

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:41,550

2
00:00:41,550 --> 00:00:45,240
That was close enough, all this.

3
00:00:45,240 --> 00:00:48,202
You want to try and keep
eye contact with me.

4
00:00:48,202 --> 00:00:49,160
These guys aren't here.

5
00:00:49,160 --> 00:00:50,190
Yeah, OK.

6
00:00:50,190 --> 00:00:52,080
I'll look straight at you.

7
00:00:52,080 --> 00:00:54,000
OK.

8
00:00:54,000 --> 00:00:56,670
This is just a warm-up
question, but can you

9
00:00:56,670 --> 00:01:00,060
tell me about your family's
attempt to move to the US

10
00:01:00,060 --> 00:01:02,710
in 1922?

11
00:01:02,710 --> 00:01:03,770
Yes.

12
00:01:03,770 --> 00:01:06,330
My mother and father
at that time-- and they

13

00:01:06,330 --> 00:01:08,760
had a little girl
about four years old.

14
00:01:08,760 --> 00:01:10,710
Can you incorporate
that [INAUDIBLE]??

15
00:01:10,710 --> 00:01:12,490
Oh, yes, yes, OK.

16
00:01:12,490 --> 00:01:16,980
[INAUDIBLE]
[? next 10 minutes or-- ?]

17
00:01:16,980 --> 00:01:19,100
Would you repeat the question?

18
00:01:19,100 --> 00:01:22,050
Can you tell me about
your family's attempt

19
00:01:22,050 --> 00:01:26,280
to move to the US in 1922?

20
00:01:26,280 --> 00:01:31,140
My family attempted to
move to the United States

21
00:01:31,140 --> 00:01:36,540
because most of their
family were living here,

22
00:01:36,540 --> 00:01:39,370
and they wanted to join them.

23
00:01:39,370 --> 00:01:44,340
And when they arrived
in the United States,

24
00:01:44,340 --> 00:01:47,130
they had to go
through Ellis Island,

25

00:01:47,130 --> 00:01:51,990

and when the doctors
examined my father,

26

00:01:51,990 --> 00:01:56,760

they found he had a touch of TB.

27

00:01:56,760 --> 00:02:01,230

And they would not let
him get out of the boat.

28

00:02:01,230 --> 00:02:03,810

They gave my mother and
the child permission

29

00:02:03,810 --> 00:02:07,440

to get off the boat
but not my father.

30

00:02:07,440 --> 00:02:13,950

And so my mother got off the
boat to visit with the family,

31

00:02:13,950 --> 00:02:19,410

but then she went back to Ellis
Island and stayed with him.

32

00:02:19,410 --> 00:02:26,790

His brothers make an attempt
to try to get him off

33

00:02:26,790 --> 00:02:30,690

through maybe the senator
and the representative,

34

00:02:30,690 --> 00:02:32,400

but they could not.

35

00:02:32,400 --> 00:02:36,780

But they were successful
in getting him to Canada,

36

00:02:36,780 --> 00:02:40,260
and when they got him to Canada,
he stayed there for a while.

37

00:02:40,260 --> 00:02:45,000
And they attempted to get him
into the United States, which

38

00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:48,720
was a mistake because
they caught him.

39

00:02:48,720 --> 00:02:51,900
And as of that,
he was banned ever

40

00:02:51,900 --> 00:02:54,570
to come to the United States.

41

00:02:54,570 --> 00:02:57,000
So my mother and child--

42

00:02:57,000 --> 00:02:59,670
in the meantime,
while my mother was

43

00:02:59,670 --> 00:03:02,130
in Ellis Island with my
father and the child,

44

00:03:02,130 --> 00:03:09,390
the child contracted diphtheria
and died on Ellis Island.

45

00:03:09,390 --> 00:03:14,700
And they went back to Europe,
and they started life again.

46

00:03:14,700 --> 00:03:23,280
And then they had-- my
sister was born in 1923.

47

00:03:23,280 --> 00:03:28,410
I was born in 1924, but my
father passed away three months

48
00:03:28,410 --> 00:03:29,490
before I was born.

49
00:03:29,490 --> 00:03:39,120

50
00:03:39,120 --> 00:03:44,190
Tell me how old you were
and what you were doing,

51
00:03:44,190 --> 00:03:48,870
what life was like
when war broke out.

52
00:03:48,870 --> 00:03:56,790
Well, in 1939 I was 15 years
old, 15 and a half years old.

53
00:03:56,790 --> 00:04:00,300
I was actually going to--

54
00:04:00,300 --> 00:04:03,600
I had finished
what you call here

55
00:04:03,600 --> 00:04:10,410
sixth grade, like
middle school, and we

56
00:04:10,410 --> 00:04:12,630
lived in a very small town.

57
00:04:12,630 --> 00:04:16,800
There was not high
school, and that

58
00:04:16,800 --> 00:04:21,180
was one of the reasons my mother
tried and decided that it would

59

00:04:21,180 --> 00:04:24,630

be best if we would try to
get to the United States,

60

00:04:24,630 --> 00:04:27,510

because she was
not in a position

61

00:04:27,510 --> 00:04:32,910

to send us to a high school
out of town, which was Vilna.

