

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:43,700

2  
00:00:43,700 --> 00:00:45,680  
Professor Erlich,  
you're all set?

3  
00:00:45,680 --> 00:00:47,810  
Again, it's comfortable,  
the conversation.

4  
00:00:47,810 --> 00:00:52,910  
And please wait for me to  
finish before you start.

5  
00:00:52,910 --> 00:00:55,160  
Try and just make  
eye contact with me.

6  
00:00:55,160 --> 00:00:56,750  
Try not to look at the camera.

7  
00:00:56,750 --> 00:00:58,400  
Eddie and Mark aren't here.

8  
00:00:58,400 --> 00:01:02,490

9  
00:01:02,490 --> 00:01:07,840  
But we really want the  
feel of what it was like.

10  
00:01:07,840 --> 00:01:13,500  
We have no-- the beginning  
of the war, where were you?

11  
00:01:13,500 --> 00:01:14,670  
Where was your family?

12  
00:01:14,670 --> 00:01:17,280  
What was the situation?

13  
00:01:17,280 --> 00:01:18,760

Why don't we go?

14

00:01:18,760 --> 00:01:21,060  
So you want me to get going?

15

00:01:21,060 --> 00:01:25,620  
Well, the war started  
in September of 1939,

16

00:01:25,620 --> 00:01:27,520  
on the 1st of September.

17

00:01:27,520 --> 00:01:30,600  
I was 14 at the  
time, and we lived

18

00:01:30,600 --> 00:01:34,800  
in Krakow, which, in those  
days, was in Western Poland,

19

00:01:34,800 --> 00:01:37,680  
not very far from  
the German border.

20

00:01:37,680 --> 00:01:45,300  
So on the 3rd of September, our  
family moved away from Krakow,

21

00:01:45,300 --> 00:01:49,170  
in a sense, escaped from Krakow,  
sensing that the city might be

22

00:01:49,170 --> 00:01:52,060  
occupied, and we  
all went to Lwów,

23

00:01:52,060 --> 00:01:56,250  
which was in eastern Poland  
and where my mother came from.

24

00:01:56,250 --> 00:02:00,660  
And her family was from  
there, perfectly sure

25

00:02:00,660 --> 00:02:02,910

that we would come back  
very quickly because there

26  
00:02:02,910 --> 00:02:05,430  
was no question  
in anybody's mind

27  
00:02:05,430 --> 00:02:07,800  
that the Germans  
would be soon defeated

28  
00:02:07,800 --> 00:02:11,580  
and we would come back to  
our old apartment in Krakow.

29  
00:02:11,580 --> 00:02:18,690  
Well, what happened was that,  
of course, we never came back,

30  
00:02:18,690 --> 00:02:25,110  
and we stayed in  
Lwów for some time.

31  
00:02:25,110 --> 00:02:28,830  
My father was a  
judge before the war.

32  
00:02:28,830 --> 00:02:33,750  
My uncle, his brother,  
was an industrialist,

33  
00:02:33,750 --> 00:02:38,850  
and they were both afraid for  
their fate after the Russians

34  
00:02:38,850 --> 00:02:43,110  
moved into eastern  
Poland and took Lwów.

35  
00:02:43,110 --> 00:02:50,160  
And so at that time,  
they decided to escape.

36  
00:02:50,160 --> 00:02:54,220  
The only free country  
within reach was Lithuania.

37  
00:02:54,220 --> 00:02:57,450  
It was soon to be occupied  
by the Russians, too,

38  
00:02:57,450 --> 00:03:04,000  
but Vilnius, in Polish Wilno,  
was still free in those days,

39  
00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:05,190  
and you could get out.

40  
00:03:05,190 --> 00:03:07,560  
You could get some arrangements.

41  
00:03:07,560 --> 00:03:14,520  
And so they escaped illegally  
across the border on New Year's

42  
00:03:14,520 --> 00:03:20,040  
night, 1939 and made  
it safely to Vilnius,

43  
00:03:20,040 --> 00:03:22,500  
and the arrangement was  
that they would later

44  
00:03:22,500 --> 00:03:27,750  
send for us, for my mother  
and me, my aunt and my cousin

45  
00:03:27,750 --> 00:03:29,490  
and that we would follow.

46  
00:03:29,490 --> 00:03:33,480  
And this is actually  
what happened.

47  
00:03:33,480 --> 00:03:39,870  
In February, we went  
to a border town

48  
00:03:39,870 --> 00:03:42,240  
not far from the  
Lithuanian border,

49  
00:03:42,240 --> 00:03:46,170  
and we waited for the guides  
to come to pick us up.

50  
00:03:46,170 --> 00:03:50,370  
There were two women  
and two boys, myself--

51  
00:03:50,370 --> 00:03:53,250  
I was, at that  
time, already 15--

52  
00:03:53,250 --> 00:03:56,280  
and my cousin, who was nine.

53  
00:03:56,280 --> 00:04:02,680  
And we started in February,  
with the end of February.

54  
00:04:02,680 --> 00:04:05,550  
I don't remember  
exactly the date.

55  
00:04:05,550 --> 00:04:08,230  
It was a horrible  
winter, very, very cold.

56  
00:04:08,230 --> 00:04:15,240  
It was about 5 degrees  
below Fahrenheit.

57  
00:04:15,240 --> 00:04:19,920  
And we were not  
properly dressed at all.

