

Interview with Semyon Munyuk
RE: Relatives
July, 1992
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: My mother's name is Mushka. The middle name is Zola. And after she married my father she became the last name Menyuk.

Q: And Zola was her maiden name?

A: Maiden name, yes. She was born approximately 1900 year in village Komarova. That was Poland in this time.

Q: She was born in 1900?

A: Approximately 1900, yes.

Q: Do you remember what month she was born?

A: I don't remember, no.

Q: Did she ever tell you any stories about her childhood in growing up in Komarova?

A: No. She got child time not very well. It was a poor family in a village. She was working hard to make the living. And one time, I know only what she was telling, she and the father, the father was in the war, the Russian and German war. She was by herself at home waiting for the father when he will come. I was born after that when the father came from the war. She had a hard time. It was a big family.

Q: It was your father who was in World War 1?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And he fought on the Russian side?

A: Yes, on the Russian side.

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

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

Q: Maybe a few years before you were born?

A: A few years before I was born, maybe about three. Because she married with the father and he was in the war. Then when he came from the war he was one year, maybe not a full year, he was in Germany, how is it called the

Q: Oh, was he a prisoner of war?

A: Prisoner of war, yes, a war prisoner in Germany. And then after he came I was born, after a year.

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

A: Yes. I remember only the grandfather. When I was study in Sarna and I was living by my aunt, that's my mother's sister's family and one time we went to the uncle want to come to us in the village to Komarova, and he said we will come in a place where my grandfather lives. And I saw him, that's one time I saw him, in a village, We stayed. When I was a child and I thought he was an old, old man and he was sick in this time. We stayed maybe one night and then we came to Komarova to my home with my uncle from Sarna. That's what I remember my grandfather. My grandmother, I don't remember at all.

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

A: He was living in this time, he was living in Lapecica. That's a place close to Rovna, Sarna. What he was doing, I don't remember. I saw him only when he was sick.

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

A: I think he was work in the field, like in a village, own cows.

Q: He was a farmer or something like that.

A: Like a farmer, like this?

Q: Did you mother, did she go to school when she was younger, do you remember? Did she tell you?

A: You know, this time in Poland, we lived, not a lot of people got to have an education. Most of the people didn't get an education. Most of them got 3 grade, 4 grade, that was the highest because begin to work and for me, my parents tried to give me more education. They sent me to _____ to study. Most of them a couple of grades and that's it. People go to work, some cook, Many different business. That's what I think she didn't get a high education. The father got more education than the mother. The father, he began to teach me the Russian language when the Russians came. I didn't know too, Russian. I studied Jewish, Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish. And Russian I didn't know.

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

A: Yes.

Q: You were the oldest. And how many brothers and sisters do you have?

A: I've got one sister.

Q: One sister.

A: Yes. She was younger. The name is Rachel and she is younger from me maybe two years, one year, I don't remember exactly. She was the youngest and I was the older.

Q: When you were growing up, what did your father do for a living and your mother, what was she doing?

A: The father, he was -- we got land, not a lot but a little and we got a cow and we had a horse. Most of them the father was working and mother in own field. Then he managed a little, what is it called? A man, he was living in Barshra and he got a lot of forest and field in Komarova and he managed this place, how is it called?

Q: A landowner?

A: A landowner! And his name was Shelkovski. I remember his name. Shelkovski.

Q: He was from Warsaw?

A: Yes. He was living in Warsaw. And in a couple of months he came to Komarova and see how things were going and he left. He got a lot of land. It was not only in Komarova. It was in Kovakolitch across the river Steir. He got land in one place and in Komarova. My father and mother got a living from that.

Q: You said your parents sent you away to school in Sarna. When did you first go to school there?

A: They sent me to school in Sarna in 1934. And I began in first grade and I finished in Sarna in eighth grade, that's 1938. I came back from Sarna.

Q: When you went to school there, did you stay the whole year? Or did you go for the week and come back for the weekends?

A: No, only the winter vacations and summer vacations, I came home. And that's always I stayed because it is not very, very close. It was from our village to Sarna it was 100-110 kilometers and my parents were not rich people to pay to come from Sarna and go back. And it's not a train, we got a train only just to Shartansy-Shatrisk and then with horses, we went to our village and it takes a long time.

Q: Did your sister also go away to school?

A: No, she was studying the village, in Komarova.

Q: And then you said you came back to Komarova in 1938?

A: Yes.

Q: How many grades did you finish by then?

A: Eight.

Q: You were in the eighth grade?

A: Yes. That was a school, eight grades. And I came home, maybe the parents were not to warn me but the parents were thinking to send me some more to study. It happened in 1939, it comes the war between Poland and Germany. It start and came the Russian and begin the war and stopped my education.

Q: So you started working after you came home?

A: Yes. When I came home from 1938, I was working at home, helped the parents and then when it's 1939, came the Russians. I begin to work for the Russians. We got all government jobs. We didn't have own jobs because the fields, they take away everything. I begin to work and my father begin to work. And in a couple of years, begin the other war. That's 1941.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about, did the Germans ever come to Komarova, in 1939, did they ever make it that far?

