Interview with SAMUEL P. OLINER

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History

Project of San Francisco

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Interviewer: Sandra Bendayan

Transcriber: Susan S. Perrish

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Q. NOW IT'S, OF COURSE, TOTALLY UNDERSTANDABLE IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU. AND IF YOU HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH THE CAMERA RECORDING YOU AND YOUR FEELINGS AND YOUR EMOTIONS, I CERTAINLY DON'T.

A. No, No, I have no problem.

Q. BUT IF YOU DO AT ANY POINT, OR THERE IS SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT RECORDED, YOU JUST SAY SO, OR IF YOU JUST WANT TO HAVE A BREAK TO WALK AROUND OR WHATEVER--

A. Sure. Sure. I Understand.

CAMERA OPERATOR: I may get up and walk away, but that won't mean anything. I might have to use the bathroom.

A. Okay.

Q. OKAY. TODAY IS THE 14TH?

A. The 15th.

Q. 15TH. OKAY.

A. The 15Th.

Q. OKAY. YOU READY? I AM SANDRA BENDAYAN. I AM HERE INTERVIEWING SAMUEL OLINER FOR THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF SAN FRANCISCO.

TODAY IS THE 15TH OF JANUARY, 1994. COULD YOU PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND SAY IF YOUR NAME WAS OTHER THAN SAMUEL OLINER AND WHEN AND WHERE YOU WERE BORN?

A. Okay. My name currently is Samuel P. Oliner. I am on faculty at (Howell State University). It has always been Oliner, except during the war, when I had a different name. It was, during the war, (Yusef Polowski) because I pretended to be a Pole. Perhaps later we will talk about it a little bit more. So yes, the name is the same.

I was born in Poland, in a small town not too far from the Czechoslovakian border called (Gorlitz). It's famous only for one reason, that from time to time in these small towns, these (shtetls), there were occasionally rabbis who stood out as (Tadideem), as sages, and so (Gorlitz) had a rabbi, a famous sage rabbi.

Q. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A. (Halberstom), (Halberstom). And let's

see now. So I was born in one--in a small town called (Gorlitz) as I indicated, but my parents--it's a little complicated, so I'm going to see if I can straighten this out. Okay.

My own biological mother lived in a town called (Zindranova), just as you hear it. Which is extremely close to the Czechoslovakian border. And my father married her. As a matter of fact, he married her--she was his first cousin. So one of my homes was in (Zindranova), a small, tiny village where there was only three Jewish families. Okay.

My father's father or my father's--my grandfather on my father's side lived in another village called (Shanka), probably as you hear it, (Shanka), which is near a town called (Gorlitz). This is all in southern Poland near the Czech border, within a radius of 30, 40 miles, actually within the Slovak border right now, because Czechoslovakia has split. So I lived with my mother and father, until she died of TB, and I was seven years old at the time.

And then, my father decided to remarry, so again, he went to yet another village.

Remember, my father--in Poland there were two types of Jews. One type of Jew was a city Jew,

and the other one was a village Jew; peasant. There was a small percent of Jewish people in Poland used to be farmers, peasants.

These are known as (Dorfeden). (Dorf) means village in German or Yiddish, and eden obviously is Jews. So he married a woman, and so consequently I had the other--a second home now, because his new wife occasionally would live with them.

Then of course there were was a third home, my father's grandfather. My father's grandfather. Which was in (Shanka), so I used to sometimes go there. So as an orphan, that is to say orphan because my mother died, I used to move around between the places and so that my brother and sister--I had an older sister and an older brother.

Q. WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?

A. My oldest brother, older brother's name was Moshe, Moses, Moshe. And my oldest sister, she was the oldest of the three of us, F-A-Y, I suppose. In Yiddish it would be (Fadal). And so--

Q. HOW MUCH OLDER THAN YOU WHERE THEY?

A. I would think that Fay would be about four, and--my sister, and my brother would be about two years older than me, my closest recollection.

Q. AND WHEN EXACTLY WERE YOU BORN?

A. 1930, March, 1930. And--March 1930.

Q. AND WHAT WERE YOUR PARENTS' NAMES?

A. My father's name was Aaron. And my oldest son's named after him. My mother, my actual biological mother's name was (Yafa), which is--means "beautiful" in Hebrew.

Q. WHAT WAS THE FAMILY CONNECTION THAT MADE THEM COUSINS?

A. Well, okay. So there were two brothers, my grandfather's--my father's father's name--guy's name was Herman, and then my mother's father's name was Isaac. They lived in different villages, different--both farmers, and one had a daughter and one had a son and so they--the cousins married.

Q. WAS THIS AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE?

A. I don't think so. I think that there was some--attraction between the two of them, and so he--when he married her, when my father married her he had a small--most--many Jews in the villages did some farming, but also on the side had some business. And in this particular case, a small kind of general store, for the peasants and farmers would come and buy

things. So he was...(inaudible)... some ways not only a farmer and a shopkeeper, also sort of a...(inaudible)... cattle and cows and deliver them to the market and sell them or exchange them for other cows, other horses, whatever. This was a kind of way of--how people in those villages, in those towns, in those days, people made a living.

Q. SO IT SOUNDS LIKE ONE VILLAGE HAD VERY FEW JEWISH FAMILIES, AND YOUR FAMILY WAS THERE I GUESS PROVIDING THESE SERVICES AS A WAY OF MAKING A LIVING?

A. You could say that. Right. But also I think that after they were able to buy land, in the olden days, Jews could not own land, period, but this then changed--excuse me--then I guess there was one opportunity for them to eke out a living that way. There may be even Jews that were farmers and rich ones, but most of the Jews in the villages--in virtually every village, had a Jewish family or two and the bulk of the Jews lived in big towns and cities, and I'm sure you know that. Most of these Jews in the villages were poor, struggling farmers, with a small piece of land and so forth.

Q. DID YOU SPEAK YIDDISH AT HOME?

A. Spoke Yiddish at home, but also

Polish. So that I was fortunate--I was very lucky that I did speak Polish because it helped me to survive in the war, as we probably will chat about it.

Q. AND AS YOU WERE GROWING UP, WAS THIS ON A FARM OR IN THE TOWN OR--

A. Well, I was growing up--growing up, there wasn't much time to grow up in. But --

Q. AFTER YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH.

A. After Mother's death I was in the village with my mother and father, and then between my birth and the war breaking out was only a mere nine years--likely less than nine years. So, yes, I lived most of the time in villages; in these three places that I mentioned.

But there's also something that Jewish people used to do in these villages, is to send young kids to school. Normally called (Hader).

You have heard that term, right? (Hader). Which is a Hebrew word for school, approximately--yeah, school. And so I would go to a nearby town called (Lukla) near my father's house and would go to (Hader), and on the weekends I would come home. (Hader) was where you were learning Hebrew mostly and how to read Hebrew, how to pray,

occasionally some math. The teaching was strange by our standards here.

It was a kind of--the rabbi, the (molammet) used to be a--somewhat of a--didn't know much about pedagogy. It was cumulative, you memorized everything. And if you didn't you were either labeled as a "goya," who is a person who is not very smart or a... (inaudible)... among Jewish people, or you were beaten. Pedagogy wasn't very good. So these were experiences, and of course, the war came.

Q. WAS YOUR FAMILY OBSERVANT, OBSERVANT JEWS OR ORTHODOX?

A. Yes--no, I wouldn't call them orthodox, I would call them definitely observant, which means they would observe Shabuot, they would light candles, there would be special foods prepared for the Saturday, for the weekend. Even clothing would change and tablecloth was set and suppers were made. It was a special day set aside, a day of rest, and then I remember it as being very, very pleasant. Some of which I missed, by the way, which I feel that--because now I'm a workaholic, and so I work seven days a week. But before that, I reminisce about those days.

Q. DID YOU VISIT MUCH WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS OR OTHER RELATIVES WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG?

A. Yes. I used to hop around between these two grandfathers, my father's father, Herman, and then stayed in (Zindranova), where even though after my father remarried his second wife and he moved out to one of this villages I used to still stay with the people--my grandfather Isaac. And then of course I also visited my stepmother.

And so those kind of choices, that was in some ways very nice, that I had these choices. If I felt unwelcome or not loved in one place, I would seek love somewhere else. So that worked for a while.

Q. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A TERRIBLE CHANGE TO BE SO YOUNG TO LOSE YOUR MOTHER?

A. Yes. That was a--that was something that I'm sure you, of all people, are familiar with these sorts of traumas, but I couldn't believe it. I'd say, what do you mean dead? She's dead for a while, maybe? When is she coming back? But, yeah, that was--she was--she was a little bit too young. So...

Q. AND THEN THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A PERIOD AFTER HER DEATH BEFORE YOUR FATHER REMARRIED AND

SETTLED ELSEWHERE. WERE YOU WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS THEN OR--

A. Yeah, mostly with my grandparents, right.

Except for those days when I would be in (Hader), during the week, attending this and I would live with some families in town, in the little town, not in the village but in the nearby town which was probably a few miles, probably seven or eight kilometers.

As a matter of fact, I visited all these places recently with my wife, and we discovered some terrible news, but--

Q. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT LATER. SO MAYBE YOU CAN DESCRIBE SOME OF THESE SITUATIONS, WHERE--THERE YOU WERE, A YOUNG CHILD GOING IN TO STAY AT HOMES, NOT KNOWING THE PEOPLE.

A. There was Jewish--the tradition within Judaism, at least in that part of the world and at that time, to some extent, hopefully maybe it still is in some parts of the world, is to be hospitable. Is to offer hospitality to folks. So, for instance, my father would arrange with a family--an older man--that if he had an extra room, could I stay in his--in his

room. And I think he would pay him something. So that would be my place, where I would reside overnight, and then I think I wrote about this in *My Restless Memories.*

Q. YES.

A. And then during the day--then I would go to school and then sometimes the hospitality included other people would invite you to eat. This is also a tradition, which is--so neighbors might say, well, on Saturdays come and eat at my house, and on Mondays eat at my house.

So I didn't have to do much cooking, and in a sense it was a kind of a good deed, to feed somebody else, who--you know, who was--who could use it.

It's not that I was in poverty, just that I really didn't have the arrangement for rent, houses and pay for cooking and buy food and all that, so that was very nice.

That house, too, I revisited. And obviously everything I revisited recently, as late as a year ago, everything looks different and small and there are no Jews, and it's just a little world, you know, this world of cemeteries. So that's how I--as a matter of fact, I stayed in that town, in the (Dukla),

town of (Dukla), during the time of the invasion, German invasion of Poland in 1939.

Q. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THAT HAPPENED?

A. In (Dukla). I went from home in the little town, I used to go to (Hader) and I got there because--although we had some indications, some warnings that, you know...(inaudible)... I did not pay much attention to details of this sort.

But there were warnings, for instance the Polish invasion was broadcast, and then they would say there may be a war, but our Polish army will defeat those Nazis, et cetera, and as a matter of fact they have a statement which I'll never forget as long as I live. They said--in Polish it makes sense, it may not make as much sense in English, but they said: We will not give up even a button from our overcoats. (Speaking in Polish). In other words, we will defend ourselves. We will prevail.

And then a few days later, there was another broadcast which I'll also never forget as long as I live. It says in Polish--well, in English it says something like: Attention! Attention! The army--the W-army is arriving. (Speaking Polish). Okay.

And what that meant, that was a signal to

the Polish army, get out of the way because you will be captured.

Q. THE "W" MEANT--

A. Yeah, that you'll be captured by the Nazi Panthers. And the next day, next day, virtually, the Nazis were in. And one thing that I do remember, which is so very indelible, the Poles fought very bravely. We were standing on--they were standing on roofs, the soldiers, I guess they were--the retreating guards or whatever and one guy, whatever, had a machine gun and he would rest it on the shoulder--one soldier would rest it on the shoulder of another soldier and try and fight the fire and the aircraft. I mean, that was pathetic, but courageous.

And so within a matter of hours, we'd go in hiding in a basement and the next morning woke with all kinds of rumbles and tanks and motors. Next day, I woke up in (Dukla), we were frightened to hear this tremendous march, and there must have been tens of thousands of soldiers marching, because it was close to the Czechoslovakian border, they broke through into southern Poland, and so you had for the first time tanks and motorcycles and military trucks and the gasoline, the smell of fumes, and the marching. It

was like a new world, which again you can't forget that. ...(inaudible)... bizarre, strange, from another planet. That was reality.

Q. AND YOU WERE AT THE HOME OF ONE OF THESE PEOPLE IN THE TOWN?

A. In the basement, right. Right. Right.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE YOU WERE WITH?

A. Oh, sure. The name of the people was Herman, Mr. Herman. I forgot his first name. Herman. And I even know the address, it's 281 (Rinach), which means "the plaza."