58  
00:04:19,920 --> 00:04:22,920  
The ladies wore  
shoes that you would

59  
00:04:22,920 --> 00:04:26,490  
wear on the street in  
Krakow or any other city

60  
00:04:26,490 --> 00:04:29,910

but not in tremendous  
drifts of snow,

61  
00:04:29,910 --> 00:04:33,120  
and the guide was completely  
unreliable fellow.

62  
00:04:33,120 --> 00:04:36,780  
We took suitcases, which was,  
of course, a stupid thing

63  
00:04:36,780 --> 00:04:39,510  
to do because you don't go  
across the border illegally

64  
00:04:39,510 --> 00:04:42,450  
with suitcases, but  
the ladies could not

65  
00:04:42,450 --> 00:04:44,970  
part with the things they had.

66  
00:04:44,970 --> 00:04:52,290  
And we took a sled  
and one horse,

67  
00:04:52,290 --> 00:04:55,680  
and we got as far as  
we could on the sled.

68  
00:04:55,680 --> 00:05:00,480  
And then he took the  
suitcases and said, follow me.

69  
00:05:00,480 --> 00:05:03,260  
And as soon as he left,  
he sort of disappeared.

70  
00:05:03,260 --> 00:05:04,950  
It was all at night.

71  
00:05:04,950 --> 00:05:11,500  
It was a clear night, but there  
was no moon, very, very cold.

72

00:05:11,500 --> 00:05:17,130

And we all fell  
into drifts of snow.

73

00:05:17,130 --> 00:05:20,250

The ladies couldn't move.

74

00:05:20,250 --> 00:05:23,950

My cousin and I also  
had some difficulty.

75

00:05:23,950 --> 00:05:27,030

So before long, the  
dogs began barking.

76

00:05:27,030 --> 00:05:29,760

The peasants from  
the village came out.

77

00:05:29,760 --> 00:05:33,480

And they said that they would  
have to take us into custody

78

00:05:33,480 --> 00:05:36,750

because if they don't, the  
Russian patrols will come

79

00:05:36,750 --> 00:05:43,500

in the morning, and when they  
see the footsteps in the snow,

80

00:05:43,500 --> 00:05:46,050

they will arrest  
the whole village,

81

00:05:46,050 --> 00:05:49,740

and all the men will  
be deported to Siberia.

82

00:05:49,740 --> 00:05:51,930

So they took us into that hut.

83

00:05:51,930 --> 00:05:54,450

That guide disappeared  
with the suitcases,

84

00:05:54,450 --> 00:05:58,680

and we never saw him  
or the suitcases since.

85

00:05:58,680 --> 00:06:05,040

And we waited in that hut until  
this Russian border patrols

86

00:06:05,040 --> 00:06:06,850

appeared in the morning.

87

00:06:06,850 --> 00:06:09,750

They took us into  
custody and took us

88

00:06:09,750 --> 00:06:12,960

to the first prison in  
a small village not far

89

00:06:12,960 --> 00:06:16,920

from the first one and then  
to a larger town, which

90

00:06:16,920 --> 00:06:23,040

was called Radin, which was  
also the famous because it had

91

00:06:23,040 --> 00:06:26,940

the oldest yeshiva in  
that part of the country,

92

00:06:26,940 --> 00:06:30,780

and the prison was  
actually near the yeshiva.

93

00:06:30,780 --> 00:06:34,590

And then we were separated.

94

00:06:34,590 --> 00:06:36,510

I was 15, and they  
decided that I

95

00:06:36,510 --> 00:06:39,480

was old enough to be with men.

96

00:06:39,480 --> 00:06:46,110

And the ladies and my cousin  
were kept together with women.

97

00:06:46,110 --> 00:06:50,130

So this was, for me, a rather  
frightening experience.

98

00:06:50,130 --> 00:06:56,940

I was entirely alone in a  
small cell with about 20 other

99

00:06:56,940 --> 00:07:02,130

quote unquote "criminals"  
of various ilk,

100

00:07:02,130 --> 00:07:06,120

mostly smugglers,  
professional smugglers.

101

00:07:06,120 --> 00:07:08,970

They asked me what I was in for.

102

00:07:08,970 --> 00:07:12,240

I told them for trying to  
cross the border illegally.

103

00:07:12,240 --> 00:07:16,620

And they said, well, give up  
all hope for ever coming back

104

00:07:16,620 --> 00:07:17,130

to Poland.

105

00:07:17,130 --> 00:07:19,630

You'll be deported, and you  
will spend the rest of your life

106

00:07:19,630 --> 00:07:20,400

in Russia.

107

00:07:20,400 --> 00:07:23,490

Well, that, you can  
imagine, was pretty

108

00:07:23,490 --> 00:07:27,450

scary for a lad that  
was 15 years old,

109

00:07:27,450 --> 00:07:30,030

and I had no idea what my  
mother was at the time,

110

00:07:30,030 --> 00:07:32,430

nor my uncle, nor my cousin.

111

00:07:32,430 --> 00:07:34,590

But it all ended fairly well.

112

00:07:34,590 --> 00:07:38,550

After about a week  
of this business,

113

00:07:38,550 --> 00:07:43,530

we were released and  
asked to return to Lwów,

114

00:07:43,530 --> 00:07:48,660

where we came from originally,  
and this is what we did.

115

00:07:48,660 --> 00:07:55,680

We lived, then, in Lwów  
until the springtime of 1940.

116

00:07:55,680 --> 00:07:59,730

I even went to school  
for a while in Lwów.

117

00:07:59,730 --> 00:08:04,440

And then passportization  
campaign began.

