

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:26,080

2
00:00:26,080 --> 00:00:30,080
So tell me when you were born.

3
00:00:30,080 --> 00:00:33,550
I was born in 1924.

4
00:00:33,550 --> 00:00:39,430
I was born in the small
coastal town on the Baltic Sea.

5
00:00:39,430 --> 00:00:45,730
In those days it was
called Memel, M-E-M-E-L.

6
00:00:45,730 --> 00:00:53,830
Rather old town with
a German culture.

7
00:00:53,830 --> 00:01:01,720
Was on the northernmost point
of the last German Empire.

8
00:01:01,720 --> 00:01:04,849
After World War II
it became known as--

9
00:01:04,849 --> 00:01:09,940
I mean after World War I
became known as Klaipeda.

10
00:01:09,940 --> 00:01:12,790
And when I was born,
it was no longer

11
00:01:12,790 --> 00:01:15,880
German territory but
Lithuanian territory

12

00:01:15,880 --> 00:01:20,390
which Hitler took back in 1939.

13
00:01:20,390 --> 00:01:26,210
And tell me your recollections
of the start of the war.

14
00:01:26,210 --> 00:01:30,070

15
00:01:30,070 --> 00:01:39,000
Start of the war I guess we
could put a point in time

16
00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:50,230
as 1940, 1941 after we had
had a short Russian occupation

17
00:01:50,230 --> 00:01:51,760
in Kovno--

18
00:01:51,760 --> 00:01:53,860
by short may have
lasted a year--

19
00:01:53,860 --> 00:01:56,470

20
00:01:56,470 --> 00:02:03,130
the collapse of the
Molotov-Ribbentrop

21
00:02:03,130 --> 00:02:15,710
Pact of Nonaggression and the
entry of the German troops,

22
00:02:15,710 --> 00:02:19,160
I'm not even sure
of the month or year

23
00:02:19,160 --> 00:02:26,280
but I might say maybe June 1941.

24

00:02:26,280 --> 00:02:30,350

What did you personally hear
or see when they came in?

25

00:02:30,350 --> 00:02:33,800

What do you remember?

26

00:02:33,800 --> 00:02:43,940

The night preceding the
advance of the German troops

27

00:02:43,940 --> 00:02:49,640

on their motorcycles and
probably armored cars,

28

00:02:49,640 --> 00:02:58,350

but the night before there
was a lot of artillery noise

29

00:02:58,350 --> 00:03:04,260

that seemed to be coming
from the airport in Kovno,

30

00:03:04,260 --> 00:03:07,380

just a very ominous sound.

31

00:03:07,380 --> 00:03:14,490

And I think most people,
Jews and Gentiles alike, Jews

32

00:03:14,490 --> 00:03:22,440

and Lithuanians alike, were
aware that the German army was

33

00:03:22,440 --> 00:03:29,250

going to march in that week.

34

00:03:29,250 --> 00:03:32,640

And what about before
the Germans came,

35

00:03:32,640 --> 00:03:38,000

the pogroms that took place,
did you see any of those?

36
00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:41,840
No, I didn't see any pogroms.

37
00:03:41,840 --> 00:03:46,030
But I don't even recall
hearing about them

38
00:03:46,030 --> 00:03:48,460
before the German occupation.

39
00:03:48,460 --> 00:03:53,780
I think all that happened
after the German occupation.

40
00:03:53,780 --> 00:03:54,710
Tell me about it.

41
00:03:54,710 --> 00:03:57,700
Tell me what you know about it.

42
00:03:57,700 --> 00:03:58,475
Mostly rumors.

43
00:03:58,475 --> 00:04:02,260

44
00:04:02,260 --> 00:04:05,410
Well, I do remember that
the house we were living

45
00:04:05,410 --> 00:04:09,340
in then we only had a small
room that we were renting

46
00:04:09,340 --> 00:04:16,720
at the time in a part of Kovno
that was called Zalias Kalnas,

47
00:04:16,720 --> 00:04:22,000

meaning The Green Mountain.

48
00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:25,210
And it was an apartment house.

49
00:04:25,210 --> 00:04:28,640

50
00:04:28,640 --> 00:04:35,770
There were two young students
living in the basement,

51
00:04:35,770 --> 00:04:40,600
and even though I
didn't know them well,

52
00:04:40,600 --> 00:04:50,710
I had just a very casual
passing-in-the-corridor

53
00:04:50,710 --> 00:04:52,120
acquaintance with them.

