INTERVIEW WITH EVA ROITMAN

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TRANSCENDING TRAUMA PROJECT
Council for Relationships
4025 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

DEDICATION

To Rita, who when she came brought me more happiness than I ever thought possible, who gave my life a purpose, and most of all made me feel that I'm not alone anymore. Love you, honey.

To Ray, who encouraged me to tell my story. Thanks for coming into the family, and mostly bringing me peace of mind where Rita is concerned. Bless you for that.

To my darling sunshine, for whom I did this. My hope and prayer is that you never will have to experience a war like that. It is up to your mom and dad when you will read it. My guess is you will have to be somewhat grown up, and I won't be here anymore. I suppose some war stories are worse. But that was, and still is, my nightmare.

My feelings now, I would do it all over again in a second, just to have the three of you. Be happy, my angel face. My love will always be with you. Nana "E."

Thank you, Jennie. Thank you. If it wouldn't be for you, I wouldn't have told it to nobody else. It's thanks to you and to Ray. But mostly to you, because I trusted you. And you bring out the best in a human being.

INTERVIEW WITH EVA ROITMAN

INTERVIEWER: This is an interview with a survivor. It's March 6th, 1996.

I wonder if you could identify yourself: your name, your age, your date of birth, and where you were born, please?

EVA ROITMAN: My name is Eva Roitman. I was born in Poland, November 1, 1924. I'm 71 years old.

INT: Are you married right now?

EVA: Separated.

INT: And you live in Philadelphia, or Upper Darby?

EVA: In Upper Darby, it's a part of Philadelphia.

INT: Do you have any children?

EVA: Yes, one daughter.

INT: Could you tell us a little bit about her? Is she married, what was her education?

EVA: She's married. She has a master's degree in social work, and she works. She has a happy marriage.

INT: And a grandchild?

EVA: She has one daughter, which is my only granddaughter.

INT: And how old is your daughter?

EVA: (Pause) I have to think about it. She will be 47 July the 11th.

INT: Did you tell me the name of your town that you were born?

EVA: Wlodzimierz. You want me to write it down?

INT: Please spell it. (Pause) Okay, so how do you spell it? It's W-l-o-d-z-i-m-i-e-r-z.

EVA: Yes.

INT: Poland. And that was near what large town?

EVA: It was on the east side of Poland. If you can call it a state, it was the state, and the state capital was Luck.

INT: Any other big towns?

EVA: Kowel. K-o-w-e-l.

INT: How big a town was it?

EVA: We had 39,000 right before the war.

INT: How would you identify yourself as far as religion? You're Jewish.

EVA: Yes.

INT: And do you belong to any synagogue or any organizations?

EVA: No, I don't.

INT: How about Holocaust organizations, survivor organizations?

EVA: I don't.

INT: Volunteer activities, anything like that?

EVA: No.

INT: Okay. And you've been married for how many years?

EVA: 44.

INT: And separated for how many?

EVA: Three.

INT: Three, okay. And what did you do? Did you work during your married life, and what did you do?

EVA: I worked, for five years I worked outside of the home. And after that I didn't work for a number of years until we bought a business of our own. And I worked with my husband.

INT: What kind of business was that?

EVA: Cleaning store.

INT: And you lived in New York?

EVA: Yes, Brooklyn, New York.

INT: Okay. How would you describe your economic level? Your socio-economic level?

EVA: When?

INT: Right now. Now. Today.

EVA: I'm on public assistance, if that says it all.

INT: Okay. So it's a struggle. It's a little bit of a struggle.

EVA: Yes, it is.

INT: Okay. I'd like to go back to when you were born, and if you could describe the people in your family. Who was in your family, their names, sisters and brothers, where you were in the birth order, and what your parents did for a living. A little bit about your family.

EVA: As far as I can remember, I remember being about four years old. My memories go about four or five years old, before I ever started school. My mother was a housewife. My father was a bookkeeper, but he, beside that, he didn't do any bookkeeping for nobody. As far as I remember he always had with a partner, or with the two of them, I think, a grain store. They would buy the grain from the farmers, and then some wholesaler would buy it from them, and they would make money in the process of buying from the farmer, selling to the [wholesaler]. And the wholesalers would turn the grain into flour.

INT: And he had a partner, your father, or that was his own business?

EVA: No, he had two partners.

INT: What were your parents' names?

EVA: My father's name was Elkuna (spells it). My mother's name was, in Jewish it was Rykla (spells it). Supposedly my mother had four children after me. I was the oldest. I only remember the last one. I think I was about four or five when she was born. I remember a little blonde girl, blue-eyed. And she was a baby. I was told later that she passed away when she was two years old. They called that in the olden days the "English sickness," but what it was was polio. That's the way I understand it. And there was nothing to heal her with. So I was left alone again.

INT: Why do you say "supposedly" your mother had four before that?

EVA: Because I was told that she had all together five children. I mean, I cannot say it, that's what I spoke to my mother about, because my mother was killed when I was sixteen or seventeen, and not with me, she was in a hospital in another town completely. So I wasn't grown up enough to talk to my mother about things like that. But from what I pieced together from my mother talking to someone, from family members, I understand that one was born dead, one was born much, much premature and passed away, and I don't know what happened with the other, the third one. The fourth one I remember was that little girl.

INT: And how old was she when she died, do you know?

EVA: About two.

INT: Do you know what her name was?

EVA: (pause) I can't remember.

INT: So you were raised as an only child. You **were** an only child.

EVA: Yes, an only child. From when I remember already clearly, my past, by playing with the baby a little bit, and then all of a sudden Grandma took me away and I came back home after being a month with Grandma, the baby wasn't there. And I asked Mother where the baby was, and she said the baby went to heaven.

And from then on my memory gets clearer. The clearest is when I was about, I would say, five going on six, and talking about going to school and this and that.

INT: Can you describe, do you remember your house, what it looked like, what kind of a home you lived in?

EVA: To compare to other people, we had a nice, we didn't have our own house. We had a rented house. It was one big room with a kitchen. It was to those standards, those days, in a small town in Poland, it was...an above average house, because the oven was not made of clay, it was made of tiles. And we didn't sleep on straw mattresses; we had spring mattresses, like we have these days. So it seems to me it was, I would say we were middle class.

INT: Do you remember it being a struggle to put food on the table?

EVA: No, never, never, never, never. Every Passover I would get a pair of, being that I was growing, my foot was growing, I would get a pair of new -- I liked black leather -- black leather pumps. And every winter I would get a pair of new laced up good quality. They were the best shoe that was, was a Czech firm called Bata. They still exist. And they made good quality ski shoes. So I would get a good pair of boots every winter.

INT: So you had clothes, and you had food, and a comfortable home.

EVA: As a matter of fact, when I started to go to school, I would always get a piece of challah or a white roll or something, or a bagel, and I would always trade it for a piece of black bread plain with nothing, because Mother wouldn't let me eat [it]. I couldn't get a glass of tea. In those days you drank the tea in glasses. I just, because I was skinny like a rail always, or they were afraid I shouldn't get ill. In those days if you weren't about ten, fifteen pounds overweight, you were considered that you can get TB. And that's the only illness that people were worried about, nothing else. Because things like polio happened very seldom.

I lived in that town till I was thirteen -- twelve, actually. Then Grandma took me away because Father was very ill already. And I heard of one man dying of cancer and one man having a heart attack. Maybe they died, and nobody knew why they died. That's true.

INT: But tuberculosis was the big fear.

EVA: The biggest fear was TB.

INT: Could you describe your parents, their personalities? You can start with your mother or your father, and just describe them, what they were like.

EVA: My mother was...never well, actually. Headaches. Whenever I remember Mom in those days when I have trouble remembering, being very, very young. My mother always wore something wrapped around her head with ice, or the cold water, actually. She would take, I suppose, a towel and dip it into cold water and put around her. She always had headaches.

INT: Migraines? Or you don't know.

EVA: I suppose it was migraine, because I seldom remember Mother not having those headaches. From what, after Mother was dead already, and I was grown up, and I talked to the members of the family, my grandma, and my mother's younger sister and stuff, from what I could piece together, is my mother was a healthy girl when she got married. But with kids, every time she got pregnant, a child was either born dead or died right after, and then she started to get those headaches. And I think when that last baby died, the one I remember, the two-year-old girl...By the way, I think the little girl's name was Sonia. I think it was. No, it wasn't. I remember the name now. It was Toba.

INT: Toba.

EVA: Toba. Which means in English, what do you call those birds that we have all over the yards? A dove. A dove or, you could call it a dove, or those birds that come to the window. People try to chase them away.

INT: Pigeons?

EVA: Pigeons. But it's more like a dove. We called her Tobale.

INT: So you think all that stress of losing all her children, she...

EVA: After the last child my mother had a nervous breakdown. Whether they didn't know what it is, but I remember already. They were still, at that time there was still a great-grandmother -- my mother's grandmother was alive. And she was in her sixties already, so she would come and stay with us, and she would cook and take care of me and take care of the house. Because Mother couldn't do it. And I remember only Mother and -- I call her Grandma, even though she was Great-Grandma. So I remember her name was Sura. So I remember hearing either Grandma Sura or Father, "Oh, please stop talking. You're talking nonsense." Most probably she started to get, her psyche changed. She started to talk things that made no sense, I suppose.

Then I don't know how long after that it took. I remember my grandmother -- my mother's mother, her name was Chasha -- she took my mother to a doctor in Warsaw. My mother's family were wealthy people. It was upper middle class.

INT: Tell me about them, your grandparents. Did they live nearby?

EVA: Then I'll leave off [the other story].

INT: That's okay. We'll catch up, we'll come back. Just tell me if they lived near you.

EVA: Ten kilometers from the city. This was my mainstay in life. Grandma's house. Because there was still two daughters and a boy. My mother was the oldest one of my grandma's children. And there was a boy, he was my youngest uncle; he was only four years older than me. And Grandma's house was what they called a two-sided house: a corridor in the middle, on one side there was a beautiful dining room, with beautiful furniture, and a small bedroom in the back. And every room had three, four windows at least. And the other side was every day dining table, and a kitchen, a big, big kitchen. And it was always full of people with jokes and laughter and singing. And Grandma's house had an attic with wigs and all kinds of clothes.

INT: It was a fun place to be.

EVA: I have a friend who's still alive. We were born next to each other. She lives here in New Jersey. So we would get up in that attic. And there were all kinds of preserves and wines and you name it. We ate and we dressed up, and it was filled, half of the attic was filled with hay. And it smelled like heaven! Nobody knew. I don't know if they do it in Poland now, or Europe. If people have allergies. But we slept in hay. I didn't want to sleep in a bed when I was at Grandma's, just in the attic.

INT: So that was a good place for you to go.

EVA: And my grandma had a lot of land. She had a dairy. She provided half of that town had kosher butter and kosher cheese, and kosher...sour cream. My grandma went every Tuesday, every Thursday to bring to town the kosher dairy stuff. And there was butter and there was sour cream, and sweet sour cream, and sour sour cream, and G-d. And blueberries and raspberries and strawberries, wild strawberries. If anyone ever tasted them, there's no taste like that in this world. And there were forests around. Grandma lived in a village, but it wasn't a village like you see in "Fiddler on the Roof." It was a village with a station, with a train going through. I went to school when I was at Grandma's already by train to the station twelve minutes with the train.

INT: What was the name of your grandparents' town?

EVA Really like, like cattle really like, like cattle really like, like cattle**:** It wasn't a town, it was a village. Owadno (spells it). And there was a school, and there was a telephone, and some people had radios.

INT: So it was a more advanced place than where you were?

EVA: No, it wasn't. I was in a town, after all.

INT: Oh, so you were in a town.

EVA: My father worked always, and Mother was always ill.

INT: You were talking about how your grandmother, when I interrupted you, your grandmother had taken your mother to Warsaw to see a doctor.

EVA: Yeah. And then I don't know how long Grandma was there in Warsaw with Mother, but then she took my mother home with her to the farm, and they took me there, too. And Father was alone; he would come only weekends. And that was a summer, I think. And after the summer Mother was all right. Whatever they did to her, maybe she took medication, I don't know. I never saw her take any. But I suppose they kept it away from me, I shouldn't take it or whatever. And everything was all right.

INT: She seemed better after that.

EVA: Yeah, yeah. She was all right for about...I don't know how many years. Because when I was thirteen, Father died, so between that first nervous breakdown and me leaving Father and Mother and being taken to Granny's permanently, she had another nervous breakdown, and it was much worse than the first one.

INT: So you don't remember her, there must not be many times that you remember her not being either ill or...

EVA: No, she was...when Mother was well...well, first of all, we always had a maid in the house. I don't remember Mother saying, "I cannot do this." The maid did everything. We had a sleep-in maid.

INT: Jewish, non-Jewish?

EVA: No, non-Jewish. It was always a girl from the village where Grandma lived, a Ukrainian girl, and trustworthy, somebody that they knew. And we had two of them. We had one for a number of years; when she got married, then we got another one. Until Father got ill, we always had a maid in the house.

INT: So your mother didn't have many duties in the home because she had help.

EVA: I don't know, I suppose my father could afford a maid, because I remember the way Mother was dressed, and I remember my father having a fur coat. People didn't wear fur coats like they wear in these days, with the skin showing. It was a fur coat, but it was covered with material on top. So he had a beautiful fur coat with a Persian lamb collar. The fur inside looks to me like a sheep. There were different qualities. Both of them would dress very nicely, always.

INT: So what was your mother's personality when she was okay, when she wasn't ill?

EVA: I was always told by, not as much by my father. When Father was home, my father, I only know one man, he's dead already. The other one who comes close to my father is my son-in-law. My father could darn a pair of socks. He could weave. You make a hole in something, he would weave it and you couldn't tell it's there. And he could cook, he could do, because he became an orphan when he was two years old, and then he was in the army. He was just an accomplished man. The clock didn't work, my father fixed it. Whatever I needed. We wore uniforms in school, let's say. Every day I had to have white cuffs, a white collar put on the uniform, a clean one. Father always did it. Father shined my shoes, even though we had no sidewalks. We didn't live in the town itself. You could say it was a suburb. There was a small river, and across the bridge there was a suburb, and we lived in that suburb.

