

Interview with Miki Pear
June 12, 1992
Washington, D.C.

Q: Today is June 12, 1992. I am here with Mrs. Miki Pear of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, and she is here at the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum today to tell her story of the Holocaust. Good afternoon.

A: I was born in Warsaw, Poland on May 14, 1935. My father was a violinist and a professor of music. My mother came from a very large family -- my father was an only child as far as I know. He had a tiny family. My mother came from an enormous and very well known family in Warsaw, a very prominent family. My grandfather had a soda, carbonated beverage manufacturing family.

Q: On your mother's side?

A: My mother's side. I don't know very much about my father's side. I know only that he came from a family of intellectuals, professors, linguists and I don't know what all. I do remember his parents. I remember meeting them once. I remember going to their home, I remember the room that I was in. I remember that there was a red oriental rug, very highly patterned, intricately patterned and the walls were lined with books.. That was very impressive because first of all, I had never seen anything quite like it and second of all because my father's parents, like my father, were very short. They were even much shorter than my father was. I remember that --the room so clearly because I remember thinking how do they reach those books which went so high up. The ceilings in Europe were very high and I don't remember and I was very small.

Q: Were you crawling on the rug?

A: No, I was walking on the rug. I had to be four years at that point. I remember thinking how could my grandfather who was so pale and delicate looking climb? There were ladders on each side of the room, which I guess must have been on wheels or however those things worked. But I remember imagining how could my grandfather who looked so frail and tiny reach those books. That's the impression that I have of my grandparents and I remember absolutely nothing else about them nor do I know anything about them. Only that my father was an only child. However, my mother's side of the family, I remember very clearly. And they were exactly the opposite in every conceivable way. They were very loud and noisy and gregarious. My mother was the youngest of eight siblings. There were nine originally, one died at a young age, maybe in childhood, I really don't know. But she was one of five daughters, she was the youngest, and three sons. The oldest child was a daughter, the oldest child, my mother's sister, married a physician who was her childhood sweetheart and they moved to Russia. This would have to have been in the twenties. They had two daughters who I know became -- one became a merchant ship captain, captain of a merchant ship and the other daughter, this would have been my cousin, became, I believe, a physician. But that entire part of the family was lost to the other, to the rest of the family because they were in Russia. So I know nothing ...

Q: Soviet citizens?

A: --Soviet exactly. So I don't know any more about them but I imagine that these two cousins, anyway, who would probably be twenty or thirty years older than I am, might still be living. I imagine my cousin is a sea captain, provocative thought. Hopefully their descendents are living somewhere in Russia and hopefully they're enjoying a peaceful life. The rest of the brothers and sisters -- all the sisters married and all of my mother's sisters, all four of my mother's sisters had families of three or more children. And all of those families perished. Of the three brothers, the oldest was banished to Siberia with his wife and child. He survived the war and it was he who later found me where I was hidden in the Ukraine, where I survived. The other two brothers -- the middle brother escaped sometime during the first World War and the story goes that he was, what's the word? ... He punched a senior in the jaw for some reason.

Q: This is in the Russian army?

A: In the Polish army. He was in the Polish cavalry. The Polish cavalry during the first World War was kind of interesting because if you could afford your own boots, or at least this is what I am told, if you could afford a fancy uniform with boots and so forth, you sort of automatically became an officer. If you could afford to bring your own horse, you became an officer in the cavalry. So he was a horseman and he had the means to afford all this grand stuff. So he was an officer in the Polish cavalry. He was quite rebellious and kind of a smart ass and apparently he got into some, I don't know, fracas, and punched out a senior officer and they were going to shoot him for insubordination. He jumped over the wall, I don't know, I may be romanticizing this. These are facts that I was told and eventually escaped and made his way to America where there was some distant relative who took him under his wing. Morris Berliner, this middle uncle became in later years, the rich uncle in America. He's the one that we came to, he was our sponsor in the United States. The youngest of my three uncles who was just the next sibling to my mother, my mother was the younger and he was next; he was Martin Berliner. He and his bride -- he was a student in Paris -- he went to college there and became an engineer. He and his new bride were fortunate enough to have come to the United States in 1939 on the last ship which was admitted into New York harbor. So he was a surprise to us when we arrived here because we had no idea of his whereabouts at all.

Q: You had known him before you left?

A: Possibly. I don't remember him at all.

Q: Hard to keep track of all your uncles?

A: Well, yeah. Also he was in Paris. He was a student in Paris. Although he was very close with my mother because they were closest in age, I didn't know him. Or if I knew him, it would have been only very casually, very briefly. But my uncle Jacob, the oldest was closest in the family to my mother. The two were each other's confidant, they were friends. They were friends, socially. They just had a very close friendship even though they were a number of -- quite a number of years apart, perhaps fifteen years apart. And he was her protector and he loved her a lot.

Q: He had remained in Warsaw?

A: Yes, he remained in Warsaw and he remained in my grandfather's business. He ran the finances

of the business and apparently one of the reasons that he was so -- that he did that is because he was so honest and so trustworthy and so forth. He was the kind of the controller and the business head of the business. My grandfather was part inventor, entrepreneur and dreamer and my grandfather ... For example, my grandfather was the first to introduce fresh fruit juice or syrup to carbonated water. That juice was raspberry and he was at the beginning of creating fruit flavored soft drinks, sparkling soft drinks. The fledgling company which he called Fraise, the French word for raspberries because that was the first fruit flavoring that he experimented with, with his carbonated water.

Q: Did you get to drink any?

A: I don't remember at all. I don't remember that at all. But I remember that life at my grandparent's kind of revolved around the siphons. I remember their home -- I have wonderful memories of my grandparents' home and here comes the lump in my throat. My grandparents' home was sort of on the outskirts of Warsaw. My uncle Martin, the youngest of the brothers, was interviewed for a book, 'Voices of the Holocaust' and I believe, in that interview is the -- if not the address, the location of, you know. I'm not very good with the names and the places because I was so young. But that information is known. And apparently my grandfather, who was extremely tall, unusually tall, he was the tallest member of the entire family. My grandmother was quite small and she had beautiful blue eyes, she was the only one with blue eyes. She had a beautiful singing voice which could have been operatic but she preferred just to share her singing talents with her family. She was the family songbird. She sang all the time as she cooked and so forth. My grandfather was extremely, highly respected in the community. He was sort of the unofficial Jewish mayor of the area and was the ... He was the one who kind of communicated with the official government and the gentile community. He was the -- I can't think of the word. Well, anyway --

Q: Community leader.

A: Yes, exactly. Well, more than that, he was also kind of the wise man. People came to him for advice and he settles disputes. He loaned people money. He was very loved and respected.

Q: An elder statesman.

A: He was truly that and looked the part too. He was a great big tall man with a white beard. Oh, and I have a wonderful photograph of them too, if your archives might be interested, of my grandfather and grandmother. Oh, G____, They're gorgeous!

Q: Was your family orthodox?

A: I believe my grandparents were ...

Q: On your mother's side?

A: Yes, I know really nothing about my father's side. Everything I've told you is everything I know and there is no more. But my -- I think my grandparents were probably orthodox. I don't know that but I think so. My grandmother also has a wonderful reputation. She took the teachings of the Torah rather literally in some respects. Every Friday and on every holiday, she would go and collect beggars from the street and she would feed them in her kitchen. On the

high holy days, she invited them to share our holiday meal in our dining room. I remember my grandmother's dining which because she had eight children, all of whom were married and had children of their own; the table could seat I don't know how many people, maybe twenty. I remember the beautiful crystal chandelier which hung over it. I remember a little story of a peasant from the Ukraine who came to work as a sort of maid, or I don't know, helper, and my grandmother told this servant to go and turn out the light in the dining room. When the servant didn't reappear for a long time, my grandmother went to search and found this peasant standing on top of the table trying to blow out the electric lights in the chandelier. So I remember little antidotal facts like that. Stop me from telling you these stories because it will take me forever.

Q: What kind of home did you live in?

A: Well my father was a teacher. He taught at one of the universities. I really am not sure which, either the University of Warsaw -- there were two universities, I believe. I think he might have taught in the smaller of the two because there was great anti-Semitism at that time and difficulty within the university system. So he might not have taught in the Warsaw University but I'm not really sure. In any case, he also gave private lessons at home. My father was not successful in the field of making money. He was kind of a disappointment and disgrace within the family because my mother's family was all very aggressive and very well to do. Everybody did exceedingly well and apparently they thought that that was very important and everyone was talented in a different way but everyone was sort of well off. My mother was not. It was very disappointing to the family that my mother married my father because she married him on the rebound. She had been in love with a local boy who apparently was a great Zionist and gave her the choice of -- or asked her to go with him to build Palestine. When she refused to leave the family nest and go to such a faraway place, he left without her. I've often wondered which hero in the State of Israel might have been my mother's childhood sweetheart and so I romanticize about that. Anyway on the rebound my mother married one of her teachers. My father was quite a bit older than my mother and it was against my mother's family's wishes that she rebelliously married him. I was their only child.

Q: How long had they been married before you were born?

A: Well, I don't know. My mother was very young so I imagine they were just married a short time and I was their first child. In 1939 when I was four, I remember with great clarity, the blitzkrieg. I mentioned that my grandparents lived on the outskirts of Warsaw in a section, the name of which I don't remember. And we lived, my mother and father and I, in an apartment that I can describe to you in detail, the apartment building and, in fact, a little bit of our apartment too, but I won't. In any case -- well, I'll describe only this much. That it was a red brick building and was built with a courtyard inside but I think a lot of buildings in Europe were. That there were iron gates through which you entered the courtyard. The gate, the handle of the gate was a monkey's paw. I don't even know though if that's all that unusual. But I remember that clearly and I remember that gypsies came and entertained and there was a gypsy wagon. The people leaned out of the windows and looked down into the courtyard and threw coins down. I remember that very well. The circus troupe came and I remember that. I remember looking out of the window and I remember that a line was strung from window to window. I looked out of the window one morning and a ballerina was walking on a rope, right in front of my window.