62

00:04:32,910 --> 00:04:35,580

And she felt there
was no future for us,

63

00:04:35,580 --> 00:04:40,380

so she decided to ask her
relatives to send affidavits

64

00:04:40,380 --> 00:04:45,150

for us to bring us
to the United States.

65

00:04:45,150 --> 00:04:46,810

And they did.

66

00:04:46,810 --> 00:04:50,340

So we were sort of in limbo
waiting for our papers

67

00:04:50,340 --> 00:04:54,300

to come through, and
we were on a quota,

68

00:04:54,300 --> 00:04:57,250

which took quite a bit
of time, about two years.

69

00:04:57,250 --> 00:04:58,950

So that's why we were almost--

70

00:04:58,950 --> 00:05:01,530

I was almost 15.

71

00:05:01,530 --> 00:05:04,080

I was 15 or 15 and
a half, and I still

72

00:05:04,080 --> 00:05:05,790

wasn't going to high
school because we

73

00:05:05,790 --> 00:05:11,370

were waiting to try to
get to the United States.

74

00:05:11,370 --> 00:05:18,030

Then, just about
in June of 1939,

75

00:05:18,030 --> 00:05:20,850

we finally got a letter
from the American embassy

76

00:05:20,850 --> 00:05:24,960

to come to Warsaw
to receive a visa,

77

00:05:24,960 --> 00:05:28,720

and the war broke
out in September.

78

00:05:28,720 --> 00:05:37,020

So there we were stuck
again, and the war broke out.

79

00:05:37,020 --> 00:05:40,560

And our town was
occupied by the Russians.

80

00:05:40,560 --> 00:05:48,900

When Hitler and Stalin made
a pact to divide Poland,

81

00:05:48,900 --> 00:05:50,910
that [? contribution ?]
part of Poland

82

00:05:50,910 --> 00:05:53,820
was taken over by Russia.

83

00:05:53,820 --> 00:06:03,480
And at first, life was almost
the same like it was before,

84

00:06:03,480 --> 00:06:05,250
but it was getting--

85

00:06:05,250 --> 00:06:07,060
there was a shortage of food.

86

00:06:07,060 --> 00:06:08,490
There was a lot of--

87

00:06:08,490 --> 00:06:12,300
the Russians took
over, and they started

88

00:06:12,300 --> 00:06:17,370
to take away the homes from
the people who had nice homes.

89

00:06:17,370 --> 00:06:20,160
And they took away
the businesses,

90

00:06:20,160 --> 00:06:23,520
and they started to
arrest people who--

91

00:06:23,520 --> 00:06:27,150
sent them to Siberia,
people who they thought

92

00:06:27,150 --> 00:06:32,610
were anti-communist or rich.

93
00:06:32,610 --> 00:06:35,880

94
00:06:35,880 --> 00:06:38,910
And life started to
get a bit tougher,

95
00:06:38,910 --> 00:06:45,270
and people tried to get
out, to go somewhere,

96
00:06:45,270 --> 00:06:47,670
but there was no
particular place

97
00:06:47,670 --> 00:06:52,305
you could go because either
it was under the Russians

98
00:06:52,305 --> 00:06:56,020
or under the Germans, and
the war was in between.

99
00:06:56,020 --> 00:07:02,230
So my sister and I
belong to an organization

100
00:07:02,230 --> 00:07:06,460
called Betar, which is
a Zionist organization.

101
00:07:06,460 --> 00:07:12,010
It was very popular in most of
Europe, particularly in Poland.

102
00:07:12,010 --> 00:07:15,910
As youngsters, you belonged
to either Betar or Shomer

103
00:07:15,910 --> 00:07:19,930
Hatzair, which was-- one was
a left-wing organization.

104
00:07:19,930 --> 00:07:22,030
One was a right-wing
organization.

105
00:07:22,030 --> 00:07:26,800
But it was mostly a
social organization

106
00:07:26,800 --> 00:07:33,730
with Zionist aspirations,
trying to get to Israel

107
00:07:33,730 --> 00:07:36,700
and build the Homeland.

108
00:07:36,700 --> 00:07:42,970
And doing the first or second
week of the corporation,

109
00:07:42,970 --> 00:07:45,880
my sister, who was
older, went to a meeting,

110
00:07:45,880 --> 00:07:49,000
and there were a bunch of
boys and girls like herself,

111
00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:53,110
some of them a little
older, 17, 18, 20.

112
00:07:53,110 --> 00:07:56,950
And they decided they
were going to try

113
00:07:56,950 --> 00:08:01,570
to get to Vilna because
Vilna was a neutral city.

114
00:08:01,570 --> 00:08:06,130
It was given to Lithuania
during this split.

115
00:08:06,130 --> 00:08:08,650
And they thought, well,
maybe from Vilna they

116
00:08:08,650 --> 00:08:12,190
would try to get to Israel.