I remember already, before I started school they made a cobblestone road. Before that there was no road, even. Just a dirt road. They made it, I mean, there were no cars, no buses. Just wagons with horses. So they made the cobblestone road all the way, it was always up to, in the town it was up to the bridge, and then they made it further up and it reached us.

INT: You said there were about 39,000 people in your town before the war. How many would you say were Jews out of that?

EVA: 18,000. 17,000 or 18,000 Jews. It was one of those towns.

INT: About half and half.

EVA: Yeah.

INT: Did all the Jews live in one section, or you mixed? Was the neighborhood where you lived mixed?

EVA: The towns in Europe are built differently than the towns on this side of the ocean. In Europe the rich people lived in the middle of the town. Whether it was Warsaw or Wlodzimierz, it didn't matter. The poor people lived outside of town, because the middle of the town had the theaters, the movie houses, the cafes, the restaurants, and electricity. Where we lived, across the river, there was no electricity. We had a kerosene lamp. Beautiful kerosene lamps, but it was a kerosene lamp. That's the reason, I suppose, we didn't have a radio.

INT: But you lived mixed in with Jews and non-Jews. It just depended on the money situation?

EVA: Yes. There was a very small section in the town where the biggest, there were a lot of synagogues in the town. I mean, with so many thousands of Jews you needed a lot of synagogues. Besides synagogues there were a lot of small, I see them here, and I don't know. They are called synagogues. At home they were called a shtiebel. A shtiebel was just the rabbi lives there upstairs, or he lives in the back and in the front he has a room or two and that's the shul. So people shouldn't have, because you're not supposed to ride on a Shabbas, so within walking distance, if you were too far from the bigger synagogues. There was one main synagogue, and around that synagogue, I seldom went there. I went there if my father went shopping for Passover, I remember. So there was one big store -- I don't know if there were any others, because I was too small to be interested in that -- that dealt in imported foods. So Father would buy, we had neighbors, Jewish ones. They would buy the cheap Polish oil. When they would fry something on Passover, it would smell so that you couldn't go into their house. But my father would go and buy imported olive oil, and imported tea. I mean, everything was imported, but there were better qualities. Father always bought one that was in a tin can, a **beautifully** made tin can, Chinese tea or whatever. One particular tea he used to get was Russian tea, because when my father was born it was Russia there. Poland only came into being in 1920, and my father was born in the other century, the end of the century. And he went through the army there, and he liked Russian tea, so he would buy it. I don't know if it grew in Russia.

INT: Let me just get back to your mother for a minute. If you could describe her in a few adjectives, what she was like when she wasn't ill, how would you describe her? Was she affectionate, was she happy, was she...?

EVA: In relation to me, I never remember having a talk with my mother. Mother should say, "Don't do this," or "Don't do that," or, "We're going now to visit some people. Don't pick your nose," or, "Don't whatever." Father told me all those things. Mother was considered always not ill, but an unwell person, and I always was told not to bother

Mother. And if Mommy has a headache, don't bring nobody home. I don't ever remember having friends in my house to play with, even in the winter. And thanks to the fact that I had a father like I had, I was always entertained. I mean, we had no other entertainment. We entertained ourselves. The snow was always up to half windows. It's considered a little bit, not only east, but a little bit the northern part of Poland, so a lot of snow. Very cold winters. You could say like here in Montreal, that's what our winters were. And Father taught me to play cards, and he began to teach me how to play chess. He was good at a lot of things. He taught me how to take a piece of paper, a sheet of paper, a big sheet of paper, like crepe paper, and he would cut out something, you could hang it on the, it would look like a lace curtain. You could hang it on the window.

INT: He was very talented.

EVA: Very. Very talented. I don't know how much education he had, but I suppose if he didn't have much education, he got more in the army, because I remember Dad had -- this is one of my regrets. I had a picture of Dad with some colleagues of his. He was, I suppose, in his twenties. He was five years in the army. He grew to the rank of a minor officer, whatever the first rank was, and he's standing there, with what do you call those things that we have now in the parks, a carriage with a horse. But that was the only conveyance you had, to go from one place to the other. You went, and you got it. They were all over town. You got a carriage, so they were standing, one of them sitting further, and another friend was standing on the side, with a uniform.

INT: Where was your father born?

EVA: Father was born in a small town near Kowel; Kowel was about 20, 25 kilometers from our town.

INT: And what happened to his parents, do you know? He was an orphan at two, you said.

EVA: My father was left, Grandma simply baked bread, that's what I was told by my father. And the bread got cold. European breads were very round and very big. Like as big as the oven was, there would be about six breads only in them. So you held the bread this way (against your body) you cut it with a knife. You kind of stood the bread up and held it towards you the knife, always towards you. And she cut her finger and for some reason she developed an infection, and there was nothing to cure that infection in those days. They tried all kinds of things, and it spread to her blood and she died when he was two years old. He was left without a mother. And I was named after her.

INT: What was her name?

EVA: I have a Hebrew name: Yocheved. Someone told me and I forgot. Am I who, Moses' mother? Abraham didn't have a mother. Moses' mother was named Yocheved, I think.

INT: Yeah. I think that's who it was.

EVA: When my father was born, I don't know if there was a Yocheved. I think someone told me. Something goes through my head that someone told me that there were so many, there weren't many people dead, and there was nobody, so they named Grandma after Moses' mother, and I'm named after her.

INT: And what happened to his father?

EVA: His father died when the Black Death, was it the First World War? Before, or in the First World War, there is an English name for it, I forgot what the name is. They called it Black Death. A lot of people died in the United States, too, those days from that. There was simply no...he died of that. So Father must have been already about a teenager, I suppose.

INT: Okay. So he lost his mother when he was two, but not his father.

EVA: Yeah. And Grandpa never remarried, and I suppose he was better off for it.

INT: Did your father have brothers and sisters?

EVA: Yes. I don't know how many. As far as I remember, at my time, the way I remember, he had only one brother who lived in the adjoining state to us. The state I lived in was called Wolyn.

INT: How do you spell that?

EVA: (Spells it). Well, of course, the "n" had a little thing on the top, but for English you don't need it. And his brother, that was his younger brother, was named Pesach. He was living in the state called Polesie. (spells it) So I don't remember ever seeing him. He had a wife and a few kids. I don't think he was doing as good as Father financially. Father would go from time to time to see his brother.

INT: It sounds like from what you said that...

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

INT: It sounds from what you said that you got a lot from your father that your mother was unable to give you.

EVA: I got everything from my father, beside love. Love, attention, advice. I think I inherited his head for school, too. Because I don't know if he ever went to Hebrew schools, being an orphan, and I think there were more kids than just him and his brother. But for about two years my mother's youngest brother, that uncle who was four years

older than me, lived with us, because Grandma wanted him to go to Hebrew school. And he wouldn't go. She placed him here, she placed him there, with private people. He wouldn't. So she came one day and said to my father, "You're the only one who can do something with him. He loves you." So she brought him to us. He stayed with us I think one year, or a little more. He was in fifth grade, I remember. I just started school, and he was already in fifth grade, in a Hebrew school. That was a school that only rich kids could go. You have to pay there, an awful lot of money. And there were very few rich Jews in Poland. So most probably Grandma could afford it. And even my father helped him in Hebrew make his homework.

INT: So your father had some education in Hebrew, he must have.

EVA: He was not only, he wasn't religious, but he could talk about religion, what's in the Tanach, or whatever you call the other Jewish books. He could keep up with anybody.

INT: What about your mother? Was she from a religious family at all?

EVA: They kept, Grandma kept a kosher home. My grandfather wore always a black suit with a labsedeckel. Prayed every day in the morning, went to shul every Shabbas. Couldn't go every day, because he had to walk three kilometers, and there was no shul. You had to go to a bigger village, three kilometers from us, and he went every Shabbas. And wore a little Jewish hat, and had a beard. Since he got married, I think, he never shaved. I always remember Grandpa with a beard. **Always**. The only time I saw Grandpa and realized that Grandpa isn't very old is when Hitler came. And there was no way for us. We still had a little bit of -- what do you call it -- land left. Not taken away from us. And we had some grain. So you couldn't go to town like every Ukrainian or Pole can do it. So we had to go. There was a Jewish family in another village three kilometers from us, and he had one of those hand mills. It was like a stone in the bottom, and a stone in the top, and the stone on the top was attached to something that was in the ceiling there. Put a hole through the ceiling and you kind of moved that. It was a pole. You moved the top stone over the bottom, and you just got coarse flour, dark flour, but who cared as long as you had to eat in the war? And seems to me that in our village, nobody ever touched Grandpa, even in Hitler's time. Nobody ever said nothing to him, nobody bothered him. Because they knew him, they grew up with him. But he most probably went to that other village, and one day I remember, me and Grandma were sitting in that every day dining room. And Grandpa walked in, I didn't know who it is. Absolutely. Because as far as I, I mean, counting, when Grandpa died he was only about 60, 62. And that was, he must have been just close to 60. But a man walked in and Grandma was probably reminded what he looked like before she got married. And she said, "What did you do? If I would have a bad heart, I would get a heart attack! How did you dare do it?" And he said, "I cannot walk around anywhere except around here where we live, because they throw stones at me, and they pull my beard, and I'm afraid. And I just had to do it."

INT: He shaved it off.

EVA: He shaved off his beard for the first time. And I realized that Grandpa, he looked to me so young, like he was 40 years old, because Grandpa was old always, with a beard.

INT: With a white beard? He had a white beard?

EVA: Well, I suppose it was salt and pepper when I was small, but when I started to look at him when I was already eight, ten, whatever I remember, so it was white.

INT: So tell me about your father. Talk about your father a little bit.

EVA: I could talk volumes about my father. He was a very good husband. Like my son-in-law. The family was everything to him. I don't remember him ever saying something, even when I was older. I left my father, I was with my father till I was eleven, or close to eleven. Because he was very ill, and Grandma took me away because it was an infectious disease. But I never remember him talking even with neighbors, or joking around with his partners, he should say, "Oh, isn't she pretty, isn't she nice?" But regretfully, my mother looked at other men. This is the first time I'm mentioning it. I shouldn't maybe, because she's dead. And she died a horrible death. But I just can't understand why anyone would have a handsome, much more educated [man] than her husband, who gave her a very good family life and a comfortable living, to look at other men. And flirt. And I was too small, I don't know, but somehow I have the feeling that there was more than flirting on Mother's side.

INT: How do you know this?

EVA: By her behavior with neighbors.

INT: You observed it as a kid? You could see it? And even as a child you recognized what she was doing?

EVA: I didn't know then what it meant.

INT: But did it make you uncomfortable?

EVA: Those side glances and the shake of her head or stuff like that. But when I grew older I realized, I mean, I know what it meant.

INT: Did it make you uncomfortable at the time, can you remember?

EVA: Very. Especially with one of our neighbors. The neighbor was alive after the war. They told me that he's in New York. I never bothered to look for him, find him, I never wanted to see him. Because if I would see him I would tell him that he's a bastard.

INT: Do you think she was...

EVA: That he was. I don't know. He had a very nice wife, too, and had a good life. He was nobody. He married...he was a little bit taller than my father. He wasn't good-looking. And to compare to my father he was a nobody. He couldn't...I don't know if he could even daven decently. He was one of those could sign his name. I know the business that my father had, Father kept the books. So he must have known how to do it. Then when I got older I learned that before he became, got that business with two of his friends, he did bookkeeping.

INT: So it doesn't sound like they were happily married. How would you describe their marriage?

EVA: Never in my life for all the eleven years I was with them every day together, with my parents, did I hear Father belittling Mother or telling her, "Why did you flirt with this or that?" Never, ever, ever, ever. Maybe he knew and didn't want to say. Maybe because my mother was, like I said before, always considered she is not a well person. And the doctors kept on saying, Grandma said it, that she has to be in a house. Mother was a lot with Grandma. I remember being a lot, Great-Grandma would come keep house for me, for Father, because there it was a happy house, with singing, with joking, with pushing, with crawling on top. There were trees, cherry trees, plum trees, apple trees. Crawl up on a big, we had, Grandma had one very big, tall, twice as the house pear tree. You could sit there read a book for a day, nobody would see you. And so the doctor suggested that Mother should never be left alone. She should sit and think. I don't know, I suppose there were psychiatrists. If there was one in that town. I know there were, as far as I know, there were two dentists. There was one internist, a doctor for everybody. There was one pediatrician. And I was one of the lucky kids that had a pediatrician. Other kids, those that couldn't afford to take the kid to a pediatrician. The kids were never taken to a doctor. When I cut my finger, my father took me to the doctor. And he was so good, I loved that doctor. And there was one, speaking of the TB business in those days, there was one specialist, lung specialist.

INT: So you don't think there was a psychiatrist in the town.

EVA: I don't know. Maybe there was. Because maybe that's why Grandma took...I remember that first of all I don't remember if it was my father or my grandma, when Mother had the first breakdown, she was taken to that doctor that treated everybody, Dr. Shechter. And after that, maybe he suggested.

INT: What do you remember of that nervous breakdown? How did she behave?

EVA: She got up one day, in the morning. Even if we had a maid, Mother cooked. She wasn't a big cook. Later on when I was at Grandma's steady, and I realized what good cooking is, Mother wasn't a good cook. She could cook a chicken soup and stew some meat and make some pirogen, I suppose. You had to learn to make your own noodles. There was no Manischewitz you went out and bought it. And Mother couldn't bake, just a few kiechlach, I think. I remember Mother once, somebody was getting married. Our landlord's daughter -- we lived in a house rented from a man -- was getting married, and

Mother said she will make a cake. And she attempted to make a layer cake. And the darn thing looked like a pound cake. The whole cake, all the layers fell down together. So mother put it in a suitcase and put it under the bed. (laughter)

But anyway, one day Mother got up, and the old-fashioned cooking stoves didn't have four places to cook. The whole stove was one big piece of iron. You could put five pots, you could put six pots. I don't know how many pots, about four, five, she filled up with water and put it on. Father was already out, because the farmers used to, Father got up early, about six, and always made a cup of tea, or a cup of cocoa, and put it by Mother's, on the bed table, on the table between their two beds. The beds were not together. Like in the olden days, the beds were separate. And when Mother wakes up she should have something to drink already. That's the kind of a husband my father was. That's the way Ray [son-in-law] is. Ray, when Rita doesn't feel good, he will not bring her up a Tylenol, but a piece of bread she should eat before the Tylenol, because you don't take medicine on an empty stomach. That's why I admire Ray so much, and I appreciate him that he came into the family. (crying)

INT: He's a very good man.

