

OK. Well, we had left off where the Russian troops have now broken through.

Yes. Everybody tried to fled the soldiers, labor camp workers, everybody who was there, the Hungarian soldier, the Italian soldier, and all the group because they are afraid that the Russian will catch them. And we have to leave, too, because after the soldiers and the-- who went away from the front came the military police. And somebody who they catch, they shot it right away because they don't want to go to the Russian-- the Russian catch them and tell them what was going on. So maybe spying or something.

And anyway, we all came-- escaped from the front, but we, the labor camp workers, have to work on the road because of all the big snow and some of automobile stock and horse-drawn carriages stuck, and have to clean up the-- they collect from the village the tools to clean the showers and-- and we were there. And we did that, the group, we did this about, I don't remember the exactly, six, seven, eight weeks.

Did you have enough to eat there, also?

We had, sometimes we had eat, sometime not. Mostly we have one day-- one a day in the morning some food. Because after, nobody can go like that, the group together, and was no kitchen. And gave me some bones there too, but something else. It canned food sometimes.

And we escaped with other one. So many people cannot escape. And somebody who could speak to the Slavic language tried to hide and became Russian military prisoner. I don't know what happened. But a few came home from them.

Anyway, we did this for a long, long time. And I don't know. We-- [PLACE NAME], Karachev, Belgorod, all we'd walk.

About how far into Russia were you do you think?

What? How far?

I mean, in the middle of Russia, in the West, in the North?

Close to Don Canal. Close-- you know that the-- the fight stop at the Don Canal. It's Stalingrad and later, at the Don Canal. We went close to Don Canal.

OK.

[? Station ?] was called [PLACE NAME], I forget that-- they had millions name. And we walk to work. And most of the soldiers, they don't have to work. They just-- just work. And each village try to find some house, somewhere for the night shelter. And they get the kitchen, they get the-- they get the group.

But so many of them was-- died too. Because the Russian, was a big fight there. And so many died from them too. But who can escape when there? And try to find some shelters for night.

If you could find a building where the animal was, we were happy to go. That was a little bit warmer and not windy. But sometimes it was not the place. And try to go into the house where somebody was already. Went to the house where the German soldier was. They don't-- no, we don't let the Jews in. Because everybody knows that we are Jews because they have that-- that Jewish emblem.

Did you wear the yellow star?

Yes. Yes. It was in civil code.

But you had the yellow star sewn on your coat?

Oh, yes. Yes. Yes.

When did you have to put the yellow star on your coat?

Oh, it had to put on-- I think at the end of '41 in the very first, when I were in labor camp, I didn't wear yellow star. But when he went to labor camp in '42, everybody have to wear the yellow star. They're not the population, but we were, as they said, as a soldier. But [LAUGHS] we were not soldiers. We were war prisoners in our country. And our guard was out-- our prison keepers.

But the difference was, if some Russian or Polish soldier became war prisoner, they were [INAUDIBLE] at the international law-- some. If they keep it or not. But nobody, no law protect us. Nobody. No protect us. Anyway, they don't let it. And we Jews cannot come in.

If we went the house were already were Hungarian soldiers, so they look out, OK, you come in. And they try to search us, everything. If they find something, they took it away and throw us out, shoo us out. And we want to find some place because cannot walk all night and day then again walk again.

Even the place where the Italian soldiers were. The Italian soldiers was bad shape, because they had no winter clothing and was miserable. And they were pushed the same as the Hungarian. And we went there, they were as it's place like this, was then Italian soldier and the family, they let us in. They make room for us.

Because we established three, four, or five friends. Not big road, just the three. Because so many people cannot go in. But three, four, five friends maybe can go in. And they made room for us. They lay close to each other, they make room. But if they had some food, may they give some food too.

Were you hungry during that period? Were you hungry during those days, or did you--

Oh, hungry. I told you we didn't get the food maybe once a day. And sometimes, we beg from the population. We went-- but the population doesn't have anything, because the German people take everything. But we can get a potato or some one maybe once an eggs or something they gave us.

When I was in that place, they call it White Russia. The people was very good to us. But we went to Ukraine, they were terrible. They were big anti-Semite, the Ukraine. The White Russian was, they don't make any difference as a Jew or not Jews. They tried to help us.

Did you experience any abuse from the Ukrainians? I mean, did they--

Yes. [LAUGHS] Yes. One time I almost died. I tell you first, when we stop after the six, eight, or eight weeks, we stop the first time in Korosten was a bigger city. It was Ukraine. And within this, about 20 miles, I can tell you, in the middle just was occupied by the escaped soldiers, escaped labor camp workers. And they try to regroup it and that parts.