54
00:04:52,120 --> 00:04:55,210
And they told me the day
before the occupation

55
00:04:55,210 --> 00:05:03,770
that they had planned on
escaping with the Russians who

56
00:05:03,770 --> 00:05:06,680
were in retreat.

57
00:05:06,680 --> 00:05:16,100
And so there was actually
a very, very panic-stricken

58
00:05:16,100 --> 00:05:20,750
Jewish population trying to
decide whether it was better

59

00:05:20,750 --> 00:05:23,990
to run or to stay.

60
00:05:23,990 --> 00:05:31,475
And during this mad rush to
get out were the Russians.

61
00:05:31,475 --> 00:05:37,540

62
00:05:37,540 --> 00:05:42,070
I think at that point already
the Lithuanian partisans

63
00:05:42,070 --> 00:05:51,770
went into action and just fell
upon some innocent victims who

64
00:05:51,770 --> 00:05:53,590
were trying to escape.

65
00:05:53,590 --> 00:05:56,620
But I think the
real partisan mass

66
00:05:56,620 --> 00:06:03,340
murders came after the
Russians had finally retreated

67
00:06:03,340 --> 00:06:12,410
and life resumed some normalcy
for those who had stayed

68
00:06:12,410 --> 00:06:14,730
behind, but not for long.

69
00:06:14,730 --> 00:06:18,540

70
00:06:18,540 --> 00:06:20,520
What do you mean
by "not for long"?

71

00:06:20,520 --> 00:06:27,290

Well, at that point, rumors--

72

00:06:27,290 --> 00:06:32,630

Before there even
was talk of a ghetto,

73

00:06:32,630 --> 00:06:37,490

we heard about
people in the city

74

00:06:37,490 --> 00:06:42,200

who had been abducted
from their homes

75

00:06:42,200 --> 00:06:50,330

by willing Lithuanian so-called
partisans who also ransacked

76

00:06:50,330 --> 00:06:59,960

the homes, would round up
mostly men and either taunt

77

00:06:59,960 --> 00:07:04,190

and torture them or shoot them.

78

00:07:04,190 --> 00:07:08,060

I didn't see any of
this with my own eyes

79

00:07:08,060 --> 00:07:15,260

because I have no idea whether
the suburb that we lived in

80

00:07:15,260 --> 00:07:18,600

was more protected than
the rest of the city,

81

00:07:18,600 --> 00:07:23,820

but no, I have no knowledge
of seeing with my own eyes

82

00:07:23,820 --> 00:07:31,130
the brutal acts of the
Lithuanian partisans.

83
00:07:31,130 --> 00:07:32,810
But you heard about
it at the time.

84
00:07:32,810 --> 00:07:33,950
Yes.

85
00:07:33,950 --> 00:07:38,240
And so how did you hear about
it and what action did you take?

86
00:07:38,240 --> 00:07:40,830

87
00:07:40,830 --> 00:07:42,870
No action.

88
00:07:42,870 --> 00:07:46,470
In our case, we were
a family of three.

89
00:07:46,470 --> 00:07:52,390
I'm an only child, and
my mother was suffering

90
00:07:52,390 --> 00:07:56,710
the consequences
of a recent stroke

91
00:07:56,710 --> 00:08:03,730
and was quite incapacitated.

92
00:08:03,730 --> 00:08:07,820
I can't say that she was
totally incapacitated,

93
00:08:07,820 --> 00:08:10,960
but she had to be cared for.

94

00:08:10,960 --> 00:08:14,510

95

00:08:14,510 --> 00:08:18,700

So even if we had
wanted to escape,

96

00:08:18,700 --> 00:08:22,300

it would not have been feasible.

97

00:08:22,300 --> 00:08:25,640

That would not have
been practical.

98

00:08:25,640 --> 00:08:29,650

So we stayed in this
little room and consulted

99

00:08:29,650 --> 00:08:40,030

with all the other neighbors
and everybody was panic-stricken

100

00:08:40,030 --> 00:08:44,090

but not really
knowing what to do.

101

00:08:44,090 --> 00:08:49,430

And tell me about the
formation of the ghetto.

102

00:08:49,430 --> 00:09:03,610

Well, as soon as the German I
guess military administration

103

00:09:03,610 --> 00:09:08,860

was formed, all the racial
laws against the Jews

104

00:09:08,860 --> 00:09:15,730

were put into effect, the racial
laws, the Nuremberg laws that

105

00:09:15,730 --> 00:09:18,520
had already been
implemented in Germany

106
00:09:18,520 --> 00:09:21,080
and other occupied countries.

