walk in one to open that. As I take off, I cannot break the chain. I cannot. As I take off this piece of wood, what they put in the ground, the ground to keep the outside. And I take off the piece of wood from the ground. And I take from my clothes something, put in my-- to make--

An oar.

An oar. And I take-- I come to the other side river. And I begin to run. And I got to the forest, maybe to come, maybe three kilometers to run. And I begin to run. And I see it's begin-- because from Kolki to this village, it's 10 kilometers. And I run.

When I came, I came the first house with some men, what I know, the people that's in the same village, Komarowo. I came to him in morning. It begin. And he opened for me the door. And I came in. And he was very-- knew-- how it's called-- wondered from where I came. He knows what in the ghetto.

He was surprised to see you.

Surprised to see you. I told him what is happening with me. He say, I cannot keep you in my house because if somebody will find you, they'll kill me, they will kill you. He said, a guy what he left from the first pogrom, he's in the forest. That's what I show you in the picture. That's fireman. Now where he is, I don't know. He tell me approximately in this place he must be.

And you should go and find him.

Yes, the places in the forest I know very well. The people in the area, I know. And I went from here, maybe, in the forest, I was maybe by myself, very weak. You cannot eat. You cannot sleep. And you cannot-- everything that what happened, it's in your mind. And it's-- it's there when you don't what to be in future with you.

One day in forest, it was a nice day. And I was walking in forest. And they see somebody. Somebody is walking the forest. I got afraid to go. It's instinctive-- instinct. Like said to me, go. And I see he goes in front of me. And I go to him.

And while I recognized him and he recognized me. And that was this fireman.

He left from the first pogrom. He told me how he escaped from the pogrom the first. And I told him how I escaped. He escaped when they take them to kill. He escaped-- he come to the water and jumped in the water. And he was a good swimmer. And he comes the other side. And it was woods. And they didn't find him. At nighttime, he came to Komarowo, too. And we begin, two of us.

He cried, I cried. Know what to do. You cannot do nothing, no. And we begin, with him, together, to stay in forest. No clothes, no food. When it was in--

Let me stop you for one second.

OK.

OK, go ahead. Now this is your aunt, right?

Yes, that's my mother--

Rifka Perlmutter.

Yes, that's my mother's sister. She was the older, our older sister. The name is Rifka Perlmutter. They was living in Sarna. Last time, when the Germans came, it was Sarna, in ghetto. She was living with her husband, Abel Perlmutter. He was-- he makes-- he put glass in the windows. How it's called?

He didn't make the glass, but he installed it.

He installed the glass in the windows. And he got a horse and a wagon. He was getting in the villages. For all the week, he was left. On Monday he came. And Thursday, back at home for--

So, he traveled each village.

He travelled to each village and put glass. And he brought some jobs. At home, I remember I was a child, and I was studying in school. And I was helping to put the glass. Because he was working in the villages. And then what he brought at home, and he was working at home.

Then, the next week, he took this, finished up. And take them again to the--

To a different place.

--difference places to the people where he takes me.

Do you-- now Rifka was born in Komarowo.

No, Rifka, she was born in Liubytivs'ka. The name, I remember Liubytivs'ka. I don't know how it's called now. In this time, they called this Liubytivs'ka.

OK. Do you remember about how old she was when the war started? Or how much older than your mother she was?

She was older, maybe-- maybe 10 years older from my mother. Because between they got more sisters. I think approximately 10 years older.

Do you know where Abel was born?

I think in Zelipk. In Zelipk, it was

Can you spell that for me. I think it begins Z-E-L-I-K, it's- Zelipk. Put a P between-- before the K, a P-- Zelipk.

And do you remember how old he was?

Maybe he was maybe a year older than Rifka. He was approximately the same age. He was very religion man, very religion. That's--

He went to synagogue every day?

Every-- except in the week when he's in the villages, he not. When he came, the first day when he came for Friday, Saturday, he was coming sometimes. For Friday morning, or Tuesday, in evening, before when he came, he run straight to the synagogue. Straight, that was the first. He was very religious.

And he make me too. In this time, I was really even-- he didn't give me to make my homework, go in synagogue, go in synagogue.

Yeah, was Sarna a large town?

Yes.

Did it have a lot of Jewish people?

A lot. Sarna got maybe-- maybe three times more than Kolki. Sarna got maybe 20,000-- 18,000 Jewish people. It's a big city.

And they had two children. Do you remember how old they were?

The one son that's-- the oldest children, they went to Canada. They went to Brazil. I don't know in what time they left.

Do you know how many other children they had besides these-- besides Shimon and--

No, in this time, when the Germans came to Russia. It was only when I was, and the family were to leave, it was Shimon and Dvora. Nobody more. The rest children was in Brazil-- Brazil and Canada.

Can you--

OK, so the older children went to Brazil and Canada?

Yes.

And the only two who stayed were Shimon--

Shimon and Dvora.

Dvora, OK.

Yes.

Do you remember about how old Shimon and Dvora were?

