

YANINA NAYMAN  
RG-50.405.0035. (rec. 1990 Chicago)

Yanina was born in 1962 in Gomel, Byelorussia to a father who taught physics and astronomy in a public school and a mother who was an engineer in a candy and cookie factory. She notes that her family had few Jewish traditions but her maternal grandmother was very religious and kept kosher. She did have matzoh during Passover and they did celebrate holidays at home. She knew about the Holocaust but not much Jewish history before that. She lived in the same 2 room apartment until she came to the US. She describes her grandparents' lives and how they were evacuated during WWII.

Yanina's mother died when Yanina was 13 from a botched abortion. It was common to have abortions even though they were illegal, because no contraceptives were available. Yanina went to music institute for piano studies. She met her husband Kim through family members and was married at 21. They had one child, Katya, born in 1984.

Yanina describes how the government didn't say anything about the nuclear accident at Chernobyl for a while. When they found out about it, they sent Katya to her mother in law in Minsk and she stayed indoors for a month. Then she was sent to Leningrad. They had to be very careful about the food they bought.

In 1988 they received an invitation from relatives to emigrate to Israel. They wanted to go to the US so they waited until they were granted refugee status. She describes the process of getting that status. Now Kim works 2 jobs in Chicago and Yanina is looking for work. Two Jewish families from Temple Ch'al are helping them settle into American life She also mentions help from the Jewish community and from Jenny Spillane.