117
00:08:12,190 --> 00:08:17,210
We, at that time, had our
papers somewhere in Poland,

118
00:08:17,210 --> 00:08:20,620
so we thought, well,
maybe if we get to Vilna

119
00:08:20,620 --> 00:08:22,885
we'll be able to get
to the United States.

120
00:08:22,885 --> 00:08:25,870

121
00:08:25,870 --> 00:08:29,830
So my sister came home from
the meeting that evening

122
00:08:29,830 --> 00:08:33,370
and said to my
mother, told my mother

123
00:08:33,370 --> 00:08:34,809
the story, what's happening.

124
00:08:34,809 --> 00:08:38,110
And she told Mother, I'd
like to go with them.

125
00:08:38,110 --> 00:08:40,659
If we don't get to
the United States,

126

00:08:40,659 --> 00:08:43,090
maybe we could get to Israel.

127
00:08:43,090 --> 00:08:47,290
And of course, my mother
said she was out of her mind.

128
00:08:47,290 --> 00:08:50,230
What are you talking about?

129
00:08:50,230 --> 00:08:53,140
But she was very
insistent, and my mother

130
00:08:53,140 --> 00:08:54,970
realized that
things were getting

131
00:08:54,970 --> 00:08:59,710
pretty rough and
particularly for people

132
00:08:59,710 --> 00:09:03,730
who belonged to Betar because
the Russians considered them

133
00:09:03,730 --> 00:09:08,290
as the right-wing
organization against communism

134
00:09:08,290 --> 00:09:12,250
because they arrested
a number of people

135
00:09:12,250 --> 00:09:14,570
from that organization.

136
00:09:14,570 --> 00:09:19,540
So she was quite concerned,
and she didn't know what to do.

137
00:09:19,540 --> 00:09:22,810
And she thought she

would seek advice

138
00:09:22,810 --> 00:09:26,050
from one of the elders
in town, and she

139
00:09:26,050 --> 00:09:29,260
went to [? who was ?]
our next door neighbor.

140
00:09:29,260 --> 00:09:31,360
She went to him
and spoke with him,

141
00:09:31,360 --> 00:09:35,290
and that was on a Thursday.

142
00:09:35,290 --> 00:09:37,360
I remember the days because--

143
00:09:37,360 --> 00:09:40,460
I don't have the days
exactly, but the day.

144
00:09:40,460 --> 00:09:43,970
And she told him the
story, and he says,

145
00:09:43,970 --> 00:09:46,190
well, it's very dangerous.

146
00:09:46,190 --> 00:09:47,620
They're two young girls.

147
00:09:47,620 --> 00:09:49,570
How can you send them away?

148
00:09:49,570 --> 00:09:54,970
And he says, tomorrow,
which is Friday, is Shabbat,

149
00:09:54,970 --> 00:09:58,870

and he says, why don't we
think about it during Shabbat?

150
00:09:58,870 --> 00:10:01,720
And he says, we'll see.

151
00:10:01,720 --> 00:10:05,230
She came home, and
in the meantime,

152
00:10:05,230 --> 00:10:08,540
that group was
getting ready to go.

153
00:10:08,540 --> 00:10:15,580
And my sister felt that she
wanted to join that group,

154
00:10:15,580 --> 00:10:19,430
and it was getting
really more dangerous.

155
00:10:19,430 --> 00:10:27,400
So my mother decided get
advice from this other person

156
00:10:27,400 --> 00:10:29,020
who was a--

157
00:10:29,020 --> 00:10:32,410
he was the principal of
the Hebrew school, Tarbut,

158
00:10:32,410 --> 00:10:34,570
and his wife was a
kindergarten teacher.

159
00:10:34,570 --> 00:10:37,990
And they were a young
couple who came to our town,

160
00:10:37,990 --> 00:10:41,710
and my mother befriended them.

161
00:10:41,710 --> 00:10:45,550
They used to come and
spend every Shabbat, Friday

162
00:10:45,550 --> 00:10:50,500
night with us because being--

163
00:10:50,500 --> 00:10:55,540
my mother tried to have a
male influence in the family

164
00:10:55,540 --> 00:10:57,610
since there was no father.

165
00:10:57,610 --> 00:11:03,250
So he used to always come
on holidays with his wife,

166
00:11:03,250 --> 00:11:06,130
and they used to
have dinner with us

167
00:11:06,130 --> 00:11:08,020
and perform all the services.

168
00:11:08,020 --> 00:11:13,840
And it was like
a adopted family,

169
00:11:13,840 --> 00:11:19,690
and he was a very fine,
cultured, and progressive man.

170
00:11:19,690 --> 00:11:23,830
So they were coming for
dinner that Friday night,

171
00:11:23,830 --> 00:11:26,260
and we got to talk about it.

172
00:11:26,260 --> 00:11:32,860

And of course, we talked
about it and asked his advice.