Q: Across the courtyard?

- A: Across the courtyard. I remember that she held an umbrella and she smiled at me. I looked down and there was a bear standing on its hind legs and clowns. It's such a clear memory, you know.
- Q: A visiting circus?
- A: A visiting circus in the courtyard. And the people threw down coins and that's how they were paid, these itinerant entertainers.
- Q: Do you remember whether this was a Jewish neighborhood or was it mixed?
- A: I don't know, I really don't. I wouldn't know. In any case, I do remember that there was a trolley. We took a trolley to my grandparent's house. The trolley, there was a kind of circle. The trolley was turned on a -- like a lazy susan. And that -- that was the end of the line.
- Q: Then the terminal was near you?
- A: That was where we lived, at the end of this trolley line. We went all the way to the other end of the trolley line where there was another turn-a-round. Within a walk from there was where my grandparents lived. So I could probably look on an old map of Warsaw and identify where both dwellings were.
- Q: I have one such map downstairs.
- A: You do?
- Q: We'll look this up after ---.
- A: Really?
- Q: Yes.
- A: I'd like that.
- Q: During the break.
- A: Thank you. Oh dear, -----
- Q: We're talking about your apartment ...
- A: Well, I won't go into detail about the apartment. It's not really all that critical. What I remember was that very hurriedly getting out of it with a lot of bundles and having a My father, I must tell you, my early memories of my father are incredibly warm. My father never raised his voice. My father would play with me on the floor with toys and make -- he was very artistic, apparently and very creative. We played with different colored clay which we made animals and whatever, you know. My father would spend hours in play with me whereas my mother was always busy. She was always baking and cooking and sewing and knitting and doing all sorts of -- she was always busy. She was always going in and out and coming and shopping and

going. My father spent a lot of time at home, probably waiting for students or doing -- marking papers or whatever he did. In any case, I remember that he and I spent a lot of time in my childhood. I remember my fourth birthday. I remember about it that my father had decorated the entire house with streamers that he had made into... He had cut different colored shiny paper, very shiny paper of different colors and he made chain by gluing loops of varied colors. He decorated the room, I guess it was, with these paper chains which hung from the ceiling in loops and around the walls and so forth. I remember that, I don't know, 20 children or whatever of my age came and they all brought presents. I had a hysterical fit because I had received two sets of dominos and I lay on the floor and kicked and had a tantrum. How wonderful and understanding my father was and how impatient and annoyed with the whole nonsense, my mother was. So my mother was a kind of down to business personality, probably like I am. And my father was soft and sort of a dreamer. It fits -- the memory that I have of him -- fits with the family version of what he was, which they sort of feel was sort of a failure.

Q: An idealist?

A: An idealist or whatever and an intellectual, he spoke many languages, among them German, with great fluency. He was a poet, he read and wrote poetry and so on and so forth. He was an intellectual. My mother was more of an earth mother.

Q: What languages were spoken in your home?

A: We spoke Polish, a very intellectual Polish. Everyone was very well educated. My mother's brothers and sisters were all very involved in the arts. Each one had a different interest. One in theater, another one in opera and another one in, oh, I don't know this and that, whatever. All of the guests and friends and so forth and their individual circles of friends were all, you know, famous. They were all celebrity sort of people in the arts. At parties, they were all well known -- they were sort of the jet set of -- you know, of the time.

Q: Were you old enough to get any lessons from your father or...?

A: No, no. I was not. I was four years old. I was not. I just remember sitting on the floor and drawing or making, playing with clay. I remember cooking with my mother, baking. My mother -- I remember the cookies she baked. I think they're called Linser tarts or tortes or something like that. They're little round -- they were made little round cookies with some jelly and then a second cookie with a hole in it on top. That was one she made a lot. Then she made a cookie which a friend of my father's who visited quite frequently, I believe he was a professor, Professor Zuckerman, which means sugar man. These were cookies with coarse sugar sprinkled on top and my mother used to call them -- because this gentleman particularly enjoyed those cookies -- so she called those Zuckerman cookies. I remember making those with her. I remember sitting -- preparations in my grandmother's kitchen for the holidays. I remember my mother and her sisters and my grandmother all baking and cooking and I remember the challahs that they made. These great long challahs braided with a little braid on top. They always made a little one for me or they gave me dough to play with. I remember that they sat me in a high chair kind of across the -- from, you know, the opposite side of the room from where the ovens were, the heat was. To entertain me, they would say, Mirka, open your mouth. They would fling a raisin across the room and I loved raisins and I would open my mouth and try to catch the raisin. There were great peals of laughter when it hit my nose or never reached near or whatever it was. I just remember that with such clarity, it's incredible and

I was four years old. Then I recall that we left our apartment in great haste, schlepping all sorts of bundles. I remember a big hysterical fight with my mother because I insisted on bringing my favorite possession which was an enormous teddy bear, almost my own size. It was a Stief teddy bear and my grandmother had bought this teddy bear on the day I was born and gave it to my mother. I grew up with this teddy bear and he was my companion and I remember that I called that teddy bear by my grandfather's name which was David. And that teddy bear had to go with me. We left the apartment and I don't remember by what means we got there. I doubt that it was the trolley. I don't remember that part but we arrived in my grandparents' home where there was enormous excitement in the courtyard, the factory, the house and the people who worked in the factory all lived in surrounding little bungalows on their land. There was enormous excitement, people being loaded into trucks and also into the horse drawn carts which had been used to deliver the soda all over Poland and probably all over, I don't know, Eastern Europe. Everybody was getting into trucks and there were sirens and the light was fading. Then I remember being pushed up into the back of an open truck. I remember my uncle being told to drive and orders being yelled at my father -- I just remember the entire scene and I...

Q: Did you have David with you?

A: I had David and I sat on my mother's lap. I remember my mother put her hands -- I sat in her lap with my back against her breast. My mother put her hands in front of my face trying to shield my eyes and I tore at her fingers trying to get a view of this incredible thing that was going on. Huge explosions of light streaking across the sky and fireballs and explosions and noise and whistling and screaming! And the horses screaming and automobiles horns and people screaming and bundles flying! All this made excitement and then we moved out in a caravan and joined a -- did you ever see ants following in a trail making a road? Well, that's how we were -- like a river of humanity in carts and horses, on foot and screaming and it got darker and darker. And then behind the skyline of the city, fires and explosions and that's how we left Warsaw and life as I knew it, ended.

Q: You had no idea why or who or what was going on?

A: Probably not. Could we take a break? I need a glass of water.

Q: Sure.

A: ... people who take care of the horses and there were people who worked in the factory. Then there were these cabins on the land where the workers lived and whole families lived there. My grandfather sort of took care of all these people and these people were all peasants. Most of them came from the Ukraine. They came and they lived there and they worked and then they would go home and some relatives would be sent back and so forth. Whole families lived from my grandfather and his... But my grandfather was very involved with his horses and his big dream was to have a team of horses -- you know the Clydesdale horses that, you know, deliver the beer, I've forgotten.

Q: Budweiser?

A? Budweiser beer. Well these were teams of horses like that. I mean they weren't Clydesdales with the feathered feet but they were just teams of big brown...

Q: Belgian type horses.

A: Right and they were all dark, big dark horses. But my grandfather's dream was to have at least one team of all white horses. I remember that -- and my grandfather fought this new fangled business of using trucks. He was enamored of his horses and the idea of the horses and having the white team of horses. He bought -- he kept buying white horses and each time he had a failure. The horse would get sick and die or break a leg or whatever happened and he could never quite collect a team of horses. I remember an incident before the blitzkrieg. He had just bought a new white horse, a stallion, I don't know, whatever. He was very proud of this huge white horse. I remember being shown this horse along with my mother and father. My uncle Jacob who was the, I, told you before, the oldest and he was the controller, was very proud of this horse. My grandfather led the horse out of the stable and into the central courtyard of his domain and walked the horse around. He said to Jacob, here you take the horse or whatever it was. Anyway the horse -- and I remember this and it's a very important story a little later in my life -- the horse reared up and kicked my uncle Jacob in the chest. He bucked, you know, with his hind foot, he hit uncle Jacob in the chest and knocked uncle Jacob unconscious. They carried uncle Jacob into the house. I remember that back room through which we would go -- it was in the back of the house and faced the courtyard. The front of the house where we lived was a little more formal. But you see, the soda manufacturing plant was in the back and the courtyard was all earth, no concrete. So when it rained, it was sort of muddy. Also inside the soda manufactory, it was all water. So the plant was -- had boards nailed together, you know, wooden....

Q: Planks.

A: Planks so that the water could go through and underneath. All the workers wore wooden shoes, you know, like the Dutch shoes. So they would leave their shoes at home and everybody had sort of a little mud room and they would put on wooden shoes and then go into the manufactory, you know, through the courtyard and into the manufactory and work. Then, when they came home, they would leave those wooden shoes in the mud rooms and put on their shoes or boots or whatever they had. Well, our mud room was -- my grandmother's mud room -- was this big room and it had hooks on the wall on which coats hung and then sort of shelves underneath that where the wooden shoes sat when they weren't in use or the boots, you know. There was a leather sort of a bed. It wasn't a sofa, it was like a flat low thing. I guess they must have sat there to put on their boots. So when my uncle Jacob was kicked by the horse, they carried him into this mud room and they put him on this leather sofa bed or whatever it was...