EVA: (Pause) Even I think my father was too intelligent, too smart not to see that his wife was a big flirt. I will not, I mean, I don't know, maybe even more than a flirt. But first of all, there were no divorces these days. I don't know anybody before the war that was divorced. I didn't know anybody. There was a child to consider. What would he do with me without a mother? And secondly, she wasn't well. So he didn't want to rock the boat, because he will have a completely broken woman on his hands.

INT: So he put up with it.

EVA: That's my interpretation, because my father was a very intelligent man. So I don't see how my mother could have gotten by with anything without my father knowing.

INT: Was your mother intelligent?

EVA: I can't say, because like I said, I never had any talks with my mother.

INT: What do you mean by that? Does that mean that you two never spoke?

EVA: No, we did. Like when we had the baby that I remember, Mother said, "Where were you? I called you." You didn't go and call somebody. There were no telephones. Next door neighbor and the second neighbor, "Did you see my daughter?" So they said, no, so that was it. You had to wait. But nobody was afraid to let a child go away because nobody stole children; nobody did nothing to children. I was just told one thing by my parents: you're not to go on that cobblestone road, because a kid got killed. Some farmers would just whiz by on that wagon. There were no cars to kill, but wagons killed.

INT: So she would tell you things like, "Where were you?"

EVA: "Where were you?" I remember once she reprimanded me. That I remember clearly. It was very close, about half a year before the baby died. And she went looking for me. So she found me in a house, there was one of our neighbors, he was a cobbler. A cobbler, I think, makes shoes, and he was only repairing shoes. It was a very poor shoe repair business. He lived in one room, and in the kitchen, he had a corner, and he fixed shoes. It must have been a very lousy establishment, because my father never went there to fix. My father had good quality shoes always, and leather gloves and stuff like that. And the neighbor used to say, "Your shoes are as soft as your gloves." And my father said, "Well, why not?" So it must have been just for plain farmers to fix a pair of shoes.

And he had kids, I envied them always, that when their mother would cook a big pot, whether it was noodles with milk, or potatoes -- meat was in very little supply for the poor people. And she would put the whole darn pot into a big dish, and put it, not on the table, because the table was in the room for guests. But on a big, there was a stool, a long one. A long stool for sitting and for eating. Everybody would sit on the floor and get a spoon. Everybody had his spoon, it was marked. And you took your spoon, and everybody ate from the same big dish there. And I had to come home and have a plate and Father had a plate, and Mother, and I liked...

INT: You liked it the other way? (laughs)

EVA: And she had a baby, the youngest one was born about the same time, I suppose, that my little sister was born. My mother had a real, what do you call those cradles? A real wooden, beautiful cradle that you rocked. But you had to stand near it, rock it, or sit and rock with your foot on the bottom there or whatever. And it wasn't much rocking. The table wouldn't go like that. The poor people had, it was a woven basket, oval-shaped, a big woven basket, as big as a...as long as a table.

INT: Laundry basket?

EVA: No, it wasn't a round, it was oval and very long. The baby slept in it till it was about two years old, I think, every baby. As long as the mother nursed it, and some mothers nursed their children until they were two, because they didn't have anything to give it to eat, till the baby had teeth, she nursed it. And to that basket would be attached, the basket would hang on the ceiling would be a very strong hook, and the basket had four strong ropes attached to that hook there, and here it would be attached a piece of rope, anything, and you would just pull it. You could play and this and that. And I loved to pull. Whenever I came, she said, "Oh, here comes my helper." She had two girls. One was my age, one was two years younger. The older one was Veronica, the younger one, I forgot her name. And they never wanted to rock the baby, because I suppose they rocked a lot of babies.

INT: Yeah, they were sick of it already.

EVA: And I wanted to just sit there and rock that baby. So once Mother came and saw me rocking that baby. She looked for me till she came to that house. And then she said, "How come you rock?" So I said to Mother, "If you get a cradle like they have, I will rock the baby." And Mother said, "We don't have cradles like that." But anyway, the baby died, and there was nobody to rock. (pause)

INT: But we were talking about your mother and how you would communicate with her. Did she ever give you any affection, or hugs or kisses?

EVA: I don't remember.

INT: You don't remember.

EVA: I don't remember. I remember my father, (pause) hugging me and kissing me, and of course every year when I, Father put me in that school in the city, that Hebrew school. You started in that Hebrew school. Before the war, I don't know now, you started school at seven. You went into first grade when you finished seven. And that was a private school, the Hebrew school. You started at six, and there was a kindergarten. So when you finished that kindergarten, you know the ABC's, you know this and that.

INT: In Hebrew.

EVA: Everything was in Hebrew. I don't remember, because I just went for half a year. To make the story short, to show you how people felt safe and secure, they let me, a six-year-old child, walk two kilometers to school every day, across a bridge, which a lot of people drowned in that river.

INT: By yourself? No friends to walk with?

EVA: No, because the other boy, my neighbor's boy -- there was that Jewish family, the neighbors -- their boy had an aunt in the city, so he stayed there. He came home for Shabbas. And I had to go. I mean, you couldn't walk on the cobblestones, because the wagons with the horses were there. You had to walk on the side. So I would walk out of the house. When I started that school my father bought me a pair of boots. Those regular boots up to my knees. Beautiful, beautiful boots. Black. And every day in the morning I would, like a soldier, I mean, you got them dirty, you just stepped out of the door, and they were full of mud, because you walked in the mud. But every night my father shined them again, and his shoes and everybody's shoes.

INT: Not your mother.

EVA: Mother never did very few...like I said, my father would sew on my collar and my cuffs. And I was put in that school and all of a sudden I remember I was put in that school the beginning of September, and it was already late fall. It must have been October. Maybe the beginning of November. I don't think so, because November we already had frost and snow. There was no frost yet. I came home from school and

Mother, I wouldn't say my mother didn't care for me. She would always, she called my father right away. Opened the window and screamed to him through the window, and he came in from work. And she said, "Look at her. She is all red, and her head is hot." And she said, "Honey, don't you feel good?" And I said, "I don't know. I want to go to sleep." And Father of course took the thermometer, took my temperature, not Mother. Took my temperature. And he said, "Well, put her to bed." And I don't know what they did these days. They put a plaster of, what do you call those seeds you make mustard from? Mustard seeds. Anyway, let's call them mustard seeds. They were ground and you made a plaster of them -- I don't know what you mixed them with -- and you put it here [on the chest] and that was supposed to help the temperature, and I don't know what else. I was put to bed. And my temperature, Father took it at night, I remember. He woke me up and he gave me some tea with lemon, a little bit, and took the temperature again, and the next day in the morning he took me to the doctor, because it was probably my temperature shot up, and to the pediatrician, and he said I had scarlet fever. And I was sick. I remember myself having the high temperature.

We had a rubber plant, a big one. Every house had plants. But when I lie in the bed, like here, and looked at the window, in front of the window was a rubber plant. And I remember as clearly as now. Because I was already, I suppose, six years old, so I remember it. I remember screaming at my father. "Why do you let the people hang their hats on the plant? They will ruin the plant." It seemed to me that the leaves looked like hats, and people are hanging their [hats]. You know, when you came into a house, everybody had a...

INT: Hat stand?

EVA: It was for hats and for coats.

INT: Coat rack.

EVA: Yeah, coat rack. A round one. Not on the wall, but a beautiful, we had a beautiful mahogany one. And I said, "Tell them to hang their..." I don't know how many days. And it was, you know what year it was? I wasn't six yet. I was born in '24, and that was in '29, so I was five. The market crashed the same year, I think, in '29. Father was talking to them, to his partners that, there was a little tiny Wall Street in every town where there was business. Every night after the business got closed up, Father went to that, there was a little street, a corner in the middle of the town, in the business section, and they got together, and they go to know whoever had a radio in the town, and they would decide what tomorrow's prices would be. So Father, every night he went there and came home. He knew for the next day what to pay the farmers for the grain.

So I was about five and a half. And I always heard that that was the coldest winter everybody remembered around me. And Father was heating, was putting so much coal and heating the house so much that I should have warm, that when we went to sleep, that oven was like in the middle it was just an oven for heating, not for cooking. That was separate in the kitchen. And in the middle was a beautiful, like a structure, a square

structure, and it went up to the ceiling, and there was, I suppose, some place where the smoke went out. And it was made of white tiles, and all of a sudden at night I heard a big boom, and Father said to my mother, "Don't do **nothing!**" He opened all the windows, and when I opened my eyes, our house was full of smoke, smelling terribly, like there was a fire, only there was no fire. The oven exploded. The tiles flew all over. And my father just said, "Leave everything here." He said to my mother, "Get dressed in something." And the neighbors heard it. And the old mother of that neighbor, his mother-in-law, came running through the snow. The snow was very deep. It was a very cold winter. And she came running, and she said, "What happened?" And Father said, "Our oven exploded, the one that heats the apartment." There was a name of it in Polish, but it wouldn't make no sense to anybody anyway. So my father wrapped me up in a, well, there were no blankets, there were feather beds. So he wrapped me in that feather bed, couldn't dress me in a minute, and she took us to her house and she gave us up her bedroom. She went to her daughter to sleep, and she gave us her bedroom, and they put me to bed, and then I stayed in her house.

And two doctors attended me every day, the pediatrician, and the other doctor that healed everybody else. The internist.

INT: Did that affect your heart, the scarlet fever?

EVA: No, I have, at the tip of my left lung, I mean nobody ever had x-rays. You were considered young as long as, they were only worried that I shouldn't get TB. After the war finished, that was only about, I would say, '46, '47, about two years after the war finished, I went to live with a, she was a teacher. She wasn't my teacher. Her husband was my mother's older brother's friend. And that teacher was a friend with my grandmother. It's from the same village that Grandmother lived. She was a teacher in that village. And her husband was the administrator of a big, big estate. It wasn't his estate, he was only the administrator. And I got her address, she lived in Danzig. I lived those days, that was in 1947 already. I lived with a friend of mine, another one that she was older three years than me. We went to school the same time. We were on the train every day together, but not the same school. And I learned that she, the time when I was hiding by Hitler, she got married, and she lived already on the Polish side, because half of Poland was taken away by Russia, so she was in Poland, and I wrote to her and she wrote me back, "Come to us." And I came to her, and I was living with them, and that was, when I was there, there was a very small pogrom in that town. Nobody knew that I am Jewish when I was with her. But that was before the pogrom was in Kielce. After that, I think, later on. And what they did is they didn't kill. First of all, the Polish underground got into the town, and they opened up the jail and let out all the...because mostly the people that were jailed were political prisoners. So they freed all the Polish people that were in jail. And the Jews that lived around the square, there was a tiny little square, it was a tiny town, maybe 10,000, 8,000. I don't know if they had 10,000. There were no sidewalks, only in the middle of the city. Maybe 5,000, 8,000 people. And I was there only over the winter, and late spring, or early summer. Actually, nobody got killed. No Jews got killed in that town, but they broke their windows, and everybody, all the Jews moved out of there. Well, I could have stayed there, but since I learned where that

teacher is, she was in Danzig, a big town, and I always wanted to go somewhere where it's bigger.

INT: Does this have something to do with your heart? We were talking about the scarlet fever.

EVA: Yes, yes. It's not my heart. [It's my lungs.]

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

EVA: She had seniority already, so she wasn't a teacher, those days, she was already about 45 I would say. She had a daughter fifteen, and a son twelve, and a little girl seven. Her husband of the big administration that he was administering, that big estate before the war, he worked in a wholesale fruit and stuff like this. Just worked like anybody. And she was working for the Board of Education. She was the one that brought in the money into the house. And she said, "Why don't you come to us?" I wrote to her. "What will you do there? From here a lot of people..." The border between Poland and Germany wasn't yet so secure. People were going over at night like they go here to Canada. If you want to you can walk over at night. If you know where there is nobody.

And I went to them, and I stayed there in Danzig with them for about a year and a half I would say. So when I came there, one day, I was there already about a half a year. She came home and she said, "Well," she said, "One of the hospitals," -- there was a teaching hospital, a medical school in Danzig -- she says, "They have just announced over the radio, I heard at work, that anybody who wants an x-ray can come." So she said "This coming Saturday the whole family is going." And she said to me, "You're going, too." She considered me like a, I couldn't go out, I had to be home at 9:00, and I was over 21. And we went, and after I had the X-ray, I don't know what prompted me to ask him how is it. We didn't get nothing to take home, you just asked and they told you. He said, "Well, there is a little mark on your left lung." And I thought to myself, "Well, here I go with TB." And I said, "Is it TB?" He said, "No, it looks like it's calcified. It might never amount to anything, but I would advise you to have every few years an x-ray." I never had any until I was going to Canada. We had to go to a doctor. I already had Rita. They said that it's the same.

INT: It's from the scarlet fever, you think?

EVA: I don't know. I don't know if it's from the scarlet fever, because my father at the end died of TB, so maybe I got it from him, and his brother died of TB. So I don't know whether it's from the scarlet fever. All I remember is I was left after, I had a high temperature for about a month. I survived. Kids died of scarlet fever like anything. I survived, I suppose, only because my father wouldn't give up on me, and two doctors came every day. I asked my father when I was older, "Why two doctors?" And he said, "Because one doctor might think, is that this or is that not, should I do this? Then every

day they had a consultation, 'What do you think would be the best for her?'" And at the end, the two doctors came for about two months to the house. When I was free of fever already for a number of weeks, I suppose the pediatrician said to my father, "It's enough now that I come myself." So he would come himself. And he said to my father, "Now listen." I remember having my head turned like that, and I couldn't turn. If I had to see there, I had to turn like that [moves whole body].

INT: Your neck was so stiff?