173
00:11:32,860 --> 00:11:37,930
And at that time they had
two little children, just

174
00:11:37,930 --> 00:11:42,400
two little girls, and he says,
well, you know, my little girls

175
00:11:42,400 --> 00:11:45,880
are too young for journeys
like this, he says,

176
00:11:45,880 --> 00:11:50,050
but if your daughters were
my daughters, he says,

177
00:11:50,050 --> 00:11:52,450
I would send them
because maybe they'll

178
00:11:52,450 --> 00:11:56,380
have a chance to get through.

179
00:11:56,380 --> 00:12:01,650
And my mother made up
her mind to send us

180
00:12:01,650 --> 00:12:07,890
away, and right there
at that night she

181
00:12:07,890 --> 00:12:11,670
took out the little valises,
what we have, and there were--

182
00:12:11,670 --> 00:12:12,910
what do you call that--

183
00:12:12,910 --> 00:12:20,070
[INAUDIBLE] and started

to pack our belongings

184
00:12:20,070 --> 00:12:21,420
that she wanted to give us.

185
00:12:21,420 --> 00:12:27,600
And he went to a
neighboring farm,

186
00:12:27,600 --> 00:12:35,070
got a farmer and a little
wagon, and brought him back

187
00:12:35,070 --> 00:12:39,060
to the house, and picked up
the wagon with our things.

188
00:12:39,060 --> 00:12:42,690
And then he came
back, I remember, just

189
00:12:42,690 --> 00:12:48,390
like in the middle of
the night, and my sister

190
00:12:48,390 --> 00:12:50,350
and I got into the wagon.

191
00:12:50,350 --> 00:12:53,760
And they covered us
with blankets and stuff

192
00:12:53,760 --> 00:12:56,370
so we wouldn't be
seen, and my mother

193
00:12:56,370 --> 00:13:00,390
was sitting with the
driver, with [INAUDIBLE]..

194
00:13:00,390 --> 00:13:02,010
You know how the wagons are.

195

00:13:02,010 --> 00:13:05,010

There's room for two people.

196

00:13:05,010 --> 00:13:07,050

She was sitting
next to him, and she

197

00:13:07,050 --> 00:13:12,460

had a kerchief around her head
to look like she was his wife

198

00:13:12,460 --> 00:13:14,460

and they were
going to somewhere,

199

00:13:14,460 --> 00:13:16,710

to a market or somewhere.

200

00:13:16,710 --> 00:13:20,940

And we took off right
there that night,

201

00:13:20,940 --> 00:13:25,890

and the train was about 100
miles away from our town

202

00:13:25,890 --> 00:13:28,590

to go to Vilna.

203

00:13:28,590 --> 00:13:31,942

Oh, that's the other
line, but I won't--

204

00:13:31,942 --> 00:13:34,830

Well, we can take a break,
and we can break it up.

205

00:13:34,830 --> 00:13:36,180

Roll again.

206

00:13:36,180 --> 00:13:36,897

Yes sir.

207
00:13:36,897 --> 00:13:38,390
Stand by.

208
00:13:38,390 --> 00:13:41,638
So let's go back,
and then I'll keep--

209
00:13:41,638 --> 00:13:43,055
You're going to
piece it together?

210
00:13:43,055 --> 00:13:44,430
Yeah.

211
00:13:44,430 --> 00:13:44,930
[INAUDIBLE]

212
00:13:44,930 --> 00:13:46,510
OK, that's your job.

213
00:13:46,510 --> 00:13:49,070

214
00:13:49,070 --> 00:13:50,070
You asked me a question.

215
00:13:50,070 --> 00:13:52,670
A little bit more concise.

216
00:13:52,670 --> 00:13:54,060
Less detail?

217
00:13:54,060 --> 00:13:54,860
Less detail.

218
00:13:54,860 --> 00:13:57,390
Some of the detail is great.

219
00:13:57,390 --> 00:13:58,070
Some of it--

220
00:13:58,070 --> 00:13:58,280
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

221
00:13:58,280 --> 00:13:58,780
I see.

222
00:13:58,780 --> 00:14:01,220
I don't know which one, OK, OK.

223
00:14:01,220 --> 00:14:02,840
Anyway, tell me about--

224
00:14:02,840 --> 00:14:10,570
you had applied for a US visa,
and what year it was, in June.

225
00:14:10,570 --> 00:14:11,580
OK, I'll start now.

226
00:14:11,580 --> 00:14:18,410
Well, we applied for the four
US visa actually like in 1937,

227
00:14:18,410 --> 00:14:20,330
and we were waiting for--

228
00:14:20,330 --> 00:14:22,760
we were put on a
quota, and we were

229
00:14:22,760 --> 00:14:26,480
waiting to be called
to come for the visa.

230
00:14:26,480 --> 00:14:29,150

231
00:14:29,150 --> 00:14:34,850
And we got a letter from
the United States embassy

232

00:14:34,850 --> 00:14:40,970
in June of 1939 to come
to Warsaw to pick up

233

00:14:40,970 --> 00:14:47,240
the visa in November of
1939, and then the war

234

00:14:47,240 --> 00:14:49,155
broke out in September of '39.