A: Yes In approximately 10 days, you mean in 1939?

Q: Yes, in 1939. Did they ever reach Komarova?

A: No, in 1939 it comes not the Germans. Our place, take Russia in 1939.

Q: So you were in the eastern part of Poland?

A: Yes, and that's decide after the book. You know, the border -- the Germans stopped on the border on book and the Russians came and take our place and then we begin to live in Russia in 1939. And we live until 1941 until begin the war between Russia and Germany. That was the war between Poland and Germany.

Q: That was in 1939?

A: 1939. And it's our place, take Russia and it's become Russia in 1939 and didn't leave until 1941. Again the war.

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

A: Do you know, what I remember what my father explained to me, we hear Germany killed a lot of people and people run away from Germany, sometimes the father, the father was talking, he was saying "I can't believe what can happen". He was a war prisoner in a time in German and he was saying how the Germans was very good to Jewish people. There were prisoners and they were good. He say he cannot believe Hitler can change the situation. Because, in this time I think Wilhelm was the president of Germany and this become when Hitler came to the power and he changed. I remember when the war with Russia he told me he say I cannot believe he will kill us for what. The people we live in village, we Jewish people we live good with all the

people because in the village was not a lot of Jewish people. Maybe 5 families, not more, and we didn't know the difference between us and the Ukraine people. Everything was together, most Ukraine people. And we didn't know. The Germans came and making all the bad start.

Q: Did your parents think about trying to get away or move to the east, I guess because your father wasn't that frightened?

A: Yes, we was talking, in this time, I didn't have a nice life experience in this time and the father say, 'no, why we'll go, where we'll go, who knows how we need to leave the home, we need to leave everything, where we will live and it was a big mistake, a big mistake when the father said we will go to Russia'. A lot of people they escaped from Germany. I don't know how it will be when we left; no the father didn't want to leave. He say we stay in our village. He say the Germans say we will work, we work and we will cooperate, for working. No, it was a big difference. Not only to work. They began to kill us. That begins the trouble. A couple, the Germans begin to come to us in 10 days.

Q: That was in 1941?

A: 1941. In ten days the Germans were in our -- I remember, I see them the Germans how they came like it was, the soldiers, a korot --like a rest place, they came. They drink, eat chocolate. No fighting. We feel this time we would have trouble. My father, he speak very well German and he was talking with one older, the young people was very bad. The older Germans was much, much better. One German, I remember the father explained to me, one German told him, you are Jewish, you'll have a lot of trouble, he told him. It was late. The Germans are here, you cannot go anywhere and he told us, the father. Yes, a German soldier told him we will have a lot of trouble and in 10 days after they came, we feel what it was begin to done to us. The helpers was the Russian _____ (can't understand). The people live another nationality in the villages and begins trouble and trouble.

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

A: When Russia came to us, we didn't got no troubles. They came, they begin to work, they didn't say nothing, _____, it was everybody was feeling like the Ukraine people and it was not bad. We begin to work for the government. I was beginning to work. I got no more education than other people. The Ukraine people they want to make me the head of the government business. And they want for me to make me, and I was maybe at this time 16, and I was the head of the stores what was around the villages of Komarova which was 12 or 15 villages and I was the head of stores.

Q: You were the Commissar.

A: No, Commissar is political. No, I didn't know nothing about politics. I know only _____. I didn't know how to begin to work. And one Russian guy, he came always from Polkeny, he was beginning to make Russian government, we lived in Poland and we didn't know a lot of stuff what was going on. And I remember he begin to teach me. I told him, "People, I don't know from what to begin?" And he begin to teach me how to work and I begin to work and it was not bad and the head from the Polke, the higher grade office there, how it's called, and he

tells me “oh you work very well and good” and when I came to a meeting, I was the youngest person, most of them were 50 and 40 and I came, 17 years, and he was looking to me what is a child come to us. And I was not this time very tall. I was beginning to work and I was working until begin the war, 1941. And it was a big mistake why the parents didn't left this place and go to Russia. When I take the money from the stores, they bring all the money to me and I put them in the bank to Menibish. When it begins the war, I got money, I got the government's money. Then they come to me at nighttime, the Ukrainian people to take the money. When overnight left, it was possible to have money, it was government's money. We didn't left, we stayed. Maybe in a couple of days, they come to me at nighttime, the Ukraine people and say give the money and you have gun. I didn't need a gun, I never got a gun. And they begin to do a lot, a lot of bad things, it's terrible today if to remind us.

Q: You said you worked for the Russians. Did your parents also work?

A: Yes.

Q: What did your mother and father, what were they doing?

A: The mother was working -- when the Russians came we got a cow, not later we cannot have, but in the beginning we got a cow and she made food and in the house and the father was working. He teach young people, the presignico how it's called, Russian.

Q: He taught Russian to the Polish children?

A: No, no, not Polish children. They speak no Russian. And the father, he was in the Russian army and he was an officer, I don't remember, from the Czar's army, he got crosses.

Q: Like a medal or something?