Q: A cot.

A: A cot, yeah, I guess, cot. Well, it was more elegant than a cot. It was a big upholstered thing.

Q: It was leather.

A: But it was leather, yeah. It was dark leather, brown leather. I mean I remember that thing. You know I remember the squeak of the hinge of that back door. I can hear it in my memory. The room where I slept when I stayed at my grandmother's must have been above or somewhere near that door. Because I remember it opening and closing in the morning when my grandfather went into the factory and my grandmother went out to get the chickens or whatever it was.

Q: You spent a lot of time with your grandparents?

A: Yes, and I loved being there. And I guess because my parents worked, you know. My mother must have worked and my father, I don't know -- I must have spent a lot of time there and I liked it.

Q: Did you love horses?

A: I don't remember. I really don't remember any interaction with horses.

Q: So everyone else is more excited about horses than you?

A: Well, I remember being awed, but you know.... I remember spending my time with the cooking and that sort of thing, in the kitchen sort of and around my aunts. I remember being in the factory. My grandfather must have taken me there. I remember sitting behind their house on big barrels. He had big barrels which must have contained something to do with the soda plant. I don't know, whatever fruit or, I don't know, whatever it was. We would sit there on the barrels in the sun. That part of the house faced south. In the afternoon, the sun was there. My grandfather and I would sit there and he would tell me stories. I remember one day, he gave me Hanukkah gelt. I remember he was explaining to me about Hanukkah gelt and I just remember him giving me coins and sitting in the sun and talking about Hanukkah gelt while inside wonderful things were being cooked and delicious smells were coming out of the windows and across the courtyard. Anyway, getting back to the story of my uncle Jacob being kicked by the horse, I remember -- oh now -- uncle Jacob, because he was the controller, he wasn't really involved in the factory nor the stables. He was in the office so he didn't wear wooden shoes or boots. He wore shoes with laces, you know, like a businessman. So when he went out into the courtyard, it must have been a muddy situation because he was wearing his shoes. When they brought him in and laid him on the couch, I remember, while they were all running around excitedly calling for doctors and what should we do? You undo his belt and you get cold water to put on his forehead and blah, blah. My aunts and everybody was quite hysterical. I remember untying his shoelaces. I don't know why I remember doing that but that's what I did while they were all -- they were undoing him and I undid his shoelaces. Years later, when uncle Jacob found me, he -- well shall I tell you about it later or shall I tell it now? He said to me, do you know me? I said of course I know you. He said but you were so little when you saw me last, how do you know me? I said well I remember you perfectly and then I told him this story. He was amazed because he figured out that I couldn't have been three. I must have been like two and a half when this happened because he knew when it was before the blitzkrieg because that was probably the last time he saw me.. So I had to have been less than three years old. He found it so amazing that my memory was so clear and that he remembered that and how much he had loved me because I was the only -- I was the youngest of his nieces and was the only child of his favorite baby sister. So I was very special and that act of taking off his shoes was very special for him and the fact that I remember that with such clarity meant a great deal to him. But I'll get back to that period later. The next couple of years of my life are very fuzzy. The family all stayed together for a very brief period of time and then my grandparents insisted on returning to Warsaw.

Q: So you actually left Warsaw?

A: Yes, the entire family and all the workers and everyone who lived there. Everybody -- we went

in the truck because we -- the family went in the truck. But everyone else was given the cars and carts and horses. Take what --run for your lives -- take --save yourselves. Everybody got on the road, we all got on the road and, I guess, dispersed on the road, I don't know.

Q: Your family remained together? You were in two open trucks?

A: Yes, the family was together in two open trucks. We stayed together. I don't know where we went. I don't know. We left the city.

Q: Do you have any idea whether it was a short distance or a..?

A: I really honestly -- I don't know. I mean I'm sure I went to sleep and I don't know and hours or years could have elapsed... I really can't tell you, I'm very fuzzy there. I only know -- I only remember isolated instances. I don't remember history, I remember antidotal sort of things.

Q: Were you in a city or --?

A: I don't know, I don't know. We were in cities. I know we were in cities. I remember, as I said, antidotal incidents. I'll tell you just a few and that might help. I remember that -- I know that my mother's family were very close, as I have already indicated. Apparently my grandparents decided that they wanted to die in Warsaw in their home and they insisted on going back. I know that some of the sisters went back with them. I don't know where Jacob and his family went or wound up and I learned later that he refused to sign the communist whatever -- he had to pledge -- and therefore he was banished to Siberia. The youngest brother, as I told you, was in Paris so he's out of the picture. Where the aunts all went, the four -- well one was in Russia with her family so the other three, I don't know. They might have all returned to Warsaw with my grandparents. I know there was another branch of the family in Pinsk. I know we went to Pinsk, oh that helps, right? We went to Pinsk.

Q: That's the Russian occupied part of Poland.

A: That's the direction we -- oh thank you. You're helping me too. So that is where we went -- to Pinsk. That's where we must have gone. I don't know if we went there immediately or what. Then I remember that my parents had furious arguments because my mother wanted to go back.

Q: To Warsaw?

A: To her parents, to her family, you know. They had horrible fights and didn't get along very well. I remember screaming and whatever. Then we probably left Poland because I remember an incident where one night I heard my mother crying and my parents were arguing and I came out of bed. There was a fireplace, you know, most _____ was the central heating most places in Europe. My parents were burning Polish money; they were burning the bills. My mother was crying because she was lamenting all the sacrifices that she had made to save this money. My father was telling her instead, forever the romantic, look at the beautiful colors of the flames. Don't think about what it is. There is no paper in the world that burns as beautifully as that. Look at it, look how it sparkles. Look, come here Mirka. Sit by the fire and watch. Isn't that beautiful? You'll never see anything like this again as long as you live and of course I never have seen anyone burn money, particularly Polish money. I remember, oh my G____, I remember being with my parents once in some other city. We were in a community of

people and my mother -- we were on the edge of a forest. It was a city on the edge of a forest. My mother knew about mushrooms. You know in Europe there are wild mushrooms, wild mushrooms are picked, there was much more interest in mushrooms that we have in the United States and there was a great deal to know about them because some of them are poisonous and whatever. Well, my mother apparently was a mushroom maven. A group was organized to go to the forest on a picnic and mushroom picking expedition. Several families went in a horse drawn carriage and we drove to the edge of the woods -- or maybe two carriages, I don't remember. But anyway, we got to the edge of the woods and there was a little boy about my age and we had a picnic on blankets at the edge of the woods, a clearing in the woods, very sunny and pretty, clearing and grass. We had this lovely picnic. Then my mother told this little boy, you keep an eye on her. He was a little older. You take care of her and we're going into the woods. Don't worry, we'll be back, you stay here and play right here. Don't go further than this spot or whatever she told him. And he and I began to play and run around. We got to bushes suddenly, big bushy things and I said to him, look those are berries, they're raspberries, I'm sorry, blueberries, you know, blueberries. He said, yes. There were several kinds of berries growing and we began to pick these berries and eat them and stuff our mouths with them. I had on a dress with a pinafore or apron or something and I took the skirt and made a sort of pouch and held it in one hand and put the berries into my apron. He began to pull the berries off the bush and he climbed up and we had my apron filled when we heard some noise. Suddenly all the adults came flying out of the forest and I was so excited to show my mother what I had found. My mother started to scream, come it's raining and she took the berries and put them in something and she just -- there wasn't time to be excited. My mother was impatient. I already told you that.

Q: Practical woman.

A: Practical, yes. She said come, it's raining, it's beginning to rain. We started to go toward the -- where our carriage, cart, horse cart was, and we began to walk in a line. The adults held up the blankets over our heads -- made like a ceiling of blankets. The little boy and I and there were several other children who were older and who had gone into the woods with the mushroom pickers. We were among their feet, you know, underneath the blankets. The taller adults held the blankets aloft over us on the four corners. Huge drops of rain and possibly hail began to fall. With that, two airplanes came flying out of the sky and strafed us and began to shoot. We scattered. They made a pass and my mother said, I remember my mother screaming something like the blankets wouldn't protect us from bullets, scatter. We began to scatter and I wound up in a ditch. When the excitement of the planes and the noise and the bombs or whatever ended, the little boy who had been picking berries with me was lying dead next to me. So that's an anecdote.

Q: And you still didn't know why or what or who?

A: No, I knew. I did understand. You know, it's like nobody ever explained the facts of life to me, nobody ever had a sex talk with me but I knew. Nobody ever explained the war to me, but I knew. I was old before my time and understood without explanation. I don't think I ever asked a question. I remember men disappearing. I remember the gathering of jewelry to pay some kind of ransom. Somebody was imprisoned -- Zuckerman! Dr., Professor Zuckerman, we had to... My mother gave some jewelry and we collected jewelry because he was detained. We never did get him back. I remember that. Shortly after that, my father went foraging for food somewhere and he was in a farmer's field. They went to steal food from a farm at night. I

remember my father coming back and saying that the soldiers were running -- were chasing them and that he hid in a furrow, you know....

Q: Irrigation ditch?

A: Or something, I don't know, in a furrow on the farm between the rows of whatever was growing. And that a soldier stepped on the brim of his cap and very soon after that, my father disappeared and my mother said that he had left and that he would send for us. My mother and I were left alone. I remember asking my mother, many, many times, when will father come for us or send for us. She always answered in exactly the same way. It's really one of the half dozen Polish words that I remember. She always said, Crusscoov and that means soon. But of course, he never came. Then my mother and I moved to another city and I wish to G___ I could tell you where. But that city was in the Ukraine.