235

00:14:49,155 --> 00:14:52,340

236

00:14:52,340 --> 00:14:55,250
So there was no way to
get to Warsaw to get--

237

00:14:55,250 --> 00:15:00,500
No, nothing, or even
get in touch or even--

238

00:15:00,500 --> 00:15:02,930
it was just-- first
of all, the war

239

00:15:02,930 --> 00:15:07,160
was over in three
days for Poland.

240

00:15:07,160 --> 00:15:10,150
Three days, it was finished.

241

00:15:10,150 --> 00:15:14,990
The Germans occupied
Warsaw right away,

242

00:15:14,990 --> 00:15:19,850
and the Russians occupied--

243

00:15:19,850 --> 00:15:22,790
they came into our

town the second day.

244

00:15:22,790 --> 00:15:27,890

The first day or the second
day, I believe, in the morning,

245

00:15:27,890 --> 00:15:32,480

we hear planes
flying over our town,

246

00:15:32,480 --> 00:15:35,570

and there were
reconnaissance planes,

247

00:15:35,570 --> 00:15:37,940

I believe because in
our town there was

248

00:15:37,940 --> 00:15:40,340

a Polish garrison stationed.

249

00:15:40,340 --> 00:15:45,710

And they wanted to make sure
what the situation is there.

250

00:15:45,710 --> 00:15:52,430

So when the planes went over
the town, they saw the barracks,

251

00:15:52,430 --> 00:15:55,670

everything was empty because
they left for the front

252

00:15:55,670 --> 00:15:57,170

the first day.

253

00:15:57,170 --> 00:16:01,370

So there were no soldiers
or anybody in the barracks.

254

00:16:01,370 --> 00:16:05,270

And then the next day, they
just marched with the tanks.

255
00:16:05,270 --> 00:16:07,536
And how did the
Russians treat you?

256
00:16:07,536 --> 00:16:10,960
Hold on a sec.

257
00:16:10,960 --> 00:16:13,060
They treated us--

258
00:16:13,060 --> 00:16:13,570
Stop, stop.

259
00:16:13,570 --> 00:16:14,950
Oh, the Russians--

260
00:16:14,950 --> 00:16:16,620
Sorry, I was talking.

261
00:16:16,620 --> 00:16:17,950
I'm sorry.

262
00:16:17,950 --> 00:16:23,060
The Russians-- when they marched
in, they were pretty decent.

263
00:16:23,060 --> 00:16:25,150
They didn't mistreat us.

264
00:16:25,150 --> 00:16:31,180
But once they got settled
into those barracks and all,

265
00:16:31,180 --> 00:16:33,640
what happened was
there were always--

266
00:16:33,640 --> 00:16:37,240
we were very close to the
Russian border, not far,

267

00:16:37,240 --> 00:16:41,590
and there was always a
communist element in town

268

00:16:41,590 --> 00:16:43,810
who were communists.

269

00:16:43,810 --> 00:16:46,600
And when the
Russians marched in--

270

00:16:46,600 --> 00:16:50,140
but it was illegal to be
a communist in Poland.

271

00:16:50,140 --> 00:16:53,110
You couldn't be--
it wasn't legal.

272

00:16:53,110 --> 00:16:56,740
So once the Russians marched in,
they came out of the woodwork.

273

00:16:56,740 --> 00:17:03,940
They became the rulers,
the local communists.

274

00:17:03,940 --> 00:17:08,020
So when they-- and
then, of course,

275

00:17:08,020 --> 00:17:16,410
also what they did was they
pointed out to the Russian

276

00:17:16,410 --> 00:17:19,170
generals, whoever
occupied the town--

277

00:17:19,170 --> 00:17:20,910
they pointed out
the people that they

278

00:17:20,910 --> 00:17:25,230

wanted to get even
with like big merchants

279

00:17:25,230 --> 00:17:33,015

or if you were more of a--

280

00:17:33,015 --> 00:17:34,020

what do you call it--

281

00:17:34,020 --> 00:17:37,470

the other party, a
more right-wing party.

282

00:17:37,470 --> 00:17:41,280

And they started to
arrest people or take away

283

00:17:41,280 --> 00:17:41,920

their homes.

284

00:17:41,920 --> 00:17:46,330

Now, in our case, they
took away our home.

285

00:17:46,330 --> 00:17:47,730

They took away most of the home.

286

00:17:47,730 --> 00:17:51,760

They left us one
room and the kitchen.

287

00:17:51,760 --> 00:17:55,740

And my mother, and myself,
and my sister-- and we

288

00:17:55,740 --> 00:18:00,850

had a family housekeeper
who was with us.

289

00:18:00,850 --> 00:18:03,660

We all lived in that one

room, in the kitchen.

290

00:18:03,660 --> 00:18:05,550

They took away the
others because they

291

00:18:05,550 --> 00:18:12,990

felt it was too luxurious to
have four rooms or five rooms.

292

00:18:12,990 --> 00:18:19,170

So some officers
moved into our home.

293

00:18:19,170 --> 00:18:22,470

And then how were you able
to escape and leave, and why

294

00:18:22,470 --> 00:18:24,310

didn't your mother go with you?