As I said, I took photographs very recently with Pearl there. And I said, this is the place, and so forth. And I showed them--showed them--showed Pearl various things, including the cemetery.

So since I'm at this point maybe I'll talk about this, because you might forget to get back to this.

Q. SURE.

A. Okay. I was in Poland many times after the war, say in the last ten years, primarily because we were doing a research on altruism, with

rescues of Jews in occupied Europe, and we published some works on that, Pearl and I and others.

When I was in Poland in 1989, for the 6th or 8th time, I was interviewed by a Polish newspaper, "Politika" and the Polish--wrote a long article about who I was and what we were doing and what the project was about. Well, I received a letter a year later, almost a year later from a man from (Zindranova)--you remember the village?

Q. YES.

A. (Zindranova). I received a letter from him and he says, I think I know you--in fact, I'm sure I know you, and you and I may have gone to school together, which is possible, and I live at such-and-such a place, and he says you must--when you come back to Poland you must come back and visit me as an honored guest, honored guest of mine, and he added, by the way, I know exactly what happened to your grandfather. My grandfather Isaac.

In my book, *Restless Memories*, I talked about it, but I was never 100 percent sure of what happened. And then he added, and by the way, of the three houses, your father's house, your grandfather's house, and another Jew who was a brother of my

grandfather, (Zellmon's) house, all houses are gone except (Zellmon's) house is still standing.

Q. AND ALL THESE HOUSES WERE CLOSE TOGETHER OR IN THE SAME BLOCK?

A. No, no, no. Maybe a half a mile apart. Except my father's and my grandfather's house were close together.

But (Zellmon) was a half-mile away, and he says, I want you to come because I would like to--this house is still standing and I would like to make it into a Jewish museum. And so I was moved by this and decided next time I was going to go to Poland--I'll try to make it shorter. Next time we go to Poland, we'll do that. So indeed Pearl and I went to Poland.

Q. ...(INAUDIBLE)...?

A. We went to Poland, and we took a taxi from Warsaw, I believe all the way to the Czechoslovakian border.

It was simple and cheaper, and since I speak Polish, I didn't have any problems.

We arrived there, and sure enough, I have lots of photographs of this home, which he's trying to make a Jewish museum of now and raising some funds.

So, first things first. The first thing, of

course, is the first night I was taken to a mass grave. This man says, in the woods here, all the Jews in 1942, ironically, all the 13th, the day before my other grandfather was terminated, the one of this place here, which we'll maybe talk about later, but--he took me to the grave, and I went over there, and what they did is they gathered these Jews from various villages including some Jews from (Dukla) in trucks, took them in trucks, they told them they were going to drive them to the Slovak border, Slovakia, three or four miles across.

Instead they veered off into the woods. There was a mass grave there. And they terminated them all, shot them. So there is a monument now, and of course I had some real troubles at that time. Everybody... (inaudible) ...because I broke down into tears and so forth.

Q. OF COURSE.

A. So, that's issue one. The other issue on this particular trip--I also went to see, you know, the cemetery, which was part desecrated. And I went to (Dukla) to look at the shul where I used to pray, and there is nothing standing there any more except some walls are still--parts of the wall, and

fortunately somebody--maybe the city council decided to fence it in with some steel fence, so at least that remains,

And finally, in this village, he showed me the house, my grand--Zellmon's house, which I used to go--as a kid I used to go to that house quite often for cookies and cake, and to me, as a child of nine and before nine, seven--six, seven, eight, nine, the house looked gigantic, and I was unbelievably tiny. Unbelievably tiny. And so it's all falling apart.

When they terminated the people, the mass grave, the house was given to an elder Polish couple, peasants, and they lived there until they died, and then the local, local Russian orthodox church took over this house, and they--so this man who is a member of this church, very nice human being, he decided that it's important that because Poland--Poles don't know very much about--at least current Poles don't know very much about Jewish presence and Jewish culture--

Q. IS IT SUPPRESSED?

A. It was, under the Communists it was suppressed and it's not a popular topic, especially topics of Polish anti-Semetism, et cetera. But he felt that he himself, as an oppressed person, because

he was a Russian Orthodox person, Lithuanian, that he wanted to do something, and so I was very moved by this.

And so I'm raising some funds, and some personal money particularly, and it's going to take about $6,000 to rebuild everything, because the roof is falling in, the ceiling is falling in, and everything is rotted, and he's trying to get some Jewish artifacts--excuse me, Jewish artifacts, so there can be a tiny little regional museum. Because they only make museums in Poland in Warsaw, maybe in Krakau there is a type of one. So that was my (Dukla) visit--my (Zindranova) visit.

Q. ON THAT ISSUE, THOUGH, WERE THERE NO RETURNS OF PROPERTY OR RECLAMATIONS OR REPARATIONS?

A. Well, if I wanted to I could do this, but what for? If I wanted to do it now, perhaps the Polish government is saying--well, when the Communists took over in 1945 everything became state. Now there are laws in Poland and even Czechoslovakia, there's some items in the paper, even in the Chronicle even today, and that laws are being passed that people can claim their property back, but I guess one--there is nothing for me to claim. I'd just as soon see it as a

museum.

Q. OH, I WAS MEANING CLAIMING IT AND THEN DONATING IT.

A. Yeah, it would be possible. And it's still a thought in my--that might happen.

And then I walked a quarter of a mile further and then I went to my own house, and nothing is standing.

And my grandfather's house, my grandfather Isaac's house, nothing is standing except there is a Polish woman--a neighbor, nearby neighbor, who built a beautiful home--a nice home, and...(inaudible)...and she owns the land. I went to see her and she was--personally she was very sorry that she lives on my land. She's very sorry what happened to my grandparents, et cetera. She probably is, but what does that mean? And so she must have bought the land from the government. So what, do I sue? What for? What is that land worth? It's not a question of money. For me there is nothing but memories there.

So I just let--I correspond with her and they send us occasionally some presents, and publications, but the museum is my minor obsession, because that--I figure this is the only thing that

will be left--and he sends me pictures as it is being rebuilt, and the foundation, little by little, as he gets a check, and he buys more, and the city, the (Dukla) town is helping with the free lumber, and so maybe two years from now, a year from now I'll go back and see it and maybe have a dedication.

Q. SO (ZELLMON) WOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR GREAT UNCLE ON BOTH SIDES?

A. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. You got the story right. Lovely person. Very, very warm and compassionate person, (Zellmon). His wife, always fattening me with these cookies and rogelach and hagelach. Do you know what--

Q. YES, I DO, I KNOW. YES, I DO. I... (INAUDIBLE)... THOSE COOKIES.

AND WHAT WAS HER NAME?

A. Her name is--I think he was Hannah.

Q. HANNAH?

A. Hannah. Right.

Hannah and (Zellmon). And so that's the part of Poland and--

Q. DID THEY HAVE ANY CHILDREN, TOO?

A. Yeah, they perished as well.

Q. THEY DID? WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?

A. Let's see. I think one of them was David and another one was Moshe.

Q. AND YOUR GRANDFATHER IS ISAAC. WHAT WAS YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S NAME?

A. (Reisel).

Q. (REISEL)?

A. Reisel)...(inaudible)...

Q. YES, I REMEMBER THAT.

A. (Reisel). That was a fascinating relationship.

Q. YES.

DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT?

A. Well, it's difficult for me to understand hindsight, and I don't know exactly what might have happened in their life, but there was a kind of anger between them that--that was never resolved. I don't know what might have happened. So...(inaudible)... contempt. And so when they communicated, communicated only barely, even in the same room, an interesting psychological phenomenon which we're incapable of analyzing at this point. But when they communicated people there would say, tell him, and--you have heard that only in comedy here, I suppose, in the movies and television. But it was

real life at the time for me.

Q. AND YOU NEVER FOUND OUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE PROBLEM?

A. Not really, not really.

Q. MIGHT THEY HAVE BEEN AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE?

A. It could have been. It could have been, arranged marriage, and maybe she thought that he was below her station, because she was much more brighter and he was a more passive person, passive-aggresive, perhaps.

Q. AND, THEY HAD OTHER CHILDREN, TOO, BESIDES--

A. They had other children, sure.

They had other children, and their two sons, one, quote, was a good son, one was the bad son. (Markie) was the bad son, because he was a womanizer and a chaser of women and he was not, quote, Jewish, not dedicated enough. He was a rebel, and then (Mendell), (Mendell), was a good son, who was also blind in one eye. Interesting enough, that this (Mendell), I just discovered last year, did survive the war.

Q. HE DID?

A. The younger folks were dragged to the concentration camps. He survived the war, and I found this out in the Jewish historical institute in Warsaw, and the last known address that he moved out to Hungary, and I tried to trace him in Hungary, Budapest, but no luck, so he must have--right now he would have been probably an--I don't know, 85 year-old man.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HIS FATE WAS DURING THE WAR?

A. He was taken into a concentration camp in Auschwitz.

Q. AND HE SURVIVED AUSCHWITZ?

A. Somehow made it. And the irony of it is that I made it in Poland by being hidden, or concealed my identity, and he made it through the camps, and somehow we passed each other like ships in the night and we never--only discovered years later that he did survive the war, because in 1945, all surviving Jews that returned to Poland, no matter how they survived, where they survived, were asked by the Jewish--newly constituted Jewish committees and communities to please report their names, and so my name is in Warsaw, as one of the survivors, and

another cousin by the name of Oscar and his wife, and Hannah, are reported, and there's (Mendell), (Mendell) (Postoz) was reported as having written into Warsaw that he had survived, as I discovered it.

Q. BUT THE TWO OF THESE NAMES NEVER CONNECTED WITH EACH OTHER?

A. We never connected with each other. We never--I never went to--you hear his stories even now, that sometimes 40 years later people discover their brother's alive in Yugoslavia somewhere. There is such a case in Oakland. I forget his name, a baker who discovered his brother alive, and--in Yugoslavia they were reunited, only two years ago or so.

Q. INCREDIBLE. BUT NOW THAT YOU BROUGHT IT UP, PERHAPS YOU CAN DISCUSS THE CONNECTION OF YOUR NAMES, OF (POLSTER) AND (OLINER)?

A. Yeah, a puzzlement--Yul Brenner said, another puzzling situation. Okay.

My father's real name would have been (Polster)--it was (Polster). It would be (Polster) because he was the son of Herman (Polster), but Herman (Polster) decided not to marry in a--his wife, not to marry her with the state. Instead he married her just with a rabbi.

The papers were never filed. He married an Oliner, right? So my--and therefore my father was a quote-unquote illegitimate, therefore he was stuck with his mother's name, therefore, Aaron Oliner is my father's name instead of Aaron (Polster). Therefore I am Oliner, because I am my father's son.

Q. I SEE.

A. Very weird little things going on, but hopefully not too complex.

Q. NO.

A. And so perhaps I'll resume in the 1939 invasion.

Q. YES.

A. So several things have occurred to me that were very painful almost immediately, and it's sort of like a reawakening, sort of like you suddenly--you have aged because of what you have seen. First thing was that in the shtetl called (Dukla), where I went to (Hader), there are some Jewish shops. In fact, the shtetl was small, but Jewish shops--the shopkeepers, the Jews were frightened of the new Nazis and the military and had some suspicions about what the Nazis were about, and so virtually the next day, all the Jewish stores were closed. Locked and bolted.

But the peasants, nearby peasants were there submitted--with an inclination would come to the town. We're talking about seven, eight miles, six miles, five miles away. As a matter of fact, kilometers would be even closer. They'd come and they would be sold sugar or whatever or oil for their lamps. There was no electricity in the villages, (navka), used to be called, for lamps.

The Jews used to have these as merchants, shopkeepers.

They were banging on the doors and the Jews wouldn't open, and suddenly they would go over--the Nazi--the newly arrived military, the SS and Gestapo or whatever, the German uniforms, and they would only know one or two words: You there! You there! Point at the store, and the Nazis would help them smash the doors open, and take whatever loot, whatever they could, of course humiliating the Jewish people. So that's one kind of incident that I witnessed.

Q. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU OBSERVED THIS?

A. Well, I was like outside. We were out, out of the cellars and basements because it was the next day, and then, of course, the other thing was that I was soon--I decided soon to go--my grandfather,

grandmother, that is to say, Isaac and (Reisel), they sent for me, because they knew I was so close, and my father was further away, in another village, married to his new wife.

So they thought it would be safer for me to go to the town. So I witnessed more brutality with Jews, because they gathered at the time and they still had beards, and the Nazis would kick them around and beat them up, and I did not understand why they would do this. I mean, they hadn't done anything, and so in these nine year-old eyes, I was shaken by this sight.

Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COPED WITH IT AT THAT STAGE?

A. Fear. Fear and denial. I think when I would go back to the village, I would sort of pretend I haven't seen this stuff. For me, it was easier to try to deny something.

And so I was in the village with my grandfather Isaac for a while, and then my father ultimately came for me again. It was very dangerous. Jews began to shave their beards off and, you know, soon thereafter--so they would not be recognizable, and of course soon thereafter had to carry the star of David, which was clearly--you're not supposed to be

traveling places. He came with a horse and buggy and took me, and then I witnessed another humiliation.

Q. WHAT WAS THAT?

A. Well, he was driving his horse and buggy. We're talking about 30--35 kilometers, roughly, from my grandfather--(Zindranova), let's use the village, the name of the village to--actually where he was with his new wife, and so his horse and buggy was sort of on the road a little bit, and the Nazi trucks and jeeps and so forth were passing and one guy.... (inaudible)... and by the way, in the meantime I was tired, so I laid back in the straw and hay in the back of the wagon, cart, and he was pulled over and this guy, Nazi says to him, what have you got in the back there? Why...(inaudible)... and he said, oh, nothing. He went to go look and found me, and he said, you said nothing. So they slapped him around. And that's the first time I saw my father beaten up.

So that wasn't very--these sort of situations were impressionable. And then so once I get--once I got to my father's second wife's house--

Q. WHAT WAS HER NAME?

A. Her name was Esther. Esther, because she plays an important role in my life when we were in

the ghetto. She--so again we were in very bad shape in the village because there was not enough food and you couldn't go outside the village to do any business. So --

Q. WAS IT WIRED IN?

A. No, the village was not--that was before the ghetto. We're still, quote, not in ghetto. We're not "ghettoized." We're simply, simply persecuted, but not "ghettoized" yet.

Q. HAD YOU HAD ENOUGH FOOD IN THE--WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS THERE?

A. Yeah, we had enough food, and so--so then I decided after I stayed with my grandfather--with my father for a little while, and moved back and moved with my second grandfather, Herman this time.

Q. WHY DID YOU MOVE BACK?

A. Not back--well, back and forth, actually. Well, because any time I felt not--that I was maybe not appreciated much in one place I would try to go to another place. And my father would say, go ahead. Go. For a young kid it wasn't so bad. I could hitchhike, walk, whatever.

Q. IT WAS SAFE TO DO THAT?

A. Yeah, yeah, relative safe, particularly because I did not look Jewish.

Q. AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR SISTER AND BROTHER, THE OLDER ONES?

A. Well...(inaudible)... with my grandfather Isaac in (Zindranova). In fact, they perished with him in this mass grave that I mentioned, was describing about a minute ago.

And so--and so life was going on like this, tremendous--in villages things were not so bad yet. We heard rumors about ghettos coming up, but, you know, we still...(inaudible)... talking about 1941.

And then in 1942 things became even worse for Jews in towns, because from time to time you would see Jewish women or men going into the villages, trying to obtain some food. My grandfather, Herman--and you could sometimes get a few pounds of potatoes and so forth. And they would trade, sell clothing, whatever...(inaudible)... scissors, and they would get food. Things were very bad already.

And then finally, in our part of Poland, in August--no, in June, in June, an order came that under penalty of death, that every Jew, no matter where he lived or she lived, would leave all his or her items,

materials, whatever, and just pack a suitcase and report to a designated ghetto.

And so--so my grandfather--that was my grandfather, Herman, stayed there, until the very end. He knew that this was coming so he had some cattle, since he was a rich--a farmer, a small farmer, and had horses and cows and so forth, which was illegal somewhat--quite a bit, as a matter of fact, he decided to sell his horse and his cow, particularly to a woman whose name was (Valvena). (Valvena Piatsuk), and they knew each other from before the war, and she knew my father as well, since they were--perhaps they'd gone to school together. My father obviously grew up with her, and his father, Herman. But the Nazi--a couple of Gestapo plainclothes dressed, the Gestapo from the local town, called (Gorlitz), a little town, (Gorlitz), they came and they would ask my grandfather, what did you do with the horse? What did you do with the cow? You're supposed to leave everything here.

And he would sort of deny, and they would brutalize him in the worst way. They would kick him down to the ground, and kick him in the face and the stomach, and I was hidden sort of off, behind a wall

there, I was scared and frightened, but I was also very impressed that this man defied them. That gave me some additional courage, an old man defying these brutes, and he didn't report, and they finally left him alone. He was bleeding.

I went over to help him up and his wife, too, was frightened and so forth. So still we had 72 hours to pack everything. Remember, I'm now with my grandfather Herman's house, and so a kindly neighbor, peasant, came with his horse and wagon and we picked up some suitcases and some bedding, and our designation--we had 72 hours or so to arrive in another town, called (Balbova). That was the designated ghetto for that immediate loop of villages, and since (Balbova) was a little town, it was already made into a ghetto, with those fences and so forth.

Q. AND THIS WAS IN, AS YOU SAY, JUNE?

A. June 1942. And so we left everything.

As a matter of fact, it was a surrealistic world for me again.

When we left the house, in this state, whatever, we locked things up, because in some ways, there was this unreal feeling that, oh, it's temporary, you know, they're going to resettle us, and

we'll go back. Why would they want to--because we were a poor Jewish farmer, who has no wealth and anything that he had, they would have taken anyway.

Q. HAD YOU HAD ANY NEWS OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO JEWS IN THE REST OF POLAND OR GERMANY OR--

A. Yes. We had some news, but very sparse news. That Jews occasionally were shot in the streets in some of the towns, brutalized; that I had seen myself.

But no one ever, ever talked about mass extermination or ghettos with gas chambers or gas chambers--you know, exterminations were taking place in 1941 already in the--by the Alexander group that the Nazis invaded--when the Nazis invaded Russia, the first thing they did was started these mobile killing units, murdered 1.9 or 2 million Jews, with the shooting. Secrecy. There was no radios, no communication, no travel, no telephone. So it was very, very--and there is also denial, I think, on the leaders' parts, leaders' minds and heads.

Q. HAD YOU HEARD ABOUT ANY CAMPS BY THEN?

A. Yes. I knew one camp, because my father was taken to a camp. Plaszow, outside of

Krakau. He was taken--seized in the streets of (Dukla), happened to be in (Dukla).

Let's see, am I saying it right? No, I'm sorry. He was on the streets of (Gorlitz), streets of (Gorlitz), and the trucks would grab you and take you to the camp.

And so he discovered later that he was taken--about two weeks later he arrived. Escaped.

Q. ESCAPED?

A. Escaped, came back home.

Q. DID HE EVER DESCRIBE HIS EXPERIENCES WITH YOU?

A. Yes, brutal. No food, lots of beating and kicking, very hard labor, and he escaped, so we knew.

Q. DO YOU KNOW HOW HE ESCAPED?

A. He sneaked out somehow under the eyes of a guard; guard was distracted. So he came back and he told us, told us the story.

Q. WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG, SAY UP TO MAYBE 1939, DID YOU REMEMBER EXPERIENCING ANY ANTI-SEMITISM FROM THE LOCAL POLES?

A. Yeah, yes. But it never--I never took it extremely seriously. A local--frequently I would

be called (zidak), which means a Jew boy. Sometimes I would be--someone would throw stone at me, in the village. I would start throwing stones back at them.

But another incident which I don't seem to be able to forget either is that the Polish government, before 1939, before the war broke out, had some very anti-Semitic decrees, one of them which was that Jews were no longer allowed to kill the animals—(Shita), which is a ritual killing, killing animals, which in my view--and those who know this--is the most humane way of killing an animal so it suffers least, but the Poles didn't think that, or the government didn't think that--some parts of the government didn't think that, so they outlawed ritual slaughter so Jews were immediately, you know-- disadvantaged.

But as observing Jews, a lot of them would disregard the law, and so a lot of times my father would get a calf, buy a calf, and then he would invite the local shtetl—town—(shoika), which is the ritual slaughter person who was skilled at this--and by the way, for those who may not know, there is some similarity between this and native Americans. You make a (braha) before you kill the animal, you make a specific prayer, and the Native Americans say they

apologize to the animals. It is something not too far akin to that.

But--so then I had to--the (Shoika), this ritual slaughterer, this man who was the skilled person, it was his profession to kill animals, for meat, food. He would come, and I would have to watch out for guards, would guard the place, and nobody would see him sneak into the barn and then slaughter the animal. So things of that nature began to make more sense, came into my consciousness--this is what was happening unfortunately.

Q. SO AT THAT POINT WERE THE JEWS--WAS YOUR FAMILY ABLE TO FOLLOW ANY OF THE OTHER OBSERVANCES THAT YOU HAD?

A. Well, yes. Because you could follow religious observances in private, you could pray in private, you could light candles in private, if you had candles, and you could keep (Kashut), kosher, versus nonkosher dishes; you could still do that at the time. When you were still in your house, your home, and while there was a tremendous shortage of food, somehow or other in the village you had a possibility of seeing--having some animal that you could have meat, and vegetables, and trade with

peasants, so that wasn't--the picture totally changed when, as I said, during 1942, my father--my grandfather, Herman, was--had 72 hours to go to report to (Bolbova) and we were taken by the kindly peasant neighbor, and we locked the house, and I went with my grandfather to the ghetto.

And guess what, my father's village, with his step--his new wife and new children, he had some children, very young children, with his new wife, also designated to come to (Bolbova), and so my father's father, Herman, and his wife and myself, and there would be a son as well--my grandfather had another son by his second wife. First wife died.

Q. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A. His name was (Getzel), (Getzel). And so we found ourselves--we arrived in (Bolbova) ghetto and we were all put into a room, literally the size of--maybe twice the size of this living room, in which we are sitting here.

Q. MAYBE 20-BY-12 OR SO?

A. No, I would say bigger. Maybe--maybe 20-by-18 or so, 22-by-18. And that--it was this so-called house, no bathrooms, no toilet, because they were outhouses. Even in our shtetl a lot of people

didn't have plumbing, running water. And it was owned by an older--an older bachelor, and he rented it to us. So we had literally at least 4 or 5 families in the same room, and so we had a corner, mattress, straw mattress, and another corner, my grandfather would be in one corner and my father would be in another corner and there would be some other family there and so forth and that is--we were in this ghetto from June until August, the fateful day of August the 14th.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT WAS DAILY LIFE LIKE IN THIS SITUATION?

A. This (Bolbova) ghetto--again Pearl and I visited. Again, what a difference in terms of size. I have photographs of it. It's tiny. It used to look large. The marketplace, the town has a marketplace called (Rinnek), also looked tiny, now with grown-up eyes.

Life in the ghetto was very demoralizing. There were a lot of people who were hungry, a lot of people who were resigned, sort of resigned, to their fate. There was also some activity because the Nazis siphoned out the younger people to labor camps. Several hundreds of those people. And there was the Jewish police. There was a gate. People would go to

(shula), synagogue, one synagogue, which is also destroyed now.

Q. THEY HAD A (UTENRATT)?

A. They had a (Utenratt), absolutely, a (Utenratt).

And hunger was prevalent. People used to close their curtains so the hungry people wouldn't see. If they had some food or eating or whatever, the hungry people would just gawk through the windows, starving people. And --

Q. HOW DID YOU GET YOUR FOOD?

A. Well, it was still, quote, private economy.

There was no soup kitchen, per se. So however you could get it. So peasants would sometimes bring some stuff towards the gate or towards the fences.

But mostly the way I got our food, occasionally, on a rare occasion my stepmother, Esther and I would sneak out.

She didn't look particularly Jewish, so we'd go again to the village, nearby village, we're talking about five or six kilometers away, seven kilometers away.

Q. AND THE VILLAGE WAS CLOSED. HOW DID YOU GET OUT--

A. Sneaking out places, you know?

Different places, by a church or, you know, a gate wasn't--and so, it wasn't really very hard--controlled very intensely. It was controlled by the Jewish police a little bit. But, you know--it wasn't impossible to do that. Not really impossible. And so we did this a few times. We'd bring back potatoes and cabbages and eggs, and maybe some grain or bread. But then it became more dangerous, and so then I used to go myself, since I, quote, did not look Jewish. And I did not. I would sneak out and do the same stuff, and occasionally I would steal some food, because--it was easier to steal eggs from the barns, fruits off the trees. It was summertime, and remember, we were getting towards July and things are not ripe yet. But you could pick cucumbers, do some stealing that way, if you didn't get caught, and so we were like that for a number of months, and then along comes August the 14th. And this is a very tough one for me.

August 14th, the Nazis surrounded the ghetto. They surrounded the ghetto with soldiers.