Q: So you never returned to Warsaw?

A: No, no, we never returned to Warsaw. Oh, I remember, another incident. My parents and I were on a train and the train was bombed. Several of the cars fell down into a ditch and there were many dead and screaming and G___ knows what. We were in the last car of the train and I think that was the only one that was left standing on the track and was not hit. So I remember that. Anyway my mother and I were alone and we wound up in this city, probably in the Ukraine, and very near the village where I was ultimately to be hidden. My mother supported us, it's a terrible word. I mean she provided the little we had by knitting. I know that sounds ridiculous but my mother would take your old sweater with the holes in the elbows and she would rip out the yarn and out of that torn, holey sweater, she would make you a vest or a short sleeve sweater or whatever it was. She knitted day and night. I remember listening to my mother's knitting needles, even in the night. My mother smoked. I remember seeing her cigarette in the dark. My mother was an exceptional knitter and she could knit in the dark without having to look. I remember going into bomb shelters during air raids and my mother would say to me, I'm here, just listen to my needles and you know I'm here. You needn't be afraid as long as you hear my needles. If she wasn't knitting, she was smoking. She'd say, watch, that's my cigarette. I would watch her face suddenly light up as she took a puff of her cigarette. But most of the time she was knitting. She knitted all the time. She would ask me to hold out my hands. When she ripped a sweater, she would wind the yarn around my hands. My two outstretched hands. Then she would wind it into a ball from my hands. I remember holding out my hands and getting very tired and complaining a great deal but that was how she supported us. I know that at night, she would sneak out after the curfew and she would go to the parts of the city where she wasn't allowed to go be, to deliver her goods. One time she took me with her. That was rare, usually she left me back in our room with my teddy bear, my David, my treasured possession. She took me with her into the city and she said she was taking me to a lady who, I must be very careful and I must not speak only to say please and thank you and to be very polite, other than that to not speak. If I'm asked a question only to say yes and no and not to say anything. Because where we were going was very dangerous but this was a very generous lady and she would probably serve tea and cake or cookies. That was why my mother was going to take a chance and take me because we might get something very delicious to eat, or jam, jam. So we went and we crossed into a section that I don't remember by what means or what but I know we weren't allowed to be there. We went into a house and I just seem to remember that it was a white house and it had a door. We went inside and inside was a very cozy home, a cozy room with lovely upholstered furniture and a lot of pillows. There was a

piano and it had a shawl over it and a beautiful vase filled with flowers. There were photographs and there were a lot of pictures and paintings and things on the walls. We sat on an upholstered, lovely carved settee with a table in front. Just as my mother had predicted, this lady brought out a tray with a tea service on it with cookies and jam and toast and wonderful things. I ate and oh it was so wonderful.

Q: You hadn't had anything like that in a while?

A: I hadn't had anything like that, my G___! Oh, it was so wonderful. With that the lady said to my mother, come into my bedroom and I'll show you what I made. It turned out that this lady was a -- well she did beautiful needlework. She did these pictures which were framed which were both embroidered and appliquéd. For example, there was one -- well I'll tell you about that one because it almost caused our death. Also the reason she called my mother into another room is because this lady also made dolls which were fully clothed adult dolls but they were apparently anatomically correct. So she showed this lovely doll but then invited my mother into this next room so that she could undress this male doll and show my mother that it had all its anatomical parts. Well, while my mother and this lady were out of the room I turned and looked at the wall behind me on which hung a picture that this woman had also made. The picture was of a sort of cottage and a yard filled with chickens and there were flowers against the cottage and there were little windows with shutters and a door and so forth. There was a girl throwing feed from an apron, just like I had described before, throwing seed out to chickens. There were chickens all over, feeding and flying around and whatever. All of this was appliquéd and embroidered and so on and very intricate. Suddenly I realized to my horror or fascination that the girl feeding the chickens had a yellow star on her chest. When my mother came out of the other room with this lady, I absolutely couldn't help but point it out. Look she has a yellow star. With that this woman flew into a rage, pointed a finger at my mother and said, you did that, it wasn't there before, you're responsible, you did that! She screamed out of the door for the police. My mother and I ran out. There were two police and I can't tell you what they were but I think they had brown....

Q: Brown uniforms?

A: Brown uniforms. That's -- I think -- my memory serves me -- they were brown. One blew a whistle and ran around the corner for the truck or whatever it was. The other one had a rifle or a gun or something, I don't remember, and he was holding on to my mother. I realized the import of what was happening and I began to scream and I bit the hand of this policeman. He began -- pulled away his hand in pain and screamed out. My mother grabbed me and we ran and hid and we got away. At that time, my mother and I shared a room with another lady in a sort of a boarding house which must have been all Jews. I don't know whether the woman who owned this home was Jewish or not, I only remember that she -- I remember a lot about her actually. One of the things that I remember is that she kept talking about her son who was in the army and who was going to come home. She had cookies or mondelbrut that she had baked and she had it in packages under a cabinet. She showed us that she had baked this and she was saving it for her son, it was his favorite thing. As soon as she knew where he was, she would send it to the front, send some to the front. But if that wasn't possible that was okay, because he would be home soon and then she would have this for him. My mother and the lady who shared the room with us gave each other a knowing sort of look and then my mother, every night, proceeded to steal some of the cookies.

Q: Was this an Ukrainian woman?

A: I don't know. One day, my mother went out and she came home very, very excited, very happy. At that time we were literally starving. There was nothing to eat. It was summer and we were eating, it's a weed that grows. It's kind of a jagged leaf and it has a kind of gray, silky, shiny surface. It grows here in the United States and every year is a ritual, I eat some. It kind of tastes like spinach. That's what we ate that summer, that and the stolen cookies. Every now and then something else my mother was able to forage. But my mother came home one day extremely excited and happy. She had made a great coup, a conquest. She brought home this treasure. She carefully unwrapped this thing. I couldn't wait to see what it could possibly be. She kept on unwrapping this handkerchief. It was in this piece of cloth. Finally there was this two- inch square of -- or maybe it was one inch, I don't know -- it looked like a big domino of something white. I'd never seen it. I didn't know what it was. I said to my mother, what is it? It was such a treasure! She said, it's fat, which didn't mean anything to me but it did finally mean that she was able to fry those greens and they had a little taste rather than eating them raw or boiling them.

Q: Earlier you mentioned that you saw this embroidered picture with the star, a person wearing a star. Did you see any people, real people wearing those stars?

A: Yes, I was one of them and so was my mother. My mother was very talented at all needle work. She was a wonderful seamstress. My mother had made me a beautiful -- she must have made it -- well I guess it could have been after the blitzkrieg. Maybe it was a birthday present, in fact, maybe I think it was a birthday present.

Q: A birthday after the blitzkrieg?

A: Possibly or the one after that, I don't really know. That period is very -- it's all very fuzzy. I mean my memories are more anecdotal than they are historic. There's no real sequence. I guess they're in some sort of sequence but it doesn't really tell you much, well maybe it does. So my mother made me this coat and I remember this lovely spring coat. It was a very pale gray tweed and it had little nubs of color, little colors. The colors were all pastel, little bumps all over this fabric. They were beautiful, pale lavender and pink and light green and blue and just sort of a capelet, a little cape on top of the shoulders. I remember that I couldn't wait for it to get warm enough to wear this wonderful treasure that my mother had made. When I finally -- it was time to wear to it my mother sewed this very ugly yellow star on my left shoulder and my left shoulder blade. And I protested vehemently and she simply told me not to discuss it. It was a fact and to ignore it.

Q: This was your first yellow star?

A: Yes.

Q: Then this was before you had seen that -- the embroidered picture?

A: Yes, yes. Well, the yellow stars became common. I also remember my mother coming home one day. She had a navy coat and it had a black fur collar, a shiny -- a seal. It must have been a seal collar or a black Persian , or I don't know, something, a black fur collar. When she came home -- and the coat had yellow stars on it -- when she returned home from wherever she had

been, the fur had been removed from her coat. She explained to our roommate that all fur had to be donated to the German army because they needed it. Of course, the coat was ruined. So I remember that. One day my mother came home and she had this young girl with her. She was a teenage girl and I was supposed to remember her, but I only vaguely remembered her. Apparently this girl had been a student of my father's in Warsaw. My mother, by chance, bumped into her somewhere in town and brought this girl whose name was Rya. She sat me on her lap and in her no nonsense sort of way, she said to me, you must go with Rya and when I can, I will come for you. When will you come for me? Crusscoov.

Q: You heard that one before?

A: Of course, my mother never came for me.

Q: Do you have any idea when this was? How many winters, for example, had passed since you had been wandering?

A: I know that this incident was at the very end of summer. It was probably the same summer which the preceding spring had brought the pretty coat and the yellow star experience and all that sort of thing.

Q: The same year that you had the incident with the picture, the embroidered picture?

A: Yes, probably although --. I would imagine that that was very close, those events were very close to each other. The events that I told you before, traveling with my father, the train, the bombing with the blankets over the head and all that; I think that was probably a year before. So that might have been, say 1941.

Q: Pretty good guess.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you see German soldiers?

A: Yes, yes. Well, of course, yes.

Q: More so than before?

A: Yes, I didn't really see a great deal of German soldiers when I was still with my mother, although yes, some.

Q: Any explosions, aircraft, bombings?