295

00:18:24,310 --> 00:18:28,560

OK, now that was--

296

00:18:28,560 --> 00:18:37,320

the reason-- when we decided
to leave, the Russians still

297

00:18:37,320 --> 00:18:41,790

did not move into our home,
but they told us we could only

298

00:18:41,790 --> 00:18:44,610

live in that part, that
somebody is moving in,

299

00:18:44,610 --> 00:18:46,410

they're taking it away.

300

00:18:46,410 --> 00:18:47,400

That's one way.

301

00:18:47,400 --> 00:18:48,840
They didn't know.

302
00:18:48,840 --> 00:18:53,700
And the reason my mother
didn't come with us was just

303
00:18:53,700 --> 00:18:57,270
she couldn't see
leaving her home.

304
00:18:57,270 --> 00:18:59,460
She says, how could
I leave all this?

305
00:18:59,460 --> 00:19:01,380
She just couldn't see it.

306
00:19:01,380 --> 00:19:05,370
They didn't think it was--

307
00:19:05,370 --> 00:19:08,730
she didn't think it
was final, and it

308
00:19:08,730 --> 00:19:11,700
wasn't final at the beginning
because the border was still

309
00:19:11,700 --> 00:19:15,270
open until after a
couple of months.

310
00:19:15,270 --> 00:19:20,880
They closed the border
between Vilna and Russia.

311
00:19:20,880 --> 00:19:26,500
And then she used to come
and visit us once we left.

312
00:19:26,500 --> 00:19:29,080
Now can you start and tell

me the night that you left?

313
00:19:29,080 --> 00:19:32,380
Tell me that story of how you
left and how you got to Vilna.

314
00:19:32,380 --> 00:19:33,670
OK.

315
00:19:33,670 --> 00:19:37,900
Now, when we took
this train when we--

316
00:19:37,900 --> 00:19:39,970
Got back to your house.

317
00:19:39,970 --> 00:19:42,110
When we decided to leave--

318
00:19:42,110 --> 00:19:44,920

319
00:19:44,920 --> 00:19:47,080
Mother decided to send us away.

320
00:19:47,080 --> 00:19:54,910
She packed us up, and this
friend of the family helped us.

321
00:19:54,910 --> 00:19:59,860
And we got into the
wagon, and we drove down

322
00:19:59,860 --> 00:20:01,810
to the train station.

323
00:20:01,810 --> 00:20:03,700
We got to the train station.

324
00:20:03,700 --> 00:20:09,460
There was like daybreak, and
the train was standing there.

325
00:20:09,460 --> 00:20:12,520
And there were thousands,
thousands of people

326
00:20:12,520 --> 00:20:15,340
trying to get on the train.

327
00:20:15,340 --> 00:20:18,730
And the train was
packed, and people

328
00:20:18,730 --> 00:20:22,990
were going through the windows
and between the trains.

329
00:20:22,990 --> 00:20:24,400
And my mother just--

330
00:20:24,400 --> 00:20:25,930
and we had two small--

331
00:20:25,930 --> 00:20:30,910
one of those little
valises and a bag.

332
00:20:30,910 --> 00:20:35,460
My mother just pushed
us on the train,

333
00:20:35,460 --> 00:20:37,680
and just as she pushed
us on the train,

334
00:20:37,680 --> 00:20:40,980
she sort of threw the
two valises after us,

335
00:20:40,980 --> 00:20:43,090
and the train took off.

336
00:20:43,090 --> 00:20:45,830

We never got even a chance
to say goodbye to her.

337
00:20:45,830 --> 00:20:48,690

338
00:20:48,690 --> 00:20:51,050
And we arrived in Vilna.

339
00:20:51,050 --> 00:20:56,240
It was, I would say, like
about two-hour ride by train,

340
00:20:56,240 --> 00:20:58,160
and we arrived in Vilna.

341
00:20:58,160 --> 00:21:02,200
And one of the reasons that
she felt a little bit better

342
00:21:02,200 --> 00:21:04,670
about sending us is
because she sent us

343
00:21:04,670 --> 00:21:10,850
to a friend of hers who was
running a rooming house.

344
00:21:10,850 --> 00:21:17,390
So she gave us a letter and
sent us to stay with him.

345
00:21:17,390 --> 00:21:21,380
And when we got
there from the train,

346
00:21:21,380 --> 00:21:25,400
they used to have those horse--

347
00:21:25,400 --> 00:21:29,930
I didn't take off
the other line.

348

00:21:29,930 --> 00:21:31,340

Yeah, I'll [? do-- ?]

349

00:21:31,340 --> 00:21:37,050

One of the things that I
need to get from you is--

350

00:21:37,050 --> 00:21:38,950

I've never escaped
from any place.

351

00:21:38,950 --> 00:21:40,890

I have no idea what it was--

352

00:21:40,890 --> 00:21:41,910

were you scared?

353

00:21:41,910 --> 00:21:45,810

Were you-- did you
have bad dreams?

354

00:21:45,810 --> 00:21:46,650

Were you frightened?