A: Yes, medals. When the Russians came, no one to teach the records and people see what, we know him and he was a good soldier and he knows Russian language good and he begin to teach the government and he take money for this. That was his living and I was working. We was not rich. Not rich, poor. We didn't got a life like we live now in America.

.Q: So your mother, she didn't work outside the house. She worked in the house and that was

A: Yes, in the house.

Q: 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 more about that?

A: When they came in the town I told you, the first day after 10 days when they first came, the father told we will go in the forest for a while, maybe the first soldiers will go and then maybe later will be better to be not in the wrong time in the house.

Q: So he wanted to leave for a little bit, let the soldiers leave and then come back?

A: For a little bit. We went to the forest in Komarova village in the forest. We got a horse. Yes,

we went to the forest.

Q: The whole family went to the forest?

A: Yes, the whole family. And we came back in a couple days. They take out everything from our home and we came, the home it was empty. Everything. We cannot live in our home and we live in the home of my mother's sister in the same village and we stay together with my mother's sister's family and they begin to use us in village. The worst work. You can think they tell us to do this. We begin, they send us to clean offices, to clean toilets. We don't got toilets, everything is outside and they keep us to clean. You cannot tell, the worst jobs they give to us.

Q: To the Jewish people?

A: To the Jewish people, Then in a couple months, they take us to the ghetto. They take us to Kolke ghetto. And the rest of people, we got relatives in Shatrisk, they took them to other ghettos and they was in Shatriska ghetto and our family, in Fireman's family we was in Kolke ghetto and in ghetto, you want me to explain in ghetto?

Q: Well, let me ask you a question and then I'll ask you about the ghetto. How many Jewish people were in your town, do you remember, about approximately?

A: What town do you mean?

Q: In Komarova.

A: In Komarova it was 5 families. Approximately in each family, it was 6 persons in the family. It was 30, 35 people were in the village of Komarova. In Kolke, it was mostly Jewish people. Kolke I think was 7,000.

Q: How far away was Kolke from Komarova?

A: That was 12 kilometers from Komarova to Kolke. They didn't give us nothing to take with us only what you can get in a wagon with one horse.

Q: Whatever you can put on a wagon?

A: Yes, for all of us. We go by foot, we walk to Kolke. They take everything we got in Komarova. Some things we take to Kolke. We take some clothes.

Q: Do you remember what you took other than clothes and things? Was there much to take?

A: No, we didn't got because they take everything from the house and it is only what we got on us and that's it. Some a little food we got, we take this to the ghetto because to the ghetto in Kolke, they give in one hour and must take everything you want in one hour and come to ghetto.

Q: Oh, they gave you an hour to collect things.

A: Yes, to come to ghetto, it was no two blocks in the city and if you late to come in the ghetto, they will kill you after the time they give one hour to come in this place. Everybody was trying to come faster in the ghetto.

Q: They gave you an hour from Komarova to Kolke?

A: No, from Komarova we got more. I say it is one hour in city Kolke the time to come to the ghetto. No, when we come to Kolke in ghetto, one room it was maybe ten people in one room. It was very, very -- no children but you cannot live in a situation like that. It was very hard.

Q: When did you arrive in Kolke? Do you remember the date?

A: That's approximately in August, I don't remember the date, when we came in ghetto, when we came from Komazaras they gave us yellow patch, one in front and one in back. We got only yellow, yellow patches, one in front and if Germans want to try how he killed in ghetto, how many they killed in, nobody cared about this they have the power in ghetto.

Q: So your family, you found a room together?

A: They stayed together. I remember, only, my mother and my father they were crying all the time. They looked at me and my sister, how we will be. A lot of time they say, we older people, you young people you cannot live more, what can happen at every hour. We went to work, someplace. I work at one place, the father worked at another place. They took us to terrible jobs, terrible jobs. No food. You don't know if you'll come back. They take us to job and you don't know if you'll come back or not.

Q: Do you remember how big the ghetto was?

A: The ghetto was approx 3-4 blocks around, was the ghetto. That was a lot of people because they put in one room. They didn't watch bedrooms. They put in each room ten, eight, twelve people in one room, which was a lot of people. I think it was 7,000 Jewish people.

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

A: They take her to work. She was working in a, it was a German farm. They took her to work every day to work in the farm. Different jobs. In the field, to clean, different jobs. Every day was another job, every day. And nobody paid and nobody give food. Hungry. In most situations, the morality was very, very bad. You know now you work and in one hour you don't know if he will kill you or he will kill somebody in the family. And it was every day, thy killed, killed. Terrible, terrible situation, terrible.

Q: How did your family get food in the ghetto, did the Germans provide any food?

A: Any food. What is left from _____ comes from the villages, people, for a piece of bread we give a suit for a piece of bread. Who got the clothes, sold the clothes for food, we didn't got. Some people, friendly people brought to us a little food. What we got, we changed. Then the Germans when we was working, they began to give us 100 grams for a person, bread. 100 grams, that's a quarter pound. Two small slices. They begin to give us the bread. And that's what we lived. Hungry and no clothes. We were staying in ghetto over wintertime.