And by the way, Ukrainians, Ukrainians were in the service of the Nazis.

I hate to say that, and a lot of Ukrainian-Americans might say that this is not true.

It is absolutely true. There were some members of the--some men in the--who are Ukrainians who served in the Nazi army. This is a fact. They can look it up. I invite them to look it up any way they want to. This is not an anti-Ukrainian statement. It's a true statement. Ukrainians were brutalizing Jews, in the service of the Nazis.

These guys would surround the ghetto, and then there were these noises, and I woke up and there was tremendous confusion. The Nazis would be inside the ghetto itself now, and they would be yelling, (speaking German). All Jews out! Out where? Out to the marketplace. What is a marketplace? It's a square in the town where several dozen trucks, giant military trucks were waiting. And these people were chased out in a state of fright and fear, et cetera, et cetera, into the marketplace. They were all made to lie down and sit down, squat down. Anybody who would stand up was knocked down. And they were waiting and waiting there. And in the meantime, in my

situation, we were also frightened. My father left somewhere to look at what was happening, and disappeared, and came back, reappeared, and we were trying to find out what is happening, and we knew that people are being shot already, because they were trying to escape, they refused to go out. So anyway, my mother's--she already--my stepmother, she had a premonition that something terrible was going to happen, tremendously--something very dangerous, and so she told me to--in Yiddish to run and hide and survive, because if I do--because the end was coming of some sort, and so--a lot of involvement there. Other things have occurred.

But--so I did ultimately after many different meanderings, I did escape. I ran to the roof, and all these people were taken--roof, attic, and I observed from the--actually the top of the roof, covered up with some boards, and I observed all this stuff. They were taking them to those trucks. I could see it.

It was only maybe 250, 300 yards away. And from the roof I could see that they were beating them and taking them into trucks, and they took these people to a mass grave, which is the--it's a little

small forest, used to be an Austrian military cemetery, small forest with a cemetery and forest all together.

I visited it again several times. Maybe a half-mile square, and there was a mass grave pre-dug in there, and they dragged them from these trucks into this forest, and there would be a board across this mass grave, and they would shoot them all. And they were shooting them for a long, long time.

(Camera Turned Off-Filming Stopped)

A. So ...

Q. OKAY.

A. I think we were talking about, they took these people and they shot them in a mass grave. The Poles were so terrified, the Polish villagers around these (gottwats), which I--again, I visited it several times since, recently, to sort of case the place, to see who, what, where. They were so frightened because of the noises and the screaming, that a lot of them ran out to the nearby woods or hills because they thought, you know, that--well, they were terrified, didn't know whether they would be next or what. But it took them about 18 hours or so to get these trucks going back and forth. And when I was

there in 19--with (Stashek), one of the people that helped me survive the war, in 1989, I was visiting the grave, mass grave, which is--by the way, has a monument on it now, and it's fenced in, I was standing there of course saying my caddish, my prayer. A Pole came by. He didn't know who I was. I was a tiny little boy at the time. And he says, you know, I was here at the time this was happening. So again he elaborates more and more as to what happened, how they did it and how they dragged them in from the truck and how people screamed and so on. And so he sort of filled me in on the details. So what I did then, from the ghetto (Bolbova), with my stepmother's words--

Q. WHAT WERE HER WORDS? LEAVE AND SAVE YOURSELF?

A. Yeah. It's--in Yiddish, probably most people--not too many people understand Yiddish. But it says (speaking in Yiddish). Run away and you will survive. You've got to run away, because--and survive. I think I said--transliterated that in the book itself.

Q. SO THIS WAS LIKE A BLESSING FROM HER?

A. Yeah. It was an order. Somebody told me what to do because I didn't know what to do. I

mean, somebody gave me marching orders, gave me permission.

Somebody gave me--defined the situation for me. I was--I was a nine-year-old kid--in this particular case I was no longer nine. I was approaching almost 12, but still, not --

Q. YOU WERE A YOUNGSTER?

A. Not experienced in these kind of--I couldn't conceive of people wanting to kill someone for no reason.

I mean, if you did something to me then I can conceive of wanting to do something to you, but to take innocent people just didn't make--didn't compute too well for me.

Q. SO WHATEVER LEVEL OF JUDAISM YOUR FAMILY OBSERVED, DID YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BELIEVED IN GOD?

A. Yes, in the sense of--because I called on him quite often. So--just to be safe I did call on him quite often. I'm not 100 percent--excuse me, 100 percent sure that a conception of God the way I have a conception of God now. But I knew there was something that--in some force that could be helpful, and so I would ask for help. Very frequently. For the balance

of the war.

Q. ON THIS PARTICULAR DAY, WHEN YOUR STEPMOTHER AND FATHER WERE TAKEN, WHAT ABOUT YOUR GRANDPARENTS?

A. Okay. Everyone. Everyone.

Q. THE WHOLE HOUSE?

A. The whole house. My grandfather, Herman, his wife, and then there would be this other family with little kids who shared the room.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER THEIR NAME?

A. No, unfortunately not.

Q. WHAT WERE YOUR STEP-SIBLINGS NAMES?

A. Okay. One was (Shya), and believe it or not the other one was mentioned--was named after my mother, my dead mother, (Yafa). And (Shya).

Q. HOW OLD WERE THEY?

A. I would think the boy would have been extremely young. I don't know, maybe months.

The girl was absolutely stunning, (Yafa), she must have been at least five-ish or so, five-ish.

Q. THE SON OF YOUR GRANDPARENTS?

A. (Getzel). Yeah. (Getzel) somehow was not there at that moment.

He was somewhere else, but he was caught

later. And he did not survive, either. So everyone was taken, and I stayed in the ghetto for a while --

Q. YOU WERE ON THE ROOF?

A. On the roof.

Q. AND YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL LEAVE BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR FATE IS AT THIS POINT?

A. I don't know what their fate is other than I know they're being brutalized and killed and driven on truck, and some were shot already and hit with rifle butts. Some woman was trying to hide with the baby, and the baby would cry and she would be discovered and she would be murdered and so forth. So I--it was just like--I couldn't believe that I was awake or alive or dead or--it was a nightmare as I observed this.

And I'm also not dressed too much, you know?

So after things quieted down, it may have been the very next morning, I went back--of all the things that I was missing, I was missing my mother's photograph...

Q. YOU WANT TO STOP FOR A MINUTE?

A. No.

Q. OKAY.

A. So I was looking for the photograph,

and of course I couldn't find it. So anyway, it was too dangerous to stick around. And I got some clothing, and I believe I may have even swiped some clothing from somebody else, and decided to make a dash for the--to get out, to run, remembering my stepmother's words.

Then I came across a vicious little anti-Semitic boy.

The Nazis were still searching houses, homes, you know, house to house, basement to basement, the roof, attic, whatever, and so this boy who I had some troubles with was nearby, so it was like a nemesis, like a devil taunting me.

He also knew very little German, and everybody seems to know the word (yuda), like this universal word, and so he--a Nazi was searching around the corner and he yells, (Yula Yuda), pointing at me. So I rushed at him, and I was going to choke him, and--and again for 12 years of age, almost, I was quite--at that time I was relatively hefty, and he sort of--I scratched him, God knows what, and kicked him a few times and he ran away, howling, and I made it through--for my favorite hole, escape place, and so I was wandering around the villages, from time to

time--for a number of days, I forget whether three days or two days, and ultimately I--ultimately I managed--a thought went through my head as I was sleeping in the barn, I said, who can I go to? Who do I know? And sure enough this (Valvena Piatsuk) came into my forehead, came into my mind, and so I was heading for that village. Incidentally, the--which was very close to my--see, think of Poland, and this part of Poland is a very small region, very hilly, forests and valleys, no good roads, no telephones, no buses, mud roads, no cars, so that everything looks sort of like it is far away, but when you travel it now, in 1993 and '4, there are roads built, and it's only a matter of five minutes, ten minutes, 15 minutes, 18 minutes, between distances with a car, and a little longer in some cases.

So I went from village to village, and then I decided to go through my--through the village--by the way, I had a cap on, a big cap so that when I saw somebody I might recognize, I pulled it over my eyes, or I would be so careful, my antenna would be out so sharply, that if I knew somebody was coming, I would immediately turn and go the other direction, to the left or the right, anyplace, so our eyes don't meet.

Q. YOU WERE HYPERSENSITIVE?

A. I was constantly--and and perhaps to this very day I'm a very light sleeper--constantly aware--constantly vigilant about what might come around the next corner or how to be sure about your circumcision, how to be sure about not ...(inaudible)... in public, how to be sure you don't make a slip. And it's kind of like the wisdom of the ages, you suddenly--poof, suddenly you're mature. Necessity, I suppose, is the mother of invention or something, some people say.

Q. SO YOU GREW UP OVERNIGHT, AS IT WERE?

A. I think so, yeah. Grew up overnight, and so I decided to go through the village, my grandfather Herman's village. And the house, by the way, nothing was left of the house. The house was still standing, the windows were broken, doors were gone, anything in the house, the stables, any implements, anything, it was just stolen by the neighbors.

Q. WAS THIS TYPICAL?

A. Very, very typical. And--at least in this part of the world. I don't know if it would be typical of Holland, Denmark or in some other place in

France, but it was typical in Poland.

And so in the adjacent village was (Valvena Piatsuk's) house, in a village called (Bestra). I know that you must be confused with these villages by now. (Bestra) is the village.

And so I came and I knocked on the door, and she already heard what had happened, because the forest is very close by; on a clear day down the hill you can see--see its location, the approximate location of it. And she knew what had happened, and so she took me in, and she sort of calmed me down, she said don't worry, you must survive, you will survive, but she couldn't keep me in the house, for a number of reasons. I don't know, maybe she was not 1,000 percent altruistic. Maybe she was afraid.

But she was kind and compassionate. But then she had--and the main reason why she was frightened is because in Poland--again this is not an attack on Poles. As a matter of fact, I feel fondly towards Poland. But the facts must come out and the truth must be told.

During the war there was a group of people--and you must have heard in your other interviews--a group of people called (schmaltz) (of

Nicki), which means--comes from the Yiddish word (schmaltz), and a (schmaltz) is a guy, mostly males, Poles, during the war, made their living off catching, betraying, informing on Jews. They would bring them to the Gestapo, the information, and get a reward or even capture some old man or woman and bring them to the Gestapo and get a reward. Poles were hungry and deprived, too. So if you got an overcoat or some shoes or food or some money or whatever from the Gestapo, it supplemented your income. So some--some, I must repeat myself--over and over, only some Poles did that.

And let's not condemn all of Poles, because Poles were also heroic rescuers.

Q. BUT THE (SCHMALTZ) IS LIKE FROM FAT?

A. Yeah. That's right. (Schmaltz) (of nicki) like the fat of the lamb, if you could draw a broad-stroke analogy.

And so there was this man (Croupa), the (Schmaltz) (of nicki), a traitor, and he was literally within a matter of--I know this house, I've seen it, a matter of a half a mile away, and she was afraid--because what he used to do is he suspected somehow, so he'd sneak up at night and listen to the

window and see whether there is anybody, and then go to the police for a reward, and the next day the Gestapo would be right there.

And so she thought up an idea, which I believe you're familiar with. Furthermore, she suggested I change my name, which I did. I became (Yusef Polowski), which is typically Polish.

Secondly, she taught me the Catechism, which I remember to this hour, better than I remember anything --

Q. YOU COULD LEARN IT THAT QUICK?

A. Listen: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. What--there is nothing to that. (speaking in Polish).

And then, she said, listen:

There's many peasants in the nearby villages who could use help. Help would consist of such thing as cowhand or stable boy, a farm boy, a combination of all of the above, cleanup boy. Many people who were poor send their kids, young kids out to work like that. The richer farmers or peasants would be able to give you food, and give you someplace to sleep, perhaps some clothing and maybe even give you some--instead of money they might give you some grain,

let's say a ton--I mean, a hundred pounds or 200 pounds or 500 pounds of wheat, or potatoes, is a tremendous amount of money, so that would be your payment to your family.

Well, I came to--I was looking--so we said good-bye and she told me any time come on back and so forth and so on.

Q. DID SHE HAVE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS THERE?

A. Yes, she had a son who was my honored guest here. I took him to a local church and I bought him a car in Poland very recently.

Q. WHAT IS HIS NAME?

A. (Stashek), (Stashek), and we correspond regularly.

He also had a sister called Sophia.

Q. A HUSBAND?

A. Sister, (Stashek) had a sister.

Q. BUT (VALVENA)--

A. Had a husband, yeah, had a husband as well, and he was rather totally--it was a second husband, he was totally out of it.

So she was the real altruist. She was the real boss.