118

00:08:04,440 --> 00:08:09,390

We were all supposed to either  
choose Soviet citizenship

119

00:08:09,390 --> 00:08:13,770

or return to the original  
place of residence,

120  
00:08:13,770 --> 00:08:16,260  
in our case, Krakow.

121  
00:08:16,260 --> 00:08:20,970  
Since we didn't know  
at that time yet

122  
00:08:20,970 --> 00:08:25,410  
what Germany would be about--

123  
00:08:25,410 --> 00:08:29,940  
Krakow was still occupied by  
the Wehrmacht, not by the SS,

124  
00:08:29,940 --> 00:08:34,860  
and one could get out from  
German-occupied Poland

125  
00:08:34,860 --> 00:08:38,400  
through Italy, mainly,  
and then from Italy

126  
00:08:38,400 --> 00:08:42,230  
to Spain and eventually away.

127  
00:08:42,230 --> 00:08:45,060  
We'll wait for that to finish.

128  
00:08:45,060 --> 00:08:48,360  
Is that going to be every  
15 minutes, that clock?

129  
00:08:48,360 --> 00:08:52,330  
That was just 10:00, I think.

130  
00:08:52,330 --> 00:08:55,220  
Just you want to back over  
the way out of Germany?

131  
00:08:55,220 --> 00:08:56,100  
Yes.

132  
00:08:56,100 --> 00:08:57,840

Yes.

133

00:08:57,840 --> 00:08:59,290  
Am I doing the right thing?

134

00:08:59,290 --> 00:09:00,870  
Yeah, that's perfect, very good.

135

00:09:00,870 --> 00:09:02,970  
Good, very clear.

136

00:09:02,970 --> 00:09:04,470  
I'm going to go  
back and maybe ask

137

00:09:04,470 --> 00:09:06,970  
you like, well, what were the  
conditions like in the prison?

138

00:09:06,970 --> 00:09:07,830  
What did you eat?

139

00:09:07,830 --> 00:09:11,060  
Yeah, what did I--

140

00:09:11,060 --> 00:09:11,880  
it's a funny thing.

141

00:09:11,880 --> 00:09:13,770  
You told me that I  
should say things

142

00:09:13,770 --> 00:09:17,100  
which get people sort of moved.

143

00:09:17,100 --> 00:09:18,930  
I don't remember those things.

144

00:09:18,930 --> 00:09:21,240  
I remember only the  
good things, which

145

00:09:21,240 --> 00:09:25,050  
is a funny thing how a

human being suppresses

146

00:09:25,050 --> 00:09:26,160  
the unpleasant.

147

00:09:26,160 --> 00:09:28,740

148

00:09:28,740 --> 00:09:30,970  
So we begin--

149

00:09:30,970 --> 00:09:31,470  
Yeah.

150

00:09:31,470 --> 00:09:35,000

151

00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:36,350  
I guess go back--

152

00:09:36,350 --> 00:09:43,256  
So anyway, yes, we  
went back to Lwów.

153

00:09:43,256 --> 00:09:46,030  
We stayed there for  
a few months until

154

00:09:46,030 --> 00:09:49,580  
the Soviet passportization  
campaign began.

155

00:09:49,580 --> 00:09:52,640  
We were under the  
impression that, once you

156

00:09:52,640 --> 00:09:57,690  
take a Soviet citizenship,  
this is the end of you.

157

00:09:57,690 --> 00:09:59,450  
You will become  
a Soviet citizen,

158

00:09:59,450 --> 00:10:03,200  
and you will never get out  
because we knew perfectly well

159  
00:10:03,200 --> 00:10:08,420  
the history of the Soviet Union  
for the past 30 years almost,

160  
00:10:08,420 --> 00:10:10,200  
30 years.

161  
00:10:10,200 --> 00:10:13,980  
And so we elected to  
go back to Krakow,

162  
00:10:13,980 --> 00:10:20,120  
hoping that, from there, it  
was still possible to get out,

163  
00:10:20,120 --> 00:10:22,520  
and we knew of cases  
of people getting out

164  
00:10:22,520 --> 00:10:25,700  
from there through  
Italy or through Hungary

165  
00:10:25,700 --> 00:10:30,050  
onto Spain and to  
Western Europe.

166  
00:10:30,050 --> 00:10:33,440  
Well, while waiting  
for the permission

167  
00:10:33,440 --> 00:10:40,460  
to go back, at night,  
towards the end of June 1940,

168  
00:10:40,460 --> 00:10:44,690  
a tremendous campaign  
of deportation began.

169  
00:10:44,690 --> 00:10:48,590  
All those people who refused  
to take Soviet citizenship

170  
00:10:48,590 --> 00:10:51,570  
were deported inside Russia.

171  
00:10:51,570 --> 00:10:54,740  
This was done over three  
days, all at night,

172  
00:10:54,740 --> 00:11:00,140  
using absolutely every  
moving vehicle in Lwów.

173  
00:11:00,140 --> 00:11:06,410  
All the cars, all the trucks,  
all the peasant carts,

174  
00:11:06,410 --> 00:11:09,890  
everything that  
moved was mobilized.

175  
00:11:09,890 --> 00:11:11,540  
They did it by streets.

176  
00:11:11,540 --> 00:11:14,414  
They had lists of  
people with addresses.

177  
00:11:14,414 --> 00:11:15,746  
Can we stop for a second?

178  
00:11:15,746 --> 00:11:17,500  
That one was probably OK.

179  
00:11:17,500 --> 00:11:20,257  
Yeah, your-- we can  
hear that on film.

180  
00:11:20,257 --> 00:11:20,840  
Oh, I'm sorry.