Wintertime they take us to hard jobs. That's to woods in forest, in bridges to repair. Any jobs they need, they don't need. They keep us till we die. We were working. It was very hard that time.

Q: Was the ghetto heavily guarded? Was it walled in?

A: No, it was not wall. They got police always, day and time and they were going around watching and nobody can come in ghetto and nobody can come out in ghetto. People smuggling. People came in and out. Were not allowed. And if they catch somebody, Jewish people they will kill. And if it's Ukraine, they will make them trouble and if he brought some food in, they will kill him too.

Q: Did you know people who were smuggling things in and out?

A: From the Jewish people?

Q: Or anybody?

A: No, that's we live together, we know what there smuggling, they went to brought something, they brought some food. Everybody brought for him. If he didn't brought something, a lot of food, a little, a little, to keep for one day, two days. Ukraine people, remember smuggling from our village bringing some people to us food. For one day a piece of bread or little potatoes or something more. No, good. It was good people and bad people. Some people were happy, uh huh, Jewish people in ghettos will kill you.

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

A: A year, about a year.

Q: Now, the next summer, did they liquidate the ghetto or did they take people away?

A: They make two pogroms. The first pogrom they make it was approximately in August they make the first pogrom, they take us, me and my father and they took maybe 40 people, maybe 50, I don't remember how much and they called us one night. They took us in evening and put us in warehouse in Lactop. We didn't know what. We were thinking that they would kill us. We stay all the night in the warehouse. In the morning they open up us and take us (they open us maybe 12:00 daytime) to the ghetto. When we came to the ghetto we see nobody's in the ghetto, no people. They kill all of the people and they put them in trucks and they take them out from the city. When I and father came to the house where we were living, it was a big building, we came in the apartment in the room. Nobody begin to cry. I can't express to you the situation. I will never forget, I came in the basement. You don't know what it is. If you don't talk about it. If you don't talk, a person deals with life what comes on every day and if you begin to remind the time, it is ever forgotten, never. There are moments for any person, it's a hard time. You can when_____. I came home with father, father would begin to cry and I would begin to cry and call mother, mother and nobody answered. Now we understand what they brought us and they told us to take all the stuff what's in the apartments and 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 they shot, the bodies, we take them in the wagons and somebody takes them to this place where they kill. It was outside. They stay -- the Germans

and the police, they say what are we doing, faster, faster, faster. Everything, but we take everything. Don't leave nothing. Boxes, in the wagons, put them. We do that job and it's left 50 or 60 persons, I don't know exactly how many persons, they tell us, now you can live in these buildings. We do not touch you. It's left old people. They killed some in the family's children or they killed the parents, the children left or the husband they killed, the wife left. It was not any family that came but was all the family in life. We began to stay in this place again and we were working the same in the German farm. They take us to the farm, they take us to clean up where the horses stay. Clean the toilets. In one time it not was a lot of people but they left from Germany, they left from Poland, they came to Russia and now was a lot of left, a couple people left in this city where it was the ghetto. One night came a guy and tell me "you know what, when the Germans came he was a good jeweler and he take in the evening the German take all the stuff and maybe something can happen today or tomorrow, after tomorrow. It was why he came to take this.

(END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1)

We stay maybe after that's enough from the first pogrom where they said you will leave and you need to work. We were working and it's best maybe at three weeks, maybe 20 days, I don't know exactly know -- a short time. People come was people come back from the forest because in the forest it was very hard because the Ukraine was killing in the places. They come back in the ghetto and come again a couple hundred people. One day, I with the father, we work in the farm and we didn't go to sleep in the ghetto after that what the guy say what the German take from him all the gold stuff what he need to work around that. We was sleeping in the farm. One night we stayed with the father in the farm and we hear in morning, it is quiet, everything is -- nothing happen in the farm. It was straw, hay, we sleep in this place. I get up and I see the father get up and we come. It was in the barn a loft high in the top and we begin to come out. We seen nobody -- is quiet. We come only to see down somebody. The Germans with the police, they come very quiet. They were knowing what somebody's inside. When they see us, _____ that's in German. We, with the father, we come down from the ladder, come down and see a German one or two, I don't remember. They begin to beat us. They beat me, beat the father. The father begin to talk to them in German, they didn't want to talk at all. I see he beat the father and beat me and a couple of minutes it begin to keep a lot of people but they didn't go. They left but they didn't go to the ghetto too. Then they take us again brought to the ghetto. We come to the ghetto we see this -p- stay trucks and police, a lot of police and Germans. Germans was in forms was what kind of soldier I don't know, was in black forms. A color like that, that was the SS. The SS and green colors uniforms. 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 one o'clock or two o'clock daytime, comes the first truck to the door where they can take people. They make like a corridor, they stay the Germans, the police with like ---.

Q: Clubs or truncheons?

