

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:40,440

2
00:00:40,440 --> 00:00:45,100
First of all, tell me when
and where you were born.

3
00:00:45,100 --> 00:00:52,270
I was born in Kovno in 1929.

4
00:00:52,270 --> 00:00:59,980
To a family I had two
brothers, an older sister.

5
00:00:59,980 --> 00:01:03,520
My parents were affluent.

6
00:01:03,520 --> 00:01:07,480
My father was the owner
of a wholesale grocery.

7
00:01:07,480 --> 00:01:10,060
Was the second
largest in Lithuania.

8
00:01:10,060 --> 00:01:13,030

9
00:01:13,030 --> 00:01:18,490
A normal religious
family in Lithuania.

10
00:01:18,490 --> 00:01:26,160
We lived in downtown Kovno on
[INAUDIBLE] gatvė— later which

11
00:01:26,160 --> 00:01:35,680
changed to [? Grodno ?] gatvė—
Nothing special till 1939.

12
00:01:35,680 --> 00:01:43,320

Then things start to change
with the war starting, German,

13
00:01:43,320 --> 00:01:48,540
Polish, 1940 the
Russians marched in,

14
00:01:48,540 --> 00:01:51,840
confiscated the store.

15
00:01:51,840 --> 00:01:55,230
We were already uprooted.

16
00:01:55,230 --> 00:01:59,190
At one time we got wind
that the Russians wanted

17
00:01:59,190 --> 00:02:02,130
to come and arrest
us as bourgeoisie

18
00:02:02,130 --> 00:02:07,770
because we are rich people and
wanted to send us to Siberia.

19
00:02:07,770 --> 00:02:11,730
Once we got wind of it,
everybody left the house.

20
00:02:11,730 --> 00:02:15,720
The children were sent
away to different areas,

21
00:02:15,720 --> 00:02:19,770
and when they came to
get us nobody was home.

22
00:02:19,770 --> 00:02:23,760
I was sent away
down the Neman, that

23
00:02:23,760 --> 00:02:30,270
was the river to a town I

should go in the market there

24

00:02:30,270 --> 00:02:31,540
and told them what to do.

25

00:02:31,540 --> 00:02:36,350
And they came back
three days later.

26

00:02:36,350 --> 00:02:38,120
And that's what the
Russians were doing.

27

00:02:38,120 --> 00:02:43,640
If they came a place where they
didn't find them, forget it.

28

00:02:43,640 --> 00:02:47,120
They did a talk, moved
on, and you don't

29

00:02:47,120 --> 00:02:49,430
know when they will come back.

30

00:02:49,430 --> 00:02:51,440
But this time we were saved.

31

00:02:51,440 --> 00:02:54,380

32

00:02:54,380 --> 00:02:57,950
And that was after they
confiscated the store.

33

00:02:57,950 --> 00:03:02,870
In the beginning, they put
my father as a worker there.

34

00:03:02,870 --> 00:03:08,690
He worked there for a few months
and then they chased him out.

35

00:03:08,690 --> 00:03:14,960

We had enough to
live on, but you

36

00:03:14,960 --> 00:03:18,110

had to have some kind of
an occupation, otherwise,

37

00:03:18,110 --> 00:03:20,880

you are already a criminal.

38

00:03:20,880 --> 00:03:25,347

So my father took a occupation
as to being a watchman.

39

00:03:25,347 --> 00:03:26,930

That's the only way
you could get away

40

00:03:26,930 --> 00:03:28,100

without working on Saturday.

41

00:03:28,100 --> 00:03:31,350

42

00:03:31,350 --> 00:03:35,400

Later on, we saw that
this wasn't the answer.

43

00:03:35,400 --> 00:03:39,960

We opened what we called a
little restaurant in our house.

44

00:03:39,960 --> 00:03:44,950

We had a big apartment
with a big dining room,

45

00:03:44,950 --> 00:03:46,320

so we made a little restaurant.

46

00:03:46,320 --> 00:03:50,800

Actually, this was a cover
so people can come in

47
00:03:50,800 --> 00:03:54,480
without drawing any suspicion.

48
00:03:54,480 --> 00:03:58,650
And between them, they did a
little business on the side.

49
00:03:58,650 --> 00:04:03,960
If any stranger, anybody that
is unknown used to come in,

50
00:04:03,960 --> 00:04:07,110
everybody was shh, quiet.

51
00:04:07,110 --> 00:04:12,330
Nobody would say a word and
just eat a meal, pay your bill

52
00:04:12,330 --> 00:04:15,450
and get out.

53
00:04:15,450 --> 00:04:17,430
That was 1940.