181  
00:11:20,840 --> 00:11:21,560  
I'm sorry.

182  
00:11:21,560 --> 00:11:23,900

OK.

183

00:11:23,900 --> 00:11:26,060  
Can we just turn the clock off?

184

00:11:26,060 --> 00:11:28,760  
We certainly can.

185

00:11:28,760 --> 00:11:30,715  
And could you cinch  
your tie up once more?

186

00:11:30,715 --> 00:11:31,660  
Just a little bit.

187

00:11:31,660 --> 00:11:32,160  
Great.

188

00:11:32,160 --> 00:11:35,298

189

00:11:35,298 --> 00:11:37,340  
My camera's on that shirt,  
and they just pop out.

190

00:11:37,340 --> 00:11:44,880

191

00:11:44,880 --> 00:11:46,470  
I'll go back and--

192

00:11:46,470 --> 00:11:48,870  
when you were in prison there,  
how did you communicate?

193

00:11:48,870 --> 00:11:50,790  
Did everyone else speak--

194

00:11:50,790 --> 00:11:52,590  
what language did you speak?

195

00:11:52,590 --> 00:11:57,450  
That was a prison with  
nothing but Polish prisoners

196

00:11:57,450 --> 00:12:00,330  
because this was a  
former Polish territory,

197

00:12:00,330 --> 00:12:02,790  
and all the prisoners  
spoke Polish.

198

00:12:02,790 --> 00:12:05,560  
The language in the  
cell was Polish.

199

00:12:05,560 --> 00:12:13,740  
My co-prisoners were actually  
a nice bunch of people,

200

00:12:13,740 --> 00:12:16,950  
and they told me that they  
would be deported to Siberia

201

00:12:16,950 --> 00:12:19,200  
because this is what they  
were convinced would happen.

202

00:12:19,200 --> 00:12:23,340  
This is what probably  
happened to all of them.

203

00:12:23,340 --> 00:12:29,680  
They asked me whether I wanted  
my mother to know where I was,

204

00:12:29,680 --> 00:12:32,280  
and I said, yes, but  
what can I do about this?

205

00:12:32,280 --> 00:12:34,890  
And he says, oh, we  
can do a great deal.

206

00:12:34,890 --> 00:12:39,940  
And they started tapping on the  
wall, and within a short time,

207

00:12:39,940 --> 00:12:40,980  
there was another tab.

208  
00:12:40,980 --> 00:12:43,780  
And there was a  
communication with my mother,

209  
00:12:43,780 --> 00:12:47,970  
so that made me feel  
a little bit happier.

210  
00:12:47,970 --> 00:12:49,380  
What we ate--

211  
00:12:49,380 --> 00:12:53,010  
I really can't remember  
well what we ate,

212  
00:12:53,010 --> 00:12:58,560  
probably the Russian kasha--  
that is the sort of gruel that

213  
00:12:58,560 --> 00:13:00,090  
the Russians love--

214  
00:13:00,090 --> 00:13:03,780  
and some thin soup.

215  
00:13:03,780 --> 00:13:05,730  
But I don't really  
remember exactly what

216  
00:13:05,730 --> 00:13:07,650  
it was that we ate.

217  
00:13:07,650 --> 00:13:15,000  
What I remember very well is  
the trip on a sled from one

218  
00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:18,120  
of the villages to  
the prison in Radin.

219  
00:13:18,120 --> 00:13:23,820  
This was in the morning,

sort of late morning

220

00:13:23,820 --> 00:13:28,530  
because the sun comes out very  
late at that time of the year,

221

00:13:28,530 --> 00:13:31,620  
and we were on the Russian sled.

222

00:13:31,620 --> 00:13:37,320  
They are very different  
from the sleds in America.

223

00:13:37,320 --> 00:13:42,370  
They are very low, and they  
are built in a triangular form

224

00:13:42,370 --> 00:13:46,950  
so that the horse is attached  
to the top of the triangle

225

00:13:46,950 --> 00:13:54,000  
and the rest of the triangle  
acts so that the sled would not

226

00:13:54,000 --> 00:14:00,030  
tip over, just to keep  
it on top of the snow

227

00:14:00,030 --> 00:14:02,280  
rather than sinking  
into the snow.

228

00:14:02,280 --> 00:14:05,160  
There were two Russian  
soldiers with us,

229

00:14:05,160 --> 00:14:09,330  
and the trip took a very long  
time, about more than an hour.

230

00:14:09,330 --> 00:14:12,300  
And after a while, they  
got sort of sentimental,

231

00:14:12,300 --> 00:14:14,310  
and they started singing--

232  
00:14:14,310 --> 00:14:17,980  
they had a guitar, and they  
started singing Russian songs.

233  
00:14:17,980 --> 00:14:21,810  
This was the first time that  
I heard Russian, really,

234  
00:14:21,810 --> 00:14:26,100  
this close by and the  
Russian songs, which are

235  
00:14:26,100 --> 00:14:29,040  
extremely mournful sometimes.

236  
00:14:29,040 --> 00:14:32,340  
But this was an extremely  
unusual experience.

237  
00:14:32,340 --> 00:14:34,890  
There was nothing  
but snow around,

238  
00:14:34,890 --> 00:14:39,030  
these two Russian soldiers,  
very nice fellows,

239  
00:14:39,030 --> 00:14:41,940  
singing those  
mournful Russian songs

240  
00:14:41,940 --> 00:14:45,650  
as the sun was getting up.