A: Like the police carry. Uh-huh. They begin to beat us, they take from the house into the corridor and we had to run to the truck because the truck is open, you need to run. In house, I told you what it was, was there's a guy what told us he was a couple more. They say we have a gun. We'll go, the young people, we'll go form in the truck. Maybe we can save our life. He said I will begin to shoot and everybody will help me or --. I come to my father and tell him, you know let me, we'll go together. That's when we were inside the house, maybe we'll have a chance to run away. He told me, no, son, I don't want to go. I don't want to see your death and you will not see mine. I went and a couple people more, we come ourselves to the door. They

hit us and we come on the truck. They put us on the truck. If you sit, you straight up your feet straight and on your feet sit another person. I got the chance to sit, it was my back -- in the back truck in the corner. _____ they put us and we see, I see what they said maybe five policemen inside and a couple Germans in the inside in the truck. They take us outside the city. Outside the city the guy what he said he has the gun, he begin -- he take two shot, he didn't work the gun and they killed him straight. When they killed him, I was sitting in left side and I jumped from the truck on the floor. I know I hit my face, it was blood and I begin to run, run from the truck. You know what was difference people, it was people what they got a sympathy to the Jewish people. They didn't want to do for them like that. No, it was a difference people too, was a difference with this one and they begin to say one Zhid _____. That means a Jewish guy, he's running. The policeman run away, I was jumped to two fences. Now when somebody tells me to jump this fence, tell me you can kill me, I will not jump. This time it was so, was so to life to be like that. Hr begin to shot after me. He shot me two, three times. He didn't shot me and I come in a barn. It was a pig and I jumped where the pig -- I know what somebody's running after me. I see what to do. In Poland or in Russia, it was a small barn. Then you can go up, it stays straw or something more _____ and I jumped. It's only when you're young, when you're physically fast what you can do then. That's seconds, seconds because when I jumped in the barn and I come, it was straw. I come in the corner and I put on me, straw. It takes maybe not more, maybe two minutes, three minutes maybe, not more. 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. They said here jumped, a Jewish guy jumped inside. When I hear this, I think that's it. 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. I stay and I hear when the policeman comes up and begin to look for me. I was lucky from G-d or how can I say. I was in the corner and he take from the middle a couple the straw ----.

Q: Bales?

A: I don't know how it's called -- bales. He take from one side and the other side,. Believe me I didn't know how I was not in life and not dead. I don't know. I see what he say _____ in Ukraine, he's not here. He comes down and they left. I stay in this. Then I hear trucks where they went where they take these Jewish people in. The place was a shop, it was not far away but I heard of the guns was working, shot and shot all the time. Then the children, women, they take them to walk. Walk a circle with soldiers. How long, the barn was on the way that they put to the place. How long will I live, I will never forget the voices, the crying, the children, the women, men, I will never forgot. What I can do, I cannot do to help them, nothing to do to help them. I was staying in this barn. In a couple of hours it's stopped the shootings, they finished the job, stopped the shooting. The owner with his wife, I think, or who that was because it was a lady too. They come to the barn and they say, the policeman, the Germans they kill a couple more persons on the way. They told to take them and to bring in the place where they kill them. The owner take the horse and take them in a couple times, took a while, maybe a half hour, forty 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 it's so terrible, he said. They shot and they take off the clothes, it's terrible to stay to see them, what they doing. Then I begin to think what I can do. I stay there and I need to wait when it will be the night come, then I -- where to go, I don't know. If I'll go back to the city, it will kill me. Then I decided I will go in my village where I was born, where I know the people. Somebody maybe will help me. I come out at nighttime to come up when I begin to open the door, the owner he locked the door from outside, I cannot come out. Then I find really that's what ---.

Q: A pitchfork?

A: Pitchfork. I find, I think somebody leave it happen with me. I will be dead with anyway. How to -- I take -- I went back up where I was and it was cover with straw. You know in the villages they put straw. Make a hole in the --.

Q: Roof.

A: In the roof. I come down, you know what, you do the work and you have so afraid. I see it stay in my mind what the Germans or the police would --. The night come out, I left across the way. Maybe to the forest was maybe a half-kilometer or ---. I begin to run to the forest. In the time what I was running, maybe a thousand times I was falling and come back and around. When I came to the forest, I came to the forest, it was easier. I am in forest, nobody shot after me and I came and I was very tired. You know when you in fear, the organs become----.

Q: Stronger?

A: Not stronger, very weak. I came in forest and sit on the ground and believe me, my hair on my head comes like get up from fear. What to do. I decided let me go to -- I will take and watch the ways if I will go anywhere I can get lost in the forest. As I was watching the way and I will go not with the way with the highway what it goes to my forest, I will go around. That is I will go by the River St_____, I will go by the River St_____ and then I will come to the nearest, I know, the places I am knowing very well. I begin to run, run. I know what I need until the day will come, I need to be in another forest in my village. Because if the day will catch me in this place, I don't know the people, I don't know to whom to come. In the daytime if they see me, they'll kill me. At nighttime I came to the village of Kolikovich. It was something wrong what I didn't need to do. I came the first house, nighttime and I have mine --- -, how's it called?

Q: Pitchfork?