He was the--very nice guy, very simple, uneducated person, but totally--totally uninvolved in this matter. Just--you know, he's involved: He had his mouth shut.

Q. THAT WAS GOOD.

A. I went from village to village and sure enough, right across the hill, like you say, between here and Eureka, that is as far as it is, literally, across the hill, people don't really see each other.

It's another village, another little world, another entire universe. Maybe a little further than that; maybe it's a little closer to the other side of Eureka.

And so sure enough, I asked in the village, asked in the village, does anybody need a pasteur. "Pasteur" is another word for cowhand, farm boy.

And sure enough some man says after several villages, he says there is a house up there, up the street, maybe a quarter of a mile up the--by the creek, it has a tin roof. Go over there. They need a pasteur.

So I go over there, and sure enough, a nice--most of the houses around there have thatched

roofs. I took Pearl to show her that, too. Thatched roofs. And this house was a tin roof and had a separate stable.

Most of the houses had stables attached to the house itself. For warmth in winter. You know winters are extreme in Poland. So cows and cattle bring heat to the people, some--the very, very poor peasants would have a room, say, the size of this house here, a shack or--on that side would be two cows, not separated by any window--by any walls or anything, and there would be some sort of a grain for the cow urine and so forth, smell, odor. This part, people would be living, but that's--but the cow and the cattle was the sustenance, the life, the milk, their cheese, and whatever.

So I knocked on the door of this tin house, and it was opened by a Mr.(Povolski).

To begin with, it was a Jewish house with a Jewish farmer, a better-off Jewish farmer. The farmers were exterminated--the Jews were exterminated. (Bolbova)--by the way, their name was Schiff; Schiff was their name. And he had two sons. And that is something that is coming in a minute about the two sons.

This Mr. Schiff had two very healthy, powerful sons. And he says--this (Mr. Povolski) says, yes, we're looking for a pasteur only who is very honest, who is very obedient, who is willing to work very hard, so I said I am it, I am honest and obedient. And he hired me, and I had nowhere to sleep so I slept--why they didn't give me the other room, I don't understand. There were two rooms, there was a kitchen and so forth.

But they needed the other room for whatever. Their parents used to come and visit sometimes. So I slept in the stable for three years. Had a little--a shelf, a big shelf with straw and I was sleeping with the cows and horses, in the same room.

Q. HOW WAS IT DURING THE WINTER?

A. Very warm.

Cattle put out a lot of heat, in small--especially the walls are confined and insulated with cowhide or--I mean, cow dung or whatever.

Anyway, so he hires me, and I work for them, and I make up an entire story: I am Yusef Polowski. I have a mother. Made the whole thing up, just on the spot. I have a mother, I have a brother, and I have a sister, and I gave them the name of a village which is

probably 40 kilometers away, which I knew well. Not too far from (Bolbova), the ghetto from which I was just driven out. Maybe a little to the other side of (Bolbova), maybe a little less than that.

And so he says, sure, you can get started right away. You sleep here. This is what I want you to do. I said fine, yes, I'll work here, et cetera.

And he says, well, I want to see your mother because I want to know what it is going to cost. I mean, what is it you want to work for me. So I said, don't worry, sir, I'll get you my mother, thinking in my childish way, the Americans may be invading, the allies may be invading Africa. Maybe this, maybe the russians, maybe--somehow I kept thinking eight weeks max and the Nazis will be defeated.

Eight weeks turned into three years. Childish.

Anyway, along comes Christmas--along comes Christmastime, and remember--so December, the guy says, (Mr. Povolski) and his wife, says, now why don't you go home for Christmas and bring your mother with you back. And I said, yes, sir, I'll go home and bring my mother back.

So I go home--go home, namely I sneak back

to the hills and mountains through the snow and end up at (Valvena's) house in this evening. Those days I could walk very fast and rush, there was no such thing as not having enough energy. I didn't know about not having enough energy.

So I arrived. I sneaked in so nobody will see me. And she welcomes me, and I stay a couple days, and I say, listen, Mrs. (Valvena), Mrs. (Piatsuk), we need to--the man wants to see you.

I told him I had a mother. So she says, well, go back and make some other excuse, you're sick or whatever.

So I went back and said, she's sick. I said, my mother is sick, but she said to me, give me food and clothing and maybe some wheat.

I'll collect some wheat, you know, let's say X amount of wheat or--wheat and barley and potatoes and whatever. So he said--but I said, soon, in the spring, my mother will come. And I keep working.

In the meantime, many different things happen to me, but one particular one is that I--since it was a Jewish house, in the attic, buried in the corner with a lot of junk still left, small little things, is a (sedure), a Jewish (sedure), a Jewish

prayer book, so I'm kind of, I don't know, automatically attracted to it, which was a very dangerous thing to do. And I took it down and put it in my--in the stable, beneath my things. And (Mrs. Polvoski) finds it and she says, what is this? Are you a Jew? Sort of like joking, kibitzing. Oh, no, no, no. I found this, and I don't know what this is. It was kind of a funny book. I found it, and I found it over here. There's other things over there, too, and so of--it passed, but it was a silly thing to do.

Q. HAVE YOU EVER FELT SUSPICIONS FROM THEM BEFORE?

A. Well, no, not really, because he in particular used to make horrendous anti- Semitic statements throughout the years.

Q. FOR EXAMPLE?

A. He would say, those damn Jews. I feel very sorry for them. Those devils are being killed in Warsaw ghetto, and so forth, because there was a Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943, and he knew about that.

As a matter of fact a friend of his wrote a letter to him. She was describing how she was standing on the balcony observing these poor devil

Jews being bombed and gassed and whatever.

So he said, I feel sorry for the Jews, but, on the other hand, the Nazis cleaned Poland of Jews for us. It will be a different Poland, a better Poland for it.

So you know--and a statement of this nature made me feel he couldn't be suspicious.

Q. WERE YOU LIVING IN FEAR DAILY, THOUGH, BEING DISCOVERED?

A. I was living in fear, not daily, because I was fine in an isolated village, but I was living constantly on the alert, constantly observing the mood, observing who is coming to the village. If, God forbid, a car ever came, which it did, once in a while, the Nazis would come through there on one of their jeeps, on a dirt road, I would hide or be out of sight, because I never knew when they were coming. When the Nazis came to a village they always came by car. When they came by motor vehicle it was for some purpose. In this particular case they were looking for eggs, you know, wanted eggs, to buy eggs for the headquarters in (Gorlitz).

Q. DID THEY EVER COME TO THE FARM?

A. Oh, yes.

They came to the farm wanting to buy eggs and I obviously was far away.

I was always ready to take off. A couple of other instances--incident that have happened to me during the (Povolski) days--a number of things. One of them is that there was a kid whose name was also (Usek) across the field, and he was somewhat my nemesis. I always had a little nemesis. I had to be careful. One of them was--he somehow came to the house, this Usek, and he stole a knife, a pen knife. (Mr. Povolski's) favorite pen knife. And they suspected me immediately. And there were going to fire me immediately on the spot. Like the next morning.

But (Mrs. Povolski) had a dream--and I'll never forget again, some of these instances you'll never forget, because they're so--you couldn't even manufacture them if you tried--a dream that it wasn't me that stole it, it was (Usek.) The next day, he goes over and calls him over and says, (Usek), you stole the knife and we want it now. And he returned the knife and got a strapping from his father.

So, a simple peasant man. But (Usek) also hung around with me all the time as I was in the

pasture, because we were adjacent and he always searched me out. One day, believe it or not, I see a man coming towards me. I was in the pasture, in the field, a man coming towards me, and I am always suspicious when somebody is coming. And as he's getting closer I recognize him. He's the bachelor who rented the apartment to us in (Bolbova) ghetto. He apparently managed to escape somehow from the termination, disheveled, torn, looks like--looks like he's half there, when he--and so when I finally recognize him, I think quickly and I said to (Usek), look, (Usek), your cow is going from the pasture to the grain field, it's eating the grain. You better go and get it quickly, because there will be trouble. So I averted him and I ran towards this guy quickly and I said, what are you doing? Please don't give me away. I'm just a pasteur here. And he says, but I'm hungry. Can you give me some food? I said, I'll tell you what: Go in those woods and hide, and this evening I'll come by and steal some bread and other stuff, maybe milk and tins of butter or wheat and bring it to you, so I did that and he lasted for a while and he moved somewhere else, and and I understand later on he perished.

Q. HOW DID HE PARISH, YOU KNOW?

A. Somebody betrayed him because ... (inaudible)... somebody would catch him, because he looked Jewish, you know. You could tell.

And then, of course, I was constantly trying to cover up my identity, constantly authenticate, cover up, you know, any opportunity. When you were speaking anti-Semitic stuff, I'll be more anti-Semitic. Make anti-Semitic remarks, when he--these people, these (Povolskis) would never go to church. They were educated people. He was an engineer, and he--so in order to further authenticate myself, as with the villagers, I used to go to church, so I would go to church. And that (Usek), the knife stealer, would be my guide.

He would--whatever he did, I did. I had never been to a church. When he made the sign of the cross, I did. When he kneeled down, I did. Whatever he did. And I did not know what confession was, but then I saw him walk over--see, in the Catholic faith in Poland, you don't have to make an appointment to go see the confession. I don't know how it works here. No idea. But, there you just walk over to the booth, and say, Father, I've sinned. So I just listened

carefully. I couldn't hear the details, but I know he started with "Father," and made the sign of the cross, "I've sinned." So I went over and did the same thing, Father, I've sinned. And he asked me, what did you sin about? Oh, I stole apples, I cursed, I was thinking about girls--I don't know what I made up. That further covered up any doubts that further covered up my sort of--if anybody thought, who was this kid. And the fact I spoke Polish well as a peasants, not as a--not an intelligent, educated Pole, college-degree Pole, it was a simple peasant's type of--I would become more peasant-like.

Q. SO YOU NEVER MADE ANY ERRORS IN YOUR CHURCH BEHAVIOR?

A. I don't know if I made any errors. I would say probably nobody noticed if I made any errors. I don't know if I made the sign of the cross right, you can make an error by doing this, starting the wrong way, I think you have to start here and go that away or something, I don't recall now exactly.

Q. DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY THINGS LIKE NIGHTMARES OR OTHER KINDS OF BEHAVIORS LIKE THAT?

A. Yes.

Yes.

Yes. Dreams. Okay.

Q. WHERE YOU MIGHT CRY OUT?

A. Yes.

But I was in the stable always. Yes.

And that was my fortunate thing, that I was always in the stable and a light sleeper. But one of the dreams that I--one of my thoughts came to me, I don't know why, kept hearing the Jews are being caught, and I'll tell you probably what prompted that, the house was a Jewish house that I work in. It was owned by Mr. Schiff. Hershel Schiff. Two of his sons escaped somehow. And they were hiding out.

One had a Polish woman as a lover in one of the villages there nearby.

One night, there is a knock on the door, and these two big guys come in, they say--that's right, I go to the door. But fortunately they didn't remember me or didn't recognize me, but I knew who they were. I was sort of hiding a little bit.

My face was hid, sort of. At least I think they didn't recognize me.

If they did, then, you know, certainly they knew my father and I often think about this, whether they did recognize me and pretended to not know me.

Maybe one of them did.

I'm not sure. I don't know. So I say to Mr. (Povolski), there are two gentlemen to see you, and they are coming in, forced their way, politely. They say, by the way, this is our house. And we we don't want any trouble, we don't want to harm you, we know that you rented this house.

There is something in the stables that we want, we want that and we'll leave. And by the way, if you make any trouble, you will be hurt and there are five of us outside. By the way, there is nobody outside. So they go into the stable, they take off a board from ceiling and sure enough, there is a pistol and they--they take the pistol and the ammunition.

Q. YOU ACCOMPANIED THEM?

A. Yes.

And so did Mr. (Povolski). And (Mr. Povolski) is a little afraid, and you can see, but I had this feeling they wouldn't hurt him. Why? What for? What would they do? And then he--and he said also--one of them said, by the way, we could use some food. Do you have any food? Someday we'll repay you. They were very polite. And this guy gave them bread and butter and some other thing and sausage and they

left. Unfortunately, these guys in a couple months later, they were both caught. One was betrayed by a (smarts novi) and he was shot with his lover, a Polish woman, in the house. They are buried right in the house, mud hut, mud floors. They were asked to bury them right in the house.

Q. TO TORMENT HER?

A. Well, they shot her, too, but the neighbors, and so and as an example. The other one was--the other one was caught later on. So this is one kind of idea that was more frightening. And then the second idea, I was--the second thing that came to my head, during those days, was that perhaps I couldn't trust (Valvena) after all.