EVA: That was left over from the scarlet fever. And my father was devastated. Always talked to the doctor and talked to the doctor, and I remember at the end the doctor said, I don't know how long it was already into the sickness. He said, "It will be enough if I see her once a week already." And my father said, "What will become of her? She's such a smart girl, and she's the only child I have. What will become of that child with that neck?" And he said, "I have a suggestion to give you." He was doing it before, too, because the doctors told him. My father would literally put up the clock and it would ring every hour and he would get up and he would dip the, I don't know what it was, I suppose a white towel, a linen towel, into water, and then dip it into, wring it, dip it into alcohol, and wrap my neck. And on top of that, absorbent cotton, and on top of that something warm again, and every **hour, day and night** -- during the day Mother did it if Father wasn't in the house. If he was in the house, he did it. Every hour on the hour. And he said, "If you continue doing that till it's six months into the sickness, and it doesn't help, then give up, because that's the way she will be."

INT: For six months he did that?

EVA: Well, the illness was gone actually, already. And before the six months I started to move my head. So I have to thank my father for that, too. I wasn't allowed to eat anything, even chicken soup. I lived like a little baby. I wasn't allowed to have a little tea. I was allowed to have only water, warm water, not hot, and you know what laykach is? Sponge cake. You know, the thing you serve every simcha there has to be sponge cake. With just eggs and sugar and flour. And Rita still likes it for Passover, I bake a laykach always.

INT: You remember this?

EVA: Dip that, either challah, not at the beginning, not even challah, because challah was heavy, maybe. A little bit crumble up into this, and that was my food. And I didn't want to eat. I didn't want to eat.

INT: You remember all this?

EVA: I remember.

INT: You were in bed the whole time.

EVA: Nobody could come and play with me, even the boy from the next door Jewish family, because it was highly contagious. And I remember Father getting up every hour, waking me up and changing the compresses.

INT: He was really something, your father.

EVA: (Crying)

INT: And your mother would help also?

EVA: When my father passed away I was twelve, and my life ended. (Crying)

INT: You really loved your father.

EVA: I was very young, only twelve, but I knew that my life ended. I had to become the father to my mother. I had to become her husband and her...I had to take care of Mother. I knew it without anybody telling me. (pause, crying)

So that's how I have that, I don't know where it came from, but it never changed. Just two weeks ago when I went to my internist with that bronchial infection and she said to me, take an x-ray. I took an x-ray and she said, "Well, you have a little something on your left lung." I said, "Is it on the tip of the lung? Is it calcified?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Well, it's there already for I don't know, maybe seventy years." (laughs) So that's that.

INT: I wonder if you could talk a little bit about school, what your school was like, your friends.

EVA: School was a holiday to me. To make you understand how, I don't know why I don't remember names these days, and everything fails me. I can't believe it, because I had a mind sharp like a razor. I went to that Hebrew school for what? About three months, four months. I wasn't happy there. I came home, I cried a lot. And I heard my father saying to Mother, "The heck with it. She doesn't have to know Hebrew." Because they were laughing at me. They were only city kids. I was the only kid wearing boots, so do you think they called me Yocheved? They called me, "Boots." Because everybody came in little shoes, because they had sidewalks. And the sidewalks were, you got up in the morning, the sidewalks were cleaned.

INT: So they made fun of you.

EVA: They made fun of me. They all, even though it was kindergarten, but let's put it this way. It's only the rich kids that went to that school, that could afford to pay. And rich kids had parents who had time. Rich kids came from rich houses, and the parents were maybe a little more educated, and the father knew how to read and write, and he taught the child something. When they came to school, they already knew a few words of Hebrew, and they already knew at least to say "Shalom," and this and that. And they

laughed at my clothes, even though I wore very nice clothes. And they laughed mostly, I was devastated. I didn't want to wear those beautiful boots. They were made of calf leather. The kids that lived, the Ukrainian and Polish kids that lived in that suburb, where I lived with my parents, wore stiff leather boots, the cheap ones. Mine were calf's leather, but I cried, and Father said, "You can't go to school if you don't wear them, because you will be up to your knees in mud." And they called me "Boots." So I heard once or twice, I think, Father saying something, "I don't think I'll keep her in that school. Only this year, or maybe even before the year. She's not happy there, so the heck with it. She's not a boy, she doesn't have to know Hebrew."

We had a school from us like Rita's house and Linda's house.

INT: A block away.

EVA: It was just across the [street], it's like closer, maybe it's like Rita's and Jeanie lives now.

INT: A public school?

EVA: A public school. A wonderful one-room house. One-room school. One of those big room, two big rooms, actually. And in the middle there was a tiny little cubicle. That was the teacher's room; she would go in there. Because if it's nice we went outside. If it wasn't nice, and we had, here Elizabeth [granddaughter] doesn't have any periods between, any free [time]. We had a period 45 minutes, and then you had seven minutes, you go out of the classroom.

INT: Take a break.

EVA: And then you went to the bathroom. I mean, there was no plumbing, so that was an outhouse. But it was a very decent one. Up to the standards, you know?

INT: Let me understand. This is a public school with Jews and non-Jews going together?

EVA: I was the only Jewish kid there.

INT: You were the only Jew.

EVA: There were only two families of Jews, and we both kids of those families went to the city. So I remember Father saying. And then my winter went by with the scarlet fever. But I was thirsty for knowledge that small.

INT: You were seven? No, you were six.

EVA: Six. I was five, I could sign my name. Father brought in, money was mostly in coins. Even the denominations, a zloty was like a dollar here. A dollar was in a coin,

silver. Everything was in silver. Only the one penny was, I think a nickel, made of nickel, or copper. Five pennies were already made of something, but it wasn't copper. But the rest, there was ten pennies, and then there was fifty, there was a dollar. I mean, they had other names, but I'm just trying to give you to understand it. Everything was of silver. So Father rolled, made rolls, and I don't know, I suppose it went to a bank or whatever they did with it. So I learned to make rolls. Father smoked, so he rolled, he bought his own brands of tobacco, and he mixed them, and I would roll the cigarettes for him.

INT: Was he teaching you while you were sick?

EVA: Father read always two newspapers a day. I don't remember my mother ever holding a newspaper or a book in her hand.

INT: I was going to ask you that.

EVA: Mother, well, you see, women didn't do those things. Mother sometimes you would go into the neighbor, to the Jewish neighbor, and what they would do, you wouldn't buy turkeys, they were geese. You would buy for Passover a goose, or whatever. Or usually a small family like us, we bought only a goose for Passover, then we ate it the whole month. And where were you keeping? There was no refrigeration. So we ate it a week, and I don't know what Mother did with the rest of the meat. So you bought feathers from whoever bought katchkes, maybe Mother bought katchkes, I don't know. I mean, I just ate, I didn't do anything. There was a maid always. So the feathers were collected, and if you didn't have your own goose or duck feathers, you bought from the Ukrainians in the village. They had their own geese. So they sold the feathers, but you had to pluck them to make pillows. So you sat there. I mean, you know how you pluck the feathers, and in the middle there is a bone, so you threw it out. And the rest you kept. So I would help with that. I remember when they were doing this, this week was for plucking the feathers, so when you walked in, you had to walk slowly. You couldn't blow the wind with your mouth, you couldn't do nothing. Because if you did, everything flew!

Or they sang songs. They darned. The neighbors darned. My mother didn't darn. My mother gave away, even though she had a maid, the darning, my father later on, when we weren't that well off, a year or two before he died, he had to get out of that business, the doctor told him, because there was a lot of dust, and he started a little store with, a little tiny grocery in the house where we lived, just one corner of the big room. It was like school supplies, actually. Mostly school supplies, because we were by the school. So kids would come in and buy stuff.

So while he had that grain business, there was a lot of Jews that were very poor would come out and stand by those businesses if they were allowed. Our neighbor was such a bastard he never allowed nobody to do it, but my father was very good-hearted, and he allowed. There was a blind Jew, he was called Moshe the Blind. Blind Moshe. So Moshe the Blind one would stand there every day, and if a farmer had grain, and had

chickens to sell, or eggs to sell, eggs Moshe didn't buy, I think. But I know he always bought the chickens from the farmer's wife. And so he would buy the chicken from the farmer, take it to the city, sell it in the city, and make some profit. And that was his way of feeding his wife and three kids. And every Friday when Moshe was going home, Friday they have the business open half a day, my father, and when Moshe was going home, Mother baked challah, so she would have a big challah, and I don't know what else. There was always a big package, and she would give Moshe a package to take home. Maybe a piece of meat, who knows? I don't know. Because Thursday I went with Mother to the city to the butcher's, and she would buy meat for Shabbas.

INT: When you would go on these trips with your mother, what did you talk about? Did you talk about anything?

EVA: (Pause) I don't remember really what we talked about. I was a kid, and then I started to go...

INT: Did she tell you stories at night, bedtime stories? Did she...?

EVA: Father read me something from the newspaper, I suppose, if it was for a child. And Father played with me. I didn't like chess, but I liked the other one, what do you call the other one, it's similar to chess?

INT: Checkers?

EVA: Checkers I always played. And he let me beat him, and I was winning money, and he taught me cards. Nice games in cards to play.

INT: So what was school like? Did you like it? Did you enjoy it?

EVA: There was seldom anything that I didn't understand, but if I did have a problem, Father was the one I asked, and he would always tell me what to do.

INT: What kinds of things did you learn in school, do you remember what your subjects were?

EVA: The subjects? Well, you just learned...

INT: Everything was in Polish?

EVA: Polish. That was just Polish. That's where I first got the bug bit me with the Christian religion. The first year. And when I was Passover, after that scarlet fever, the winter went through, Passover was the first time the doctor gave my mother permission. But he said the chicken soup that we eat these days is water. My grandmother would die if she would taste it. Because it had to be, fat had to swim on top of it.

INT: Full of fat, right. We skim it off.

EVA: It had to be yellow. Mine is white! So he said, "You take the chicken soup, and you pour half chicken soup into the plate, and half boiling water, mix it. And put a little, I'm giving you permission. She's not allowed matzah." What is scarlet fever? Do you know what scarlet fever contains of? Your insides, the kishkes, are all full of...

INT: Pus?

EVA: No, like you break out with...

INT: Like a rash or something?

EVA: A rash. But it was, every little rash had a point with pus in it. And that was inside your kishkes. That's why they had, you needed penicillin, something. Scarlet fever disappeared with penicillin. And he said, "I'm giving you permission. You can keep in a corner a little piece of challah. Give her an ordinary plate, and take a few little pieces of dry challah and put it, pour the soup, and don't let her eat dry matzah, because you will make the child sick. Because her insides are so delicate." It was the first time, the soup was with water, I didn't know. But it tasted heavenly. Because the whole, about four, five months, I ate that laykach with water, with milk, a little bit. So that was the first time.

INT: But what did you learn in school?

EVA: And came summer and came vacation, I wasn't in any school. But Father, I counted the money with Father, and I knew already how to multiply to 100.

INT: Did you learn Polish history and did you learn...

EVA: Yeah, yeah. But anyway, my father went to that school. He took me by the hand one day when vacation was finished, when they were registering kids, and he went to that teacher. And he waited till she was finished with the other people, and then he went over to her. I was sitting. He told me to sit, and he was talking to her. And then she came over to me, she asked me how my name is. Of course I spoke a good Polish. Very few Jewish people spoke good Polish. Every Jew spoke Polish like Abe [her husband] speaks English. Very few.

INT: Did you speak Polish at home?

EVA: And she said to my father, my father most probably told her...No, Jewish. My father, with my mother when they didn't want I should understand what they talk, they spoke Russian. My father was after all brought up. He was in Russia, not in Poland. Only in 1920 when he was a thirty-year-old, something old man, he became Polish. So I remember she came over, and she asked my name, and I told her how old I am, I told her. And she said to my father, "Well, I'll tell you what. With all you told me, I think I'll have to give her an exam." So we started in classes, I don't know when she told me. "Bring her

in, half an hour before, and I'll give her a little bit." There was only reading, writing, and arithmetic. I mean, it was first grade. We were ready to go into first grade. So she gave me the exam, and she said, "You sit on this side of the room." And I said, "But this is not the first grade." She said, "No, you're going into second grade." I knew so much that I, the kids in first grade, especially you know, the farmers, the kid, one day it went, and then when you had to plant potatoes, it didn't go for a week. And you know, it's very few, only the richer farmers kept up. When I finished that four grades in that school, I was the only one that went to the city, nobody else.

INT: To the higher school in the city? Higher grades?

EVA: Yeah. I went to finish public school.

INT: I see. You were the only one that went.

EVA: The only one from that whole class.

INT: Where did the other kids go? Back to work with their families, or that was just it? They didn't get any more education?

EVA: They went to work on the farms. They went to work. The village where my Grandma, that was only a little suburb where I lived with my parents. The village where my Grandma lived, there were about, I would say, at least a thousand people in that village, with surrounding the village, then someone on the outskirts of the village. There were only about, beside me, there were only five or six of us that went to the city. The rest, I told you, there was that teacher that went to live in Danzig. She was the teacher, it was a four-grade school. All the neighbors, I knew a lot of kids, my grandma's neighbors. They all finished four grades and worked, and by sixteen got married. My grandma got married, she was fifteen.

INT: Let me just ask you. Could you describe yourself as a kid? What kind of a personality did you have when you were little? You know, before the war, and before your father died?

EVA: At what age?

INT: Before your father died. You were twelve when your father died?

EVA: I must have been twelve, because they cut my...

INT: They cut your dress? [sign of mourning]

EVA: Well, you have to be twelve. A girl has to be twelve.

INT: I guess so, yeah.

EVA: So I was twelve. He died in '36. The first inkling I had that Father is very ill, I know Father didn't feel good, he went to doctors and this and that, was taking medication. And then he said he's going away. We had the Carpathian Mountains, the south of Poland. And there were some, what do you call those places?

INT: Spas? Like the waters? You go take the waters.

EVA: Not spas, but hotels, not hotels. They were like...

INT: Sanitarium?

EVA: Sanitariums. That Father went away, one was called Krinica. Krinica actually comes from the word, what do you call that place where the river starts, that's the mouth of the river. But where the water comes out from the earth?

INT: Oh, like a geyser, or a spring.

EVA: A spring. So the word krenitza comes from a spring. So he went to that city. You have to have a lot of money to go there. He spend there a number of months. He came back and brought me, he brought me a little doll like those Russians have now, stacked dolls?

INT: Matryoshka dolls.