Shimon, it was older from me, approximately 10, 12 years.

Oh, so they're not young.

No. he was grown. And Dvora was older from me, maybe eight years, nine years.

And they were both born in Sarna.

In Sarna, yes, the children was born in Sarna.

Let's me see. What did Shimon do? What was his job?

They helped all the fathers. He was working. Because he brought jobs at home. And he lives at home the week. And Shimon and Dvora, I was a child, a student, whatever. When I got the spare time, I was working.

You helped also?

I helped also to put the glass in the windows.

Mm-hmm.

Did Shimon, he to school in Sarna.

When I was-- he finished the school.

He'd already finished. But he went in Sarna, though?

Yes, in Sarna. He finished what the-- Dvora, she finished the school too in Sarna.

Did they go to public school or to a Jewish school?

No public, Polish. Polish public school.

And that's what you attended, right? You attended a public school?

No, I attended-- I finished the Jewish school. The name was Tarbut. It was Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish. And its called Tarbut school.

Now, so even after he got out of school and got older, Shimon, he was still helping his father with the job.

Yes.

Was he going to-- was he eventually going to take over the business? Is that was what was going to happen at some point in the future?

I don't know if it will be like this, he will take it.

But maybe.

Maybe, it can be maybe. Because he was-- the father was another kind people and he was another kind.

Yeah, they were different.

He got more [NON-ENGLISH].

Education.

Education. The father he got very low education. He was a very religious man. And he was working to make his living for the family. No, I don't know what it-- when he's in life, what he-- what will be happen.

OK. What happened-- now, you left Sarna in 1938. You stopped going to school there.

Yes, 1938, I finished the school. And I went to my village, Komarowo.

Did you see-- did you see the family after that, after 1938, before the war started? Or no?

No.

OK.

No. We got only letters. We was writing. No, we didn't see them.

Now Sarna, you said, is about 100 kilometers or so away from Komarowo.

From Komarowo.

And was it to the East to the West?

To the East.

So it was closer to Russia.

Closer to Russia, yes?

So they-- when the Germans came in to Poland, they were on the side that the Soviet Union took.

Right. Yes.

Do you remember what happened? Or did you hear about what happened to them when the Russians came in to Poland?

When the Russians came, they was working.

Did they seize his little business?

Somebody telling me in that time what the father and the mother was, and the daughter was. He was run away from the Russian. I don't know the--

Shimon did this.

Shimon, yes. He didn't want-- and he left to Litva or Latvia. I don't know why. I didn't understand what the problem was. No, he left. He left.

And he went to one of the Baltic states, Latvia or Lithuania?

To the Baltic states. No, I don't know what has happened. For them, I know what. They was in ghetto.

The rest, the other three, Dvora, Abel and Rifka were in the ghetto in Sarna.

Yes, in Sarna.

But that was-- but that was after the Germans came.

Yes.

Yeah.

Now in what ghetto he was, I don't know.

And you never--

Sarna was a big ghetto.

A big ghetto, Sarna.

And you never heard any more about Shimon after that.

No, no.

OK.

Sarna is very close to this city in Russia, where I was born.

Oh, yeah?

But I was in Russia born. This is on the border with Russia, Sarna.

Close to Poland, yeah. It's close to the border.

To border, Russian border.

The city where I was born.

OK, so he ran. As soon as the Russians came, he ran away.

Yes.

But they stayed.

They stayed.

They stayed. Do you know if the Russians seized Abel's business? Or if he-- his window, the glass window making, did they stop him from doing that? Or did he continue to do that?

No, I think they stopped him. Because it was in Russia, you cannot have your own business. It was what-- it was very, very small business. He was working by his self. He didn't got people what somebody worked for him.

Yeah, he didn't have any employees.

No, no employees. Only family. His family and that's all. No, I think they stopped him to do this. Because in Russia you cannot do this. No, we didn't see them in the time from Brazil. I remember only it was letters. But they're healthy and everything is OK.

Yeah.

And the mother and father was written letters to them.

Do you know when the Germans came in, do you know when they reached Sarna in 1941, when they invaded the Soviet Union?

They reached Sarna later than-- they reached first our. Because we was more closer to German, to Bug, where the Germans came. No, maybe it take a week more, when they came to Sarna. They was going fast, the Germans, very fast. Russian soldiers, run away, run away.

Yeah, now the German set up a ghetto in Sarna.

Yes.

Just one ghetto or was there more than one ghetto? Do you know?

I don't know how many. No, I think in the big cities, they was doing the same, one ghetto. The make only bigger the size from the ghetto. If in when we got, for example, four blocks, to put in Sarna, they need may be 10 blocks--

10 or 12 blocks, yeah.

12 blocks.

And Rifka, Abel and Dvora were all put in the ghetto.

Yes. That's was in ghetto I'm sure.

Do you know how long they stayed in the ghetto and what they may have been doing there?

No, I don't know what. The ghetto, everywhere it was the same, everywhere. The same, it was take them to work. No food. The principal, the same all the ghettos.