241  
00:14:45,650 --> 00:14:52,820  
So that's when-- to come  
back to the deportations,

242  
00:14:52,820 --> 00:14:58,810  
when the streets that  
we lived on came up,

243

00:14:58,810 --> 00:15:01,130  
there was a truck  
waiting downstairs,

244  
00:15:01,130 --> 00:15:03,530  
and everybody  
living in that house

245  
00:15:03,530 --> 00:15:06,380  
who belonged to  
that category that

246  
00:15:06,380 --> 00:15:12,530  
is people who did not want  
to become Soviet citizens

247  
00:15:12,530 --> 00:15:14,360  
were all deported.

248  
00:15:14,360 --> 00:15:20,450  
And so when we finally ended  
up on the train in that freight

249  
00:15:20,450 --> 00:15:26,690  
car in which we made our trip to  
Russia, we were all neighbors,

250  
00:15:26,690 --> 00:15:31,490  
and many people knew each other  
if not personally at least

251  
00:15:31,490 --> 00:15:33,140  
by sight.

252  
00:15:33,140 --> 00:15:38,000  
So that's the way we  
made the trip from Lwów.

253  
00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:41,300  
We were still convinced  
that we were going west,

254  
00:15:41,300 --> 00:15:43,280  
that is, back to  
Krakow because this

255

00:15:43,280 --> 00:15:46,940

is what the Russian soldiers  
were instructed to tell us,

256

00:15:46,940 --> 00:15:51,590

until this train started moving  
and when we realized that we

257

00:15:51,590 --> 00:15:54,760

are not moving west but east.

258

00:15:54,760 --> 00:15:59,680

The trip took about  
10 or 12 days,

259

00:15:59,680 --> 00:16:09,850

and around the tenth of July, we  
came to a small station called

260

00:16:09,850 --> 00:16:18,300

Sharya on the trans-Russia  
railroad line running

261

00:16:18,300 --> 00:16:20,430

from Moscow to Vladivostok.

262

00:16:20,430 --> 00:16:23,350

263

00:16:23,350 --> 00:16:28,950

There were Russian  
officers waiting,

264

00:16:28,950 --> 00:16:33,210

and this was actually-- this  
happened on stops before that.

265

00:16:33,210 --> 00:16:37,710

And each of them had  
a list of desiderata,

266

00:16:37,710 --> 00:16:41,550

and he would say three  
cars, two cars, four cars,

267

00:16:41,550 --> 00:16:44,490  
depending on how many  
people they could handle.

268

00:16:44,490 --> 00:16:48,360  
Well, when we came to Sharya,  
he wanted three freight cars,

269

00:16:48,360 --> 00:16:51,480  
that is, people who were  
in those three cars,

270

00:16:51,480 --> 00:16:53,880  
maybe a little bit  
more than that.

271

00:16:53,880 --> 00:17:00,870  
And we were asked to  
get out, put on trucks,

272

00:17:00,870 --> 00:17:05,638  
and then driven north, and  
we drove for a day or--

273

00:17:05,638 --> 00:17:07,680  
First, could you tell me  
what were the conditions

274

00:17:07,680 --> 00:17:09,420  
like on those freight--

275

00:17:09,420 --> 00:17:11,880  
On the freight trains,  
they were pretty awful

276

00:17:11,880 --> 00:17:14,790  
because we were  
packed like sardines.

277

00:17:14,790 --> 00:17:17,790  
There were, of course,  
no toilet facilities.

278

00:17:17,790 --> 00:17:23,010  
There was a hole in

the floor in each car,

279

00:17:23,010 --> 00:17:27,210  
and then by the ingenuity  
of the passengers,

280

00:17:27,210 --> 00:17:31,830  
we covered this area with  
a blanket or something.

281

00:17:31,830 --> 00:17:34,560  
So it was a sort of  
an improvised toilet.

282

00:17:34,560 --> 00:17:38,250  
But normally, when there  
was need to do that

283

00:17:38,250 --> 00:17:40,410  
and when the train  
stopped, the Russians

284

00:17:40,410 --> 00:17:42,900  
would unlock the  
doors, and everybody

285

00:17:42,900 --> 00:17:49,290  
went outside trying to  
find a secluded place.

286

00:17:49,290 --> 00:17:53,190  
Food was what they gave  
us, very little of it,

287

00:17:53,190 --> 00:17:58,260  
but we had with us some food  
because the Russians in Lwów

288

00:17:58,260 --> 00:18:01,110  
told us, please take everything  
that you can with you

289

00:18:01,110 --> 00:18:03,450  
because you will  
need everything.

290

00:18:03,450 --> 00:18:08,190

So we took clothes, and we  
took some bedding, even.

291

00:18:08,190 --> 00:18:11,850

And we certainly took some food,  
so we had enough to last us

292

00:18:11,850 --> 00:18:13,590

for the duration of the trip.

293

00:18:13,590 --> 00:18:20,400

But if we were to rely on what  
was given to us by the guards,

294

00:18:20,400 --> 00:18:25,140

we wouldn't be very  
happy, obviously.

295

00:18:25,140 --> 00:18:27,990

Go back to the trucks.

296

00:18:27,990 --> 00:18:29,400

So on the trucks--

297

00:18:29,400 --> 00:18:31,470

again, we were lucky.

298

00:18:31,470 --> 00:18:35,430

This whole time the  
weather was very good.

299

00:18:35,430 --> 00:18:46,230

We were in the open trucks, an  
usual line of trucks extending

300

00:18:46,230 --> 00:18:50,790

for about, I would say,  
half a mile, all of them

301

00:18:50,790 --> 00:18:53,100

fueled by wood.