107
00:09:21,080 --> 00:09:27,850
And I can be more
specific and mention

108
00:09:27,850 --> 00:09:34,500
that none of the Jewish
academicians or professionals

109
00:09:34,500 --> 00:09:37,920
were allowed to go
about their work.

110
00:09:37,920 --> 00:09:43,290
The doctors were not allowed to
practice medicine unless they

111
00:09:43,290 --> 00:09:46,170
were seeing Jewish patients.

112
00:09:46,170 --> 00:09:50,220
Lawyers were dismissed
from their firms

113
00:09:50,220 --> 00:09:58,170
and professors were dismissed
from their academic positions.

114
00:09:58,170 --> 00:10:06,540
And a curfew was instituted
I think at 6 o'clock

115
00:10:06,540 --> 00:10:10,200
all the Jews had to
be in their homes.

116
00:10:10,200 --> 00:10:14,280

The yellow star, the
wearing of the yellow star

117
00:10:14,280 --> 00:10:17,670
was made mandatory.

118
00:10:17,670 --> 00:10:27,400
That was a piece of yellow
cloth shaped like a star.

119
00:10:27,400 --> 00:10:36,230
And this started to be
worn on the outer clothing,

120
00:10:36,230 --> 00:10:44,130
on the left-hand side of the
chest, as well as on the back.

121
00:10:44,130 --> 00:10:50,400
It had to be firmly sewn
on versus being pinned on,

122
00:10:50,400 --> 00:10:59,960
which could always indicate the
intention to escape or blend

123
00:10:59,960 --> 00:11:02,150
with the general population.

124
00:11:02,150 --> 00:11:07,850
Also, Jews were made to walk
in the street or in the gutter.

125
00:11:07,850 --> 00:11:10,970
They were not allowed
to walk on the sidewalk.

126
00:11:10,970 --> 00:11:13,685
And all the men had to--

127
00:11:13,685 --> 00:11:35,420

128

00:11:35,420 --> 00:11:39,860
Let's just back up to what
happened to the men taking off

129

00:11:39,860 --> 00:11:40,520
their hats?

130

00:11:40,520 --> 00:11:43,120

131

00:11:43,120 --> 00:11:47,640
Well, I don't think I
can add anything to that.

132

00:11:47,640 --> 00:11:59,030
Those were the first blows
to our civil liberties.

133

00:11:59,030 --> 00:12:01,620

134

00:12:01,620 --> 00:12:06,660
And tell me about the
formation of the ghetto.

135

00:12:06,660 --> 00:12:09,810
And do you remember moving in?

136

00:12:09,810 --> 00:12:13,060
Yes, I do.

137

00:12:13,060 --> 00:12:23,400
The decree went out that all
Jews in the city of Kovno

138

00:12:23,400 --> 00:12:34,910
were ordered to relocate to a
ghetto, which was the poorest

139

00:12:34,910 --> 00:12:42,470
part of the city with
mostly dilapidated huts,

140
00:12:42,470 --> 00:12:45,350
even though there were some
more substantial farmhouses

141
00:12:45,350 --> 00:12:53,630
to be found also, as well
as some newly constructed

142
00:12:53,630 --> 00:12:58,830
apartments, referred
to as blocks, which

143
00:12:58,830 --> 00:13:05,940
had been constructed for
the industrial workers,

144
00:13:05,940 --> 00:13:08,880
Lithuanian workers.

145
00:13:08,880 --> 00:13:14,320
The date, there was set as the--

146
00:13:14,320 --> 00:13:21,310

147
00:13:21,310 --> 00:13:24,540
Well, the date was
the 15th of August.

148
00:13:24,540 --> 00:13:30,880
The reason I remember that is
because it fell on my birthday

149
00:13:30,880 --> 00:13:37,080
and I forgot whether
it was 1940 or 1941.

150
00:13:37,080 --> 00:13:40,450
I think it was 1941.

151
00:13:40,450 --> 00:13:42,970

We had about two months to relocate.

152
00:13:42,970 --> 00:13:45,940

153
00:13:45,940 --> 00:13:51,280
The way this relocation was handled

154
00:13:51,280 --> 00:13:57,130
was that first one had to secure a place to stay in the ghetto.