And we went to a village, [PLACE NAME]. And the group of us, I don't remember how many people were there. Because all the time was less, and less, and less. And the group was put in a school building. But before we went further from that front line, I don't know how many weeks after, I went to my second officer who a little bit was my acquaintance. Not personally, but through my brother-in-law brother.

He was a teacher in Nyiregyhaza. And because I had the land close to Nyiregyhaza, he was a big hunter. And through my brother-in-law brother, who was a pharmacist, and he was a lovely man. Everybody like him. And his place was a Casino. The big shop, and they went there to talk a little bit, make a-- you know what's going on in a small city.

And this guy went to that and asked him, you know, I am relative him, asked me to let him hunt on my land. And told him, OK, I don't hunt. I don't care.

And my land was a very, very special land. Because my land was neighbored with a [INAUDIBLE], we thought, who had made just 4,000 acres of land around here, and big forest. And was deer and so many animals. And everybody-- and this deer came to mind for us too. And everybody want to hunt on my land. And I gave the permission, OK, come to hunt.

Anyway, I was a very weak position that time, and hungry, and I went that guy, listen, I told them who I am. And what I did for him before. What-- by whom, and held me. He told me, listen, I don't think so I can help you because I am not a good relationship with my officer who is the head of the group. But I will think about.

Anyway, a few days later-- but they-- he had the soldier who was around him all the time to help him. And the same day, he sent me a loaf of bread and a piece of butter. It was a fortune. And there was two days later came to me, called me, and he told me, listen, I can help you only one way. Became a horse carriage driver. OK, I became.

He told me, we will take over Mr. Berger horse. I told, listen, Lieutenant, I never take over Mr. Berger horse. I don't take over his job. The next day, he get a Russian horse and a carriage. I don't know who, maybe from the German, and gave it to me.

You didn't want to take over another Berger's--

No, another Jew's horse. It was a life saver. And he looked at me, you will take me and my package and everything that I have after that time. And after that time, I was lucky, because he finds some shelter, I find shelter that place too. And I had more food. Anyway, he went to Davidkov. And the group went for that school building. And I went with him.

And he told me, you will live with me in this house. I told him, listen, I cannot live with you in this house because I have-- excuse me-- I have a family. I have four friends. And I don't want to leave them. If you give me the permission, we have a house here. We take hay keeper, the hay storage, the horse will be there, and I will be there in that building with my friends. OK. Let me live there.

Do you remember his name?

Who?

This--

This name-- his name was Jura Tosh, a first lieutenant, first one, lieutenant. A very nice man. At least he was not bad for everybody. The other guy was a cruel sadist. Anyway, I lived there. And I was busy every day. There was no work in that place, because no work at all. They just tried to regroup everything, the soldiers, the labor camp workers, everything. It takes a long time.

But the Jews cannot lay there just do nothing. And it was a middle close to the school. And their were little straw flew there. Then every day, that people have to go there, oh, you must clean up yourself and take a bath. And that just even melt the snow. And but I was saved from that one because I lived with a different place. And my four friends have to go there.

But I don't because I was busy. Once a week, I have to go to the Korosten with the sergeant, sergeant for the mail of the whole group, military group. Because during that escape, almost every horse what came from Hungary with the group died because of the severe weather condition and died. And all my Russian horse was alive and usable. And I went every week to that place of Korosten for the mail.

Did you-- were you able to write to your family at all during this time?

Beg your pardon?

Could you write to your own family at all during this time?

Not at this time.

No.

Not at that time. Sometimes later we tried to write family, sometimes they get it, we sometimes get their letters, but very seldom. And I stopped with my horse a place at the yard and was a building there, until the sergeant went to the military post office to get that. It takes a few hours. And anyway, it was a distance. The horse must take a rest too.

And I find out the building, in the building in the kitchen. And in no time around the workers, I don't know, factory or somewhere, came over here, get that meals. And I went there. I couldn't speak maybe a few words, a Russian word that time I learned already. But nothing.

I took the lane and a tray, and went my food. And they gave me food. And I saw everybody pay. I took out some Ukraine money from my pocket and gave it to them. I don't know how much it was. But they gave me some change back. OK. I had a good meal anyway. But I didn't have for weeks and weeks.

