

G. P.

RG-50.405.0037. (recorded 1990 in Chicago)

G.P. is a mechanical engineer born 1946 in Minsk. He married A.P. in 1973 and they have a daughter (1974) and a son (1978) His mother was a research biologist in a botanic garden. His father was one of nine children. He has a much younger brother. His mother's family was very religious and he remembers secret prayer services at his home as a child. His paternal grandparents were killed during WWII. His mother was in Leningrad during the war during the siege and saw many of her friends die. She moved back to Minsk after the war.

G.P. talks about the antisemitism in the government and in school. He went to technical school because Jews weren't able to get into higher education. He talked about how oral exams made it difficult for Jews to get into Universities. He did post graduate work on heat and mass transfer, but had to leave school and abandon his thesis after his mentor died.

He describes the difficult 10 years between the time he and his wife tried to leave Russia and their final ability to leave in 1988. He states it was a terrible time for the family when he and his wife lost jobs and the children suffered in school. He talks about how the government kept their eye on everyone and knew everything about you, even if you went to a concert of Jewish music in your childhood. He talks about the Gorbachev era and how he didn't really change things. G.P. says he was always afraid living in Russia.