

Six, marker.

We're rolling.

Another question about the Kinder Aktion-- did some parents choose to go with their child?

Oh, sure. Not too many parents were around because mostly they were working, but for instance, there was one man, and he was a policeman in the ghetto. And he did not give his child, and he went along. It was Mr. [? Buch. ?] And a few others who were there-- for sure, quite a few were taking older parents.

Do you know what happened to the children?

Whatever was said, that they were taken and gasses. I really don't know. No witnesses are there to support. But nobody came back. Let's put it that way. So the imagination is there.

The hiding place-- did you spend some time in the hiding place?

Yes, we did. When the ghetto was liquidated, we all went into that same hiding place, the whole house where we lived. And it was terrible, and the few children who were-- like my cousin's children. At that time, we lived in the same house. And as soon as the ghetto got always smaller, smaller, they closed off parts. So when my mother was taken away and my husband's family, we all went together with my dad, and my brother, and my cousin, and my aunt, and the children. We all lived together.

And the children were really good because they were told that they should hardly breathe, not a sound out of them, but the air was so stuffy. And really, I couldn't breathe, so I said, whatever will happen to me, I'm going out. So my husband and my dad came along, and I was pleading with my brother to come also. And he said no. He said, whatever will happen, I'm staying here. I'm not moving.

And unfortunately, he got-- because when we were taken away from the ghetto, the ghetto was already burning, and they all perished. And I'm sure that if he would have come with us, he probably would have been alive because my dad survived, and my husband survived. So he probably would have survived, too.

Tell me what that hiding place was like inside.

You didn't even see. It was dark, and we had there provided a few pails of water to drink. And I don't know if we had bread or what. I really don't remember. I only remember the water, and from time to time, it was passed a few drops for each one. And we stayed there like-- I think I stayed there like about maybe two days, and then I couldn't take it anymore.

And I said at that time-- I asked my aunt and my cousin also to come, and my cousin said, look, where will I go with my old mother and my two small children? I don't have a chance. Where will I go? So she stayed, and my brother didn't go. He also opted to stay.

Was it hot in there?

Terrible hot. We were practically naked because it was a small hole, no walls and nothing, a hole in the ground. But it was under-- there was a shed on top, so under the floor they had dug out, the men. And I don't know how many were there, 30, 40, or 50 people, 30 for sure because when you start to run and somebody else from the neighborhood came, you couldn't tell him he can't come in. You had to let them in, too. So I'm sure there were a few still who didn't belong to our house.

And so when you came out, describe what you saw and how long it took before you were deported.

When we came out, we opted to go to those Werkstätten, where they-- and there, we even met up with a few of our friends. And there we stayed until the Germans came, and they said that they have the trucks ready and we should move. And they put us on trucks, and they took us to the railroad station.

And when did you see the ghetto burning?

While we were on the trucks. They went already to each house, and they started to shoot, and they started to burn because they knew that people were hiding. And some even came out running and also the very poorly dressed because I'm sure in each hiding place it was the same situation like in ours, so people started to undress their clothes. And some were caught, and some probably were shot because we heard shots, too. So some were killed on the spot.

But you made your way from the hiding place to the workshop safely?

Yeah, yeah.

You sort of sneaked there or--

Well, we did it probably at night, when it was dark, and the ghetto was not miles and miles. It probably was a couple of blocks. So we went one after the other, and we were three people, my father, my husband, and I, so slowly, slowly until we made it.

And you were married in the ghetto, and did you get pregnant in the ghetto?

Yes, I was. I was pregnant twice, and I had to have abortions because that was the law.

And so how did you arrange that?

Oh, there were doctors [? that was ?] [? with the ?] Germans. In fact, one of the doctors-- he was in a person, and they released him because he was an obstetrician, and they needed him. And that was his job.

And can you tell me how different it was in the concentration camp from in the ghetto?

First of all, we didn't have our clothes. We also didn't have our families, for instance. As I said before, I didn't know too many people, so I was really alone like a stone. Some had a mother, a sister, a sister-in-law. I was all alone. And so you shared with a friend.

And there you didn't have anything. You had your dress and your coat. You also didn't have-- not a piece of soap, not a comb, not a piece of toilet paper even, nothing. I didn't even have any shoes until the end of November, until they brought the wooden shoes. And they were very bad because up in the north, when you have snow, you have snow. So it was very-- and the snow used to be on the wood, and it was very hard to walk. You walked like this, and if you didn't walk like four in a row or three in a row, you got hit by the German.

We also lived in little scout tents where you couldn't walk in like you walk through a door. You had to crawl like a dog. There were 10 people, 10 women to a tent, and the tents were already-- from the rain and from the snow, they were not even anymore waterproof. So in the morning, our heads were frozen to the material. You also didn't have any-- if it rained and you came back, there was no way of taking off your clothes and trying it. So you went to sleep with the wet clothes, and in the morning, you went back to work with the same wet clothes until it finally dried on you.

I think we did everything. Let's cut. I think we're almost out--

Seven, marker.

You want to ask me the question now?

Which one do you want to start with?

Well, let's start with the festivities.

So tell me about the festivities in the ghetto.

When we got married-- first of all, my husband-- he had a lot of friends, and he knew a lot of people. And also, because I had saved my aunt and my cousin, they at that time said, listen, when you get married-- but not thinking that I'll get married in the ghetto-- we'll really go to town. So when we decided to get married in the ghetto-- and you wanted to have a little something.

So first of all, I had to still my dresses what were made to order before the war, and my sister-in-law had, probably, a little veil or what. So anyhow, I was a nice pride. And the food consisted of-- they took potatoes, and they took out the inside. And they made it like gefilte fish with the spices, and they cooked it back with onions.