54
00:04:17,430 --> 00:04:23,295
In '41, when the war broke
out, that was a Saturday night

55
00:04:23,295 --> 00:04:31,310
or Sunday morning, I remember
that Sunday evening we

56
00:04:31,310 --> 00:04:35,540
had a meeting in our house
and they had to decide,

57
00:04:35,540 --> 00:04:39,080
my father, a lot of
friends came in the house,

58
00:04:39,080 --> 00:04:43,910

should we run or should we
stay and wait for the Germans

59
00:04:43,910 --> 00:04:45,650
to come in?

60
00:04:45,650 --> 00:04:51,260
We did not know the realities
that you couldn't run.

61
00:04:51,260 --> 00:04:54,620
When the Germans were in
Vilnius day before Kovno,

62
00:04:54,620 --> 00:04:58,650
they cut off any
routes to run away.

63
00:04:58,650 --> 00:05:00,470
But even without
knowing that, they

64
00:05:00,470 --> 00:05:03,050
decided not to run
because we hated

65
00:05:03,050 --> 00:05:05,690
the Russians so
much that they were

66
00:05:05,690 --> 00:05:08,390
no better than the Germans.

67
00:05:08,390 --> 00:05:12,020
So the decision was not to run.

68
00:05:12,020 --> 00:05:15,740
Those that did run,
unfortunately, didn't make it.

69
00:05:15,740 --> 00:05:19,640

70

00:05:19,640 --> 00:05:24,350

It was a couple of months
that the Germans send us

71

00:05:24,350 --> 00:05:26,870

to the ghetto.

72

00:05:26,870 --> 00:05:28,640

The Germans came
in, I think it was

73

00:05:28,640 --> 00:05:31,370

Wednesday morning, Tuesday
morning or Wednesday morning,

74

00:05:31,370 --> 00:05:32,060

in Kovno.

75

00:05:32,060 --> 00:05:35,330

76

00:05:35,330 --> 00:05:41,250

The time before we
went into the ghetto

77

00:05:41,250 --> 00:05:47,070

they used to come into our
house to pray in the morning

78

00:05:47,070 --> 00:05:48,570

and they needed
a minimum, what's

79

00:05:48,570 --> 00:05:51,120

called a quorum, 10 people.

80

00:05:51,120 --> 00:05:55,560

So people either from the house
or from very close by used to

81

00:05:55,560 --> 00:05:58,260

sneak into our house to pray.

82
00:05:58,260 --> 00:06:01,006
One day we were in
middle of praying

83
00:06:01,006 --> 00:06:05,560
and they saw a German
officer come in.

84
00:06:05,560 --> 00:06:08,980
I don't know what he knew,
but he came to Father

85
00:06:08,980 --> 00:06:09,770
and looked at him.

86
00:06:09,770 --> 00:06:15,243
They were in their garb with
the tefillin, that [HEBREW]..

87
00:06:15,243 --> 00:06:16,660
And all of a sudden,
he comes over

88
00:06:16,660 --> 00:06:19,120
said, do you have a [HEBREW].

89
00:06:19,120 --> 00:06:23,410
Which is actually the
code of the Jewish law.

90
00:06:23,410 --> 00:06:26,890
And my father was amazed
a German officer should

91
00:06:26,890 --> 00:06:30,260
ask him a question like that.

92
00:06:30,260 --> 00:06:32,300
He showed it to him.

93
00:06:32,300 --> 00:06:37,490

He put it back in the
bookcase and left.

94
00:06:37,490 --> 00:06:40,550

It didn't take more
than five minutes,

95
00:06:40,550 --> 00:06:45,800
a whole group of German
officers came in and questioned

96
00:06:45,800 --> 00:06:47,600
was anybody here?

97
00:06:47,600 --> 00:06:49,430
Did he demand anything?

98
00:06:49,430 --> 00:06:52,290
Did he ask for anything?

99
00:06:52,290 --> 00:06:57,080
And this again
interrupted the prayers.

100
00:06:57,080 --> 00:07:01,260
They didn't say
anything and left.

101
00:07:01,260 --> 00:07:08,130
A few minutes later, a few
high-ranking officers, exactly

102
00:07:08,130 --> 00:07:10,410
I don't know what the
rank were but there

103
00:07:10,410 --> 00:07:14,310
were higher-ranking officers
came in and told all of us

104
00:07:14,310 --> 00:07:16,855
to get out to the yard.

105

00:07:16,855 --> 00:07:18,230

We thought this
is the end of it.

106

00:07:18,230 --> 00:07:20,740

107

00:07:20,740 --> 00:07:25,960

We tried to take over the
[HEBREW],, the scrolls,

108

00:07:25,960 --> 00:07:27,280

and the tefillin.

109

00:07:27,280 --> 00:07:30,730

And they went, no,
no, you should not.

110

00:07:30,730 --> 00:07:32,140

Don't take it off.

111

00:07:32,140 --> 00:07:33,900

So we thought this
is the end for us.

112

00:07:33,900 --> 00:07:36,440

They want us the way we look.