EVA: I was the only kid that had. And he brought Mother a string of beads. They were glass beads, but pink, beautiful beads, and all I rescued is from a neighbor. I have about, in my safety deposit box, I rescued about ten beads left. I have those beads.

INT: From the necklace your father bought your mother.

EVA: And after that Father seemed to be all right. And then in 1935, a big occurrence appeared: Pilsudski died, our beloved Marshal. He was beloved by all, because he was good to Jews. Jews had, really it was paradise for Jews in Poland, until '35. Pilsudski died. I didn't know anything about politics. I wasn't interested. But I remember my father talked to his neighbors and he said, "I wonder if our life will be the same, if we will have such a good life like we had till now?"

And then we kids, we had blue berets, and in front of the beret you had an eagle, but an eagle with a crown. An eagle with two wings spread like this. It's like you take an eagle, you cut it in half, when it stands like this, and a crown. And we had a little eagle there. That's the national bird in Poland. An eagle with a crown. And you wore a black armband. And I remember when the year finished, it was, we didn't wear it for a year. We wore it for a month, I think. And then I took it off, and I uncovered, the eagle was covered, too. I took this band with this, Mother gave me a piece of black silk, I covered it. And then I wanted to throw out, and Father said, "Well, this little piece you can throw out, but this, why don't you keep it? Who knows when you might need it?" And next

year I wore it for my father. He knew already that he was dying. That I had the first inkling. That was in spring. Next year, spring, my father was dead.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's March 12, 1996.

Mrs. Roitman, last time we were talking, we were talking about your childhood.

EVA: Where did we finish?

INT: We ended up, you were talking a little bit about when your father had died. But before we get to that, before we talk about that, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about your childhood, and one of those was, can you describe for me what kind of a kid you were? What your personality was when you were a little kid? Were you an outgoing kind of kid? Did you have a lot of friends? Were you more quiet and shy? How would you describe yourself?

EVA: No, I was, I would say, a regular kid. I was a regular girl. What I'm talking about is the ages from between five and twelve, the ages that I remember. At eleven, [between] five and eleven, that's when the doctor said that the disease is infectious, and I had to go to my grandmother, they took me away. So I was too small to have kids outside. And besides, you couldn't have kids far. There was no telephone. You had kids, your neighborhood kids were your friends. I had friends. I went to the school right next door to me, and I had friends going to school. And neighbors' kids.

INT: And you had non-Jewish friends?

EVA: Non-Jewish. Because the only Jewish friend was a boy next door. I played with him, I remember, when we were very small, when his grandma would still put him on the potty. But after that he went to the, he was kind of going to the Hebrew school that I went for a while, and he slept, he had an aunt in the city, so he slept there. And I stopped going after half a year there.

INT: Do you remember some of the things you liked to do when you were little? What kind of games you played?

EVA: I just wanted to sew. I did games. My father taught me to play cards, play checkers. The monetary system was, I had never seen paper money; it was mostly coins. So at the end of the day when he came in from the business he would roll it in rolls. And even when I was, I remember, six, seven years, I learned already to roll the rolls with money up for him. And I rolled his cigarettes. My father was entertaining me always. And I...I loved to sew. I loved to mostly embroider. I would steal a needle from my mother and steal some thread and crawl under the bed, nobody should see me, because the bedspread would cover me. I must have been small, because I fit sitting up there. And in the dark I would make cross-stitches, which is my favorite embroidery till this

day. Because all the girls, some of them, there were not many Polish families, mostly Ukrainians. And their main thing is cross-stitch embroidery, whether it's a blouse or a shirt for a man, or anything, cross-stitch. And I loved it from the moment...Finally, my mother once found me under the bed with a needle, and I don't remember whether she spanked me, but she must have talked to my father, and they decided that if you cannot beat them, join them. Mother gave me a big needle and gave me a little thimble, and Father went out. I wanted colored thread to make colors, to embroider in colors. So Father went out and bought me...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

EVA: ...dressmakers. I don't ever remember in my life till after the war, till, to be precise, till 1948, '49, that I went into a Woolworth and bought, I don't remember what it was, ready made. I didn't even know things like that existed. You had everything made by a dressmaker. Underwear, shirts, everything. So every dressmaker had one girl who wanted to be a dressmaker, and she started by, not embroidering, but sewing around the seams on the wrong side of the dress. There are seams, that they shouldn't ravel.

INT: Right. Unravel.

EVA: Unravel. And so the thread that she did it what was cheap, it came in skeins of about, I would say, 16, 18 inches, a thin skein, and it came in colors, and Father got me that thread and all kinds of colors, and I was in heaven, so I could sit endlessly and make up my own designs. Until this day.

INT: Where did this come from? Where did this idea come from?

EVA: I saw the Ukrainian girls do it. And I admired...

INT: Peasant blouses?

EVA: The Ukrainian girls for church on Sunday would put on a white blouse. Percale was the fabric that Ukrainians used a lot. Shirts, blouses. And when they would go to church, a skirt and a white percale blouse, and the color would be embroidered, and the sleeves would be embroidered, and I just loved it.

INT: So you wanted to do it.

EVA: Yes. And I cried my eyes out that every Ukrainian girl had a national costume. I don't know, do they call it national? Regional.

INT: For dances?

EVA: Well, not only for dances. When a girl was getting married, so the day of the wedding, she would wear the white dress that she got herself already. But before that you couldn't even let people know about the wedding with mail, because certain people lived so far that no mailmen would get there. They lived under a forest, here, there. So what she would do, the father would get the horse and the wagon ready, and she would ride every Sunday, about a month before the wedding, from one relative to the other, and the other villages and wherever it is they lived, and she would invite them to the wedding. So she would wear her national costume. It's a very colorful [costume]. Mostly it would be of a red skirt, a very full red skirt. The bottom would be sewn with colored ribbons all around it. The blouse would be a white one, embroidered. Around her head, she would have a lot of colored beads in the front of the blouse. And even with embroidery, she would have a lot of shiny colored beads wearing, and she would be wearing on her head, it's like a little wreath made out of, I don't know, maybe in the summer it was made of flowers. And in the winter...

INT: Ribbons?

EVA: Something around her hair. Usually she had a coronet made of -- they had long hair -- of braids. And there would be something around that coronet on the head that in the back, to that whatever she would be wearing, a wreath or whatever would be attached colored ribbons. At least an inch and a half wide, all colors. And where that bride would go around her own village, the last week. And invite people to the wedding. Some of them came to us to invite us, like our landlord's daughter was getting married. When I looked at that bride, I don't think, I thought for years and years I thought that this is the most beautiful sight in the world were those, when she walked, the ribbons in the back from her hanging down from her head, they would hang as low as her dress, they would flutter, and it would be **so beautiful** that I wanted that outfit and wanted it, and...I don't know, most probably my parents didn't want me to have a national outfit that had anything to do with the Ukrainians, because the Ukrainians were killing Jews way back, even when the Czar was there, still.

INT: Were you living in a Ukrainian section of Poland, or near the Ukraine?

EVA: Well, with my father we were living in a suburb. There were little pockets, like let's say four, five Polish families. But the whole village was Ukrainian.

INT: Oh, okay, I didn't understand that. I see.

EVA: What that was, that portion of Poland, the east side of Poland, belonged to the Czar for years. For at least since the first time they took away that portion of Poland was in 1833 or '34. Until 1920 it was Ukraina. It belonged to the Czar, but they didn't have any freedom, but it was Ukraina. It was one Russia. It was a part of Russia. But when in 1920 Pilsudski came into power, and he took away back the portion of Poland from them, they started to send in Polish people, like the Jewish people now in Israel tried to get Jews to go live in the areas where there were Arabs, to make it a Jewish state. That's what Poland did. They would give land...

INT: To Poles, to get them to come back in.

EVA: To Poles, yes, and a lot of...

INT: But meanwhile there were a lot of Ukrainians living there.

EVA: Yeah. The majority were Ukrainians. And everywhere, except maybe...well, if you crossed, there is, even now, dividing Poland and Ukraina there is, at the part where I was living -- further north I don't know how it was, but I was kind of in the middle to south -- there is a river called the Bug. And that was the divider. If you crossed the Bug, even before the war, when it was Poland, for me it was Poland. I didn't know any Ukraina. They were just different people, Ukrainians and Polish, living with me. But when you crossed that Bug, you were in central Poland, and you seldom saw a Ukrainian. Only Polish people, all the way to the German border, to the west.

INT: How did your parents feel about the Ukrainians? Any messages they gave you about them?

EVA: No. I never heard from my mother or father any messages of hate towards any other religion or nationality, except that, "We can't eat there. Jewish people don't eat it." "We don't do that because we don't believe in that." But like, I suppose they didn't want me to have that costume because Grandma always used to tell stories, how by the Czar still, the Cossacks came. One came waltzing on his horse into the kitchen and nearly stampled them all to death with the horse. They were killing, the Cossacks, the Ukrainian Cossacks. So the history, it didn't permeate my brain. I was too young, too small, not even in school. But I knew that the Ukrainians don't like [the Jews]. But after Poland came into being, as long as Pilsudski was alive in Poland till 1935, we were equal with everybody. Well, what individual people did, I never myself, not once between since I remember and 1939, when the war started, I had never had any discrimination of any kind.

INT: I was going to ask you. Not from teachers, not from friends?

EVA: Well, because I went, the first four years I went to a Polish [school]; actually the majority of kids were Ukrainians, but the teacher was Polish, and the language in school was Polish. And so we learned Polish history. We learned the geography about Poland, and we learned about the Polish heroes who fought in the wars, in the (?) War, in the thirties, in the 1830's, 1860's.

INT: But they didn't make fun of you because you were a Jewish kid?

EVA: The kids that knew me, I never had. I don't know whether it was an unwritten gentleman's agreement. If a Jew lived in a, he could have been a good Jew, a bad Jew, a nice Jew, a bad-looking Jew, a Jew with a hunchback. If he was their, it's what Jewish people used to say, that every goy has his Moshek, and his Moshek -- it's Morris, you

know? -- his Moshek is all right. The rest of the Jews are no good. I heard snippets of discussion, but not with me, and not in front of me, unless I just walked by and the men were talking about something.

INT: So you didn't personally experience anti-Semitism?

EVA: Never. I never had a stone thrown after me, I never was called "you dirty Jew." Never. The truth being, I didn't look Jewish, like other Jewish girls. I was dressed the same as all the kids around me. I spoke a flawless Polish and Ukrainian. Because most of the Jewish kids that adhered more to, that their families adhered more to Jewishness, didn't speak a good Polish. They all spoke Polish like Abe speaks English. That was the Polish.

INT: So they could immediately be picked out as Jews.

EVA: Yeah.

INT: And you couldn't. You could pass for not being Jewish, as a child, even.

EVA: I didn't have to; I was free. We were free in Poland, free to do anything. You could become a doctor, you could become a, you didn't have to pay off nobody. If your father had money, you went to schools. The schools had to be paid.

INT: Under Pilsudski.

EVA: Yeah.

INT: Could you tell me more? I just want to try to get a little bit more from you about what kind of a child you were. Did you have initiative to go out and do things? Were you a leader, not a leader?

EVA: I played. I played. What did kids play? The neighbor had two girls and a little baby, which I told you, I liked to rock always. But the baby would sleep, so we would go out behind the house. And there was always, every kid had broken up pottery. A lot of stuff like, you kept all your dairy and stuff like that in the pottery in the cellar, that was the cool place. So if that would break, the kids would play with it. So the girl was taller than me, she would be the father. I would be the mother, and the younger one would be a child. And we would play home. What would you play? Where playthings are concerned, I didn't like dolls. At the beginning, whoever didn't know would come visit, and buy me a doll and within, as fast as I could, sometimes the same day, the doll would be taken apart, because I had to know what's inside. Where the legs come out from, and what's inside. And I didn't like dolls. I just wanted balls. To play with balls, I wanted to make myself, the boys made themselves wooden skates. I wanted skates. But that stemmed, I know from what. I spent an awful lot of time, I suppose half of my time was spent with Grandma in the village, which I **loved** doing, and when I had to go home, I would scream blue murder, and they would leave me for another week or two. And I

played with my mother's uncle. If he crawled on the tree, I crawled on the tree. If he crawled on top of the roof, I crawled on top of the roof. And I liked only to play with that uncle.

INT: It was your uncle, it was your mother's brother, right?

EVA: My mother's youngest brother. He was only four years older than me.

INT: What was his name?

EVA: Yisroel.

INT: Yisroel. You used to follow him around.

EVA: Yeah. And I loved him more than anybody else. And he passed away very young. He was only 42. They didn't want to tell me. They knew.

INT: He survived the war.

EVA: No. He went away. My mother's youngest sister, who was six years older than me, or, wait a minute. She was ten years older than me, and he was four years older than me. The two youngest children, my aunt got married and, well, by then, my father was dead already. By 1947, '48, when Hitler started his move ('37, '38), first Austria, then Czechoslovakia, people knew that it is just a matter of time, and he'll come into Poland, and to claim his, because the western part of Poland that Pilsudski took away from the Germans was actually, when the Czar had the east the Germans had the, they called it Silesia and Prozen (?). So he took away Prussia and Silesia. So they knew that he will come. So Jews started to emigrate. It was hard to go to America. Actually, I don't know why my aunt and uncle didn't go to America. But it seems that people said that there is a lot of…Ukrainians, even, from our village went to Paraguay, Uruguay, and the Jews mostly to Argentina. Because you could get land very cheap and start your own farm. And it was easy, without not many questions, as long as you were young and healthy.

And somehow people started to go to South America. I mean, I never actually got, we had nobody in South America, but they went. My aunt got married, and her and her husband decided to go to Argentina, make a life there instead of America, and my uncle, and my grandma decided to send the youngest son. He was eighteen. They left in 1937, I think, or the beginning of '38. So he went with them.

INT: So he got out before the war. Could you talk a little bit about your relationship with your grandparents? What your grandmother was like, what your grandfather was like?

EVA: Grandma was Granny, like everybody wishes to have a granny. I had actually, until I was fourteen, I don't remember when Grandma Sarah passed away. My father died in '36, so Grandma Sarah was still at the funeral, so she must have died in '37.

INT: Your mother's mother.