And somebody had gone and-- and I think my husband even went to a brigade. Because he was a bridegroom, they let him do more exchanging than the others. So he brought back some flour, and so my aunt-- she made even cream puffs. I don't know if they were filling, but they were little cream puffs. You cooked it.

And then from the peels of the potatoes, we made pancakes. They were washed, and that was done not only for festivities. That was really sometimes our main dish. You washed them, and then you chopped them up. And you put in a little flour, and you baked them. Or if you had a little oil, you fried them, and that was the pancakes. And I don't know if he even had, I think, a chicken or something, but anyhow, it was a very nice celebration. And that was our wedding.

Who were some of the guests, and how many people came?

The guests were-- as I said, we didn't have family. It was only my aunt, and my cousin, and the two children. My husband had to married sisters and his mother, and the rest were his friends because he was a very outgoing person. And he liked to have people around himself and to be like the center and to talk to everybody. And so all his fraternity brothers came and all the people he knew.

And we had a rabbi, and it was like according to the Jewish law. In fact, after the war, my grandfather, who was a rabbi and who had come to Palestine at that time-- we started to correspond, that we are alive, and so the first question in his letter was who was the rabbi who married us because, for him, that was the most important thing as a religious man. So we wrote him at that time who it was, and it was with his approval, that it was legit.

And now we have to backtrack a bit, and tell me about the woman who approached you in the street so that we can learn how you met your husband.

Oh, OK. So she approached me on the street with the letters--

You have to back up a little bit.

Oh, because you don't have that?

We don't have it.

Oh, OK. One day, when I was working from work to the ghetto, I was walking in a gutters. And I saw that the woman is going, and she's looking at me, and she's like keeping up the steps with me. And so I looked at her, and then she motioned me I should come closer. And she came closer to the curb, and she said that she has some letters from Jewish people from a ghetto in Vilna, if I would take it to the ghetto. And she said that she would be there in two or three days, and if they are replies, she would bring them back.

So I took the letters, and I went back. And I gave it to my mother, and we looked at them. And my mother, the biggest

bulk, she took to the Dr. Elkes, who was our oldest man, our elder from the Judenrat because, as I said before, she connected with him. And a few I kept because I thought I knew them because it was addressed to a Dr. Bloomberg, and we had friends Dr. Bloomberg, who came not from Memel but from the region of Memel, and we knew them very well.

So I said, the few what I know I would like to deliver myself. So I took that letter, and I asked where the Dr. Bloomberg lives. And they told me, in the white-- what was it called? I forgot what it was called. --in the white block. So I went there, and I knocked at the door.

And my husband-to-be opened the door, and I had known him from before, from Ponewesch, when we came out of Memel and when we went to Ponewesch. So I said, I have a letter for Dr. Bloomberg. He said, yes, come in that's my brother-in-law. So I right away knew that it was not that same Dr. Bloomberg what I thought he was, but anyhow, I delivered that letter. And that's how [? was ?] the friendship. And then later, the courtship started, and we got married in two weeks.

But after the war-- we were liberated by the Russians in January of '45, and the war was still going on. So we figured that we-- so then we were-- from the whole camp, we were about 700 women. About 20 were sent to a hospital, and I was among the 20.

So after that, when we stayed there-- and the Russians themselves-- they didn't have any food, and they didn't have any food for us. So we were lingering around. And then they said that they'll send us back to Lithuania. And we ourselves wanted to go because that's where we came from, and we wanted to go back there. We didn't know-- that was already, then, after the war-- who survived and who will come back.

And so we started going back to Lithuania, and we went through Poland. And at that time, you couldn't go with train like you go now. You buy a ticket, and you go. You went to the railroad station, and whenever you saw a train and you felt that it's going north, you jumped on it, and you went to another town or another town, always closer, closer.

So in one town, we stayed on the railroad, and a few people in Polish uniforms came by. And they were talking-- and at that time, Poland was still very antisemitic, so they were talking a little Polish and a little Jewish. And they asked us, are you from [NON-ENGLISH]? And [POLISH] in Poland means a town, and [HEBREW] is a Hebrew word for the Jewish people. So we knew there were Jews, so we nodded our heads.

So they said we should come down, and then when we came down, they started to talk to us in Jewish. And they said, what are you doing? Who are you? And so we said we are refugees. We survived the camps, and now we want to go back to Lithuania. So the guy said, do you know if somebody is alive from your families? And we said no.

He said, please, don't go back. It's a very large door in but a very small one out. Stay in Poland, and if you will hear that somebody of the family is there, they'll always let you in, the Russians. So we took their advice, and we went to a bigger town, to Lublin. And we stayed there, and at that time, also, we didn't have anything to eat. We still wore our clothes from the camps because we didn't have anything.

So we went to the market, and we sold-- somebody gave us some yarn to sell, so we had a few pennies there to buy a small piece of bread. And if we didn't have it, we didn't have it. So we were three women, and one woman had a daughter. And we were all from the same camp. So we were four.

So then one day, some men came-- they went to Lithuania-- who had given away their children to Gentile people, and they wanted to collect them. And when they heard my name, they said, oh, your husband and your father-- they are both alive, and they are in American zone because they were all in Dachau, and they were liberated by the Americans.

So you can imagine that we are very happy. And for the other women, they also said that her husband is alive. And for the next one, they said her husband was killed, but the brother-in-law was alive. So we decided we'll go to Germany already, and that is a story by itself.

So also, at that time, you couldn't go-- so we used to live in the train station, and whenever we saw a train, we went on

it. In one town, we met up with two German--