A lot of them, they came to us, Russia. And they stayed us. We left our place. We didn't stay.

No, that was not in the time ghetto. From ghetto, they didn't go to Russia.

I say a lot of Sarna--

Oh, no, this was before.

They ran before the Germans came.

Before the Germans, yeah.

Yes, people, they run away.

Oh, no. In the ghetto they stayed.

Now do you know what happened to the three of them?

They was killed in ghetto.

They were killed when the ghetto was liquidated?

Yes.

OK. And you didn't hear anything after they were in the ghetto? You didn't get letters or anything like that?

No, when the Germans, we didn't got any connection.

Were people allowed to send things out of the ghetto? Mail and things like that?

No, no, not any-- nothing. In the ghetto, you cannot do nothing. No letters.

Is the tape on?

Yes.

Oh, OK. I understand.

OK, now this is your cousin, right?

Yes.

Rakhil Menyuk.

Menyuk.

But Freyman is her married name.

Freyman is her married name.

Now was she older than you were?

Older.

Do you remember about how much older?

She was older-- she was older, say about 10 years maybe. I'm sure the 10 years-- that's--

And where was she born?

She was born in Komarowo.

OK.

[NON-ENGLISH] Komarowo.

And how about Borik.

Borik, he was he was older from--

Dvora? This is--

No, no, Borik.

Oh, Borik.

He was older, maybe a couple of years from me, but two years older. And he was born in Bil's'ka Volya. Bil's'ka Volya, that was from Chartoriysk. That's about 10, 12 kilometers from Chartoriysk. They was in ghetto, in Chartoriysk ghetto.



And they was killed in Chartoriysk ghetto. The Germans killed them.

In ghetto's, it was working. Same like in all the ghettos, the same.

Do you know-- now Rakhil, she was born Menyuk. And she was born in Komarowo. And she was born-- she was your sister-- your mother's sister's daughter.

Daughter. Right.

And do you remember the name of her parents?

Yachvid, Yachvid Menyuk. Because her husband was a relative to my father.

OK.

And it was double. The sisters and their husbands was related, the same last name. Yachvid Menyuk and her father Shia Menyuk.

Shia?

Shia. Shia Menyuk.

And that's the mother?

Shia is the father.

That's the father sorry.

The father, Shia Menyuk. And the mother is Yachvid.

OK. I know the names, it's very hard.

Did she-- did Rakhil go to school in Komarowo? Or did she--

I remember she finished the school.

She had already finished. But she didn't go to school.

She went to school. She went to school. In the beginning they got, when we didn't got the schools, all the families, the Jewish families take a teacher and they was teaching the study by the teacher in the village.

I see, OK.

How it's called, I don't-- No, she finished the school. And she studied with us with the teacher.

All right. Now, do you remember when she got married to Borik? Were you a child then?

I'll tell you, just a minute. It was approximately in 1937. I think, approximately, because before the war, was when they got all the papers to leave for Brazil.

Yeah. So they were trying to leave for Brazil.

For Brazil and become the war, 1939, and it stopped them.

Had they gone through-- had they gotten their papers already?

They got their papers.

But they couldn't leave.

They couldn't leave because it became the war. And it stopped everything. And that's all. And it's finished. Everything, it was packed.

They were all packed to leave.

All packed to leave. How do they get their papers? Did they have to go to Warsaw?

They make the papers in the city, Kolk city, they make all the papers. And in this time, you didn't got flights. It's only the port. It was Gdansk. I know where they got the papers to go to Gdansk. That's in Poland. [NON-ENGLISH]-- port, the same? Port?

Mm-hmm, port.

Port, Gdansk. Come begin the war, everything stopped.

Now did-- what did Borik do for a living?

He was in business. He was-- he bought [NON-ENGLISH]. That's--

Cows.

Cows, he bought cows--

Oh, yeah.

--in the villages. And he brought them, it was [NON-ENGLISH].

Bazaar.

Bazaar. And he was selling cows, horses.

So he traded livestock.

Yes.

Yes.

This was his business.

Did they have any children?

No, no children.

No children, OK. Now, I would imagine when the Russians came that they stopped him from trading in livestock. Yes?

Yeah.

What did he start to do after that? Did he work for the Russians?

He worked for them. I don't remember what he was doing.

But he did something for the Russians?

Yes, he was doing something for the-- I don't remember what he was doing for the Russians. Because he left. When the Russians came, he left from Komarowo. He left to Bil's'ka Volya. And he was living in this place near--

He went back to where he was born.

Where he was born.

And Rakhil went with him?

And Rakhil too, yes. And he was in Chartoriysk ghetto. He was not in Kolki, Chartoriysk.

And that's where they were killed?

Yes.

Do you know how long they were there before they liquidated the ghetto?

Same, maybe eight months, nine months, 10 months. Most of them, all the ghettos, they was killed in a time with eight, or nine months, a year. It depend how they was using the people.

Yeah.

Now, do you know anything about Borik's childhood, about when he was younger? Do you know anything about his--