But when I went to Korosten, I forget to tell you before, when we arrived to Davidkov, was no kitchen at all. Everybody get for a week a loaf of bread, about three or four pounds of red potato. Everybody can do with them what you want.

It's not very much food.

Not very much food. That's not enough for live but too much to die. And I don't know that other people what did. And I find a big empty shell for the gun, it's a big gun. And I made a fire every day, for of us, five because with four of my friends and mine, put it, I peel it and put it in, and cook it for them when they came back when I was home.

When I went to Korosten, I had no time. I told my [INAUDIBLE] officer, let your help with a soldier to put this on the stove to cook it for me. And they did. And sometimes put some sausage something in maybe they will do it. Anyway, he was very good for me, all four of us. And that afternoon I went back.

And this soldier who came with me was a very rough guy. And he never was satisfied. The horse is too slow, the horse is too-- and try to beat me sometime. Never was satisfied. But what can I do? Because that food, I couldn't go say I wouldn't go. But because that food, I went very well.

And one time, when I stopped there and Hungarian soldier came over here that and want to sell bread. He worked for the military bakery. And how many bread to have. He had 15 bread. [INAUDIBLE] I had some money, Hungarian money, and a bag of bread. I gave him 15 pengoe and I put in the carriage.

And the sergeant came back, said, what is in that bag? I told him, some soldier came here and offered some bread. Oh, you cannot do it. I take it. Anyway, I take off one bread. Break it and try to eat. At least I have that many. And he will take it. And he went home.

And I told that my friends what happened. Oh they chased me, you stupid, you let-- you didn't hide it. But what can I do. What-- and that happened. Anyway, we escaped. We four, five, with the big sickness. Because that group who went to the school have to play to each other close, and their lice was tremendous. And the typhus, almost every get the typhus. And the other six days of the day, I have to took their sick to the next village. They got Doroshichi.

That village, they established a Jewish hospital. And this hospital was a school which was a stone building or brick building, a small school, where was the doctor. Their doctor incidentally was the doctor who came with us from Hungary, the same doctor. He was a few peaceful people who helped them. And was a big, big wood board building about 100 yards from them which was the regular hospital.

And I took the sick people. It was crowded. Hundreds and hundreds there were-- from other-- from the other villages. Because every Jew around that area have to go there. And what I do, I-- they have to go there.

And one time I have to took one of my good friend, he was a teacher. And his wife was the same village when this doctor. And I went to this doctor, listen, this is my best friend. But it's not important. His wife is your village. And I don't let him go to that place. Give them his place. He said, put it down here. If somebody will die, he will take that place. And he was lucky. He escaped. And--

What kind of treatment did they get in the hospital?

Nothing.

Nothing?

Nothing. There was no medicine, no nothing. They don't want to treat them. They just want to collect the typhus diseased people, don't give the typhus some other one. But the civilian people, the other one. They don't want to save it.

Anyway, I don't know how many weeks I do this every day, three, four, five, who became sick, I told them. They was half dead when I took them. And I saw that every day what's going on here. And that it was a terrible, terrible thing.

What about you? Did you ever get lice?

No. That's why-- all of five who lived with me escaped from that sickness. It was a luck. It was luck, because we don't live with that-- we had some lice too, but not so much. And that-- not that, because they pick up from the other people. But we don't have to lie down each other. And we have a big room with the hay. And we were lucky, no one of get that sickness.

What about any medical care? Did you have any medical care for yourselves if you got an injury or a sickness?

Oh nothing. Nothing. Nothing. The guard, to get the people when he want. All the time, I have so much flu or hay fever in my life, especially in the land. And during that two and 1/2 years in Russia, I never got.

Why is that?

Just the God help me. I never got the flu or anything else. I don't know why.

What about a toothache?

Toothache? We have no toothache. I don't know. I got no-- [LAUGHS] I had no toothache and-- anyway, 1940-- it was 1943, around Easter time. I don't know what day. It was in April, that got around the wood frame hospital, they tied all the doors up. Tied up and set fire with the people inside.

The Hungarian soldiers?

The Hungarian who was the guard. Yes.

Why were they doing that?

Why are they doing it? They want to kill the Jews, why. And somebody who was a little bit stronger and tried to break the board and escape, they had the machine gun and killed them.

But I forget to tell you, just in that hospital, who I took them, it's saw the situation there, what is terrible, and feel a little bit better, could walk. Want to escape, went to the doctor, I want to go back to my group. And they let them go. And a few came back. That was lucky because they could escape from that fire. But somebody-- so many hundreds who were in that building was destroyed everyone.