EVA: My mother's grandmother. So she didn't do nothing already. She was given food, and she would help out sometimes, say to my daughter, "Chasha, I'll help you do this." But there was so many, there was always a maid and a girl who came, a maid a steady, and a girl who came in part-time. And Grandma was still young, and my mother was, there was, I guess I told you, my grandfather had a sister who died very young. I don't know how they died, the sister and the husband, but they left three kids, two girls and a boy. One girl and a boy got married and lived in the city. And made out fine. But the youngest one, I think -- her name was Pesha -- she was simply an ugly girl. She was tiny, skinny like a rail. And had nothing in the front, nothing in the back, and she had an ugly face. A small face with a big Roman nose. And she was constantly in love with my older uncle, with the one, she was always in love. That was a terminal illness with her. He wouldn't even look at her, because he was a tall, my uncle must have been somewhere close to, somewhere between 5'10" and 6 feet, and handsome. One day when you come in and we can spare, it would help you to see the people that I'm talking about.

INT: You have photographs of them?

EVA: I have.

INT: That would be wonderful.

EVA: So we will maybe make it for fifteen minutes later or earlier and I will show you.

INT: I'd love to do that. So he wouldn't look at her.

EVA: So she was always, nobody told me, but I heard it from the neighbors. She was crying a lot always. He had girls, G-d -- Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish. And he was very well-off. It seems like my grandmother had, my grandmother Chasha had four girls, and they waited for a boy, and when he was born, it was a big simcha. There's a kaddish. And who mostly waited for that kaddish was Great-Grandma Sarah. Because she was a widow at 29 with three girls. Her husband passed away; she never married again in her life. I don't know. I suppose in the olden days, maybe it was like that. She never married. She struggled and brought those three girls up. My grandma was the oldest, so she brought those girls up.

INT: Your grandmother was Chashie?

EVA: Yeah. Chasha. And she struggled. When the first boy in the family was born, and he was named after, you know, to people who believe, she could daven. She was always sitting with some kind of a siddur in her hand and look in there. She was teaching me to pray in the morning.

INT: Who was? Your great-grandmother or your grandmother?

EVA: Great-grandmother. Grandma, I don't even know, I couldn't tell you for sure if she knew how to daven, my grandmother, because she had so many businesses to attend to. I told you, there was a dairy, there was a grocery. There was a small, like a portion of a room was taken over and they sold sandwiches and beer. It was whatever you want to call it. I don't know. And she had a lot of dealings with, there was, I told you there was a big, what do you call it, estate. So she was always constantly delivering groceries to the estate and getting, going there and making the books.

INT: What was your grandfather doing? Your grandmother was so busy.

EVA: Grandpa didn't like, only liked the farm. My older uncle, the one that, he's the one that came to America in '39. My older uncle...

INT: The one who wouldn't look at Pesha?

EVA: Yeah. He didn't want the farm, and Great-Grandma Sarah was responsible for making a...playboy out of him. He didn't do anything. Everybody got up at sun up, that's what a farm is. The animals get up, you get up, you start your day, and you go to bed at sundown, and if you don't want to, you can stay up. He slept long. The maid had to polish his shoes and boots every day. His nails were done, always, manicured.

INT: What was his name?

EVA: Eli.

INT: Eli. So he was very spoiled, because he was the boy, right?

EVA: Spoiled rotten! And Great-Grandma had, one girl was my grandma, the oldest one. You have to see those pictures, you will understand more. There was a while that they had, they didn't have an easy life. They weren't starving, but they didn't have all what they have, what **I** remember.

So young men started to immigrate to America. Not from Ukraina. You had to cross that border, too -- but it wasn't hard to cross -- to Poland, and then for some money you acquired a Polish name, and you were born in Poland already, the papers, and I suppose they didn't have the sophisticated stuff to find out if it's false or not false. You had something with a stamp, it was a...And he went to America. But my grandfather's going to America was connected. When he married my grandmother, she was supposedly very pretty and was only fifteen when she married him, I think. By sixteen, she had her first child. So Grandma said to him, "You want my daughter?" And he said, "Yes." She says, "I'll give you my daughter. But you have to promise me right here, we are standing under the chuppah." Years ago they did those things. "That you will help me bring her two sisters, the younger girls that I have, to some kind, in Jewish they say (Yiddish). You help me put them on their feet, getting them married off." Because there was no

dowry, nothing. And my grandfather was a **very, very** honest and decent man, and he promised her, and we kept it.

INT: What was his name?

EVA: Benjamin. In Jewish they called him Binyomin. And when he went to America in 1909 he was working. He was in New York. I think he did some sewing, because I remember him telling some stories. Somebody told you there is a job in the dress factory there, so you carried your own machine on the shoulder, and there they gave you a table and you sewed it. He was making, I don't remember what it was, he said, three dollars a week, or five dollars a week, I don't know. But to make the story short, he was in America five years. And he saved up. He paid his room and board, and he was decently dressed as far as I remember pictures. And he saved up $200. Beside that, he kept his word to that schweger of his, to that mother-in-law of his. He wrote home that he is ready to come home and bring his wife and children, but before that, he said, "Send me the girls." So Grandma sent one girl over first, and he still sent a few dollars back home to his wife, too. She sent over one girl, and he got her a job, and she got to know somebody, and he made her a wedding and married her off, and she was rich here. She had a hotel in the mountains, a very big one. And then go the other one here and married her off and settled her with a husband. And then he went to Poland to get his wife. Shows you what a decent...

INT: This is your grandfather and grandmother.

EVA: Shows you, when I think about Grandfather...you know, since we came here, me and Abe, with Rita, in the beginning fifties, we have heard of so many people who came here and, even my aunt has a father or had a father somewhere here. He died, I suppose, already. She couldn't find him. But everybody had a father who left. 90% of them never wrote. They forgot about the wife and the kids there, they let them rot. They married here an American girl, made themselves, married a girl with money, and the kids didn't know.

Near Abe there is a man living, he found his father here and the father gave him a lot of money. And I heard a **lot** of those [stories]. But my grandfather went back in 1914. Was here five years. After marrying those girls and settling them here, he went back to Poland with $200 to pay passage for the wife and the kids. So he came there, and the war broke out, and they could never make America. But for the $200....

INT: Before the First World War broke out. I see.

EVA: Yeah. And for the $200 they bought a nice piece of land. They built a house, they called it a two-sided house, because most people had one-sided houses. (phone interruption)

INT: We were talking about your grandfather, and what a decent man he was.

EVA: He came back to get his wife and children. Never made it, but he came back. He married the two girls, he promised under the chuppah, and he came back. And he was known as a very honest man. The Ukrainians and the Russians, I hate to call somebody a goy. I hate that name. Something was born in me. I don't remember my father or mother telling me, "Don't call him a goy." I just, myself. Certain things I was just, I suppose, born with. I hate the word calling somebody "goy." To me it seems like the same thing, you call somebody a "Spic," or whatever.

INT: It's derogatory in some way, you think?

EVA: But they always treated him with respect, the whole village. And Jews in the village usually were moneylenders. Grandma didn't lend, wasn't a moneylender. Even though they had a lot of businesses, they bought more land. You could see that the family that my grandma had, the two girls and the two boys she had at home that weren't married yet, they were always dressed better than the other girls in other villages, because they always went to town and got their dresses made in town, the latest styles and stuff like that. And the house was a, they called it, if you walked into a house, a small one, it was like you just walk in, there is a kitchen, there's a little hall, a kitchen, and a big room which was a combination bedroom and dining room. But in my granny's house, because Grandpa brought that money, you walked in, the hall was a little longish, and to the right was half of the house, and to the left was another half of the house, so it was a big house, a two-sided house, they called it. So it was a...

INT: Very comfortable life for them.

EVA: Yes. I loved this place. Certain things I remember about me when I was small that they were, I suppose you're born with those things; it's ingrained in you. I remember when they would come to pick up, Father would buy the grain from the farmers. And then in the afternoons -- or I don't remember if it was every day or every second day -- there would come people from the city with whom he had contacts, and take the grain to the city and turn it into flour, and in that transaction Father would make money, buying from the farmers and selling. They had no outpost to buy the stuff from the farmers. So there were a lot of places like my father's. On the outskirts of the city they would buy the grain from the farmer, and the farmer wanted to unload it. And he unloaded it right at the beginning of the city. Then he went to the city, had the money already to buy whatever he needed for the farm. And usually they were Jewish guys. They would come, it was a wagon, just with some boards on the bottom. And he would pile up those...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

EVA: ...Narrow wagon. Pile up those sacks of grain to take them to town. And that poor horse couldn't pull the thing up, because I told you they made, when I remember, they made a cobblestone road for the horses. But between my father's business and this, there would be some rain, there would be holes with water. So father would always go

out. The others, they didn't know, but my father, I must have been like my father. Father would always go out and said, "Will you stop beating that horse!" They would beat, the horse would fall down, and they would beat it, it should pull. And I used to start screaming and crying that he beats the horse. I don't know. My father was a good man altogether. I think he did it because he would help him pull up the thing from that. Like a pothole it would be, and get him on that cobblestone road that he should go.

INT: So he was kind to animals, too, your father.

EVA: Yeah, he was. We always had a dog. Even though with the parents, I had a dog. I grew up with a big dog. Supposedly my dog, one of our dogs, he was a black shepherd. We had shepherds most of the time, German shepherds. And they were a little variation of the true German shepherds, because they sometimes inbreed, but it was always a big dog. And he slept with me a lot. And when I had my scarlet fever, not only were my intestines full of, sprinkled with those rashes, the rash was there, but I had rash all over my body. And supposedly, he licked me before that, too, but he would lie with me and lick me and lick me and lick me, and the doctor said that the dog's saliva helped heal the rashes outside, and the dog had to be destroyed, because he developed a disease. The dog had died. So what else about my life?

INT: You enjoyed going to your grandparents' house? Those were good times for you. Climbing trees and...

EVA: It was not a big orchard, but like, Grandma had a big garden in front of the house. And the garden was as big, you could play football on it. And it was ringed around, half of it was ringed around with trees, from cherries, sour cherries, sweet cherries, plums, apples, you name it. All kinds of plums. Green plums, purple plums, whatever. You wanted to eat a cherry or plum, you crawled up on the tree, you sat there, and you ate it.

INT: What was your grandmother like?

EVA: Grandma never played with grandchildren. She was a good person, but she just, I understand it. She didn't have the time. She didn't have the time. Because my youngest aunt, that one that went to Argentina, she would be usually taking care of the dairy, and then, "Mom, could you come here? I don't know what to do with it." They would make forms of one kilogram butter. It was kosher butter. And then was a little left over. "What do you want me to do with it?" Well, Grandma would say, "Wrap it. I'll give it to," like to my parents. Or, "There is not enough to wrap. Leave it here. Or give it to a neighbor or something." Because the house was swimming in butter and cream and sour cream and sweet cream, and all those things. Milk was like water. They could have it for nothing.

INT: So she was very busy.

EVA: Always. And there was the grocery to tend to. It's not like the grocery was constantly open. But from time to time people would drop in, some for sugar, some for

salt, some for baking powder, some for a cigarette, this, that. So you had to drop everything, and run in. And my youngest uncle didn't want to do nothing in the house. He would get up in the morning with Grandpa. He just loved horses and farming. From the littlest time. When they finally realized that even in an expensive school, even my father couldn't keep him there, he would burn his hat by carrying coal to the field, because they are picking potatoes there. "I want baked potatoes! I want baked potatoes!" "So couldn't you come and tell me, I would have..." So he came without saying nothing, took a new hat. You wore hats in school. Took a new hat and put the coal in the hat and till he brought it there, the coal burned the hat through. Every week my father had to buy him a new hat. So he loved the earth and the horses. He would groom the horses. G-d, he would prim them like two dolls. Always, constantly brushing the horses and tending to the machinery on the farm, and stuff like that. He loved farming.

INT: What did you like to do there best?

EVA: Well, whenever he wasn't busy with Grandpa, he would play. Next door to us there was a house. There was a girl and a boy. The girl was my age, the boy was his age. So we would play together. They tried always to get rid of us. And we somehow knew where they go, because we knew where they go, so we would find them, if not in this hole, in that hole.

INT: Uh-huh. Make them play with you. (laughs)

EVA: Oh, G-d! They would go swimming, we would trudge after them. Everywhere.

INT: Could you describe a little bit about what the level of observance, Jewish observance was in your house and in your grandmother's house?

EVA: In my house it was, you could say that every Jewish house, no matter how little education or religion, you could say every Jewish house was Shomer Shabbas. Nobody worked on Shabbas, whether it's my house in the city, or Grandma's in the village. Shabbas, nobody did any work. The dishes were kosher. Passover dishes, everybody had Passover dishes. But you see, my grandma, in that big room that she made a partition, started to sell -- because they were clamoring, they were bothering her. They called her Mrs...well, Benjamin in Polish is Bunya, so they called Mr. Bunya and Pania Bunyova. That was Grandma's name. They called her, all the Ukrainians. So they say, "Sunday we come here. The girls get some candies and stand and eat. But what am I going to eat? I would like a beer, I would like something. Sometimes we would eat a sandwich." So Grandma took an unkosher salami. It was only there, nobody in the house, only there, and made sandwiches. Of course we ate it. Grandma knew we ate it. My aunts, my uncles. Everybody ate it except Grandma and Grandpa.

INT: And they didn't mind that you were eating that?

EVA: No. They didn't mind that we eat it. Of course, she always said, "Don't eat when Bubbe Sarah's here. And don't bring it into the kitchen, because I'm going to throw it in the garbage."

INT: Did your grandmother wear a sheitel?

EVA: No. All the sheitels were upstairs in the trunk.

INT: You were playing with them in the trunk.

EVA: Those dresses! Those dresses! Those sheitels!

INT: It was a lot of fun, huh? What about your great-grandmother? Did she wear a sheitel?

EVA: No. Granny wore a white kerchief, like this, and behind her ears, and it would just hang here. And Granny would never, ever, like in the summer, she would go wash her hands. And then mention the name of G-d. Granny was religious.

INT: Did your father make kiddush on Friday night?