A: A lot, a lot. I told you about listening to my mother's knitting needles in bomb shelters and cellars and that sort of thing. That was nothing, that was daily, sometimes twice daily. Many times, that was --that was just ordinary. In fact, at one point, I was pushed down some stairs, or a ladder or something and my nose was broken. It wasn't even known until the next day that my nose was broken because we were in the dark. It wasn't until the light that my mother saw that I was completely bruised -- my nose had been shattered.

- Q: You were someplace in the western Ukraine, late summer, end of summer '41 and your mother is now giving you to this young woman who was also from Warsaw originally?
- A: No. Now I have to give you a little bit of background. First of all, Rya was no more than a teenager at that point. I would say, that at the most, she was 16 or 17. I would have been say five and a half, six. So Rya was, I don't know, ten years older. A little background... In the Ukraine, what I know of the Ukraine, there are little villages. Obviously, there are big towns but the countryside of the Ukraine was... This is another life, now I'm giving you history that I -- this is where I lived. There were little villages which were connected to each other by dirt roads. During the summer these roads were traversed by horse drawn carriage, not carriages but carts. The villages -- surrounding these villages were the farms. The land had been divided after the fall of the Czars, Czar, First World War, had been divided among the peasants. Previous to that, it was owned by the Church. So that now although the people were very religious and were very loyal to the village priest and they were very generous to him; he was no longer as wealthy and flamboyant as they had been during the time of the Czars, during White Russia. But because the peasants were religious, the priests lived a far better life than did the peasants. Now it's the Greek Orthodox Church, the Bible is in Greek. The priests marry and have families. The families were the intelligentsias, if you will, of the village. The children of the priests became the postmaster, the school teachers, the mayor, if there was such a thing. They sort of ran the community.
- Q: They could read and write?
- A: They could read and write. Some of them were very highly educated. The more wealthy was the priest, the better educated were his children. In order to be educated they were sent "abroad". Abroad meant great cities in Europe like Warsaw where this particular Rya, child of a priest in an Ukrainian village would up studying in Warsaw with my father. Apparently she took private lessons at home or somehow or other got home to meet my mother and became enamored of my mother and became a frequent visitor. I told you earlier about the generosity of my grandmother and her warmth and so forth, and I am sure that my mother befriended this young girl from the Ukraine in a similar sort of way, although this girl was not of peasant stock. But my mother liked her and they had a relationship. Therefore, when my mother bumped into her in town and explained our plight, Rya must have asked -- I had to have been a baby, less than four -- and Rya must have played with me or possibly babysat or whatever. So when my mother explained our plight and the possibilities of our disaster, Rya being an altruistic, kind and religious teenager said, well I'll take her home and hide her with me, without any thought to the consequences or to the reaction of her family or the possible danger to herself, her family, the entire village, the future, I mean, you know, nothing. She simply offered and my mother jumped at the opportunity. So my mother sent me off with a little package of clothing wrapped around a handkerchief, my teddy bear who was now significantly smaller than I was. I remember walking down the front steps. I remember my mother standing on the stairs saying don't turn around. Just go, walk through the gate and don't turn around, keep walking. Remember what I told you, remember what I told you. We walked through the -- down the stairs and through the garden. I remember that the garden was overgrown and unkempt and wilted and a great mass of jungle. It had been cultivated at one time. That's why I -- it was late summer. I remember walking with Rya holding my hand and I holding on to my teddy bear and Rya with the bundle. We walked out and I turned once to look at my mother and she was holding a handkerchief up to her face. She yelled again don't turn around, keep walking. That's my last memory of my mother. I don't even remember getting to the village or anything

about it. I don't remember arriving, I don't remember any of that.

Q: Had you remembered Rya from before? Or were you -- as far as you were concerned this was a stranger?

A: No, I might have -- I don't know, I really don't know. I don't remember whether I remembered then or...I was just an obedient child and I went... If my mother said she would come for me, she would come for me. If she said that I would be safe and I should go, that was it. I trusted my mother and I knew not to argue with my mother.

Q: Were you wearing your yellow star?

A: I don't know. I don't imagine so, I don't know. I'm not sure that that yellow star was on summer clothing. I think it might have only been on outerwear. I really don't recall that.

Q: But Rya knew you were Jewish?

A: Rya.

Q: Rya.

A: Yes, yes. So now we arrive in the village of the Ukraine. I'll describe the village to you. There was a dirt road through which you got to the village. When you got to the village, there were houses, there's one in these pictures somewhere. There's a man standing in front of it -- I was looking at it before and now I can't find it. It's kind of log cabins with thatched roofs. Why don't you turn that off for a moment and I'll look for the pictures?

Q: Sure.

A: There were houses like I pointed out to you with thatched roofs, log cabin kind of houses, but whitewashed; whitewashed log cabins. Then the road split like a wishbone. In the crook of the wishbone sat a small, white church with steps going up. It had a large door and two windows. When I looked at it, it looked like a clown face because it had a big window on each side of the door and the steps -- it looked like a clown with his tongue hanging out. It had a sharp point at the top of the cross with the slash underneath. The road went around it. Behind the church was a small cemetery with crosses, stone crosses. There was a legend that the cross of the priest whose family I was about to live with, that stone cross grew every year. The people were so superstitious and they had revered this particular priest to such a degree that these legends about him grew. Anyway, the houses continued as the road -- the two roads...

Q: Diverged.

A: Diverged, exactly behind the church. I would say that at the very most there were 30 to 50 houses. That was the entire town. On the left side behind our house, which was the most elegant house, it was a clapboard house, very different from the other cabins...Further back behind our house was a stream and then a forest. On the opposite side of town, to my right, as I was facing the church was a road that led out to the fields where all of the various wheat and grain and hemp and barley and whatever all was grown was. That was the entire town. There was no electricity, there were no automobiles, there were no telephones. The donation that I

made to you, I wrote a little piece to go with it. The little dress we grew our own hemp. We spun on a spinning wheel, we spun the yarn. It was loomed at home, on a loom. I sewed it by hand. Life was primitive. I am sure that it was no different than it had been two centuries before. That was the life of the village.

Q: Okay.

A: So I've described the village to you. Okay, the household. I mean I could describe our house. Very briefly, I'll tell you that life was centered for the most part around the kitchen, primarily because it was the warmest place. There was no central heating of any kind, in fact. There is usually a fireplace in one room and the wall against which the fireplace is in one room is the bed wall in the adjacent room simply because of the heat, you know, the warmth. There was one room which must have been the back of the kitchen, the wall behind where the oven where we baked our bread was. We used to sit in that room a great deal. Or if not sit, we would stand with our hands behind our back leaning on that warm wall. We would take turns because only one spot on the wall was really warm and so we would take turns. That was how our evenings were spent. We would tell stories. In fact, Rya devised a game. She would start a story. She would say Mirka and Vali were two beautiful children and they went on a picnic. When they got out to the woods a wolf suddenly jumped out from behind a tree and Mirka said ---, and she would point to me and I would have to pick up the story. Then I would take the story to some precipice and the next person would go on with it. This is how we entertained ourselves at night and then we would all go to sleep.

Q: Just you and Rya?

A: No and other members of the family.

Q: Were there other brothers...?

A: Yes, I'll tell you about that. That's how our evenings were spent. There wasn't much to the evening because we woke up to the roosters. They took off with the first light, they would crow. Life would start at five in the morning or whatever it was and I am sure we were all in bed and asleep by dark.

Q: Candlelight?

A: Kerosene, we had kerosene lamps. Okay, the members of the family. The priest had died some years before, two, three, five, I don't know. The wife of the priest was very highly revered in the town and she was, in fact, feared. She was spoken of in the third person, you know. Enormous respect was accorded her. She was spoken of in the way you speak of a -- almost a god or a monarch, or whatever. Very highly respected and revered. People paid court. There were obligatory visits that they had to make. They brought baskets of fruit, or whatever, to visit her. They would nod in our direction whether we were sitting by the window or not, nod toward our house as they walked by to pay respect, that sort of thing. Now she was a very bright woman. It was decided that my new identity was going to be that she was -- she spoke fluent Polish -- she was very well educated. She was fluent in Polish so my identity was going to be that she was Polish and had married the Ukrainian priest but she had a sister back in Poland and I was that sister's child. That was -- since I came from, I don't know where, wherever they had me come from in Poland, my Ukrainian was not perfect, my Russian was not

absolutely perfect, but that was the excuse. I was brought from the city of -- I was her niece, or her relative, or whatever and that was why my name was different. I didn't look exactly like them and that was my beard.

Q: You were given a new last name?