302

00:18:53,100 --> 00:18:56,490

This is something which you  
don't know in this country.

303  
00:18:56,490 --> 00:18:58,980  
I don't know whether the  
Russians still remember that.

304  
00:18:58,980 --> 00:19:00,960  
They were sort of  
Ford-like trucks

305  
00:19:00,960 --> 00:19:04,170  
because the Russians  
had a license from Ford,

306  
00:19:04,170 --> 00:19:07,590  
and instead of a  
gas tank, they had

307  
00:19:07,590 --> 00:19:12,420  
two tanks attached to the trucks  
on two sides of the cabin.

308  
00:19:12,420 --> 00:19:15,780  
And every now and then,  
the truck would stop.

309  
00:19:15,780 --> 00:19:20,130  
There were piles of small,  
cubed pieces of wood

310  
00:19:20,130 --> 00:19:22,290  
along the side of  
the road, and they

311  
00:19:22,290 --> 00:19:26,460  
would put it into  
those tanks where there

312  
00:19:26,460 --> 00:19:28,890  
was a normal fire and steam.

313  
00:19:28,890 --> 00:19:32,640  
And this is how these  
trucks were moving.

314

00:19:32,640 --> 00:19:35,460

Well, we were going like  
this for quite a while.

315

00:19:35,460 --> 00:19:41,730

The countryside around us  
became more and more forested,

316

00:19:41,730 --> 00:19:44,310

and finally, we  
came to a road which

317

00:19:44,310 --> 00:19:47,040

was really not a road  
but a path in the forest.

318

00:19:47,040 --> 00:19:50,490

And we went for about  
5 miles along that,

319

00:19:50,490 --> 00:19:58,110

and eventually, we saw a  
little brook and a few barracks

320

00:19:58,110 --> 00:20:03,330

alongside which were  
completely empty.

321

00:20:03,330 --> 00:20:06,120

They were called barrack  
number one, two, three, four,

322

00:20:06,120 --> 00:20:07,110

and five.

323

00:20:07,110 --> 00:20:09,330

And then we were  
asked to dismount,

324

00:20:09,330 --> 00:20:15,330

and each family was  
to take one room.

325

00:20:15,330 --> 00:20:19,110

And so we ended up-- my mother

and I ended up in barrack

326

00:20:19,110 --> 00:20:23,760  
number one, which was actually  
a very good barrack as it turned

327

00:20:23,760 --> 00:20:27,480  
out because it was high up  
so that water in the fall

328

00:20:27,480 --> 00:20:33,300  
and in the spring would not get  
in, and that's where we lived

329

00:20:33,300 --> 00:20:36,540  
for the duration of our--

330

00:20:36,540 --> 00:20:39,270  
we would call it, of  
course, imprisonment.

331

00:20:39,270 --> 00:20:43,110  
The Russians called  
it resettlement.

332

00:20:43,110 --> 00:20:47,220  
We were resettled to a different  
part of the Soviet Union,

333

00:20:47,220 --> 00:20:49,020  
and for them, it  
made no difference.

334

00:20:49,020 --> 00:20:52,410  
We were in Lwów, which was  
part of the Soviet Union.

335

00:20:52,410 --> 00:20:59,040  
Now we were in a forest halfway  
between the Urals and Moscow,

336

00:20:59,040 --> 00:21:03,480  
about 400 miles  
northeast of Moscow.

337

00:21:03,480 --> 00:21:05,910

And so we were living  
in a different place.

338

00:21:05,910 --> 00:21:07,680

They found nothing  
wrong with that.

339

00:21:07,680 --> 00:21:09,540

There was no  
sentence of any kind

340

00:21:09,540 --> 00:21:11,820

because this was  
just resettlement.

341

00:21:11,820 --> 00:21:14,580

342

00:21:14,580 --> 00:21:17,980

I needed to cough, and  
fix your tie again.

343

00:21:17,980 --> 00:21:18,610

My goodness.

344

00:21:18,610 --> 00:21:19,173

What's wrong?

345

00:21:19,173 --> 00:21:20,256

What's the matter with it?

346

00:21:20,256 --> 00:21:21,670

[INAUDIBLE] down [INAUDIBLE].

347

00:21:21,670 --> 00:21:23,430

It's very slight,  
but it's helpful.

348

00:21:23,430 --> 00:21:25,720

Thank you.

349

00:21:25,720 --> 00:21:28,450

So did you have any contact  
with your father at this time?

350

00:21:28,450 --> 00:21:30,760

Well, not immediately,  
not immediately,

351

00:21:30,760 --> 00:21:35,320

but my grandmother,  
who was from Lwów--

352

00:21:35,320 --> 00:21:38,290

she had no choice  
about Soviet passports.

353

00:21:38,290 --> 00:21:43,060

People who were normal residents  
of Lwów and the areas occupied

354

00:21:43,060 --> 00:21:46,900

by the Russians were simply  
issued Soviet passports,

355

00:21:46,900 --> 00:21:48,700

no questions asked.

356

00:21:48,700 --> 00:21:50,320

So she was not deported.

357

00:21:50,320 --> 00:21:53,230

She stayed there together  
with my mother's sister

358

00:21:53,230 --> 00:21:55,090

and her husband.

359

00:21:55,090 --> 00:21:58,960

And my father at the  
time and my uncle

360

00:21:58,960 --> 00:22:05,260

were in Lithuania, in Vilna,  
and they wrote to each other.