So all those people, they were the ones that had the typhus?

Yes, mostly. Some had some other sickness, I don't know.

Do you think--

The rule was in that villages for the Jews, somebody cannot go out. Not for work, for the field, must go to that hospital. Even who out to the field or go to the hospital. No exception. And that's why I have to take that people-- somebody was not so sick, but cannot go out, and I must take them to that hospital.

Do you think that they were planning to collect the Jews this way earlier on, or do you think they just made the fire at the end?

No, all around the villages, they were hundreds of hundreds they are sick, and the typhus, and just lay there. It was not so much until each other. Sometimes the dead was three or four days there.

No nursing care?

Oh, no, no nursing have. A few people was in the school building who no reason to go there. Because had no medicine, no-- no-- no anything. No reason to go there.

What about feeding the sick people?

Feeding? I think they give some feed. I don't know. I am not sure. I don't know what they give there. I don't know. The strong get sick people went to give the other one, or maybe they have some kitchen. I don't I really don't know. Because I was there every day just a few hours until the-- I took them over there, and I went back. I tried to escape as soon as I could.

So there were no survivors from that fire?

No. No. No survivors of that fire. No. No. Somebody who tried to escape, they killed them with machine gun.

And what about you Jews who were not sick, did they try to kill you also?

Where?

There in Russia. I mean, you said they wanted to kill the Jews. So they killed the sick ones. But what about you and your friends and others who were not sick?

Sooner or later they do think everybody will die. My office that time, his name was Lajos [PERSONAL NAME]. He was a terrible man. Told us during the walk from the front, listen. See this briefcase? I want to take your name in this briefcase to home to Hungary. Because you die early I go earlier to home.

Ah.

That's what the polizei.

Was he a brutal person too?

A brutal person. Brutal.

Was he beating people?

He personally, no. But the guy, he gave the guards to do it.

Were you ever beaten by the guards?

That sergeant, when I went to Korosten, sometimes beat me. And but what could I do? And a little luck worked more than a big fortune. After we left that, this sergeant who came with Korosten after a while some who got sick and went home.

And other sergeant came, another brutal guy, to our group. I didn't have to go to the group. Just once a week I get there to my bread and my potato. Otherwise, I stay there with my-- and this sergeant was a brutal guy too.

And some one time, the officer, that cruel guy, want to make a bed using the porch, the sun porch, to give to the house owner that he lived. And they told me too. And I told them, I will do it. I will make it.

Anyway, he went to the middle and took some, I don't know how they call that, the long thing. I collect it. I made a frame, a wood framework, and I did it. I try to build it. And this new soldier came every day to see me. After three days told me, you are not ready yet? And try to beat me up.

I told him, listen, I try to do my best. But I want to tell you something. I was a landowner in at home. And I have a neighbor, an aristocrat, who had 4,000 acres of land. And he has a manager on there. And he gets so rich, that before I left, he rent another 1,000 acres somewhere else.

If I go home, you are same as a guy as he was. I will give you-- I try to give you that chance. Because I am very well with that my neighbor. I'll catch him. I catch him.

He liked that.

Never chased me. Never chased me before. And he tried me after them, listen, when he left the group sometimes in Kyiv, the group came together to farewell him. Listen, if one man will escape from Hungary-- from Russia, this man who must escape.

But a little luck. I don't know how it came to my mind. But the God help somebody. I never had made so much false statement. But somehow that came to me and I did it.

Did you ever see him after the war?

You know, a funny thing happened after the war. I tell you if you want to know.

Yeah.

It was a two-person kind of kitchen when we were in Kyiv. One kitchen was the Jewish labor workers. One for the officials and the guards. And it was two Jews who operate the kitchen for the officials and that guy. And somehow, one time this food, this guy didn't like it. And beat him up. But he cannot do anything. OK. They take it.

And I just want to jump much. After the war, one of the guy was a Czech high military officer about more than captain. I don't know how they did. And they were in a Russian army came, he became the Russian-- the part of the Russian army. The Russian different way, kept Czech citizens and the Hungarian citizens. And the Czech citizens can talk their language or somehow anyway. He became right away a Russian officer.

And one time, I just heard it, one time he went to the village he lived in the West of the Danube in a village. He knew very well when we went to that village as a Russian officer, went the house, this guy just was surprised, and get up. He didn't say a word. He had the machine gun and killed him.