A: Pitchfork. I knock on the door at nighttime and then a lady answered. What you want. I say take me over the river, take me across the river, take me on the other side. She got afraid more than I am. I stay in and I am afraid and he got afraid too, who knows who he is. She says you know what I have small children and I am afraid, I will not go. I see it's nothing and I run away to the other one. In the other house, it happened the same. Nobody want to go in the nighttime out and I don't know to whom I can come. In one house, they say, the owner tell me, open my --. He didn't come out, he said only open my barn, that's a place where he keeps the ---.

Q: Keeps his boats?

A: Not the boat, the boat is in the river.

Q: The oars.

A: That's how it called? Open and you will take in my boat in the river. I open this door and I have afraid. Who knows who will come. No, I didn't find nothing. You know what I was thinking. I got my oar, I think I will take some clothes and put them to faster because the river

is going very fast the water. It will take me very far away. I came to the river, all boats is locked, locked. I cannot -- I see the time is passing, I begin to work in one to open it. As I take off, I cannot break the chain, I cannot. As I take off that piece wood, what they put in the ground to keep the outside. I take off the piece wood from the ground and I take from my clothes something to make ---.

Q: An oar, yeah.

A: An oar. I come on the other side river and I begin to run. I got to the forest maybe eight kilometers to run. I begin to run and I see it's begin because from Kolke to this village, I got it ten kilometers. I run and when I came the first house, it's a man what I know the people what's in the same village, Komarovo, I came to him in morning and begin. He opened for me the door and I came in. He was very wonder from where I came. He knows what's ---.

Q: He's surprised to see you?

A: Surprised to see. I told him what's happened with me. He say I cannot keep you in my house because if somebody will find you, they will kill me and they will kill you. He said a guy what he left from the first pogrom, he is in the forest. That's what I should do in the future, this fireman. Where he is, I don't know. He tell me approximately in this place he must be. The places in the forest I know very well. The people in the area I know. I went for maybe, I was in the forest maybe by myself about a week. You cannot eat, you cannot sleep, you cannot everything what that's happened, it's in your mind. It's terrible and you don't know what will be in the future with you. One day in forest, it was a nice day and I was walking in forest and I see somebody's walking in the forest. I got afraid to go, no, its instinct in me, like said to me, go. I see he goes in front of me and I go to him. While I recognize him and he recognize me and that's what was that fireman. He left from the first pogrom. He told me how he escaped from the pogrom, the first. I told him how I escaped. He escaped when they take him to kill, he escape -- he come to the water and jumped in the water. He's a good swimmer and he comes the other side. It was woods and they didn't find him and at nighttime they came and took Komarova too. We begin, two of us, he cried, I cried, know what to do. You cannot do nothing more. We begin with him together to stay in forest, no clothes, no food. When it was in ---.

Q: Let me stop you for a second..... Okay, go ahead. Now this is your aunt, right?

A: Yes, that's my mother's sister. She was the older sister, the name is Rifka Perlmutter. She was living in Sarna. Last when the Germans came, it was in Sarna in ghetto. She was living with her husband Abel Perlmutter. He put glass in windows, how it's called?

Q: He didn't make the glass but he installed it?

A: He installed the glass in the windows. He got an old horse and a wagon; while he was getting in the villages. For all the week, he was left in Monday and he comes back Thursday back at home for ---.

Q: So he traveled to each village?

A: He traveled to each village and put glass in_____. Brought some jobs at home. I remember I was a child and I was studying school and I was helping too to put the glass because he was

working in the villages. But he brought at home, he was working at home. The next week, he took this, finished up and take them again to different places to the people where he takes them.

Q: Rifka was born in Komarova?

A: NO, Rifka she was born in L_____. The name I remember L_____, I don't know how it's called now. This time they called it L_____.

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

A: She was older maybe ten years older from my mother. Because between they got more sisters. I think approximately about ten years older.

Q: Do you know where Abel was born?

A: I think in Zellutz.

Q: Can you spell that for me?

A: I think it begins Z-e-l-i-k. Put before the 'k' a "t".

Q: Do you remember how old he was?

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

Q: He went to synagogue every day?

A: Every--no, except in the week what he's in the villages, no. When he came, the first day when he came in the--for Friday, Saturday. He was coming sometimes Friday morning or Thursday in evening, when he came he run straight to the synagogue. Straight, that was the first. He was very religion. He make me too. At this time I was religion. He didn't give me to make my homework, go in synagogue, go in synagogue.

Q: Was Sarna a large town?

A: Yes.

Q: Had a lot of Jewish people?

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

Q: They had two children. Do you remember how old they were?

A: One son that's--. The oldest children they went to Canada, they went to Brazil. I don't know in what times they left.