361

00:22:05,260 --> 00:22:08,870

And we wrote to them as  
soon as we knew our address,

362

00:22:08,870 --> 00:22:13,600  
and so, in this way, via Lwów,  
my father found out where we

363

00:22:13,600 --> 00:22:14,530  
were.

364

00:22:14,530 --> 00:22:17,560  
And we began to  
communicate directly.

365

00:22:17,560 --> 00:22:20,500  
That is, we would write to him,  
and he would write back to us.

366

00:22:20,500 --> 00:22:23,260

367

00:22:23,260 --> 00:22:31,570  
Now, in that camp, I was  
15, and under Soviet law,

368

00:22:31,570 --> 00:22:33,910  
I did not have to work.

369

00:22:33,910 --> 00:22:36,910  
You have to work  
when you are 16,

370

00:22:36,910 --> 00:22:40,660  
and I was still  
about six or seven

371

00:22:40,660 --> 00:22:44,950  
months before my 16th birthday.

372

00:22:44,950 --> 00:22:47,650  
My mother, though, had to work.

373

00:22:47,650 --> 00:22:49,450  
The work was in the woods.

374

00:22:49,450 --> 00:22:54,850

We were all-- practically  
all of us became lumberjacks.

375  
00:22:54,850 --> 00:22:57,580  
Nobody knew how  
to handle an axe.

376  
00:22:57,580 --> 00:23:00,100  
Nobody knew how to handle a saw.

377  
00:23:00,100 --> 00:23:09,040  
There was no mechanical tool  
whatsoever, no power saws.

378  
00:23:09,040 --> 00:23:12,380  
Everything was done manually.

379  
00:23:12,380 --> 00:23:16,090  
And we were totally out of it.

380  
00:23:16,090 --> 00:23:20,830  
Well, the Russians were aware  
of that, and they attached to--

381  
00:23:20,830 --> 00:23:26,020  
they divided us into  
brigades, and to each brigade

382  
00:23:26,020 --> 00:23:30,340  
they added a native  
peasant from those areas.

383  
00:23:30,340 --> 00:23:34,540  
And he was teaching  
us how to do it.

384  
00:23:34,540 --> 00:23:38,410  
But before it came to  
that, I told the commandant

385  
00:23:38,410 --> 00:23:42,580  
of the camp-- there was one  
commandant and three militiamen

386  
00:23:42,580 --> 00:23:43,300

under him.

387

00:23:43,300 --> 00:23:49,240

That was the whole  
contingent of the guards--

388

00:23:49,240 --> 00:23:52,360

and I said to him, what's  
the point of taking my mother

389

00:23:52,360 --> 00:23:57,820

to work because she will never  
do anything for you because she

390

00:23:57,820 --> 00:24:00,700

is simply unable to  
do anything like that?

391

00:24:00,700 --> 00:24:03,490

Why don't you take me  
instead and let her stay

392

00:24:03,490 --> 00:24:06,490

in the barracks since  
I don't have to work?

393

00:24:06,490 --> 00:24:10,600

He liked the idea, and so I,  
before I was supposed to work,

394

00:24:10,600 --> 00:24:12,190

began working.

395

00:24:12,190 --> 00:24:14,470

And later on, when  
I turned 16, they

396

00:24:14,470 --> 00:24:16,720

got so used to the  
sight of my mother

397

00:24:16,720 --> 00:24:20,650

at home, that is, in the  
barracks rather than at work,

398

00:24:20,650 --> 00:24:23,500  
that she never worked for  
the length of our stay

399  
00:24:23,500 --> 00:24:24,490  
in that camp.

400  
00:24:24,490 --> 00:24:30,010  
And after a few months, I became  
an experienced lumberjack,

401  
00:24:30,010 --> 00:24:34,000  
and trade which I still love  
and which I practice at home.

402  
00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:37,750  
That is, whenever there  
is a tree to be felled

403  
00:24:37,750 --> 00:24:41,410  
or a branch to be cut, I do it  
with a great deal of relish,

404  
00:24:41,410 --> 00:24:47,070  
always with manual saws,  
never using any power saws.

405  
00:24:47,070 --> 00:24:53,160  
So that's essentially how  
we got into that camp.

406  
00:24:53,160 --> 00:24:58,110  
The kind of work--

407  
00:24:58,110 --> 00:25:01,605  
I would say 90% felling trees.

408  
00:25:01,605 --> 00:25:04,860

409  
00:25:04,860 --> 00:25:09,870  
There was a stream running  
through the camp emptying

410  
00:25:09,870 --> 00:25:14,070

into a larger river which again  
emptied into a larger river,

411  
00:25:14,070 --> 00:25:16,020  
and eventually,  
all of this emptied

412  
00:25:16,020 --> 00:25:21,930  
into the river which was  
called Northern Dvina, which

413  
00:25:21,930 --> 00:25:26,610  
goes north to Archangel,  
the city of Archangel,

414  
00:25:26,610 --> 00:25:31,500  
where there's a port,  
and you could then

415  
00:25:31,500 --> 00:25:33,960  
move whatever you could  
because from that time

416  
00:25:33,960 --> 00:25:37,810  
you couldn't move  
anything by land.

417  
00:25:37,810 --> 00:25:42,120  
So our job was to  
fell trees, cut them

418  
00:25:42,120 --> 00:25:44,610  
according to specific  
measurements.

419  
00:25:44,610 --> 00:25:47,880  
Every kind of tree,  
every kind of wood

420  
00:25:47,880 --> 00:25:50,370  
had its own requirements.