A: Yes, yes. So I had a new last name which was a Polish last name. Theirs was a Russian name, obviously. I remember only that my name was purported to have ended in ski whereas theirs ended in kvov which son of whatever as does ski, I think. In any case, so I was --well, it's irrelevant, okay, I won't give you all that. In any case, this woman had five children. The oldest was Ivan and Ivan was the son who really didn't take too terribly well to education. I don't think he was ever sent abroad. He was sort of more interested in farming. He was very practical, he was the farmer. He was huge, he had a moustache, he never smiled, he rolled his own cigarettes, he spat into a spittoon. You know, he was more like a peasant. He was very well liked and respected and he was like one of the boys and probably the head boy, you know. Then there was a middle son and he was very rebellious. He ultimately ran off to the forest and was with the partisans. In fact, I used to hide out by the woods when the Germans came. At one point, I was hidden in the hayloft, haystack rather. He once or twice came and gave me messages which I carried back. But I hardly remember him because he left. I don't even remember his name. I remember that his mother -- I remember his mother describing him to someone, and she said, and it's funny because it's an expression that I've used many times because it described him so well, it described his nature. She said that this middle son when he has a cause or feels strongly about something would fight until he was up to his knees in blood. I don't know whether that was a Russian saying but I've heard myself saying that in describing such a person, a kind of tenacious stubborn person. The youngest son was two years older than I was. His name was Vali and I was -- he and I slept in the same bed. I was, I don't know, five and a half, six; he was two years older. I can describe him perfectly. He was very tow headed. He had a cowlick in sort of in the wrong place. It was just above the widow's peak where his hairline began. He had a sort of a double cowlick with cowlicks going in opposite directions at that point. Because of that, his hair was almost shaved off. Because had it not been, it probably wouldn't have been able to sort of stay all in the same direction. So he has this Russian version of a crew cut. So those were the three sons. The two daughters were Rya, who I've already told you about and the older one whose name I really don't remember and whom I didn't get to know very well because she already worked and lived in, sort of in town. So she had some sort of office type job. Rya was the homemaker and Ivan was the farmer who grew the whatever, the provider and the man about the house. Vali was the kid and my playmate sort of, and the middle boy was the rebellious, I don't know, 14 year old he was, who ran off and joined the partisans and became what we called a Cossack. So that was the household. Now I was not received with any degree of love or kindness. I wasn't sheltered or shielded or loved at all. I was tolerated, I was respected and I was sort of taken care of but never with kindness, never with love. I was never complimented. If I did something very well, it was -- more than anything I had the feeling of resentment. Furthermore, I was from the city. I was urbane and Vali was a peasant. He had never been to the city. I described the building in which I lived which had four floors. He couldn't understand that there was a room above a room. I explained to him that it was like the attic where they dried their apple slices on a -- strung from one end to another -- and stored things. Also like the cellar where the cabbage slaw was kept and that, in fact, his house had three floors. But these were four floors of one above the other, bedrooms and, you know, apartments. I described one apartment building. He couldn't conceive of such a thing. He couldn't conceive of such a thing as chocolate either. So that when we were finally

invaded by the German army, the first time I was hidden in the haystack which I already mentioned. But then they went back and forth and in and out. They were, you know, driven out by the Russians and there was fighting back and forth. So they were there several times, in and out. At some point, I became very brazen and I wound up sitting on the laps of officers. They would pinch my cheeks, kiychy-koo and play with me and so forth and give me chocolate. I would then take the chocolate and give it to Vali. Until the mother found out about this and put a stop to it because it was, you know, absolutely life threatening. Well, anyway I never really had any love. I was incredibly lonely. I kept thinking about my mother. One day, it just occurred to me that she's not living and she'll never come back. Meanwhile the mother, Vali's mother, Rya's mother, was teaching me to read, to sew, to be a Ukrainian child, girl. Taught me all the things, how to spin, how to weave, how to sew, how to mend, how to cook a little bit although it was very difficult because of the primitive style of cooking in deep ovens with iron pots. You know, children couldn't physically manage that but everyone had jobs and mine was peeling the potatoes. In the time that I was there, in the two and a half years, I must have peeled ten truckloads of potatoes, that's all I did. I peeled potatoes. I read with the mother and at first she would read to me. She read me Bible stories. She would read to me and she would point to the words with her finger. I would watch her moving finger across the page and then she would turn the page and there would be a picture that related to the story. She would continue the story and I kind of fell in love with one story. I kept asking her to read it over and over. It was the story of the prodigal son. I don't know why I liked that one especially but somehow... So she read it over and over and then one day in the middle of the story, she sort of looked up and she said, you read, and I did. And not only did I read but -- maybe because I had heard that one so many times -- I understood it and I read it and we turn the page and went on to the next story. At one point we turned the page and there was a picture of little girls crossing a little bridge over a -- you know -- like a little stream. Hovering -- and there was a very sort of rickety little bridge, maybe a log, whatever it was, and it looked dangerous with the rushing water underneath. Hovering in flight with arms outstretched behind the little child was an angel with beautiful wings like a bird and a flowing gown. I said what is that and she explained to me about angels. I said everybody has an angel? She said every child has an angel to protect it. I said even Jewish children? She said yes, even Jewish children and even you. You have a very special angel. So that night I went to sleep and I woke up and I knew who my angel was. I was absolutely certain that my own angel was the infant Jesus and that I would be protected because I had a Jewish angel. No harm would come to me. I knew that I would be all right. I can tell you a lot of stories about life in that village. I was there two Christmases and three Easters or maybe the other way around. It's the other way around. One day, you're not going to believe this, you're not going to believe this... One day in the middle of the severest winter, a horse drawn sled came into town on the road, which was an event. I mean nothing came in the winter. Sometimes, you know, if the German army was there, the trucks came but we never saw anything like cars or.... In fact, once a car came and all the children of the village gathered around the car and stared at it as if it was a flying saucer.

Q: You had seen one before, hadn't you?

A: Well, I mean to me, it was cars, I mean it was nothing, I had been in cars. My grandfather had a yard full of big shiny black cars and I remember sitting on his lap and blowing the horn, it was outside the car, you know, one of those things you squeezed. I mean cars -- was nothing to me. I was a city child. I remember being fascinated watching all these children staring at the car like it was something really. But in any case, it was a great event in the middle of winter, a sled came from -- into town. Also a wagon, you know, a sled came from -- into town. Also a

wagon, you know, a sled pulled by a single horse with a bell and a guy huddled up and dressed in -- bundled with a whip. He came right to our house and Rya came to me and she said Mirka do you remember your uncle Jacob. This is a note from your uncle Jacob. He's waiting for you. I was put on the sled the next morning. That morning, Vali, the little boy who was two years older than I, disappeared and hid with my teddy bear. Finally the sled driver was anxious to leave and we could wait no longer and I had to leave without my teddy bear.

Q: For the first time in your life?

A: Yes. That teddy bear is alive and well and living in the Ukraine and I know that. Because that - that artifact would never be destroyed or discarded, never.

Q: They loved ____ teddy bears?

A: I know that teddy bear is living and well somewhere in the Ukraine. So several hours later, by sled, we got into town and a tall extremely handsome man with a moustache and dark hair; he looked kind of like Clark Gable or possibly..... No, no even more distinguished than that, not as romantic a figure but the one who -- what was that great war movie, Mrs. Miniver, who was the husband of Mrs. Miniver? Not Gregory Peck, Walter Pidgeon. So my uncle Jacob, looking like Walter Pidgeon, in black shiny boots, very natty, very straight like a soldier, lifted me out of the wagon and set me down. I looked up at him, up, up, up; he was so tall. He said, do you remember me? I said, of course, you're uncle Jacob. How do you remember me? And he carried me into the house and I told him the story of when the horse kicked him in the chest.

Q: Those were the days.

A: Well, uncle Jacob and I traveled around Europe. We went to a number of capitols. I remember that we went to -- I think we were in four or five countries. We traveled by those same railroad cars, looking for survivors. We lived in rooms that were incredibly cold. I'd like to tell you about one experience but first I'm sure you'd like to know how it was that uncle Jacob found this needle in the haystack hidden in a village in the Ukraine when he had been in Siberia. So now I'll tell you a story that you will not believe. Uncle Jacob left Siberia where he had been put in charge because he was, I had told you before he was so trustworthy and efficient and good at everything, so he had been put in charge of the food supply, mainly the meat. He was the head butcher in charge of -- he never touched the meat but he was in charge of all the food. With the little bit of black marketing and finagling that he did, he was able to fill several suitcases or bundles with goods, ladies' silk underwear... I don't know where he got all this stuff. I'm sure they were payoffs for favors or whatever but as we traveled around Europe later, after he found me, those suitcases got lighter and lighter because their contents is what kept us fed.

Q: That was your money?

A: That was our money. He also kept a journal. Unfortunately, at one point, we had to cross a border where I was told that I was to play the part of a deaf mute since we were going -- I didn't speak the language of wherever we were going. He was so fearful that he burned the journal and it was the history of the entire war, day by day, from the time he left Warsaw. So unfortunately a great treasure was -- and I watched that burn, I watched that burn. That was a daily log. Anyway Jacob left Siberia and traveled until he -- traveled to many places. At one

point he wound up in this town.

Q: The town that's near the village where you had been staying?

A: Yes. The way the Jews -- there were no train schedules, you know. People would -- if they wanted to go east, they went to the platform where the train was heading east was going and they sat on the platform for a day, for an hour, for a week, whatever, until the train came. When the train came, they boarded the train and they went east. When the train stopped, they got off or they kept going or whatever and that's how people got around. So there were always people sitting on the platform. They were going either east or west or wherever they were going, north, south, waiting, sitting on platforms. Well, apparently, Jacob got off the platform and I have already described to you that he was extremely handsome, very nattily dressed, which was very unusual, highly unusual. So this handsome guy gets off the train with two bulging suitcases and the women were extremely attracted to him. He began to talk to a woman who was waiting for a train which was going east -- in the opposite direction -- into, towards Siberia. Is that east?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay.

Q: The direction from whence he had come.

A: From whence he had come. So he gets off the train, he's on the platform, he begins to chat with this woman. What is your name? That woman was the only human being who knew my whereabouts. She was the woman who had shared the room with me and my mother.

Q: Before your mother gave you to Rya?