113

00:07:36,440 --> 00:07:40,820

They took us out in the yard,
put us against the wall,

114

00:07:40,820 --> 00:07:43,610

take out cameras
and took pictures

115

00:07:43,610 --> 00:07:46,720

and told us all to get back in.

116

00:07:46,720 --> 00:07:49,630

This was Wehrmacht officers.

117

00:07:49,630 --> 00:07:54,100

Of course, our lives
were on the line.

118

00:07:54,100 --> 00:07:56,320

We thought this
is the end of us.

119

00:07:56,320 --> 00:07:59,260

This is one of the
first experiences

120

00:07:59,260 --> 00:08:03,180

that I had with
seeing the Germans.

121

00:08:03,180 --> 00:08:10,020

It didn't take long, I think
in the middle of the summer,

122

00:08:10,020 --> 00:08:14,940

and everybody was supposed to
find a place and get there.

123

00:08:14,940 --> 00:08:20,300

They designated an area and
all the Jews had to move there.

124

00:08:20,300 --> 00:08:23,710

125

00:08:23,710 --> 00:08:28,510

Looking around where to find
a place to move wasn't easy.

126

00:08:28,510 --> 00:08:32,380

The Lithuanians that had
to move out for that area

127

00:08:32,380 --> 00:08:34,360

weren't too happy either.

128

00:08:34,360 --> 00:08:38,799
However, my father had
owned the building,

129
00:08:38,799 --> 00:08:42,020
I think it was a
16-family house, what

130
00:08:42,020 --> 00:08:47,020
they called [LITHUANIAN],,
the Green Mountain, in Kovno.

131
00:08:47,020 --> 00:08:57,220
And in looking for a place,
he found a Lithuanian

132
00:08:57,220 --> 00:09:00,980
that had a four-family house,
five-family house, four-family

133
00:09:00,980 --> 00:09:02,940
and an attic.

134
00:09:02,940 --> 00:09:05,890
And he said, how
about making exchange?

135
00:09:05,890 --> 00:09:12,240
I'll give you a big house, 16
families, a real income house,

136
00:09:12,240 --> 00:09:16,590
for this little cottage
you have without water,

137
00:09:16,590 --> 00:09:26,550
without any plumbing, and that's
the way they exchanged houses.

138
00:09:26,550 --> 00:09:31,800
So we found a little
place in the ghetto.

139

00:09:31,800 --> 00:09:34,050

There were four
little apartments.

140

00:09:34,050 --> 00:09:37,050

Each apartment had
a kitchen and a room

141

00:09:37,050 --> 00:09:43,010

and a little vestibule in
front, and an attic, which

142

00:09:43,010 --> 00:09:46,620

was also a couple of rooms.

143

00:09:46,620 --> 00:09:50,790

My uncle and the family,
my aunt and uncle's family,

144

00:09:50,790 --> 00:09:52,150

took one apartment.

145

00:09:52,150 --> 00:09:53,670

We took another apartment.

146

00:09:53,670 --> 00:09:56,430

And another couple of families,
whatever the arrangement was I

147

00:09:56,430 --> 00:09:59,670

didn't know, they
took the apartment.

148

00:09:59,670 --> 00:10:02,040

That's how we moved in together.

149

00:10:02,040 --> 00:10:04,740

Do you remember what
you took with you?

150

00:10:04,740 --> 00:10:08,040

We took the bare necessities.

151

00:10:08,040 --> 00:10:13,770

We had a big apartment at Grodno
gatvÄ— [? katalotika ?] number

152

00:10:13,770 --> 00:10:15,570

14.

153

00:10:15,570 --> 00:10:21,450

And where we went is only two
rooms, a room and a kitchen.

154

00:10:21,450 --> 00:10:25,560

So only the most
important things

155

00:10:25,560 --> 00:10:29,040

that you could think of
we took along with us.

156

00:10:29,040 --> 00:10:34,080

Among the things we took
along with us was somehow

157

00:10:34,080 --> 00:10:42,780

we had a valise with
wheat, not ground wheat,

158

00:10:42,780 --> 00:10:46,120

and my father
foresaw that in case

159

00:10:46,120 --> 00:10:48,420

we have to stay there
through Passover

160

00:10:48,420 --> 00:10:52,710

he will need something
to make matzah from,

161

00:10:52,710 --> 00:10:55,680

so took along that valise.

162

00:10:55,680 --> 00:10:57,510

That was among other things.

163

00:10:57,510 --> 00:11:00,840

Of course, we took
along [HEBREW]..

164

00:11:00,840 --> 00:11:06,720

And a Bible and whatever books,
the most important books, we

165

00:11:06,720 --> 00:11:07,840

took along with us.

166

00:11:07,840 --> 00:11:11,410

And that's how we
went to together.

167

00:11:11,410 --> 00:11:13,680

OK, we have to reload.

168

00:11:13,680 --> 00:13:29,280