155
00:13:57,130 --> 00:13:59,740

156
00:13:59,740 --> 00:14:06,650
And the inhabitants, I mean the Jews of Kovno, some of whom

157
00:14:06,650 --> 00:14:09,860
had been quite well-to-do, had owned

158
00:14:09,860 --> 00:14:15,020
either their homes, apartments, or houses,

159
00:14:15,020 --> 00:14:20,840
so they were in a position to trade

160
00:14:20,840 --> 00:14:24,590
their well-established, comfortable homes

161
00:14:24,590 --> 00:14:34,660
for a peasant's home in the newly formed ghetto.

162
00:14:34,660 --> 00:14:38,980
Naturally, it was not

an equitable trade,

163
00:14:38,980 --> 00:14:41,035
but at least they
had a place to stay.

164
00:14:41,035 --> 00:14:44,020

165
00:14:44,020 --> 00:14:47,080
The three of us were
at a disadvantage

166
00:14:47,080 --> 00:14:52,930
because we had nothing
to trade, so we

167
00:14:52,930 --> 00:15:00,060
depended on the kindness of
strangers to give us a space.

168
00:15:00,060 --> 00:15:03,510
And after a long
search, my father

169
00:15:03,510 --> 00:15:12,660
was able to find a pharmacist,
an elderly pharmacist

170
00:15:12,660 --> 00:15:17,520
friend of my mother's,
who had owned

171
00:15:17,520 --> 00:15:23,550
the pharmacy in my mother's
village where she had grown up.

172
00:15:23,550 --> 00:15:29,340
So Mr. Masahovich and
his wife told my father

173
00:15:29,340 --> 00:15:33,720
that they had a small attic

space that they could spare,

174
00:15:33,720 --> 00:15:37,380
that everything else had
already been spoken for,

175
00:15:37,380 --> 00:15:42,150
and that the three of us
could have this attic space.

176
00:15:42,150 --> 00:15:43,550
So that's what we did.

177
00:15:43,550 --> 00:15:47,030
We had very few belongings.

178
00:15:47,030 --> 00:15:53,945
I think we may have
owned a bedroom suite.

179
00:15:53,945 --> 00:15:58,840

180
00:15:58,840 --> 00:16:03,700
And we had a sewing machine
for some reasons, which

181
00:16:03,700 --> 00:16:08,950
I till this day don't
understand or remember

182
00:16:08,950 --> 00:16:12,970
how or why we kept
the sewing machine

183
00:16:12,970 --> 00:16:19,250
from our original household,
but it came in very handy later.

184
00:16:19,250 --> 00:16:22,480
So there was a bed
that was moved,

185

00:16:22,480 --> 00:16:28,300

a sewing machine, and
maybe a chair or two

186

00:16:28,300 --> 00:16:33,040

and the clothes that we
had been able to save

187

00:16:33,040 --> 00:16:35,980

from our original home.

188

00:16:35,980 --> 00:16:45,670

Then my dad hired a, well,
found a peasant with a horse

189

00:16:45,670 --> 00:16:53,620

and wagon and he paid him
for the transportation

190

00:16:53,620 --> 00:16:56,695

of our worldly
goods to the ghetto.

191

00:16:56,695 --> 00:16:59,910

192

00:16:59,910 --> 00:17:02,100

And what was the attic like?

193

00:17:02,100 --> 00:17:03,720

How big was it?

194

00:17:03,720 --> 00:17:04,410

Very small.

195

00:17:04,410 --> 00:17:07,410

196

00:17:07,410 --> 00:17:17,329

I'm very bad at dimensions,
but it was a long, narrow space

197

00:17:17,329 --> 00:17:29,310
that held my parents'
bed on the one long wall

198

00:17:29,310 --> 00:17:37,290
and my cot and the sewing
machine opposite my cot.

199

00:17:37,290 --> 00:17:45,070
And there was a window next to
my cot that I could look out,

200

00:17:45,070 --> 00:17:55,170
and I saw many brutal and
memorable, unforgettable scenes

201

00:17:55,170 --> 00:17:57,690
from that window.

202

00:17:57,690 --> 00:18:04,170
And just a very primitive
door that led from one

203

00:18:04,170 --> 00:18:09,240
attic space to our
small attic space.

204

00:18:09,240 --> 00:18:17,760
Because on the other side of the
wall another family was living.