A: Yes. Had her train come first---. It was absolute sheer chance! He said Berliner, my mother had changed her name, she was no longer using her married name because she was so disillusioned with her husband, my father. So she had gone back to her name, Berliner. This woman said oh your name is Jacob Berliner. My dear friend was Berliner. My uncle -- I'm hearing this -- apparently fainted. Her train came. She got on the train and disappeared. He wasn't sure what niece. He didn't get all the facts. He knew the village, he knew a child. He thought it might be me but it could have been any number of his nieces. He didn't know. He fainted. I don't know how long he was on the platform. Anyway, he was found passed out by someone who I think was also a priest. He was taken home to that person's house, maybe because he looked wealthy, I don't know whatever. In any case, apparently he was sick, delirious, ill, I don't know, whatever for a number of days. In that time, he told us later that he had a dream. In the dream, he dreamed he was back in Warsaw, it was before the war. He was wearing his tails and top hat because he had come from a ball or gone to the opera, or whatever it was. He was walking along the street with his walking stick and as he got near the street lamp, gas lit street lamp, he heard the clippety clop of an oncoming carriage. It was a very foggy night and out of the fog approached this horse drawn black carriage. He tried to peer inside but he couldn't see because of the fog but it stopped right under the street lamp. A woman leaned forward and she was all dressed in white. Here comes the lump in the throat. It was my mother, his young sister. She said, Yacov, take care of my child. He knew who it was and it was the next day that he sent this sled to get me.

Q: She was your guardian angel?

A: Perhaps, you're right, perhaps you're right.

Q: So that it was on a hunch, limited information, and a dream?

A: And a dream. An absolute meeting by chance. Two trains coming from different directions – people chatting on a platform. It wouldn't have happened if he was raggedy like all the rest but he was so natty and so attractive and this woman began to -- she was attracted to him and began to chat with him. I just want to tell you that when I was born, apparently I was a very sickly infant. The story goes that I couldn't be cured. I apparently had all of the childhood diseases, all at the same time. Anyway I was given up for dead. I had everything including whooping cough, all at the same time. They gave me up, this child will never live. Finally my mother in desperation said well, then she'll die at home. She took me out of the hospital away from the specialists and so forth and took me home to a room that she had painted white, everything including the floor. She had prepared this room for me. She took me into this room and no one was allowed in the room. She cared for me herself. No one could come into the room until her brother Jacob came. She said to him, Jacob, I know this sounds ridiculous. Everything has been done for my child and my child is given up for dead. There are no more medical cures. I know you'll think it's silly but there's one last thing that we haven't done. We haven't tried to fool the dybbuk, the dybbuk wants my child. He says tell me, I'll do anything. My mother said, we must fool the dybbuk into thinking this is a different child. He said well what, what should we do? So she said to him, well I will sell you this child and you will give her a new name and she'll be yours and then the dybbuk won't want her anymore because it's not the child that the dybbuk wants. He said all right. How much do you want for her? She said well what is a child's life worth? Give me your hat. He took off his hat. She said okay take this hat, fill it with pennies, bring it back and I will give you my child. So he went and he filled the hat with pennies and he came back and he bought me. She said, Jacob, what is your child's name? He said her name is Chai Berliner. Chai because it means life. And I survived and I got well. So I was very precious to Jacob. All that bubba meinsa fits, you see. It just was meant that Jacob would find me. All right, so Jacob and I traveled. We stayed in all kinds of places. There was one time I remember, he woke me very early in the morning. We were in a room somewhere. We had slept -- it was so cold. I used to sleep on top of him, huddled on top of his chest, snuggled up. I was tiny, teeny. He woke me, he said quickly get up, we must get dressed. But Wujaszek I called him Wujaszek, wujak in Polish is uncle, wujaszek is diminutive, a loving --. But Wujaszek, but it's still dark, it's so cold, I can't get dressed. He said here you dress inside the bed, under the covers. While you dress, I'll get you the milk. I have milk. He reached for the milk which was sitting in a bottle on the corner but the bottle was full and it had -- the milk had frozen and the bottle had cracked.

Q: But it was still frozen?

A: Yes, but it was still frozen. That's how cold our room was. Anyway we dressed and he said come we must go to the market. To the market, why are we going to the market? It's the middle of the night. He said, come, we must rush, we must run. He explained nothing. I dressed and we walked and walked and walked. It was still dark and we got to the market in the first light of morning. Instead of the usual stalls, the farmers selling their produce, there were just hundreds and hundreds of people in this cobblestone marketplace. As the morning dawned, Jacob said I'm going to put you on my shoulders. I want you to watch and no matter how

horrible the sight, I want you to keep your eyes open and watch. I said, Wujaszek, what am I going to see? Why are we here? He said they've caught some German officers and they are going to hang them and I want you to watch. Why? He said because I don't want you to have any hate. The man you're going to see hanged is the man who murdered your mother. He sat me on his shoulders and I watched three men being hung. He just didn't want me to hate. He wanted it all to -- he wanted me to be healthy -- to let it all out in this one traumatic, ugly, horrible experience.

Q: How did he know that this officer killed your mother? Did he know where your mother had been?

A: Obviously he didn't. It was just, just --

Q: Therapy?

A: It was just therapy. It was his way. There was no connection whatsoever. He just didn't want me to hate anyone. I have to admit 50 years later that it didn't work. I can't hear German spoken without -- it didn't work. He used to leave me alone in the room. He would say, here's food, here's my watch. I'm going to be gone for eight hours. I'll be back at seven o'clock. I want you to sit here and listen to the radio. Here's paper and pencil. Just listen. If you hear -- don't change the station -- it's on just the station. Listen carefully, if anything sounds familiar, write it down. I would listen all day to coded messages, messages like Wujaszek is searching for the little girl who untied his shoelaces -- only usually shorter. Or there would be lists of names. The following are documented to have died in Treblinka and then an hour of names. He would come home, what do you have? While I was doing that, he was going to various agencies, searching and looking and authenticating and documenting deaths and looking for survivors. There were none. Finally one day he said that's it. We got into one of those boxcars of which there is a photograph that I gave you. It's only many years later in the United States that I realized what was written on the exterior of that boxcar. It's in English and in Hebrew. It says "To Liberty." And "From Auschwitz to New York." You know when I arrived in the United States I didn't speak any English whatsoever. I knew two words; they were okay and I reasoned that if okay meant yes then obviously nokay meant no.

Q: The little schooling you had would have been...?

A: The little schooling I had was at the knee of the Ukrainian mother. A little bit of schooling in the village but only until it got too cold for me to walk barefoot to the school because I had no shoes. Then in the D.P. camp to which we went in that boxcar and the D.P. camp was in Munich. We were in the D.P. camp for, I can't tell you how long, maybe a year or more. In the D.P. camp, Jacob had the job of being in charge of the social hall which meant he was the electrician, the plumber; he set up the chairs, he took them down, he was the stage manager and he was the emcee of all the various goings on. Being handsome and charming and witty, he was the perfect emcee. I went to school in the morning but school was mostly the learning of Hebrew. Because most of the people in the D.P. camp, all of them, were going to Palestine. It was kind of embarrassing or shameful to admit that we were going to America. So I went to school and studied Hebrew. When I came to the United States, I spoke Polish, Russian, Ukrainian. I could understand Greek, a little bit of Hebrew, a little bit of German and somewhat more, I was able to understand but not speak fluently, Yiddish. If I'm not mistaken, that's seven languages.

Q: Had you known any Yiddish before?

A: Well, my grandparents in their home spoke Yiddish and Polish so I heard it. There was no Yiddish spoken between my parents. Of course, I heard it after my experience in the Ukraine as we were displaced persons traveling from place to place. I left out one part of the story and I will tell it to you as briefly as I can. The one part of my story which I never really told and the reason I'm telling you now is that earlier today, I told it in front of my children. It's the first time my children ever heard it. So now I feel at liberty to tell it to the world. It's not something of which I'm proud of but it's a significant part of my life. My father left us. I can't with all honesty say that he deserted us. But it sure felt that way. My father was a blue-eyed blond. My father was a linguist, he was fluent in German and he could pass. Whereas, he promised to send for us, he didn't. It could easily have been impossible. It's not something I'll ever know. But I resented my father and when my mother became Berliner again, changing her name back to her maiden name, I simply went along with that. I went along with my mother's attitude about my father which wasn't generous. It wasn't severe or bad either but their last months together were not affectionate. So I felt that my father had betrayed and deserted me throughout the war and I never thought about him. In the D.P. camp, while Jacob was working at the duties in the social hall which was an all day and evening job, I went to school in the morning where I studied Hebrew. Then when school ended in the morning, I would have lunch with Jacob and then I was free in the afternoon. Now Jacob told me that we were going to go to America on a ship across a big ocean. The ship would sway back and forth and there was a good possibility that I would be seasick. I had never been seasick but he described it. To avoid that, it would be a wonderful idea if I acclimated myself to the swaying motion by going to the playground and spending my time on the swings. So I spent every afternoon on the swings. Now the swings faced a cyclone fence. On the opposite side of the fence, this was Munich, there was a bench, a bus stop and in the afternoon a bus would come. Now I sat on the swings, swinging back and forth every day. Every day about an hour before the bus came, or half an hour, an old woman would come and she would sit on the bench and she would take out of her bag, a little package of crumbs. She would throw the crumbs to the little birds, pigeons, or whatever it was. She would turn around and she would nod to me. This happened afternoon after afternoon so finally we began to chat. Then one day she said to me, why are you spending so much time on the swings? So I explained I'm going on a long voyage on a ship. I'm going to America and I know that I'm going to get seasick and I explained the whole thing. She said, you know, I have a brother in America. Some day, I'm going to go to my brother when my quota number comes up. I said well if you're going to go on a ship, then you will be wise to get acclimated to the swaying also. From then on, instead of feeding the birds and sitting on the bench, she would come inside and she would sit on the swings. We would swing back and forth criss-crossing each other and chatting away. One day as displaced persons do, we began to talk about our backgrounds.. She began to ask me questions. What is your name, who are you, where are you from? I told her about my life before the blitzkrieg in Warsaw, my father had been a violinist and a violin teacher. She said tell me his name. I told her his name. The next day she returned and we sat on the swings and she said to me, tell me, do you have any marks on your body? Anything that could identify you? Anything that's different from anything that anybody in the world has? I said yes. I have a beauty mark on my right forearm, shoulder. When I was a little girl, my grandfather used to tease me by making believe he took the beauty mark off my right forearm until I began to cry. Then he'd say, don't cry, don't cry, I'll give it back. Then he would give it back to me on my left forearm or shoulder and I would look and there it would be. So she left and came back the next day and she said, that was a very interesting story about your grandfather but isn't there anything else on your body, any scars,