Ah.

He went back to the Russian army.

And that's what happened.

That was the payment for the beating. And he made it very well.

And so, you never saw this brutal fellow after the war yourself?

Which that?

You never saw this fellow after the war yourself, the one you said, I can get you a job?

No, I never saw him, but heard him. I heard him. He was in Budapest. And a few of my friends who want to escape from-- during Budapest, he helped them go through the border. Yes.

So when you were in this third session of labor camp, were you only supposed to be there for a few months?

A few months? No. It stopped-- and 1945, January 18.

Did you-- when you first went there in the fall, like you said, September, October, did you think it was only going to be a short while, you would be there, or did you think it was going to be long time?

No, we don't. We thought this is forever.

You did think that.

Until we leave. We know. We know it. Because we have to go to Russian front. And from the Russian front we heard many times they were killed. They were-- the hard work, the hard everything, the hungry, the sickness. And when I didn't told you I think. So when we were in Davidkov, around this area was six labor camp survivors who survive from the front.

When they left Hungary, approximately was 1,200. Because our group when we left Hungary was 213. And approximately was the same group that. And end of the days of the Davidkov staying, all the remains came to our group. They had to establish an all new group about 200 people what remained from that 1,200 people. And we, as a new group went together to work.

What happened, or where did you go after the hospital was burnt down? What happened then?

We stayed there. I cannot go there to with sick people over there. I just stayed there, in Davidkov. But after that not so long I go, around in May, I don't remember that a new group was established. And we went for the-- I forget the name of that village.

And we went there. It was a beautiful May day. And we had no work there too. We just wait, I don't know, wait there for a few days. And there were about four or five days there, when we were there, we had no nothing, do nothing. We just stay here and I was there.

And one time, about four military truck appeared there. And they want to pick up 100 Jews. I was happy just escape from that group. I took my belongings and put on the truck and went to find all friends, my closest friend, come first and when the hundred people was together, we start to go-- to we didn't know where. We didn't know where.

You were going to take a chance. We didn't know where. We want to take 100 Jews. Well, we just escaped from that group. It was enough. Anyway, we drove a couple of hours. I don't know when. Anyway, in a village the truck stop around close to sundown.



And all the drivers disappeared. What the hell happened with them? And there was a drivers, a help driver, and every [INAUDIBLE] the help driver, maybe some one or two other soldiers. Everyone escaped-- appeared-- escaped. What the hell happened?

Anyway, the village people, some came over. They recognized us right away. And oh, you Jews. Do you know where you will go? We don't know. They said, the last couple of weeks, the Germans killed in the forest over there 10,000 Jews. And then this night, you will go there too.

We couldn't do anything. What can we do? Escape, go to the Ukraine people who was worse than the Hungarian? We wait. Wait. And after a while, the soldier came back, the drivers. Anyway, we find out they went for have some dinner somewhere. I don't know where, a military place or some restaurant or something.

Came back and we went to Kyiv, right to Kyiv. We went to Kyiv. We arrived to Kyiv around 10:00 maybe in the night. But in Kyiv, even summertime the night is not so warm than in America, especially not in San Francisco, but other place of the night, in the night has 80 degree, but not in Kyiv.

Anyway, in that military place, we stopped at a military in place and told us, OK, give everything what you have on the floor. Undress to naked and put every there. And some soldiers collected it in the hand truck and took it away and tried to form around a group of 15 people. They took them, it was a shoulder there. Took them and take a good shower. And it was over, come out to the yard, and other group take that place.

But I never forget that night until if I leave 100 more years. In wet and naked came out and stay on the night hours and hours. We would want-- we would like to die. Anyway, a while later, our belongings came back. They took it to disinfect. Because almost everybody had lice and everything. And they anyway, we got back our clothes. And when everybody was through, we went to another place. With [NON-ENGLISH].

And it was around 4:00 o'clock or maybe 5:00 o'clock in the night. Maybe 4:00. It was dark. And OK, get out and go to the building. And in the building, I find a good friend who came there a day earlier. And we talk all night. We didn't see each other, what happened with them, with him.

And anyway, in the morning we have to get up and go out to the yard and stay in line. And the officer came out. No, came, step out the auto mechanics. Nobody step out. Came out the cabinet maker. Nobody came through. And they said, had somebody saw a bike already in their life?