205

00:18:17,760 --> 00:18:21,840
And that family
consisted of four people,

206

00:18:21,840 --> 00:18:28,500
mother, father, adult daughter
who was a medical student,

207

00:18:28,500 --> 00:18:34,500
and her young brother who was
maybe 12 years old at the time.

208

00:18:34,500 --> 00:18:40,380

These people became our very
good and trusted friends,

209

00:18:40,380 --> 00:18:47,010

and I would like to mention
that the older son, Ted Pace,

210

00:18:47,010 --> 00:18:48,810

is going to be
interviewed tomorrow

211

00:18:48,810 --> 00:18:51,480

and I hope to have
the chance to meet up

212

00:18:51,480 --> 00:18:53,400

with him after 50 years.

213

00:18:53,400 --> 00:19:00,060

214

00:19:00,060 --> 00:19:02,340

You said you witnessed
some brutal things

215

00:19:02,340 --> 00:19:05,650

outside the window.

216

00:19:05,650 --> 00:19:08,740

Was one of them
the Intelligentsia?

217

00:19:08,740 --> 00:19:13,690

That was the first one
that I saw from my window.

218

00:19:13,690 --> 00:19:16,360

Tell me about it.

219

00:19:16,360 --> 00:19:22,150

A call had to go

out for I think 500

220

00:19:22,150 --> 00:19:33,650
young men with a good academic
background and language skills,

221

00:19:33,650 --> 00:19:37,490
possibly fluent in
German and Russian,

222

00:19:37,490 --> 00:19:44,290
to report for work on a
certain day, at a certain time.

223

00:19:44,290 --> 00:19:46,380
It was early on.

224

00:19:46,380 --> 00:19:48,110
I don't remember the date.

225

00:19:48,110 --> 00:19:52,440
It may have been August
or maybe early September.

226

00:19:52,440 --> 00:20:00,360
And because the work conditions
seemed so wonderful by ghetto

227

00:20:00,360 --> 00:20:05,370
standards, because
already food was scarce

228

00:20:05,370 --> 00:20:13,830
and men had been taken
away for forced labor--

229

00:20:13,830 --> 00:20:15,600
I'm not even sure what it was--

230

00:20:15,600 --> 00:20:19,380

231

00:20:19,380 --> 00:20:22,890
it sounded like a
wonderful opportunity

232
00:20:22,890 --> 00:20:28,470
to be situated in a
safe office environment,

233
00:20:28,470 --> 00:20:33,000
perhaps even get a meal
or two during the day,

234
00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:34,440
and then return at night.

235
00:20:34,440 --> 00:20:36,960

236
00:20:36,960 --> 00:20:41,170
Because I wasn't working
at the time yet--

237
00:20:41,170 --> 00:20:52,150
excuse me-- I had the luxury
of staying in our attic

238
00:20:52,150 --> 00:20:55,750
and looking out of the window.

239
00:20:55,750 --> 00:21:01,370
And here I saw them coming to--

240
00:21:01,370 --> 00:21:05,670
There's open space.

241
00:21:05,670 --> 00:21:10,940
It was near what we call
the big blocks, at least

242
00:21:10,940 --> 00:21:16,910
that's how I remember it,
and I looked at their faces

243

00:21:16,910 --> 00:21:21,210

and I and I recognized
a few of them.

244

00:21:21,210 --> 00:21:26,480

One had been my
former math tutor

245

00:21:26,480 --> 00:21:30,860

because my math skills
were always very weak.

246

00:21:30,860 --> 00:21:35,940

And I recognized a
few other a young men.

247

00:21:35,940 --> 00:21:41,580

248

00:21:41,580 --> 00:21:46,170

I think I saw some
Germans surrounding them--

249

00:21:46,170 --> 00:21:50,410

it's a little hazy in my mind--

250

00:21:50,410 --> 00:21:58,080

and some pushing
and rough handling,

251

00:21:58,080 --> 00:22:00,420

and then they were led off.

252

00:22:00,420 --> 00:22:03,910

253

00:22:03,910 --> 00:22:10,460

So I didn't actually
see shootings going on,

254

00:22:10,460 --> 00:22:15,500

but just very rough treatment.

255

00:22:15,500 --> 00:22:18,450

And then how did you
figure out what happened?

256

00:22:18,450 --> 00:22:21,800

257

00:22:21,800 --> 00:22:26,220

I didn't have a
clue except that--

258

00:22:26,220 --> 00:22:50,390