anything that's different and unique? I said well, I don't like to talk about it but we have a family trait and I was born with it also. We have six toes. My uncle Jacob has six toes on one foot. When I was born, I had six toes on each foot. They were surgically removed and I have a scar on each foot. The next day the woman came and brought my father. I don't know where he survived but I think in Germany. Well my father insisted that I stay with him but we were going to sail two weeks hence. Having waited for our quota number, having found the uncle in America. I mean all of these -- years of waiting and uncle Jacob said absolutely not. They argued and uncle Jacob had the same resentment or appeared to have the same resentment towards my father that my mother had had. I didn't show him great warmth.

Q: Did you recognize him?

A: Oh, of course, of course. So they argued and finally uncle Jacob said to me, okay, it's her choice. Of course I insisted on going to America. Well about a year later, my father followed me and he knew where we were. By the time he came a year later I had begun to -- I had not begun -- I had succeeded to a great extent in assimilating into American life, just like the chameleon I learned to be in the Ukraine. I did, once again, of necessity, in the United States.. I had arrived here on June 24. By September, I was in school. On my first day of school, I called the teacher outside and said to her something like I am greenhorn, do not call on me, I will not answer. When I am ready, I will raise my hand. Then you call me. Shake? We shook hands and she never called on me until I raised my hand only a very short time later. I remember the amazement of the class and the round of applause. I even remember the question and the answer.

Q: Garbo talks.

A: Something like that. Anyway, suddenly my father shows up and he wants to take me back -- he wants to make an immigrant of me again. He doesn't speak a word of English, I'm going to be living again with displaced persons who've just arrived somewhere in Brooklyn, where I have a life. My name is Berliner. I'm starting to have friends. I speak English, I've grown, having gone from the smallest child in the class to the tallest, all in one semester. I'm appearing in their amateur hour and winning a prize doing my krazotsky and singing Russian songs. Suddenly he wants to take me -- he wants to turn the clock around, back to when I'm going to be da greena, look, the greena! Which was pejorative. Of course, 50 years of time have turned the greena a pejorative into the survivor. This exalted, you know as if I did something phenomenal, I simply lived. Just like that little dress, that schmata that I've had for 50 years today became an artifact.

Q: Just a dress.

A: No, it was a schmata, trust me, a schmata. Now they have it hermetically sealed or G__ knows what and it'll be there for a thousand years or whatever, in a museum. Oh my G__, it's incredible what 50 years will do. But there was my father and he wanted to undo the year of very hard adjustment. So I said no. He argued with my aunt and uncle. I now was living with the rich uncle in America and his American wife and going to school in Forest Hills, Long Island, P.S.3. My teacher was Mrs Riskin and the principal was Mrs. Morris. My G__, how do you remember all that Miki? Anyway I didn't want to go back with my father. My father persisted and now my birthday came and my father sent me a gift. Actually a very beautiful gift. A box of oil paints and brushes. However he addressed it Mirka -- I still can't say it, his

last name -- in care of Berlinrer. I was mortified because the mailman knew and the doorman might know. The girl who lived on the floor below might find out. Everyone might find out and oh my G____, it's all going -- he's going to turn it all around for me. They'll start to point at me again and I'll be da greena again. And there was huge arguments between my aunt and uncle and my father who persisted. Then my uncle offered my father the -- he said he wanted to legally adopt me. It didn't mean that my father couldn't have a relationship with me, we could have any relationship that we mutually wanted. I could visit him, I could go on a travel with him or whatever. But he wanted to legally adopt me to give me the benefits of his moderate wealth and American citizenship and so forth. Of course my father refused. The arguments went back and forth. Then one day my father sent a letter which named a sum of money for which he would sign the adoption papers. That caused my aunt and uncle to tell him to get lost. Consequently, I was not adopted until I was 21. Now I already told you the story of the chocolate bar and how the UNRRA gave the monthly packages and the family who had a child under ten received the added chocolate bar. So my uncle Jacob registered me as being a year younger. Consequently, I was really, in fact, 22 when I became free to sign the papers myself and I became a citizen in that year. I was also engaged to my husband who gave me an engagement ring on the very anniversary of my arrival in the United States which was June 24.

Q: That was the anniversary_____?

A: Exactly, well yes, this is June 12. It's really strange that so many events and things have happened to me in June. Today was a wonderful day and a very beautiful weekend at which I have my family with me. My husband, my daughter Mural, my daughter-in-law, Gina and my son Andy. We are staying in a beautiful suite, in a lovely hotel in Washington and the sun is shining. And I've survived the ordeal of this tape and life is wonderful.

Q: Let's hope it remains so.

A: Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you. This is still June 12, 1992 and we're about to add a postscript to our interview.

A: Yes, a tiny anecdote which might help to clarify the date. My uncle and I and his two suitcases were somewhere. It was in the middle of winter and we were in a tiny railroad station. It wasn't a big city railroad station. There weren't platforms, you know train platforms. It was a track and there was a little tiny building and inside the building it was just one room smaller, or perhaps the size of this room which is 12 by 20 or 15 or something like that. In the corner, there was a potbelly stove and there was a desk and on the desk was one of those tick-tick machines, what is that? A telegraph, right. Okay, thank you. There was a guy who sat huddled up next to the pot-bellied stove with this telegraph machine. In the back of the room, sitting on the floor, when we came in from a blizzard, walked into this building... I don't know where we came from, I don't remember how we got there. I know it was a blizzard...

Q: This was shortly after you had been taken...?

A: After he found me, okay, and we were going somewhere. We were going to wait for a train. The train is going somewhere and we're going to wait for a train. It's night, it's a blizzard. It's night, it's cold, it's freezing. We walk from whatever conveyance brought us to this station. I remember seeing the little building with the light inside and so forth. Anyway we walk in, a

blizzard of snow flies in with us. There's this guy sitting at the desk and there are maybe half a dozen people who look like ruffians, men, very rough looking characters sitting on the floor. Some are smoking, and they are sort of lounging on the floor on bundles, obviously waiting for the train. We walk in and Jacob is very well dressed and he has these two important looking suitcases and this little child all bundled up. We walk in and there was one other item which I forgot, extremely important. The guy at the desk has this telegraph machine and a small radio with a great deal of static and he's listening to this radio. We come in and we sit separate from these rough looking men. Jacob goes and talks to the man and explains to him that we want to get on the train. The man argues with Jacob and says no, no, you can't get on the train. They argue back and forth. Jacob offers him goods, whatever, he'll pay. The man says no, no. Jacob says what about these men? No, they're going to sit on top of the cars on the roof of the cars and you have a child and those boxes and you can't... Jacob pleads with him and suddenly the radio starts crackling and the man says, quiet, quiet, listen. They all listen and suddenly the men jump up and run to the radio and they crowd around and I have no idea what is going on. The static and the men are all excited and suddenly they all begin to cheer, Warsaw is liberated!

Q: That would have been January 1945.

A: G___ bless you, thank you so much. Isn't it wonderful, it's so great. You see, I really belong in history! Anyway, Jacob opened one of his suitcases and he took out the most treasured of all the possessions, a bottle of vodka! We passed it around, everybody drank from it, these ruffians...

Q: Did you?

A: No. The ruffians became our best friends. Suddenly in the middle of this revelry, we heard the train, toot, toot. The train came and we all rushed outside and the man behind the desk said to Jacob, listen these men are going on the roof. But if you will do it, you can stand in front of the locomotive. There's a little guardrail. You'll stand, hold on to the guardrail. Your little girl will stand in front of you. Put your coat around her. Remember, we'll tie the suitcases on front of the locomotive and remember you're going to be heading directly into the storm. I don't guarantee that you won't freeze to death but if you want this train, that's it. We got on the front of the locomotive. Jacob -- I stood in front of him against the guardrail. Jacob's coat was wrapped around me. I leaned against him. The train took off into this blinding snowstorm and I don't know where we went but we were happy.

Q: You know this scene reminds me of you and your mother and David on the truck, not knowing where you were going.

A: It's the same, it's the same. But you see, I fit into this context of time, that's so exciting! I am so excited. I can't tell you, it's so important. January 1945. Fantastic!

Q: How long had you been in this village? You were liberated shortly before this date?

A: Yes, because it was winter, it's all winter, right?

Q: Yes. You were there two and a half years?

A: Yeah,

Q: So that would have been, let's see, sometime in '42, summer.

A: Summer of '42. My G___ it sounds like a movie with Elvis Presley or somebody, I don't know, whatever. That's it.

Q: That was our anecdote and postscript.

A: Thank you so much.

A: Thank you so much.

Q: Thank you so much again.