421  
00:25:50,370 --> 00:25:56,100  
We were supposed to measure  
it all and then stack it,

422

00:25:56,100 --> 00:26:01,350

and some of us were then, in  
the wintertime, given sleds,

423

00:26:01,350 --> 00:26:04,800

brought sort of the front part  
of the sled with a tiny horse

424

00:26:04,800 --> 00:26:06,150

that they had there.

425

00:26:06,150 --> 00:26:13,950

And these wooden logs would  
then be taken out of the woods

426

00:26:13,950 --> 00:26:18,150

and stacked alongside the  
first big river, which

427

00:26:18,150 --> 00:26:21,060

was about 5 miles  
away from the camp--

428

00:26:21,060 --> 00:26:24,330

from where we were working.

429

00:26:24,330 --> 00:26:28,290

And then in the  
springtime, when the snows

430

00:26:28,290 --> 00:26:31,950

melt, these small  
rivulets become

431

00:26:31,950 --> 00:26:34,560

mighty rivers, and for about--

432

00:26:34,560 --> 00:26:37,050

there is a window  
of opportunity that

433

00:26:37,050 --> 00:26:40,000

lasts no more than two weeks.

434

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:45,360  
During that time, all that water  
has to be pushed into the water

435  
00:26:45,360 --> 00:26:50,460  
and floated downstream  
to the Northern Dvina.

436  
00:26:50,460 --> 00:26:54,360  
Well, there was an  
immense amount of wood,

437  
00:26:54,360 --> 00:26:57,960  
and the river, even  
though it swelled,

438  
00:26:57,960 --> 00:27:03,270  
it was still a fairly small  
river, so tremendous--

439  
00:27:03,270 --> 00:27:08,100

440  
00:27:08,100 --> 00:27:10,770  
what's the English  
word for that word?

441  
00:27:10,770 --> 00:27:11,500  
Logjams?

442  
00:27:11,500 --> 00:27:14,490  
Logjams, exactly.

443  
00:27:14,490 --> 00:27:18,720  
Tremendous logjams would  
form, and in this country,

444  
00:27:18,720 --> 00:27:23,250  
as I know from movies, what you  
do is, when there is a logjam,

445  
00:27:23,250 --> 00:27:26,130  
you dynamite it.

446  
00:27:26,130 --> 00:27:27,760

There was no question of that.

447

00:27:27,760 --> 00:27:29,260

First of all, there  
was no dynamite.

448

00:27:29,260 --> 00:27:31,080

Secondly, anything  
that would injure

449

00:27:31,080 --> 00:27:34,140

a piece of wood, which  
was valuable property,

450

00:27:34,140 --> 00:27:36,360

would be considered sabotage.

451

00:27:36,360 --> 00:27:40,230

So we were issued long  
sticks, which sort of looked

452

00:27:40,230 --> 00:27:43,080

like harpoons in a  
sense, and we were

453

00:27:43,080 --> 00:27:48,030

supposed to jump  
onto those logjams

454

00:27:48,030 --> 00:27:53,010

and push, manually, the  
logs away until, eventually,

455

00:27:53,010 --> 00:27:57,670

the logjam became free and  
everything floated away.

456

00:27:57,670 --> 00:28:02,130

But you were supposed to sense  
when this moment was coming

457

00:28:02,130 --> 00:28:07,380

and jump off from log to  
log until you came to shore.

458

00:28:07,380 --> 00:28:11,170  
This was a fairly  
tricky operation.

459  
00:28:11,170 --> 00:28:18,370  
Of course, all the time you were  
drenched completely in water.

460  
00:28:18,370 --> 00:28:20,400  
But in the woods, we were--

461  
00:28:20,400 --> 00:28:23,550

462  
00:28:23,550 --> 00:28:30,510  
cutting itself began with  
cold weather, which means

463  
00:28:30,510 --> 00:28:34,140  
mid-October or even earlier.

464  
00:28:34,140 --> 00:28:39,060  
Later on snow fell, and the more  
snow the better because it's

465  
00:28:39,060 --> 00:28:40,390  
easier to move around.

466  
00:28:40,390 --> 00:28:43,770  
It's easier to move  
the wood around.

467  
00:28:43,770 --> 00:28:48,360  
So we would start from the  
barracks in our brigades.

468  
00:28:48,360 --> 00:28:50,160  
There were five  
men in my brigade.

469  
00:28:50,160 --> 00:28:52,815

470  
00:28:52,815 --> 00:28:59,010  
The senior wood

cutter in the brigade

471  
00:28:59,010 --> 00:29:02,520  
was an engineer from a  
small town in Poland,

472  
00:29:02,520 --> 00:29:08,640  
and we would march at--

473  
00:29:08,640 --> 00:29:11,850  
when it was still dark, we  
would get out of the barracks.

474  
00:29:11,850 --> 00:29:14,280  
By the time we reach  
the place where

475  
00:29:14,280 --> 00:29:16,890  
we were supposed  
to cut our trees,

476  
00:29:16,890 --> 00:29:21,360  
it was just slowly  
getting light so

477  
00:29:21,360 --> 00:29:25,770  
that the sunrise we would always  
meet at the place of work.

478  
00:29:25,770 --> 00:29:29,700  
We would leave just  
before it would get dark,

479  
00:29:29,700 --> 00:29:35,580  
and the trip back was  
basically in darkness.

480  
00:29:35,580 --> 00:29:39,030  
We would come home, that is,  
to the barracks, to the camp,

481  
00:29:39,030 --> 00:29:41,250  
when it was totally dark.

482  
00:29:41,250 --> 00:29:44,750

What was life like  
in the barracks?

483

00:29:44,750 --> 00:31:11,000