EVA: My father bought deli, like liverwurst and stuff, non-kosher deli into the house, because they wanted to feed me, because I was literally skin and bones. I don't know here a kid to show you how skinny I was. And they were afraid that I'm going to get TB. And I never wanted to eat, and they wanted to pay me, and I said, "I don't want the payment, and I don't want to eat." They would put a piece of challah in front of me. So I always scraped the butter under the table.

INT: You didn't want the butter? Was this when you were sick, or just regular?

EVA: I wanted to eat what the girls were eating. When I went to school, vacation, it was the problem with eating. When I went to school, there was no problem. Because the minute I would reach the school, everybody, "Would you give me today your piece of challah?" Everybody wanted a roll or a challah. They had a piece of pumpernickel, and I **love** it! Yesterday Rita went to the northeast, she brought me a pumpernickel. I love pumpernickel. I love that bread. And I would be in heaven. I could never have a cup of tea, because they say tea dries you out. I had to drink milk with cocoa, and it was coming out my ears, and I didn't want milk, so they made it with cocoa. It was silly, because there was so many poor families. The kids that came to school with me, when I went to town already, and they, in this school the kids would bring a piece, even a small piece, a tiny piece of bread. And what I did is I started to tell Granny or my mother, whoever made me the sandwich for school, "Make me two, so I can take one for me and one for another girl who didn't have." Grandma stands in the marketplace selling some apples for five cents a pound. They're making something, and the father, I don't know what does with five, six kids, and there was never enough to eat. They couldn't even buy...a lot of families. I went to their houses sometimes. A lot of kids, there was a girl twelve years

old, she knew already how to make noodles, and she would roll out a piece of dough that would be as big as this table to make the noodles. I didn't even know how to peel a potato. I was never in the kitchen. Because what they had was my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandma, and there was always Zayde's niece, the one that was with him.

INT: Did you want to do those things? Would you have wanted to?

EVA: I didn't have the time. I had schoolwork to do. The train took away two hours every day with going to the train. From the train I came home. Honey, we had homework, I could come home with the early train. When there was nothing doing in school, no play. When there was a play, I would come with the 4:00 train. Without a play, without rehearsals, I came home at 2:00. I was in the house about 2:10. If I ate something and sat down, started to do my homework, 11:00 at night, I wouldn't be finished with homework.

INT: You had a lot of work.

EVA: You had to learn, recite, poetry, to recite it by heart. Pages and pages and pages. Dissertations.

INT: Did you enjoy it?

EVA: I did. I did. I loved school, every aspect of it. And I was always mixed up, being that I...spoke a good Polish, a good Ukrainian, I was always, either I was in choir, I was here, I was there, I was everywhere. I was popular in school.

INT: You had a lot of friends? Do you remember any special friends? Their names, what they were like?

EVA: Well, let me put you right about my schooling. When I lived with my parents I went through the four years of school, actually it was three years, the Catholic school. After that, my father wanted me, I always had it in mind, there was, it's like a little tiny palace. There must have been somebody, one of the czars lived near and had a beautiful house that looked like a little palace. A lot of grounds with greenery, with beautiful lawns. And they made a public school there. And the schools in our city were like this: there was a public school for Christian girls, public school for Jewish girls. Public school for Christian boys, and public school for Jewish boys. So everybody knew where he has to go. And that was without money. For money you had to go to the school where my father wanted me to go. There you learned Hebrew. That you had to pay. And of course high school you had to pay.

INT: But you only went there for a little while, to Hebrew school.

EVA: There I went for a couple of months, and got sick and Father said, "This is not for her," and I didn't go back. But when I graduated that one-room house school, which was

the Catholic school, I was so permeated, and I liked it. I liked the Christmas songs, and I liked it when the priest would -- they didn't tell me to be there. But I knew I could go home, but sometimes I stayed. The stories. See, I had no rabbi to tell me stories. My father didn't. Sometimes I would hear the stories of Solomon, how he didn't let them cut the baby apart, because the real mother said, "No, no, no, let her keep the baby." Things like this. You know, famous stories from the Bible. But the rest, it wasn't a household...

So when I finished that first school, I was sure that I would go to that Catholic school. It was the closest to me, the big one in the city. Finish seven grades there. My father went there. I had very good from top to bottom, all my school records were always excellent from top to bottom. And one day my father, one day, she told him she cannot take me in because this is for Polish girls.

INT: What year was that?

EVA: That was...I graduated my public school in '38. And you take back three years, so it must have been in...No, you take back more. Three years would be fifth grade. But you take back another three years. Take back six years from, it was '32 he took me there.

INT: And she said you couldn't come in.

EVA: She said, "There is nobody here." And I kept on explaining to her, the head of the school was talking to us. I said, "But I have a friend who comes from a village, and my grandma lives there, and she comes to this school, and she wants me to be here, too." She asked me the name, I told her. But my friend, she lives now in New Jersey. She was in that school, but my friend was never good at school. As a matter of fact, she had to left over two years in fifth grade. Not because she wasn't smart; she's a very intelligent girl. But when she would get home from school, I would sit by my books, and her father would say, "Lady, your school is over. You've got to help with the, we have to get the hay in, we have to get the potatoes in, we have to get this, we have to get this," and she had to work on the farm.

INT: But you were able to do your [school] work.

EVA: So I, nobody ever called me to any farm work. To anything. The kitchen was full of women, and the farm...

INT: But you were saying that you would sit and hear the stories the priest would tell.

EVA: And I loved the Christmas, I fell in love with the Christmas songs from day one. I loved it. And I yammered, I yammered, and Father said, and Mother said, I don't remember, both or one, "A Christmas tree you cannot have." But he bought me colored paper, and I cut out angels, and I pasted and I cut out and made...The Christmas tree, when the rich people, the Ukrainians, even the rich ones, our landlord, you sat here nights, and you strung some kind of -- there they have no popcorns; I don't know what they strung -- to make a white chain to hang over here. And then you bought paper and

you made it in little strings, and you glued the strings together round, and you made a chain out of colored paper. And that was around. And the only thing that I remember being bought for the Christmas tree were the bulbs, shiny bulbs, and the richer the person, the more expensive bulbs you bought. And you bought the things, the artificial thing that you, it kind of hangs like icicles. The icicles. And you bought candles; there was no electricity. So the candles came like with a fastener that you clip it to a tree, and the big thing would be after supper, before the kids go to sleep, father would light the candles and mother, and they would burn for an hour, and they would extinguish, because candles were expensive. They were colored little candles.

What I started to say before you asked me about kosher. My father was, as far as I can tell, he spoke about his youth that they did things that way, this way. Every Jew was always a little to the left, because we had Russia across the border. And everybody thought that in Russia there is a paradise. And everybody tried. Like Abe's brother left the family and went away there, and lost his life. But it was paradise. In my family, there were no communists, but every Jew, even when Israel came into being, the last vote was the Russian vote, that they should become an independent state. If it wouldn't be for Russia, they cast the deciding vote.

But Shabbas, my father went to daven. He went to minyan. Every Jew went to minyan. I was so small that I reached my father to put my hand in his pocket. And Father always walked with a little cane. It was fashionable. A gentleman had a cane. A nice cane. And he didn't have to go far. Father was very important to that minyan, because Father was a Cohen. I'm a Cohen's daughter.

INT: Oh. I didn't know.

EVA: And if he wouldn't come to the minyan, they couldn't do without him. So besides the big synagogue in the middle of the town, it was a very big one. I was there only once or twice, I think. But every rabbi had his little synagogue, like they have them here, too. A rabbi buys a house.

INT: A shtiebel.

EVA: He lives upstairs and the shtiebel downstairs. But there was in every town in Poland -- and ours was a good-sized town, close to 40,000 people -- that there was a head rabbi. He already had education Polish. He, I suppose, had not only high school, then maybe even college. Because our head rabbi's son went to college in Vilnius. So the father must have had college. And he had, that rabbi, that head rabbi in every big town, had already every Jew that was born and died, he had the papers. You had to go to register the baby, it was born. Somebody died, you went to the rabbi, too. And he had a two-story house. He lived upstairs, and downstairs was the shul. He didn't have just a shtiebel. It was like a big two rooms, like the whole length of the house. It was a small shul, a nice shul. And it drove me **bananas** every time they had to stand to, what do you call it, they stand up there. They shoved out all the kids and me, too, and I said, "Daddy, can I be...?" "No, you can't!" Anybody who had a father or a mother had to leave.

INT: Oh, yeah. When they say kaddish, or when they say Yizkor.

EVA: Yizkor. No, it had another name.

INT: Yizkor, and everybody has to go out whose parents are still alive.

EVE: I don't know. Don't you think once I just had to open the door a little crack? I had to know what my father [was doing]. Everyone was standing with their head down, but my father had his...

INT: Oh, he was making the sign of the Cohanim.

EVE: Father was the only one standing in front of the Torah. And I came home and I said to Mother, "Daddy stood with his hands [like this]. Why does he do it?" "Well, because Daddy's a Cohen." I said, "What's a Cohen?" "Well, let your daddy explain you. When you grow older, you will know." So when Daddy got sick, when he started to be kind of, became ill and started to ail, so there was no minyan. We had to look for another Cohen. And that big rabbi, and I don't know. I would give you the Polish name of his, but what do you need what they called him? He was the head rabbi, let's say. He didn't go to funerals. Everybody got his own rabbi. The rabbi went to a funeral. But when my father died, the head rabbi came to the funeral. And when he saw me standing by the grave, he came over and said, "Mamele, you cannot stand by your father's grave. You're a Cohen's daughter." And I don't know how many paces, he walked and counted the paces. I was standing like, here's the grave and I was standing there. And I wanted to see so badly. Because they told me they bury a plain person just with nothing, and my father had already boards all around him, and a board on top. There were no caskets in Poland, even a Cohen. But a Cohen had, the plain people only had a piece of broken crockery cover their eyes, that's all. But a Cohen already had a board underneath, two on the sides, and a big board on top.

INT: But it wasn't all put together.

EVA: No. There were no caskets. That's why, when I came to Canada and I saw caskets, and I said, "Are those Jews, or are those goyim? Who are they? I don't understand it." That's why the religious, when my aunt in Winnipeg buried Uncle, she got him what they call, they call it a real Jewish casket, which is made like of cardboard or something, and just covered with black material. Because the fancy one, when his [Abe's] brother died, that was 30 years ago his brother passed away. And they bought a casket 30 years ago for $1200. It was wood, light wood, like pine. It was so heavy, six men could barely carry it.

INT: This is when your husband's brother died?

EVA: And Abe said, he said, "Where do they come?" His father was so religious, with a labsedeckel and everything. My father never wore a labsedeckel every day. I don't remember seeing my father daven every day.

INT: I was going to ask you that. Did he put tefillin on every day?

EVA: I don't remember. But if he did, he did it, you see, I saw my zayde, because I got up at 5:00 in the morning to go to the train, so I saw Zayde. And Zayde wore a labsedeckel and wore a Jewish hat. And wore always dark clothes, and a Jewish hat. Didn't wear a kapote, no. Short jacket, a regular jacket, and black slacks. But...Father wore regular clothes. Maybe Father davened every day, but I was sleeping. I never woke up before 8:00.

INT: So you're not sure if he did or not. It's not clear.

EVA: I know that Shabbas he went to daven. Holidays he went to daven, every holiday. I know when Passover comes, the Passover dishes. Father would throw out the chometz, and the Passover dishes, and we were not allowed to eat bread and stuff like that.

INT: Did you believe in G-d when you were a child? Do you remember believing in G-d, or thinking about G-d, or talking to G-d?

EVA: I don't remember. I remember only Sarah, my great-grandmother. My father didn't. So he must have been non-religious, actually. He never taught me the prayer, nor Mother. My mother knew how to pray. My father knew, my father knew very well. He was very well-versed in those things in whatever those Jewish books are called. He could quote in any one of them anything. But he never taught me to say Krishma, or to say the prayer in the morning. But my great-grandma took it upon her. She taught me one summer to say Modeh Ani in the morning, and then Krishma at night. And it sounded to me, I didn't like it, you know why? Because I didn't understand what I was saying. The Polish prayer, I heard what they say. "Our Father who art in Heaven," said in Polish. I knew what I'm saying. In the Krishma, I was saying this thing, and I didn't understand a word what I was saying.

INT: Nobody told you what it meant, what you were saying?

EVA: No. Granny, Great-Granny, she just wanted me to know it, and I knew it for a while and forgot it.

INT: So it didn't mean anything to you.

EVA: It didn't mean a thing, because I didn't understand it.

INT: Did your grandmother ever talk to you about G-d, or believing in G-d, or, we do this because G-d wants us to do this, or anything about G-d?

EVA: The word G-d, oh, my grandma used to, the young uncle, the one who was four years older, he would sometimes run by on a Saturday. "I'm going to play, Mom." "Where are you going?" "I'm going next door there, to (?)." So he would break a twig. "On a Shabbas? You shaygetz, you broke a twig on a Shabbas! If I tell Father he'll skin you alive." Or when the older one did something, "(Yiddish)," "G-d will pay you. G-d will pay you that you do those things."

Another thing I didn't like about Jewish holidays. Come Yom Kippur, the only Jewish holidays I liked, the two of them, was Passover, because you didn't have matzah the whole year. Only Passover. So everybody loved matzah. Matzah, and those knaidlachs, and those chremslach, and all of those goodies. You always had something new to eat that you didn't eat [the rest of the year]. And I had my little cup for wine, a silver cup, and all those things. And you get to drink wine, and you didn't get it ever. And Shavuos was my very favorite, because we decorated. I don't know, I think it was only in Ukraina. Grandma had a big house, and there was a little porch, a porch that was not an open porch, closed-in porch.

INT: Screens?

EVA: Not screens, just a closed-in porch that you shouldn't to straight into the hall. But you came, a few steps you went up. So my uncle, one or both of them sometimes, you would go, you would chop down some birch trees, young ones, and you would put two, three trees on front of the porch, and you would decorate the whole house all around with nice branches of trees that bloom already in the forest. You would bring. And inside the house you would pick, I don't know if you know what it is. Nobody knows what it is in English. It is similar to the, you know those long thin things we make sugar cane from? You make sugar cane from...

INT: Sugar beets, right?

EVA: Sugar beets. But there is cane sugar. Sugar cane. It's very long, but they are very wide, and very hard. A similar thing. It was about this, it grew at the edge of the water, by a river almost.