And I step out. And I said, I had an automobile during the-- before the war. And I had the land. And I have so many machinery. And I know operate it and repair it. And after 10 or 12 people more people came out. And I don't know what they said. And they accept us. And the other went back to the-- a few days later, a group from that place came to Kyiv too. And this, the rest of the 100 people went back to them.

And we find out this place was an auto mechanic shop, military shop. And hundreds of auto was there, military automobile, and a bunch of auto mechanics. And repair it. And we tried to help it. And we gave them to help it. It was a good place. And we were not so hungry that time than before, that we still were hungry. And was clean and is skin and bone. Skin and bone.

And this guy saw what happened with us. And we went to work there. And we had the meal with them with their kitchen, and told the group after the meal, if something remained, nobody can take a spoon, just that guy. And we get the third, and second, and third meal that time. And I start to be that I am better.

What about your living space? Did you have a shelter?

Oh, we had a good living space. Yeah. We had-- yeah, we had the same as the mechanic had. In the same, we were all no different. The first day when we through that selection, the officer told us, listen, no what today, go back, everybody make his bed and space and fix it.

Wait, had you heard anything yet from your family and then about your farm?

No. Not yet. Not yet.

You still didn't know anything?

We didn't know anything. Because first one we all the time moving. All the time moving. And when I went to Korosten for that soldiers' post, no labor camp mail there. We had nothing.

How long were you in the auto mechanic job?

Around the end of September. Around September. Because as I heard that time, the Krakow, the big Russian city fell to the Russians. It was not so far from Kyiv, maybe 200, 300 miles. And that time start to evacuate Kyiv too. And that shop went somewhere. I don't know where. And we went back to original group, which made some other work in Kyiv.

What did you do then when you went back to the group?

Anyway, went back to the group. I didn't do anything. Went right away to Bobruysk. Because have to-- everybody have to leave Kyiv. We got a train and we went to Bobruysk. I don't know how far it was from Kyiv. Anyway, we went there. And we went-- we were in Bobruysk about three or four days. And we watched some for the military.

I remember, we went to a used to be a girls high school. And that school, they want to build a hospital. And some came out, some officer and asked, who is that-- who is a plumber? And I step out with a friend of mine. And I went to that building to work there.

The other people, I don't know how many of us there were. The other people have to dig a deep, deep hole, one floor to other one. I don't know why they-- this take about three or four days. And I was lucky. I was given, with my friend, to a guy who was almost in labor camp. But I don't know, a Holland guy. When they have to fight Holland, they took the guys, not the soldiers.

But I don't know, and he was a plumber. And he was-- we were given tools to help them. And he was a hell of a nice guy. And give me some plumber and told us, listen, see that pipe? Destroy everything. And make big noise. And he went outside, watch somebody will come. And he brought a big bottle of vodka or a drink.

Anyway, the three or four days went that way. And we went back to the group. And we have to go to a forest around. I don't know, about 30, 35, 40 kilometer or miles from Bobruysk to produce wood.

But it was a funny place. When we left Bobruysk, we have to go through-- I can leave it. I can leave it.

No. No. I want to see--

I can leave it.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I want to see where the tape is.

Listen, if you listen to my story, you won't go home tomorrow.

Listen. Please continue. You had to go to Bobruysk?

What?

You said you had to go to Bobruysk?

No.

Well, please continue.

No, yeah. I have to go to Bobruysk. Yeah. From Bobruysk that place. And was a river they called Berezina. It was famous because Napoleon get beat there. Anyway, it was a big river. And it was a partisan occupied territory. And about 100 soldiers with big guns take us to that part to protect us.

Anyway, I never forgot that night too. It was a good afternoon. And we went with the rubber boat and something out in the-- and through the river. And we-- when everybody was out, about five guides who was our guides what sent to the village to make room for us.

Anyway, two or three hours later, one of that guys came back. He could speak Russian, well, Slavic language. And he was a big [INAUDIBLE], and [INAUDIBLE] soldier, came back and told us, officers, you have to give everything what you have and you can go where you want. The partisans told them. The other four guy must take over to go at the partisan.

But they cannot give them up. That it was a shame. The other side was a military group with guns and everything. And we have to stay in that place and all night. And a piece of log moved, you get up. Maybe the partisan came to get us and to fight with us. It was a terrible night.

Well, did the partisans have much influence? Did you see them about much as you were moving from town to town?

That about a big, big territory, I can't tell you-- no I cannot tell you how many, maybe 600 square mile territory was under partisan rule. Everything was on that partisan rule.

So these were the Russian partisans?

Russian partisans. Russian partisans.