355

00:21:46,650 --> 00:21:47,275

Were you lucky?

356

00:21:47,275 --> 00:21:51,180

357

00:21:51,180 --> 00:21:52,660

Well, you asked
me the question--

358

00:21:52,660 --> 00:21:54,035

Let me
[? ask the question of, ?]

359

00:21:54,035 --> 00:21:56,760

where did you stay, or what
happened once you got to Vilna?

360
00:21:56,760 --> 00:21:57,480
Yeah.

361
00:21:57,480 --> 00:22:01,770
When we arrived in
Vilna, we stayed

362
00:22:01,770 --> 00:22:06,360
with a friend of my mother who
was running a rooming house,

363
00:22:06,360 --> 00:22:08,280
and when we arrived there--

364
00:22:08,280 --> 00:22:13,080
the capacity of my house maybe
had been maybe 20 people.

365
00:22:13,080 --> 00:22:16,590
There were about
40 people already.

366
00:22:16,590 --> 00:22:18,810
But he made room for us.

367
00:22:18,810 --> 00:22:24,030
He gave us-- we were six,
eight people in a room.

368
00:22:24,030 --> 00:22:25,860
But he was very good.

369
00:22:25,860 --> 00:22:29,110
He and his son were
running the rooming house.

370
00:22:29,110 --> 00:22:36,420
And we stayed with him for a
couple of weeks, and then the

371
00:22:36,420 --> 00:22:43,500
[INAUDIBLE] and the Joint

Distribution-- those two

372
00:22:43,500 --> 00:22:44,430
organizations.

373
00:22:44,430 --> 00:22:48,450
There were thousands of
refugees who were escaping

374
00:22:48,450 --> 00:22:51,900
from all over, coming to Vilna.

375
00:22:51,900 --> 00:22:55,170
And they got into
the act, and they

376
00:22:55,170 --> 00:22:59,640
tried to find housing
for the refugees.

377
00:22:59,640 --> 00:23:04,320
They formed kitchens,
and they started--

378
00:23:04,320 --> 00:23:07,950
what they did was they formed
what they called an internat.

379
00:23:07,950 --> 00:23:10,140
It was like hostels.

380
00:23:10,140 --> 00:23:15,000
They took over empty buildings,
schools or places like that,

381
00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:17,300
and they turned
them into hostels

382
00:23:17,300 --> 00:23:20,380
where people had a
room where to sleep.

383

00:23:20,380 --> 00:23:25,830

And they had kitchens where they used to-- it was very, very

384

00:23:25,830 --> 00:23:27,720

well-organized.

385

00:23:27,720 --> 00:23:33,150

And so after a while, we moved in-- and the way they

386

00:23:33,150 --> 00:23:36,540

did it was by groups.

387

00:23:36,540 --> 00:23:40,800

Betar had one hostel, and then there

388

00:23:40,800 --> 00:23:44,520

were couples who-- they made a hostel for couples

389

00:23:44,520 --> 00:23:47,520

and elderly people, and so it was

390

00:23:47,520 --> 00:23:51,630

easier for them to take care of the people that way.

391

00:23:51,630 --> 00:23:57,670

And we joined the Betar hostel because, first of all,

392

00:23:57,670 --> 00:23:59,690

we had no money.

393

00:23:59,690 --> 00:24:06,780

Mother gave us \$50 that she had, and of course, we

394

00:24:06,780 --> 00:24:10,540

couldn't stay with these
men for a long time,

395
00:24:10,540 --> 00:24:13,780
because it was his way
of making a living.

396
00:24:13,780 --> 00:24:19,170
So we used some of that, and
so we moved into that hostel.

397
00:24:19,170 --> 00:24:24,900
And it was like a communal
life where you took turns

398
00:24:24,900 --> 00:24:28,170
in the kitchen and in
cleaning the bathrooms,

399
00:24:28,170 --> 00:24:30,450
and it was very organized.

400
00:24:30,450 --> 00:24:36,840
And we lived there
until six months later.

401
00:24:36,840 --> 00:24:39,840
The Russians marched
into Vilna again.

402
00:24:39,840 --> 00:24:45,540
They took over a Vilna,
and then the hostel--

403
00:24:45,540 --> 00:24:51,270
then everything was closed
up because they would not

404
00:24:51,270 --> 00:24:57,150
allow any relief
organizations to function.

405
00:24:57,150 --> 00:24:58,740

Were you afraid?

406
00:24:58,740 --> 00:25:00,330
Yes.

407
00:25:00,330 --> 00:25:03,450
Yes, we were very
frightened because--

408
00:25:03,450 --> 00:25:09,990
I remember having
nightmares quite a bit.

409
00:25:09,990 --> 00:25:13,200
We were eight girls
in a large room,

410
00:25:13,200 --> 00:25:17,610
and all they had was a bed
and a little stand where

411
00:25:17,610 --> 00:25:20,100
you kept your belongings.

412
00:25:20,100 --> 00:25:23,610
And then, of course, you
ate in a communal kitchen.