I don't know why that came to me sort of like a paranoid dream or something. So I thought that maybe I should test that out, that theory. So in order to test this theory out, I used to see (Stashek) very often. Why? Because the Nazis made every Polish farmer, peasant farmer, deliver fresh milk every second day to a creamery in a designated location, and so I came from my village to the designated--through a village yet, and he came from his village, knowing that, you know, you have do this--do this, because if

you didn't, penalty of death. Everything was penalty of death, disobeying the Nazi orders, so one day--normally when we walked, both of us knew that we had to be very careful and nobody notices that we talk.

So sometimes she would come from one direction, I would come from another direction, and we would sort of converge. And then we talked side by side and pretend not to look at each other, but talked.

Q. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO NOT HAVE EVER MET EACH OTHER?

A. Right.

Not to the outside world, because we didn't want anybody to suspect people knew him and, you know, ...

(inaudible)...

Q. EVEN THOUGH YOU ...

(INAUDIBLE)... WITH HIS FAMILY BACK IN THE DAYS OF YOUR GRANDFATHER?

A. Right.

But this was another part of the village, another part of the ...

(inaudible)... every ...

(inaudible)... a little bit different and could have brought danger. So we walked into this creamery and I said ...

(inaudible)... I have this ...

(inaudible)... so he said ...

(inaudible)... (area of bad tape) relieved my anxiety for some reason and, oh, well, she wouldn't be doing that if she was going to betray me, and why I thought that is totally unbelievable.

Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY HINTS ABOUT WHY YOU THOUGHT SHE MIGHT BE SUSPICIOUS?

A. I just don't know. I don't know.

Fear of this--this person is betrayed and this person is betrayed and this Jew was caught in this area and that area. It was fearful and brought fear for me. But so I decided not to test this again. And now a dream came to me by my own mother, my own mother, and she said, she also assured me, don't do anything, everything will be fine. Don't run, don't move. Stay here. And so that again for some reason, talking about God or whatever, all a suggestion, now along comes Christmas again, another Christmas, the second Christmas. He says again, this is long enough, Mr. (Povolski) says, I've got to see your mother.

So I go over, again, the same story, and I get some presents, (Polvolskis) give me presents which consisted of cake, by the way, breads and cakes and cookies. And I go again, sneak into (Valvena's) home, and I said to her, listen, this man--this man wants to see somebody, what shall we do? So we prearrange a plan, which is very risky. But we prearrange the plan, that I'll come back and I'll say my mother will definitely come soon, maybe a few days, next Thursday, and she'll talk to you, sir. But the real plan that we prearranged was that she is not going to come, she's going to send (Stashek). (Stashek) would come and he would introduce himself as my brother. He wasn't as--perhaps as smart as I was in the sense of, you know, the wits about him, so I said to him, (Stashek), don't say anything, I'll do all the talking, you just are my brother, and if they ask, your name is (Polowkski) and you come from (Sterna) and so forth. So be careful. Don't say anything.

Before you answer anything, look at me first. Sure enough, he arrives, and I said, no, my God! Where--I introduced--I say, in front of (Povolski), (Stashek), what are you doing here? Where is Mum? Where is Mum? And he says, I'm sorry to tell

you, Mum is very ill again. And he says, you remember that you said that, you know, she is very happy that (Polvolskis) are employing me and very happy with the grain. Someday we'll pick it up. In the meantime, she's, you know -- I told her purportedly, I'm quite happy with (Polvolski), so she had this brief little speech and shut up, I said, that's it.

Enough is enough. So I said, (Mr. Povolski), I'm very sorry. You see, this woman is not a well woman. I hope nothing serious comes to her. I'm a little worried.

And so that authenticated my additional kind of--at least I had a brother produced. And so this was going on in these years. A month turned--one month into another month and then one --

Q. WERE YOU DEVELOPING MORE INTIMACY WITH THE (POVOLSKI) CLAN?

A. With her, (Mrs. Povolski). With him, not so much. He had no children so she was a little--and she did certain things, which is highly unusual, but maybe because that's the nature of the situation at the time. A stable is a place where cows and horses live, and sometimes--and, you know, there is a--I don't know if you have been into a stable.

Polish stables have these drains where the urine flows down, and sometimes at night she would come into that stable because it was part of--not too far from the house, almost adjacent, and she would urinate in the corner. So that was highlyy unusual, she would squat down.

Q. DID THEY HAVE AN OUTHOUSE?

A. But it was freezing cold outside, freezing cold outside.

Q. SO WHAT WAS UNUSUAL? DID YOU FEEL THERE WAS KIND OF A SEXUAL--

A. Well, yes.

Why would she do that? And the other thing was even a little bit more unusual. And that is, we had this horse. And the horse kicked me, and believe it or not he kicked me right in my groin, over here, and so she was kind of curious to see--I mean, I was very scared, so --

Q. I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU IF YOU HAVE HAD TROUBLES AROUND CIRCUMCISION AND --

A. Yeah.

Q. -EXPECTING YOU TO--

A. Well, I was very careful. Very, very careful, never to, you know, to--always be clothed

properly. And so she wanted to look at it, to see whether we needed a doctor, whether I'm crippled, and so I did sort of let her see, but I covered everything else up that was important. She could see this corner here and she said, no, just--cold compresses will do it. And then another thing that occurred, it was getting closer towards the end of the war, the Nazis were now losing the war. It was obvious, you could hear canons not too far in the distance.

Q. WERE YOU GETTING ANY NEWS FROM PAPERS OR RADIOS OR TRAVELERS?

A. No, penalty of death, anybody was caught with having a radio. Newspapers were available but all Nazi propoganda stuff, both in German and Polish. My boss, Mr. (Povolski), could read German, as I say, an educated person, Pole. He used to read the Krakau Title, an official newspaper from Krakau, published by the Nazis. Of course they always lied about progress and victories and--but things would come through that they lost in Stalingrad, the war was reversing itself and little by little there was--so you could read between the lines. The more they denied, the more you could see they were really hurting, the Nazis.

Q. WERE THERE ANY REFUGEES OR TRAVELERS COMING THROUGH THE VILLAGES?

A. Not so much travelers as partisans.

Well, these were travelers, but partisans who were resistance people who would have more information because they would have secret radios occasionally. They would spread some news and we would know if what the Nazis were saying were lies.

Things were hopeful for me because I could hear the guns at certain points, tremendous canon roars, maybe as far as 50 miles away, but you could hear them. And took, however, six months to come--to really come to the Nazis, to be--to the Russians to drive them out.

One particular incident that I heard was--as the Nazis were losing the war, they needed to--they needed to build these tremendous trenches, the anti-tank trenches, sometimes would be as long as 50 miles, 40 miles long, and so we had people--every household, every household in Poland had to provide a pair of hands, one person, under penalty of--some penalty, and these people would have to report, and they'd be given a shovel and some other wheelbarrows and whatever, and they'd have to report to a certain

location to dig these trenches. So, which pair of hands would (Mr. Povolski) volunteer? Me, of course. So I went there and we were marching and the Russians were already flying planes, these fighter planes over--over the--(phone ringing)

(Filming Stops)

Q. THAT'S WHAT I WAS WAITING FOR.

A. So (Mr. Povolski) volunteered me since every household needed to provide a pair of hands to, as I said, to dig ditches for an indefinite amount of time. And so I--I went along with a whole bunch of other men and boys from the villages, to a central location where the ditches were to be built, and I was only one of hundreds of thousands of people who were doing the same thing. These anti-tank trenches were very wide, so a tank would fall in and could not cross easily.

Q. HOW WIDE WOULD YOU SAY?

A. I would say the top part of it would be something like 25 feet, but it would be like an A-frame. The earth would be an A-frame so the tank would fall in and not be able to pull out. It was nonsense because the Russians threw bridges over these things and--I don't know, it was a waste of time.

So I arrived there. In the meantime, there were railroad stations 30, 40 kilometers away, and the Russian aircraft were bombing the railroad stations, they were bombing, German troops were being killed, trains on the way to go to the front. So we built the ditches. And one night we were staying in some of these barracks, these ersatz barracks thrown together for us to sleep. It was a 12-hour-a-day job, by the way.

Q. 12 HOURS A DAY?

A. 12 hours a day, march up there, dig and shovel, and the Germans would supervise and beat people that did not work hard enough.

Q. DID YOU GET BEATEN?

A. No, no. I didn't get beaten at that time.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR JOB?

A. Just to--in the crew of five or six people, we had a section, to dig a giant ditch.

Q. WITH SHOVEL AND PICK?

A. Shovel, pick, any which way, just get it out of there.

And if we worked slowly we were beaten, so we had to really constantly keep going.

Q. WHAT WERE THE BARRACKS CONDITIONS LIKE?

A. Temporary thrown together, sort of huts. Quonset huts, only nothing as elegant as a Quonset hut. So I come in, and tired and exhausted, and we come in and there's a bunch of rowdy boys and young men and everybody sort of is praying and kneeling, and I forget to kneel down and pray, saying the evening prayer, and one guy comes over to me and says, hey, are you a Jew?

I said, yeah, so are you, aren't you? Are you a Jew, too? And he says, you know, I bet you you don't know how to pray. I bet you, you're not praying. How come you are not praying? All the Jews are not praying. He taunts me. And I said, oh, my God, this is the end for me now. How am I going to get out of this? And so my first inclination was to just hit him, the first thing you do, I don't know why you do this, and, you know, there was a noise going on, we were fighting, and then the guard outside heard us, and he comes by, and he doesn't speak Polish, this guard, so he says, what is going on, in so many limited words, and the only thing this guy knew is (yuda), (yuda), again this word was like the--the

words to kill by. And the guard has no time, has no flashlight, has no lights in the barracks, and so he says tomorrow morning, in the morning, tomorrow come (schmesta), tomorrow, tomorrow, I'll come and see what is going on.

In the meantime I have nightmares and I say, I've got to get out of this. This is it.

So very early in the morning, before even the guards have a chance to come up, before people, I sort of--as these people are stirring, they need to get up and go to this ersatz kitchen there to get some breakfast, soup and some pieces of bread, I sneak out there, and I decide, from now on I'm not going to be with this group. I'm going to attach myself with some other group, say, five barracks ahead. And I said, this is it, I have got to get out of here. I've got to escape from here, because at the end of the day something is going to happen. I had this premonition.

So, sure enough I escaped, I ran away and left--see, there were no lists. Nobody took lists of who is here, who is not there. Just--you were sort of told, you've got to go, and people went and were obedient. And I said to myself, it's unlikely the Nazis will find out (Mr. Povolski's) cowhand escaped,

and if they do, I'll cope with it later. I can't cope with it right now. So I escaped and went back to the (Polvolskis) and I said, the reason--I didn't want to work that hard and it was too cold and too hard and they were beating us, so I decided to leave.

Q. HOW DID YOU ESCAPE THAT EASILY? WEREN'T THEY WATCHING YOU?

A. Yes, they were watching, but not that carefully once you marched out of the gate, and I sort of--not that many guards. It's not like an extermination camp, not like a concentration camp.

It's, after all, a labor camp of Poles. These were not Jews. And so I escaped. And I'll never forget that, because this guy was again my nemesis, devil. I thought, he's going to take care of me by simply reporting me, and then somebody will check me. So this was one of those narrow, narrow escapes that I had.

Another one, which--as the Nazis were coming--as a matter of fact, as they were losing the war, and one fine day the Russians arrived in white uniforms to hide and, you know, to be a cover for the snow because it was winter, March, 1945, these people were coming in and the first thing they asked, any

Germans here? They knocked on the door and Mr. (Povolski) said, of course not. They established their command post right there and then, and of course they captured German soldiers, and executed them on the spot. And that's another thing I saw.

Q. YOU SAW THEM BEING EXECUTED?

A. I saw them being executed. The Germans were pleading, now look, please don't--because the Russian soldiers told them to march, they took their uniforms and whatever, they took their weapons, et cetera, and said, just march, go ahead, and they knew that that--when they let you go that means somebody is going to shoot you as soon as you start walking. But it didn't help. They shot them, and the blood splashed into the white snow.

Q. YOU MUST HAVE HAD MIXED FEELINGS AT THAT TIME.

A. Sorry. I felt sorry for them, because at the same time these guys were pleading, and--so, at the same time, yes, it was definitely a mixed feeling. It wasn't all--only regrets. I felt that they deserved some of it.

Q. WHAT WERE YOUR FEELINGS WHEN YOU SAW THESE RUSSIANS APPROACHING IN THE WHITE SUITS?

A. It was tremendous joy and elation. Of course I didn't tell them who I was at all. This comes at a later--but the first things that the Russians did is, something also very interesting, which is--first the Russians came in drunk, many of them were drunk, the Russians. When they came in--in their water bottles they had vodka, very frequently, that made them--this is not a stereotype, by the way. They needed it, because there was such hardship, such violence, so vodka propped them up. And so I think the vodka was a thing that the Russian army offered its soldiers. And these soldiers had vodka.