Not the Russian soldiers, but the Russian partisan.

Russian partisan. No, not Russian soldier. The Syrian partisans. Not the-- but they was tough guys. And before I go further, these four guys who they catch as they told us later, they took all night work, work, work. And daytime, sit down and sleep. At night again, go, go, go. Went to the chief partisan.

And they tried to find out everything what's going on in the German part and first thing was, they took off the watch. They know it is a real Russians. And after five days, the same partisans bring them back and told them, listen. You go that building. Because that building, the officers live. That building live the Jews. You go to the officer building because they were guards.

They went there. And next day, we heard the story, and they get good care, good food. Anyway, before they get to the chief, they have to take a Turkish bath. You know what is the Turkish bath?

The steam.

They heat a stone. Put water on, and the steam. And took that bath. Anyway, came back and told us how wonderful they were in there. And about four, five days, all the military police came to take these four guys. Because they said, so told so many good things, and took it away. We never saw them before. But we heard that went to the trial for the military judge. And they get, I don't know how many years prison after the war.

Why?

Because they told so much thing. But until the war, have to fight for the-- and they went-- was sent to the fighting group. Anyway, I don't know where can I tell you more.

Yes. Keep-- more. What happened after that? You were-- this is only about what, '43, and you were--

Anyway, next day, he went to the village, find out or place. And we find out we have to go to produce wood for the military part of Bobruysk, German, the Hungarian, the military, the bakery, and where needed, and make heat.

And this place was around three miles from our living place. And we have to go there every day at 8:00 o'clock and come back when we finish the work. And about 100 German took us, to protect us from the partisans. Because this just was there to protect us from the partisans. But our guards was us during our work, our guards was there-- the officer.

Your Hungarian officer?

Who gave the-- watch us, how we at work.

How were those guards?

What?

The guards when you were working in the forest, were they brutal, or were they OK?

Oh, some was brutal. Some was not. After we went to Kyiv, the guards was not so cruel than before who saw what happened in [PLACE NAME]. Because there was exchange, and new guys came. These guys was mostly who was a soldier in the First World War.

Because in Hungary was no soldier, legal soldiers, after the First World War, took a just a certain amount. Because it was during the treaty. But these guys was mostly soldiers from the First war. This is not so long ago, 20 years ago, somehow.

And but one day, and the German guy was you should to produce this cubic feet of wood, each of us, each of you. And we established groups. And I went with a group of other farmers and we know the work better the other one, and we can finish it with very fine tools. The German gave us everyday sharp tools and everything.

And we finished it in four or five hours. And we went to help the other guys so-- We cannot go home because we have to wait for the German escort. Because nobody can go without them afraid from the partisan. We weren't afraid of partisans, but they are afraid from the partisan.

So sometimes happen, they bring own meal to the place at noontime, and bring the Germans' meals to the place too. And sometimes the partisans asked the kitchen to whom this? For the Jews. Go. Who is this? For the German. Take it.

So the partisans really were sympathetic.

Oh, the partisan was everywhere.

But they were sympathetic to the Jews?

Yeah. Because some Jews went to the partisans. When they occupied Russia, some Jews went to the partisans.

And the partisans accepted the Jews too?

Yes.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

They have. They right-- They fight for their life. And they went to the partisans. And they were some heroes-- some heroes. Some our people went to the partisans too. Somebody who could speak their language. This was a song, it was not easy. Sometimes they could not get to eat for days and days because the Germans find them-- try to find them. This was not easy too. But they were tough guys. And they fight like the Russian soldier, maybe fight better.

So you were hoping that the partisans would--

Anyway, one day, he went in the morning for work. And that our guys, I don't know, they were some-- and we were something. I don't know why. And try to exercise. Go down. Lay down. Get up. Go down. You didn't do it, there was a stick they hit him.

And the German soldier saw it. And stop it right away. Listen. These people are my workers. You cannot do it for them. And they save us. This is what-- an SS, this was a Wehrmacht. This was a Wehrmacht. The regular German soldiers. Because that's didn't do that. Anyway, I don't know it's interesting you. But I am too long already.

No, no. Please continue.

We went back this afternoon to the village. And the partisans came to the officers' building and told them, listen, if it would happen one more time, we kidnap all of you.

If what would happen?

That beat the Jews and we will again go out for work. If it would happen once more, we kidnap all of you.

Amazing.