- Q: Do you know how many other children they had besides Shimon and ___?
- A: No. In this time when the Germans came to Russia, it was only when I was in the family. It was Shimon and Dvoira. Nobody more. The rest children was in Brazil and Canada.
- Q: So the older children went to Brazil and Canada?
- A: Yes.
- Q: The only two who stayed were Shimon and Dvoira?
- A: Shimon and Dvoira, yes.
- Q: Do you remember how old Shimon and Dvoira were?
- A: Shimon was older from me approximately 10, 12 years. He was grown and Dvoira was older maybe from me eight years, 8, 9 years.
- Q: They were both born in Sarna?
- A: In Sarna, yes. The children was born in Sarna.
- Q: What did Shimon do? What was his job?
- A: They helped all the fathers. It was working because he brought jobs at home. He lives at home the week and Shimon and Dvoira, I was a child, a student whatever. When I got the spare time, I was working.
- Q: You helped also?
- A: I helped also to put the glass in the windows.
- Q: Did Shimon, did he go to school in Sarna?
- A: When I was, he finished the school.
- Q: He had already finished?
- A: Yes.
- Q: But he went to Sarna though?
- A: Yes, in Sarna. He finished, Dvoira finished the school too in Sarna.
- Q: Did they go to public school or to a Jewish school?
- A: No, public school, Polish. Polish public school.
- Q: That's what you attended right? You attended a public school in ---?

- A: No, I finished the Jewish school. The name is Tarbut. It was Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish. It's called Tarbut School
- Q: Even after he got out of school and got older, Shimon, he was still helping his father with the job?
- A: Yes, yes.
- Q: Was he kind of, eventually going to take over the business? Was that what was going to happen at some point in the future?
- A: I don't know if it will be like that.
- Q: Maybe?
- A: No, maybe. Because he was -- the father was another kind people and he was another kind. He got more education. The father he got very low education, he was a very _____ man and he was working to make his living for the family. No, I don't know what if he's in life, what will happen.
- Q: Okay. You left Sarna in 1938? You stopped going to school there?
- A: Yes, in 1938 I finished school and I went to my village Komarova.
- Q: Did you see the family after that, after 1938? Before the war started or no?
- A: No, no. We got only letters, we was writing but we didn't see them.
- Q: Sarna, you said, is about 100 kilometers or so away from Komarova? Was it to the east or the west?
- A: To the east.
- Q: So it was closer to Russia?
- A: Closer to Russia, yes.
- Q: When the Germans came into Poland, they were on the side that the Soviet Union took?
- A: Right, right, yes.
- Q: Do you remember what happened or did you hear about what happened to them when the Russians came into Poland?
- A: When the Russians came, they was working.
- Q: Did they seize his little business or---?

- A: Somebody tell me at that time where the father and the mother was and the daughter was. He was run away from the Russians.
- Q: Shimon?
- A: Shimon, yes. He didn't want and he left to Litvak or Latvia, I don't know why. I didn't understand what the problem was. No, he left.
- Q: He went to one of the Baltic States, Latvia or Lithuania?
- A: To the Baltic states. I don't know what has happened. For them I know they was in ghetto.
- Q: The other three, Dvoira, Abel and Rifka were in the ghetto in Sarna?
- A: Yes, in Sarna.
- Q: But that was after the Germans came?
- A: Yes, yes. Now in what ghetto he was, I don't know. A big ghetto, Sarna.
- Q: And you never heard anymore about Shimon after that?
- A: No, no.
- Q: So, as soon as the Russians came, he ran away but they stayed?
- A: They stayed, yes.
- Q: Do you know if the Russians seized Abel's business? The glass window making -- did they stop him from doing that or did he continue to do that?
- A: No, I think they stopped him because in Russia you cannot have your own business. It was very, very, small business but he was working by himself. He didn't got people what somebody worked for him.
- QW: He didn't have any employees?
- A: No, no employees, only all the family. His family and that's all. I think they stopped him from doing this because in Russia you cannot do this. No, we didn't see them from the time I left. I remember only that it was letters, that they are healthy and everything is okay. The mother and father was written letters to them.
- Q: When the Germans came in, do you know when they reached Sarna in 1941 when they invaded the Soviet Union?
- A: They reached Sarna later. They reached first our -- because we was more closer to German, to Buger where the Germans came. No, maybe it take a week more and they came to Sarna. They was going fast the Germans, very fast. Russian soldiers run away, run away.

- Q: Didn't they set up, the Germans set up a ghetto in Sarna?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Just one ghetto or was there more than one ghetto, do you know?
- A: I don't know how many ghetto. I think in the big city, was doing the same. One ghetto. They make only the bigger the size from the ghetto. If we got, for example, four blocks to put in, in Sarna, they need maybe ten blocks, 12 blocks.
- Q: And Rifka, Abel and Dvoira were all put in the ghetto?
- A: Yes, that was in ghetto, I'm sure.
- Q: Do you know how long they stayed in the ghetto and what they might have been doing there?
- A: No, I don't know what. The ghetto was it -- everywhere it was the same, everywhere. There was things to work, no food. The principle the same, all the ghettos.
- Q: Do you know what happened to the three of them?
- A: Was killed in ghetto.
- Q: They were killed when the ghetto was liquidated?
- A: Yes, yes.
- Q: You didn't hear anything after they were in the ghetto? You didn't get letters or anything?
- A: No, nothing. That's when the Germans, we didn't got any connection.
- Q: Were people allowed to send things out of the ghetto? Mail and things like that?
- A: No, no. Nothing, from the ghetto you cannot do nothing. No letters, no----.
- Q: Now this is your cousin, right? Rakhil Menyuk?
- A: Menyuk but Freyman is her married name.
- Q: Was she older than you are?
- A: Older.
- Q: Do you remember about how much older?
- A: She was older about ten years maybe, I'm not sure but 10 years, that's---.
- Q: Where was she born?