413
00:25:23,610 --> 00:25:32,380
But I remember they had
medics, just some people--

414
00:25:32,380 --> 00:25:35,520
I want to know more about
how you spend your days.

415
00:25:35,520 --> 00:25:37,330
Were you very close
to your sister?

416
00:25:37,330 --> 00:25:37,830
Did you--

417

00:25:37,830 --> 00:25:38,663
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

418

00:25:38,663 --> 00:25:40,260
Oh, my sister and I were--

419

00:25:40,260 --> 00:25:41,250
Sorry.

420

00:25:41,250 --> 00:25:42,480
John was still talking.

421

00:25:42,480 --> 00:25:44,670
Oh, I'm sorry.

422

00:25:44,670 --> 00:25:51,300
My sister and I had a very,
very unusual relationship.

423

00:25:51,300 --> 00:25:55,530
We were so close, and
we continued being

424

00:25:55,530 --> 00:25:57,420
that close to the very end.

425

00:25:57,420 --> 00:25:59,790
It was almost unheard of.

426

00:25:59,790 --> 00:26:03,270
We were like-- my
daughter once said we

427

00:26:03,270 --> 00:26:07,080
were two bodies with one soul.

428

00:26:07,080 --> 00:26:08,820
That's how close we were.

429

00:26:08,820 --> 00:26:09,900
So did you play--

430
00:26:09,900 --> 00:26:12,750
But it was tough.

431
00:26:12,750 --> 00:26:14,370
There was a lot of--

432
00:26:14,370 --> 00:26:21,060
well, the way most of us kept
busy was a lot of organized--

433
00:26:21,060 --> 00:26:24,000
from the group from, the
Betar, from the internat.

434
00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:25,530
There were lectures.

435
00:26:25,530 --> 00:26:27,550
There were discussions.

436
00:26:27,550 --> 00:26:29,250
There were that kind--

437
00:26:29,250 --> 00:26:30,810
that's the way we kept--

438
00:26:30,810 --> 00:26:34,740
and of course, there was
the day-to-day taking care

439
00:26:34,740 --> 00:26:38,070
of yourself, helping
in the kitchen

440
00:26:38,070 --> 00:26:40,260
or whatever you had to do.

441
00:26:40,260 --> 00:26:43,380
But did you play any games,
or have any fantasies,

442

00:26:43,380 --> 00:26:47,280
or promise that you would buy
your sister a cherry sundae

443

00:26:47,280 --> 00:26:51,210
when you got to the US?

444

00:26:51,210 --> 00:26:57,330
Well, I don't think we had
any of those dreams or games.

445

00:26:57,330 --> 00:27:04,320
It was more of a time of
surviving, getting through,

446

00:27:04,320 --> 00:27:07,380
and waiting,
surviving and waiting,

447

00:27:07,380 --> 00:27:11,280
waiting to hear if there's
a way to get out, waiting--

448

00:27:11,280 --> 00:27:15,150
and there were rumors that,
oh, I think there's a--

449

00:27:15,150 --> 00:27:19,050
we heard there's an
opening to go to Curacao.

450

00:27:19,050 --> 00:27:26,160
There's an opening to go to
Canada or to go anywhere.

451

00:27:26,160 --> 00:27:27,360
There were rumors.

452

00:27:27,360 --> 00:27:30,300
And they said, oh,
there on that street

453

00:27:30,300 --> 00:27:34,590
there's an office where
you go, and you might be

454
00:27:34,590 --> 00:27:37,890
able to get a visa or papers.

455
00:27:37,890 --> 00:27:41,340
And you went there, and
it was just a dead end.

456
00:27:41,340 --> 00:27:44,370
And then we heard
a rumor that there

457
00:27:44,370 --> 00:27:50,450
was a Japanese diplomat
giving out visas in Kovno,

458
00:27:50,450 --> 00:27:54,090
and a number of people--

459
00:27:54,090 --> 00:27:59,840
they were giving out visas to
Japan that you could go to.

460
00:27:59,840 --> 00:28:04,650
And a number of people tried to
go there, and you couldn't go--

461
00:28:04,650 --> 00:28:08,150
you couldn't just get on
the train and go to Kovno.

462
00:28:08,150 --> 00:28:13,460
You had to have a permit to get
to Kovno, and then when you got

463
00:28:13,460 --> 00:28:17,030
there-- you were only
allowed like a day permit.

464
00:28:17,030 --> 00:28:18,150

You couldn't sleep there.

465
00:28:18,150 --> 00:28:21,050
You had to come
back the same day.

466
00:28:21,050 --> 00:28:22,895
So my sister and I-- when we--

467
00:28:22,895 --> 00:28:26,387

468
00:28:26,387 --> 00:28:27,720
well, I'll tell you [INAUDIBLE].

469
00:28:27,720 --> 00:28:29,000
When we heard--

470
00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:29,900
[INAUDIBLE] let's--

471
00:28:29,900 --> 00:28:32,050
We're going to
re-load here shortly.

472
00:28:32,050 --> 00:30:37,000