Anyway, it was there, I don't know, maybe end of November. And we went farther. We went from that Pinsk. You know, Pinsk was a lower piece of earth with [INAUDIBLE]. You know, with the water and the--

A swamp?

Yes. Some-- but that part of the land was-- and it was true that a road. And the only road. And the soldiers and equipment would go there. We have to repair this, cut the wood, and lay it down.

And that was our work, I don't know, two months. And cut the wood and sometimes the [INAUDIBLE] was close a railroad station and put the woods in the wagons and take it somewhere else. And we worked there, I don't know, maybe January, end of January. I remember it was winter time.

How could you work with the cold and deep snow?

How we could walk? You somebody must work, they could work. They somebody could must walk, they could walk. Sure.

Was it very deep snow? Very deep snow?

No. That was not snow that time. I mean, it was a melting. In Pinsk was not so severe than-- it was almost Poland. I think it was almost Poland. It was melted. And that was the trouble. That's why we have to repair the road. Because every equipment would sink.

Anyway, after two months, I think so, we went to Brest-Litovsk. And we were in Brest-Litovsk about just a few days. We have some work there. Most in Brest-Litovsk is a very famous place. The Russian made the treaty in the First War in Brest-Litovsk. It was a big, big military-- I don't know it got called [NON-ENGLISH], establishment, with the big stone walls.

Around there was a river. And it was destroyed mostly because the Germans bombarded. And the building was almost destroyed. And we were in there a few days. We lived-- sleep, and that building was no window, no nothing. But the wall was-- we were saved from the wind or something we were saved there, we were there. And we were there about one day or two days, just one days, sleep there.

And the wake up in the morning and boom, boom, boom. We look out at that-- not there, the place of the window, and saw about three or four German trucks with black canvas. And they didn't know that we are there. Because we just went there from that day, and bring some people, were some people.

And open the back of the truck, take off of one people, it was bound the holes there. Someone did bump them, took them there, and shoot in the back. Saw some woman with the small child, and they shoot there, and they shoot them.

And I heard later that before a few days, the people killed some German officers. And they went to the street and catch thousand people, who came out from the movie, what came out from the factory, from camp, without exception, put in the truck and took a blanket over there, and they killed that one.

So this was a reprisal for killing the officers?

Yeah, reprisal for they killed their--

And they took just anybody randomly? It wasn't that they were killing just Jews, they just picked anybody.

No. We just saw it. We were afraid. We just saw it so. And sometime, and that time was a snow in Brest-Litovsk. And put some snow on there, and they went out there, somebody moved a little bit. And it was terrible. Anyway.

Did anybody survive? I mean, did any of those people survive?

No, no one. No one survived. So someone has a little life then, but lay there. They were put to each other. It was pushing each other. And just if that was someone moved a little bit. But no survivor.

And we were there about three or four days. But so many [INAUDIBLE] people. And we select the bricks or just do something. And after a few four or five days, the officer came to us and told us, listen, we need-- I need 40 people go to work somewhere. We were the first who went there.

You didn't know what or where?

We didn't know anything. We know, just escape. Escape our group. Because cannot be long-- can not be long with our group. After all officer at that time was a good man. But the guards and everything, they have the instruction how they have to do with the Jews. They were not bad men.

But they were ordered to treat you this way.

They were ordered to do that one. And they must do it at least something. Anyway, we were night when for it together, put the truck and went somewhere. We arrived a village [PLACE NAME].

[PLACE NAME] You know, I do want to stop here for a minute so that we can include your photographs on this tape. Wait one minute.

[INAUDIBLE]

Who is this, please?

This is my mother who wrote this postcard to me to the Russian front in 1944, April 23 after the German occupied

Hungary. The back of this card her writing.

What does she say roughly? What does the card say?

It was far with worry. If you want, I can read it for you.

OK.

Dear son. I want to notify you and calm you down what's going on in Hungary. I am still my place. But your sister and brother-in-law are already in the ghetto in Nyiregyhaza. We worry about you. We don't know what will bring the future. Be careful and try to take care of you.

Do you know about how old your mother was in the postcard?

My mother was exactly 65 years old.

And who are these people, please?

These show my brother, his wife, and his daughter. His daughter was five years old.

About when was this? When do you think this was-- this picture taken?

This picture around 1940-- I don't know. I find it at home. Somebody gave it to me, my relatives who had it.

Who are these people, please?

These people-- this picture shows my sister and her husband.

About when was this? Do you know about when this was taken?

Around the late 1930s. I don't know exactly what time.

OK, thank you.