So always a little tipsy, and first thing they looked for was women, you know?

They would rape women. Women would hide. The Polish women would hide. But the other thing they did was, especially the officers, was they needed immediately the requisitions immediately, horses and wagons to carry the supplies to the front. With the front--as the canons were roaring, canons were roaring and the Nazis were retreating, they would march and chasing the Nazis, they needed horses, so they confiscated (Mr. Povolski's) horse, but that's not all, because they need horse and wagon, so the ...

(inaudible)... get a wagon, and the neighbor across the street, the neighbor peasants had another horse, so they would confiscate his horse. Now you've got a set of horses, a team of horses. Now you needed a driver. Guess what? Mr. (Povolski) got me to be the driver. So here I am going with Russians, chasing the Nazis. There was killing and violence and canons and the Russians--I was afraid of them, because they aren't--I know they're not Nazis but they're drunk and they're angry and they are not very well controlled, there is a lot of fighting between them, I mean fist fights. So this goes on for a few days, and one day we stop at--at a park--maybe 15 miles, 20 miles, and I'm driving these horses and my wagon, I've got these machine guns and God knows whatever else, a 15-year-old boy. So it's night and they stop--and we stop in a village somewhere, and the first thing is they're hungry. So what do they do, the Russians? They take the nearest cow. Come to a place, say where, is your cow? Go to the cow--and I watched this. They take a mallet, giant mallet and--no, it wasn't a mallet, it was a giant axe, and they go and hit the cow on the fore--on the head. But as they hit it once, the axe flew off the handle. The poor cow

was like this...and what it needed is another--you know, a few more blows. Anyway, they finally killed the cow and immediately, two hours later, there is food. They cook and they--it's not like in the American Army where you have all these supplies. You get your supplies--

Q. LIVE OFF THE LAND, AS IT WERE?

A. Exactly. Precisely. And so we--I said to myself, this is insane! I can't continue with this. How far am I going to go, all the way to Berlin? From a little village in Poland. So I said, I've got to go. I've got to escape. So at night, while the Russians are asleep, and drunk, and guards are very--not very good guarding, I go and unhook my own horse, leave the other horse, get on top of the horse and sneak away from there and through the woods, wooded areas, and, you know, eating off the land and--the horse obviously grazed and I ate whatever I could. I got--sometimes I asked for some food in a house, and sure enough, maybe a week after I left the (Polvolskis), here I am with the horse.

Q. YOU KNEW YOUR WAY BACK?

A. Of course. I knew the general direction. So I come back and they sort of are very

pleased I brought them back their own horse. And of course--so soon thereafter, soon thereafter the war is maybe--I don't know, two or three weeks after the Nazis were driven out, the Russians are now here, along comes (Stashek). And he says--sort of waves me on, while nobody looks, and I come over and I said, what's the matter? What's happening? And he says, you shouldn't be afraid, the war is over. And I said, yes, but I--I don't know what to do. And so he says, my mother, (Valvena), went to the town, local town, (Gorlitz), a Jewish shtetl where some people already came from hiding or from the camps or whatever from the Russian--with the Russian armies, and one of these people is a man by the name of Mr. Jacob Peller. And he knows your father. And my mother one day told him that Aaron--that's my father's son, that's me, survived the war, and that he wants you to come back to the shtetl, to the (Gorlitz), because, you know, he's going to be opening up a tiny little Jewish community. In other words, it was--there was maybe ten or 20 Jews that came from different places, a town of 4,000 people, by the way, Jewish people. And so he says he wants you to come. So I go to (Polvolskis) and I don't have the nerve to tell him that I am

Jewish.

Q. YOU HAVE TOLD NO ONE SO FAR?

A. No one.

Q. DO YOU BELIEVE THE WAR IS OVER AND--

A. I know the war is over. The Nazis have been driven out. But I'm still sort of undercover. Still undercover somewhat. And so I go to (Polvolskis) and I say, my mother is very sick. I have to go. Just like that. So they say, okay. And I said, I'll be back soon. So I go over and meet this Peller, and we hug and so forth.

Q. YOU KNOW HIM?

A. He knows--he knows my father and he is--I knew of him because he was--he was the local untrained, uneducated osteopath. He would fix broken arms and hands for all the peasants. He learned this trade from his father. He could set a bone, a broken limb and know what to bandage and what kind of tourniquets whatever. So he was known, Peller was known. In fact, he subsequently came to Canada, and--a resident of Canada. Anyway, he said there is no point in being there. Just go and... (inaudible)... so I said, well, wait a minute. I promised I would go back.

So I go back. I bring (Stashek) with me and I said, by the way, I can no longer work for you. I didn't tell him the truth. I lied again. I can't work for you. I've got to leave. My mother needs me...da, da, da, da, da. So they--so she gave me a hug, (Mrs. Povolski), and they give me wheat and whatever and I dragged this stuff in a kind of cart, and--

Q. WERE YOU AFRAID THAT THEY WOULD BE ANGRY WITH YOU?

A. I was afraid that I--I really lied to them, and I couldn't look them in the eye. But more importantly, one way or another, I endangered their life. And that is what bugged me. Because the Nazis might not believe them had I been discovered or uncovered or betrayed. They might not believe them that, my God, we didn't know who this guy was. They might have shot them, because Poles, incidentally, in Poland, when betrayed, the Polish--there was about 2,000 Poles lost their lives like that, hiding Jews and somebody betrayed them, and so they paid the price along with the people that they were hiding. So there was a kind of--I was thinking as a young boy, I didn't know how to handle it, so the best way is to get away

from it.

So I--they found out later. They found out later, and I didn't tell them, but Peller told them, and--Peller became my guardian, by the way.

Q. DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT THEIR REACTION WAS?

A. Yes. She said that she thought I was a very good boy. She liked me a lot and had she known, she wouldn't have kicked me out. She would have kept me anyway. That is No. 1. And then incidentally, he died, Mr. (Povolski) died a few years later. But I was in correspondence with her. We never discussed that. We discussed everything else. I used to send her money and medicine, from England, yet, because I left Poland and went to England for about five years. But also, from this country.

And now--she died also, so I'm corresponding with her sister, and sending her occasionally $20 in the envelope and--

Q. THEY NEVER HAD CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN?

A. They never had children. She was a second wife, again...(inaudible)... never had any children, and so--so that's how I got myself out of this village, back to (Gorlitz), to be with Peller.

And I stayed there for a while with Peller. And--

Q. WHAT KIND OF A SITUATION HAD PELLER CREATED?

A. Well, we took back one of the Jewish buildings, turned it--the Russians authorized it, and made a community center that served all the rooms, and so people, young people who came back or whatever, survived, they would be served a soup kitchen and--I sort of didn't want to live there, so I kind of found a little apartment for myself, and I started sort of becoming, quote, a big boy, you know.

Q. WASN'T IT LONELY FOR YOU TO LIVE BY YOURSELF AT THAT POINT?

A. Yeah, but it was only a half block away, less than--a third of a block away from Jewish community center. And then, Peller, by the way, helped me to get back some of the property, the little pieces of property, my grandfather Herman's property, which I then donated to (Stashek), land, a piece of land. Remember, he was a little peasant in the village of (Shanka). I gave it to (Stashek).

Q. YOU DID? AND THIS WAS ALSO FOR REPAYING HIS MOTHER'S PROTECTION AND KINDNESS?

A. Yeah, yeah. I gave it to his mother,

actually.

Q. OH, YOU DID?

A. Yes.

Q. AND WERE YOU SURELY LOOKING INTO WHAT WAS THE FATE OF ALL YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS AFTER THE WAR?

A. Well, I knew what happened to everybody in (Gorlitz).

Q. YOU KNEW?

A. That I knew, that they were all taken and shot there.

Q. AND--

A. But --

Q. AND YOUR OTHER GRANDPARENTS?

A. My other grandparents, I was told that they were shot. But I could never--I didn't have the nerve or the inclination, mostly the inclination--I don't know, it was a sort of fearful or--

Q. DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW?

A. Didn't want to know the facts, so I never returned to (Zindranova). But because--just soon after the war, a couple of months later, there were some Jews that came back, an older man, another older man, a man in his 20's, but they were older than my--past my years. And he said to me, you know, what

are you going to do here in Poland? Nothing.

We're going to sneak across the Czech border with Germany to DP camps, displaced persons camps, with Jewish life, and Jews are gathering. And so I have nothing to lose. I have no ties and, you know, I could do anything, you know, that I chose to. And so they talked me into it. Very nice two guys. They survived the camps.

So we sneaked across the border to Czechoslovakia. Almost didn't make it, but that's--

Q. TELL THAT STORY.

A. Well, suddenly Poland became independent again, and they established their borders, and one thing that Eisenhower did in Germany was, he said that the deutschemarks, the German marks, the Reich's deutschemarks were okay even though the Germans were defeated. Until some new currency comes it is going to be okay.

So the Germans left a lot of deutschemarks in Poland. You could buy those up very cheap from the Poles, whoever had them.

Q. THEY WERE WORTHLESS IN POLAND?

A. Pretty much worthless in Poland. So I would go around villages and get these for these two

guys. I was their lacky, and I would get those for them.

Q. AND YOU WOULD PAY THEM POLISH MONEY?

A. Polish money, and we amassed a lot of--several thousands of deutschemarks, which were worth something--quite a bit in Germany--I mean, nothing--you couldn't become rich from it, but it had some value. And so what we decided to do is--they decided, their brain, in a suitcase they will have, we will fill it—in the bottom of it a bed of deutschemarks, paper deutschemarks, and on top there will be a phony lid--a phony bottom. So it looked phony. It didn't look very good.

I think I'm talking about this in the book, perhaps. And I don't remember exactly where --

Q. THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR, YEAH.

GO AHEAD.

A. So we come to the border, and the Polish police--first of all, the Pole border guys, first of all, they're greedy as hell, they want anything. Where are you going? Why are you going, and so forth and so on, and what have you got there? Oh, nothing, just some--they look through the stuff and look at this clothing and they came so close. I

remember it not--I'm not sure how I described it in the book now. They came very close to maybe getting the bottom of this, to the bottom of that suitcase, you know, phony lid, and they would have probably arrested us, so--and kicked us back. Anyway, they took anything we had, bread, pants, whatever we had. They cleaned us out and said, now get out of here! I don't care where you go, just go!

So, the two guys, the three of us, a little kid, 15-year-old kid and two grown men and the guy says, let's go this way, and the guy says, let's go this way, and the other guy says, uh-uh, the wrong direction, because it is all wooded, that's the way to Czechoslovakia. That is back to Krakau. So sure enough, the guy--the guy, the wrong guy leads us back to the Polish side. So we--anyways, it's a comedy, but we make it across, and barely, and we come to Czechoslovakia, which--we hitchhike. And the first time--

Q. BEFORE WE GO ON THERE, WHY DID THESE OLDER MEN INCLUDE YOU? WHAT WAS THE CONNECTION?

A. Their connection was simply that they saw a young orphan and they figured they're going somewhere so let's help him, let's get him somewhere

to maybe get a Jewish education or maybe go to Palestine or who knows what.

Q. SO THEY WERE FEELING KINDLY?

A. Yeah, very kindly.

Q. HOW WERE YOU SUPPORTING YOURSELF DURING THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PERIOD?

A. From going to the villages, to (Valvena), to doing some-odd jobs for some of the Jews in town, to getting something from the soup kitchen. I was just--odd jobs, nothing--and remember, we're only talking about a matter of months, because in the--the war ended in 1945, say, April or so, and I think June or July, I think it may have been July, these guys came and I took off with them, and so I went to--we ended up in a displaced persons camp. It is the first time in my life I have seen a black person, because an American GI--an American black GI gave us a lift to Munich, where the DP camps were.

Q. I WANT TO ASK YOU, ALSO, IF YOU CAN--BEFORE WE MOVE ON FROM THIS PERIOD, FIRST OF ALL, YOU MENTIONED THE NOTION OF MAYBE GOING TO PALESTINE. DID YOUR FAMILY HAVE ANY NOTIONS OF ZIONISM OR MAYBE EVEN THINKING THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LEFT POLAND FOR PALESTINE IF THINGS GOT TERRIBLE OR--

A. Not so much Palestine, but a notion of America, because the whole group of my uncles and aunts--that is my father's side--in the '20's and--early '20's, late '20's, middle '20's, left for the United States, so the aspiration someday would be--there was hope that maybe my father Aaron also would like to go to America. But somehow he was a stick in the mud person and stayed in town.