A: She was born in Komarova.

Q: How about Borik?

A: He was older from her maybe a couple of years, maybe two years older and he was born in Belskab that was from Ch_____, ten, twelve kilometers from Ch_____. They was in ghetto, in Ch_____ and they was killed in Ch_____ ghetto. The Germans killed them. In ghetto was working, in all the ghettos, the same.

Q: Now Rakhil, she was born Menyuk, and she was born in Komarova and she was your mother's sister's daughter?

A: Daughter, right.

Q: Do you remember the name of her parents?

A: Yorchwid, to Menyuk because Yorch's husband was a relative to my father and it was double. It was sisters and their husbands was relatives with the same last name. Yorchwid Menyuk and her father Shiam Menyuk.

Q: Shiam, that's the mother?

A: Shiam is the father, Shiam Menyuk. The mother is Yorchwid. The names, it is very hard.

Q: Did she, did Rakhil go to school in Komarova or did she---?

A: I remember she finished the school.

Q: She finished but she did go to school?

A: She went to school. In the beginning when we didn't got the schools, all the families, the Jewish families take a teacher and they was teaching, study by the teacher in the village. How it's called, I don't know. She finished the school and she studied with that teacher.

Q: Do you remember when she got married to Borik? Were you a child then?

A: I'll tell you. It was approximately in 1937, I think approximately. Because before the war, they expect, they got all the papers to leave for Brazil.

Q: They were trying to leave for Brazil?

A: Yeah, for Brazil, come the war, 1939, they stopped them.

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

A: They got their papers but they couldn't leave because it begin the war and it stopped everything. That's all, it's finished. Everything it was packed.

Q: They were all packed to leave?

A: All packed to leave?

Q: How did they get their papers? They had to go to Warsaw?

A: They make the papers in the city, Kolke city, they make all the papers. In this time, you didn't got flies to, it's only the port, it was Gdansk. I know was they got the papers to go to Gdansk. That's in Poland, a port. Begin the war, everything stopped.

Q: What did Borik do for a living?

A: He was in business, he bought cows in the villages. He brought them, no it was a bazaar. He was selling cows, horses,----.

Q: So he traded livestock?

A? Yes, yes. That was his business.

Q: Did they have any children?

A: No.

Q: No children. I would imagine when the Russians came, that they stopped him from trading in livestock, yes?

A: Yeah.

Q: What did he start to do after that? Did he work for the Russians or---?

A: He worked for them, no I don't remember what he was doing.

Q: But he did something for the Russians?

A: Yes, but I don't remember what he was doing for the Russians. Because he left, when the Russians came, he left from Komarozza. He went for B_____and he was living in this place.

Q: He went back to where he was born?

A: To where he was born.

Q: And Rakhil was with him?

A: Rakhil too, yes. He was in Ch_____ ghetto. He was not in K_____.

Q: That's where they were killed?

A: Yes.

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

A: Stay maybe eight months, nine months, ten months. Most of them, most of the ghettos, they was killed in that time, eight months, nine months, a year. It depends on how they was using the people.

Q: Do you know anything about Borik's childhood, about when he was younger? Do you know anything about his (TAPE ENDS ABRUPTLY HERE).
(END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1)

Now we were talking about Borik's parents.

A: I remember them. They was living in Bilsco_____, a bigger village than Komarova and it's more families, Jewish families in this village. No, the parents was doing most of this in the village. I think what's in the same they was doing in the_____. They got land and was working farmers most of the time. They got more, two brothers, I think. One, his brother I met with him in the partisans. His older brother and two sons. Now they may be in Israel. I think in Israel. The name is Freyman, the first names, I don't remember them, the first names. The last name is right, Freyman.

Q: Do you remember or do you know if Borik went to school in Be_____?

A: In B_____. Yes. He went to school.

Q: To a Polish school?

A: Polish public school.

Q: Do you know when he started trading the livestock? When he began, right after he got out of school, do you think?

A: After, after, yes. I think that he begin to do this when he married. I don't know what, a couple of years maybe, no, after the school.

Q: When Rakhil and Borik went back to B_____, did they live with his parents?

A: Yes.

Q: They stayed there?

A: They stayed in the same house. We got a house, it was a big family.

Q: That's all the questions I have. Do you remember anything else about them?

A: No.

Q: And you said that they died in the Ch_____?

A: The Ch_____ ghetto, yes.

Q: And that was in Ch_____?

A: Ch_____, yes.

Q: Now how far was Ch_____ from Biel_____?

A: It was twelve---

Q: Oh that's right, you told me.

A: Twelve kilometers.

Q: That's right. Do you know when they were sent to the ghetto in Ch_____?

A: I don't know the exact time. No, the same that happened like everywhere. The ghettos, they begin now. They came after a month, three weeks. What happened depend what places. That's all. Okay.

Q: No more questions.