Q. DID THEY LEAVE FOR PERSECUTION REASONS OR ECONOMIC REASONS?

A. I think for mostly to--to escape from the military. But economic reasons would be the primary goal, you know. America was--the streets were paved with gold, you know, proverbial distortion stereotype. So, yes.

But in terms of Zionism, I don't think they were too involved with that notion but, you know, there was activity right after the war, the Jewish immigration associations and--you know, wanted to establish a state of Israel, looking for immigrants, legal or illegal, and certainly Jewish communities that survived wanted the kids to become Jewish again or to take--to give them a hand and to kind of be concerned with them.

So in the DP camps, that is what--that's what people tried to do, talking about Zionism and so forth. But soon, along comes--also in a matter of months, or several weeks, there came an opportunity.

The British government and--not the British government, but the British Jewry, Jewish community in London decided to take in a couple of thousand orphans with the approval of the British government. And so, I--when I heard about this, that some orphans could go to England, I registered and went to England.

Q. WHAT WAS THE DP CAMP LIKE?

A. The DP camp was--first of all, most of the camps--DP camps were ex-Nazi barracks, not camps, not concentration camps, not extermination camps, but barracks that the SS--it was good officers' quarters and had lots of rooms and spaces.

Okay, so that's the physical part. The internal social structure of it, there was some sort of organization and there was a newspaper, in Yiddish, there were some classes, they started classes, talked about Zionism, there were visitors from various Jewish community members from around the world.

Q. WAS THERE ENOUGH TO EAT?

A. Yes. Yes. The Americans made sure--I

was in the American zone and they made sure there was enough to eat.

Q. I PRESUME BEING THE NAZI BARRACKS, THEY WERE AT LEAST LIVABLE?

A. Very livable. Very comfortable, very livable, right.

Q. WERE YOU EXPECTED TO DO ANY KIND OF WORK?

A. No. Those who worked would get some pay, but you could volunteer for things. And I remember volunteering for one particular job, which was shoveling coal and getting--we had to go to a major town to get a truckload of--these were GI trucks--American trucks--and these big military trucks.

And so I went with some others to help load coal, and so as I was driving--I wasn't driving, as I was on top of a pile of coal, a sack--on sacks with others--German kids were making some funny noises and sort of like yelling (yuda) or something, and that's when I--I almost snapped.

I took a coal, a piece of coal, like a stone, and I threw it, and as bad luck would have it I hit him right in the face, right in the eye, and I see

--as the truck was driving, I saw him going like this (gesturing), and I don't know whether I blinded him or not. This is still debatable in my mind. And I felt so good.

It was my revenge, poor innocent kid. I mean--but he shouldn't have opened his mouth. He opened his mouth at the wrong time and I felt that--at that point in time, I'm relatively certain that if somebody ordered me to kill somebody I would have. Somebody ordered me to kill, say, some German or Nazi, I would have done that. Easily.

But subsequently, you know, as the years went by, I felt that this was not the way to behave.

Q. HOW DID YOU COPE WITH WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A TREMENDOUS RAGE, DESPAIR?

A. Well, let's see, now. Pearl tells me that I have had--only occasionally now, but used to have them on a regular basis--nightmares, ever since we married. She had to wake me up and say--and then--but lately, only very occasionally. How do I cope? I don't know. One way to cope with this is that I feel--not a way of coping, it's a way of being, that I feel that I'm not okay, no matter what I can accomplish or do accomplish, how lucky I am to achieve

this, that, or the other, how many articles of whatever I get involved in, there is something not okay about me, and I think it has to do probably with some form of guilt or something, and "why me" and so forth. But that is a commonness, I think--we all survivors feel that, perhaps. Not perhaps, I know that--I won't say all, but a lot.

And so I also cope with it by trying to teach about it. I cope with it, if you are asking about now.

Q. YEAH. NOW AND THEN, BOTH.

A. Then, you know, then was denial. Denial and covering. And I mean, I even--when I arrived in this country in 1950, I was drafted; I got an invitation from President Truman. I don't know whether you know this, but the President of the United States invites you to join the armed forces, in other words, you cannot refuse that invitation. Now there is no more draft. There is no more conscription. So even during the days in the army I used to deny my Jewishness.

And then at a certain point in time, I became quite violent in the army. And--because I felt, there is nothing to lose. Especially I became

violent when I was sent to Korea, and during the Korean war, after basic training, I was drafted, and so on and so forth, because I said, listen, what else can happen to me? I think it paid off--when I say "violent" I meant I no longer was hiding, as if somebody called me some Jewish name I would punch him in the face.

Q. LIKE YOU DID WITH THE COALS?

A. Most of the time I would get away with it, because somehow it was a surprise or I was bigger than the other guy or I was more enraged. But I think that perhaps the most important influence--important thing that I've been doing lately is this business of studying altruism.

Q. YES.

A. Altruism.

Q. I THINK THAT--YOU KNOW, THIS IS SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT INTERVIEW, BECAUSE I WANT TO GO INTO IT IN GREAT DETAIL.

BUT LET ME ASK YOU THIS: DURING THOSE YEARS, THE WAR YEARS, WERE THERE ANY POINTS OF ENJOYMENT OR PLEASURE OR--

A. Enjoyment during the war years, not genuine enjoyment because often it was pretend. I

would participate in some sort of drinking bouts with boys, but I always knew to what limit I can go, always cut it off at a certain point because I didn't want to become ... (inaudible)... and therefore let my guard down.

It wasn't really enjoyment, and of course there was the sexual discovery, and so, I would experiment with girls, but I somehow suspected they were too dumb to realize the difference between circumcision or not, so that was somewhat risky.

Q. WERE YOU EVER FOUND OUT?

A. No.

Q. NO?

A. No.

Q. SPEAKING OF THAT, YOU MENTIONED THAT ESPECIALLY WHEN THE RUSSIAN SOLDIERS CAME IN THAT THEY WERE RAPING PEOPLE.

DID THEY EVER TRY TO RAPE (MRS. POVOLSKI)?

A. Somehow not, because the officers--the officers were stationed in the house, the Russian officers, the high-ranking officers, Colonels, et cetera. And (Povolskis), Mr. and Mrs. (Povolski)--two things. First, she remained--she always remained scarce, you know, always somewhere in the attic or

some other room, off by herself.

But, there was a certain amount of deference because Mr. (Povolski) seemed to be an educated person who spoke German and Russian and could converse with the Russians in Russian, and so there was that deference. But I have seen other instances where girls, at first girls would be hiding, and frequently they would not hide successfully, so they would be raped and screaming in various parts of the village houses and homes.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE NAZIS, TOO, WHEN THEY FIRST CAME?

A. The Nazis for some reason were not as involved in usual rape. Mass rape or whatever. And they would more--it would be more kind of orderly or it would be more mistresses or it would be requisition some woman that they wanted to sleep with that they would order them to come to their--like in the case of my sister. That's also painful.

But the Russians would be much more crass and much more open about it. As a matter of fact, they would justify it.

They would--they would openly say, I liberated you, now come, you pay me for this. And in

Russian it sounds--I won't say it in Russian.

It sounds very crude. But it meant simply, you come to sleep with me, damn it, because I freed you, I deserve--you deserve to be made love to by me, only in more crude words.

Q. BUT THE NAZIS WERE MORE, SHALL WE SAY, OBEDIENT AS THEY--

A. They were more obedient, and it was--it was polluting, defiling for them to do this just in the open with Slavs or certainly Jews or gypsies, but you know from your literature, the Nazis did, however, in the concentration camps and other camps, Jewish women were made into whores, the young ones, and soldiers, battalions--not battalions, companies and so would march into some of these camps, these were the joy houses, and any Jewish woman--young woman who would not please some soldier three times, three reports, and she'd be thrown into the gas chamber.

And so, there was this going on. There are books out, and we have read them--you may have read them ... (inaudible)... and some other books on this issue. One particular woman was going through this, now no longer around. I met her in New York.

But--so these--these were kind of days which are very difficult. It's very difficult to understand.

Sometimes I can't--I can't comprehend, now that I'm in a more or less normal life, how these things could have happened to people, and yet, I see it happening again in other places. Cambodia and Bangladesh and so forth. So it raises the whole question of the nature of human nature and--

Q. WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS AGAIN, BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HOW THIS TOTALLY OTHER UNDERSIDE OF LIFE HAPPENS?

A. Well, having been teaching this stuff a bit, I have given it some thought, but I'm not sure that I have--not a monopoly of wisdom here.

But I think that--simply put, that humankind or mankind is capable of both good or evil, and that under certain conditions, a person can be turned to be--to do unspeakable deeds of horror and cruelty. When we look at a situation of Hitler, I mean, there have been probably two dozen movies about Hitler, documentaries and psychological interpretations, Alice Miller's book and others, a man who came from a very deprived home. My understanding of his father, he not

only rejected him but used to beat him regularly.

So you've got this notion of the psychological reasons behind cruelty and perversion. But I think as a sociologist and a social psychologist, I subscribe more to the social cultural milieu, values, attitudes, ideologies, stereotypes, defining people out of the human race, scapegoating, all this sort of--these sorts of factors, the need to achieve, the need to belong, account for this unspeakable cruelty. And that people are capable of doing this is obviously a given.

Q. I THINK IT WILL BE GOOD TO STOP HERE, AND WE'LL TALK NEXT TIME. SURELY YOUR WORK WITH THE OTHER SIDE, THE PEOPLE WHO GO BEYOND--

A. Sure.

Q. --IN KINDNESS, GOODNESS AND RISK, IS--

A. Yeah.

Q. --ANOTHER SIDE OF THE STORY.

A. Yeah. One of the things that I'm involved in--I'll tell you this--I'm involved with right now, rather deeply, there is a myth of Jewish passivity. There is a myth also of "the sheep to the slaughterhouse syndrome" which was perpetrated by Nazis, by Jewish historians, by theologians. The

Jews--the Jews really didn't fight. Walked like sheep to the slaughterhouse.

This is the most unfortunate myth that was perpetrated on the Jewish people. And so I'm involved right now--and obviously others--kind of showing also Jewish heroic rescuers. Jews were in the resistance. Jews were in the underground. And there is other--in various other countries, but particularly I'm very interested in Jewish rescuers, and I'm working on a book on Jewish rescuers right now.

Q. WELL, GOOD.

LET'S FOCUS ON THAT, TOO, NEXT TIME.

A. Very good.

Q. THAT'S A WHOLE GOOD, WONDERFUL TOPIC.

A. Thanks very much.

Q. LET'S TALK AND WORK ON THE PICTURES.

Sp A. (Valvena Piatsuk).

Sp Q. THERE IS (VALVENA)?

A. Right, and next to her is--

Q. HER SON?

Sp A. Her son, (Stashek), who I mentioned a while ago, I think, that I had him here as my honored guest, and had him come to church.

He is Catholic. Took him to a local church

in Eureka, and then his--his father--rather--sorry, I can't see.

Q. THAT'S THE HUSBAND?

A. The husband, right.

And then their daughter, Sophia. Sophia ... (inaudible)... recently corresponded with both of them and these are the people--(Stashek) acted as my brother and (Valvena) acted as my mother, and these are the two chief actors in my survival, trying to authenticate my various stories that I made up as I was working for (Polvolskis).

And so this is the picture of (Valvena) and her family. And this is taken 1942.

Q. WHERE?

A. In (Shanka).

Q. OKAY.

A. This is a picture of myself as (Schulek) (Oliner), alias (Yusef Polowski), and this is taken 1944. This is the monument built after the war on (Garbotz). On this sacred piece of land lie a thousand people, massacred August the 14th, 1942. Monument was built by Jacob Peller and some other associates, and it says in Polish: "Here lie the sacred ground, a thousand people murdered at the hands

of Hitlerism."

This is another photograph of--a recent photograph of the mass grave in Poland in (Garbotz). This is a photograph of (Stashek), his wife, and a good neighbor, and this house is built only a few hundred yards away from (Garbotz) now.

His old house where I used to visit during the war burned down, and ironically he bought a piece of land very close to (Garbotz), the mass grave, and he and some others are now taking care of the mass grave.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAND YOU GAVE THE FAMILY?

A. They--they're holding on to it. Yeah. In fact this is a shot from (Stashek)'s window, second floor. In the distance you see a wooded area. This is (Garbotz), small wooded area, a half a square mile where is this mass grave. This is another photograph with some larger letters on the monument in (Garbotz).

Q. WHEN WAS THIS?

A. This was taken 1990. This is a photograph of (Stashek), my brother during the war, and myself, in front of his house, during a cold winter month.

(End of tape)

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