INT: Oh, like cattails. Cattails? Did they have a brown thing on the top?

EVA: Cattails, that we put on a vase on a table. But that was long...

INT: Reeds. Like some kind of reed.

EVA: It was long and narrow, and it had a wonderful smell, like a wonderful grass, and we would gather it up, bunches and bunches, and all the floors would be spread, for the whole of Shavuos, the house would smell like spring.

INT: All over the house, or just in the porch?

EVA: All over the house.

INT: That's so nice.

EVA: And I was always so sad that after Shavuos, we had to take it out.

INT: Did you put flowers, too?

EVA: Yeah. There was a sukkah always. Grandpa made a sukkah.

INT: Did you like Sukkos?

EVA: My father, I don't remember making a sukkah. I remember we always went, the rabbi invited the Cohen to the sukkah, always, without the wife. The wives were not important. But me and Father, after the minyan he would invite us to the sukkah and we would partake into something, and then we'd go home and have our meal with Mother.

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

EVA: I hated the fall holidays. I hated. There was no card sending, there was no such thing. There was no telephone to phone and, "I wish you a happy New Year. We don't see each other, we live far." Nothing. Because when, let's say we lived, I told you there was a river dividing us from the town. There were two Jewish families living there, and we got together, we went to Kol Nidre, let's say already. So usually they walked out of the house an hour before time. And right after the bridge, after the river, there would start Jewish houses. And every house my mother and the neighbors and all of them, and they would **cry,** (imitates crying) and, "Forgive me, forgive me, if I did something." "You didn't do." "But maybe I did it!" And that would go on for **hours**! And I was small, I couldn't tell Dad, "Take me away." Father would just go over, shake hands with the man and wish him a good year. But the women were wailing! And I didn't like it. Why the Polish holidays they **sing** songs? Happy Christmas songs. And here they wail and they cry?

I seem to have a mind of my own since I was born, because I made up my own mind. Certain holidays I liked, certain I didn't. I didn't like the wailing. And when we would get to the shul, I never saw another shul until my father got ill. I always went to the rabbi. By the rabbi, whoever came to shul, the women were praying up, there was a little balcony with the rebbetzin there, and there wouldn't be more than, I think, more than 20 people wouldn't be in that shul, because they were just people invited by the rabbi to pray. The better people in town came there, to that head rabbi to pray. Like a doctor, a this, a that. My father, I don't know if he would have done it, but simply they needed a Cohen. And he knew. I mean, they didn't have to teach him where to turn the page, and which page. So he was there. And there were children, and we played in the hall, or outside. But it wasn't as noisy as when my father got sick the first year. My mother went

to pray in another shul, a small shul, a shtiebel. The noise in that shul, G-d! The noise. The kids running in and out, and chasing each other. And it's a shul. People are praying. And the men, coming out of the shul. You know, there is like a time when they finish, and they come out, and then they go in again for the second portion. So they would come out and discuss business. And I found it, I was small, and I found it disgusting. They talked about business, and they talked about this, things that don't belong in a [shul].

INT: And you felt it, even little, that that wasn't right.

EVA: I didn't like it. Then when we came to Canada, in Germany I never went to synagogue. Abe never went to synagogue. He tells me he went, I don't believe him. I don't believe anything Abe tells me. I never did. He came once -- I was in the hospital. And he said, "So what are we going to name her?" And he said, "Well, it's the first child, so you can name her after your mother." And I said, "Well, my mother didn't live much. She was in her thirties, and Hitler killed her. So let's give your mother the preference." So she has both names, but we usually, he's the only one that called her Rivkele. So Rivkele is after his mother. I said, "Your mother at least had already grandchildren." So supposedly he bought a piece of laykach, and a bottle of wine, and went to a synagogue and named her. I really don't care, because I'm not religious. I was never a religious Jewish girl. But I think he's lying. But who cares? I mean, I know that my daughter was registered in the hospital, and then I went, and I mean, I don't remember what they gave me. Her birth certificate lists a Riwa Rykla. But then I went and I registered her, because we started making papers to go to America, to Canada, so I registered her as Rita, and that was it.

INT: So her Hebrew name was Riwa Rykla, after the two mothers.

EVA: Yeah. Riva, not Rivka. Riva.

INT: Can you talk now about your father, and how when he got ill, and how that was for you? You were twelve, or eleven?

EVA: He passed away, I must have been twelve when he passed away, because they cut my, the (?). So I don't know. At twelve, I think, a girl was already, was I think old enough. So I was a year before that, my grandma took me away.

Daddy, as far as I remember, he was still, the two partners of his, when I was about, I would say...eight or nine, one of them got married. One was married, lived in the city, closer to the city, on the other side of the river. The other one got married when I was about eight or nine, and I saw my mother dancing the first time. She must have been some dancer. She was not only a flirt. She flirted, because the men flirted with her, too. She was a pretty girl, and she was a fantastic dancer. There was always one man who knew very well how to dance, and they made, there was long stools -- it was a very rich wedding. He was very well-off, that guy that married, my father's partner. And there were long stools, and somehow one table was square, so they cleared the whole table. The men just picked up with the thing [tablecloth] and took it off. And my mother and

that good dancer, danced on that table. The, what do you call, they go like this? (With hands on knees, and switch hands) And there was another dance, it was called the (name of dance). Whatever it was, don't ask me. And for **hours** they danced on that table, my mother in high heels and a flapper dress.

After that younger one got married, he lived right across the street from the partner that was already married. They had a house. This one built himself a house and got married, and they decided, they said to my father that they don't want to stay on the outskirts of the city, all the way where we lived, because of the bad weather, and of the walking, and the, even though they built that road, it's still with no sidewalk, nothing. Where they lived, there were sidewalks already. And they built a facility to accommodate, they said to my father, "We will build a facility to accommodate the grain, and [if] you want, you can join us, and we'll be partners again." And my father didn't join them. I didn't know it then, but nobody told me now, but I think he felt that he's getting ill, because he started to go already to the mountains every year. And he started to take medication, I saw him. And he couldn't join them. He spent money that he had on doctors, and on traveling to those spas. To the sanitarium.

So he didn't join them there, so he opened up, we moved to another house, and this house, we only had two rooms. The other house had three rooms. It was a new house, not finished yet, but three rooms were finished. So we had a kitchen, and a bedroom. A kitchen with a dining area, a bedroom, and an extra small room, so they made themselves like a very tiny small grocery. It was maybe as big as, like you say, from here to here. They had some sugar. They didn't have much choice. They had sugar. But the people in Poland didn't, I mean, you didn't go in to buy crackers, and maybe the kid says, "I want some potato chips." There were no things like this. If you wanted to buy something imported, you had to go to a special store in the city, they were called import stores.

They had paper, they had cigarettes, they had tobacco. They had salt, sour salt, pepper, sugar, flour, not much. It was in small sacks. And being that it was near a school, so we had school supplies, like pencils and paper, and the loose leafs. There were no loose leafs. There were just like...a little, just about ten, twelve pages, and that was one for math had squares, and the one with lines was for the languages. And so we had colored paper the kids used in school, and stuff like that. So they made a living out of that, I suppose.

And my father started to ail. (pause) In '35, that must have been when, '32, '33, or '34, about '33 or '34 when Father realized he cannot, you had to carry heavy stuff, take off from the, carry from the partner's wagon to the store, 100 kilogram. That's 200 pounds. And carry later those sacks to the man that would take it away in the afternoon to the city. And they all considered my father, being a former military man, and he was stronger than the two of them. So he did a lot of the heavy [work]. So he couldn't hack it, so they started their business by themselves there. And Father had a little grocery.

In '35 Pilsudski died, and I was in the fourth grade. That was the last grade in that one-room schoolhouse. And I told you we covered everything with black, and wore a black

band around my sleeve. And I remember, came, about after three months, I must have, I started to take off, because I think the schools had to do it only, the army the whole year, but the schools only three months. And Father said, "Don't throw out, you never know what you might need it for." And by then he was already doing badly. He was in bed from time to time, I suppose. I didn't know, but I understand it now. And taking medications constantly.

And...and then we moved into another, there was a smith. Every village needed a smith to shoe the horses. And that smith had two rooms for rent. He had a two-sided house like my grandma. So we rented one side of his one room with a kitchen, but the rooms in Poland, when you said, "a room," a room was at least as big as this whole thing. There were no small rooms.

INT: Why did you move?

EVA: Because my father, they gave up the grocery, and they could not, from then on I remember Grandma coming twice a week to us. And handing over bread and butter and sugar and cheese and you name it. And stuffing some money into Mom's pocket, or whatever. From then on I think Grandma supported us. If Father had still a few dollars, I suppose he had, because he had to buy his medicine. And went to the doctor's. And then we moved there in the summer. We were in that house over the winter, and I remember Daddy coughing a lot. And in the beginning, the end of the winter, my beloved aunt, the youngest one, the one that he asked to take care of me. I told you, I guess, about that.

INT: But not on the tape you didn't tell me.

EVA: Yeah. The youngest aunt was ten years, she was born 1914, I was [born in] '24. She was ten years older than me. She came and they packed up my stuff. And she said, I mean, they didn't tell me, "You have to leave because Father is dying or sick." "Would you like to come and live with us permanently?" I jumped up high to the ceiling. I loved it there. I still didn't, I must have been about ten or eleven.

INT: Did you understand what was happening with your father?

EVA: I understood that Father was sick, but I never thought of him being deadly sick. And because I knew there is money in the family, and somehow when my mother was sick, Granny took her to Warsaw, and they healed Mother. And lucky through all, my Father, when he was ill a couple of years, my mother was perfect. She fell apart after he died again, but she was all right.

INT: She pulled herself together for...

EVA: And they took me away, and she said, "You'll be traveling with Jeanie." That's my best friend that lives here. "And you'll be traveling by train to school." And that was a bonus that you couldn't **beat**! Travel by a real train to school every day? Are you kidding? And get spending money every day to buy yourself something in the town. I

was loaded with money. I had at least a dollar every day with me. My uncle [said] "Do you have [money]?" I said, "I have. I have fifty cents." "Never mind, here is a dollar. Take it with you. You'll never know. Maybe you'll lose your train pass, and you'll need to pay for another." They always stuffed me with money. In that respect, I was the richest girl. We had a doctor's daughter was sitting on the same bench with me, a dentist. But I was always richer than her, because I was stuffed with money always.

And I was there for about a year.

INT: Did you visit your father in between? Or your mother?

EVA: I would come from time to time.

INT: Your mother stayed with your father.

EVA: Yeah. I would come from time to time and see Daddy. It was a long walk. It was a kilometer from the school to Father's house, and then back, and then to the train a kilometer, but I made it a point to go there. Not too often, but at least once a month, I went there to see him. And each time I saw him he looked worse, and he was more in bed and more in bed and more in bed. And when he wasn't in bed, he would just sit, read a paper. And he was always lively and athletic looking. And I realized that he is ill and...

The last time I saw my father was early spring. Very, very early spring. The snow was still lying some places. I don't remember, I think that time my father told my mother to have my aunt come, he wants to talk to her. That's when I heard about it, when she was leaving Poland, she told me about it. That he called her, and he told my mother to leave the room, and he told my aunt that, "Rikla is still young enough. She's only in her beginning thirties. She should get married and have a life. And if you could promise me that you will take care of Yocheved, because I would rather she should have an aunt and an uncle than a stepfather, because I had a stepmother." I think his father married after the grandma died. He said, "Whatever. Whatever has to happen. But I don't want my child to have a stepmother or a stepfather," he said. And she promised him. She said, "You know I love her always." She loved me.

INT: What was her name, your aunt?

EVA: Well, the whole name was Nechama, but they called her Chamka. The goyim called her Chamchie. So she was beloved by everybody. She was beautiful. Sang endlessly. Her mouth never closed. If the windows were open, Grandma used to say, "If some stranger will be driving by this house he'll think there are crazy people living here! Every window open, and you're always yelling and singing." Everybody. When she was going away to Argentina, the whole village went to the station, they all cried.

So I went, and I think she told me that, "It would be good if you would go see him." They most probably realized, a doctor would come, I think, into the house and see my father. There was one lung specialist in the town. He would come and see my father, I think,

once a week. And Father most probably told her that he wants to see me, she told me. So I went up, and it was, I remember still it was a warm day, but I still wore my winter coat, so it wasn't completely spring yet. And I came to Father's house, and when I came into the room, and I wanted to take off the coat. He said, "Honey, please don't come near me. Because I feel very bad today." So I said, "Daddy, but I would like to come close." He said, "No, honey, you cannot come close, because the doctor said it's better if you don't come close to me."

And...I felt like crying then. I realized something bad is going on, but I kept myself from crying, and I took the coat off and left it on a chair, and I was standing in my uniform. And I don't remember what we talked. Oh, yeah. The kids in Poland carried either a rucksack here, but the rucksack was not soft like now. It was kind of like a stiff thing. So I had that, and when I went to the city already, six, seventh grade, so you carried something in your hand, not on your [back]. We older kids carried it in our hands. But it was made of mostly stiff material, but not leather, because leather was terribly expensive. You had to work a week to buy one thing like that to carry, leather. But Father said, "I wanted to see you today. I wanted to give you something. You have to promise me that you're not going to spend the money for nothing else, but just buy what I'm telling you to buy. Because I know you always wanted, we always saw it in the window, and we always discussed it, that when you graduate public school and you start high school, I'm going to get you one of those." And I knew what he was talking about.

And he called me over to his bed, he said, "I'm putting on the table five dollars. You take the five dollars. Don't put them to your mouth, the five dollars," he said. "After you finish with that transaction, wash your hands." And he said, "I want you to go straight from here. I'll tell you where the store is, which store it is. Go in and tell them you want the," what is it called? I forgot. What could you call a thing like this you carry? It's like a...

INT: Suitcase, or a brief case. Or a...

EVA: A briefcase is...

INT: A satchel.

EVA: A briefcase is made differently. You could see, the Germans still have it. It was all hand-sewn, pure, beautiful leather. It was tan-colored leather. "And you get yourself, because I spoke to the man the last time I saw him, and he said the best one costs five dollars. So here is five dollars. And my dear, promise me that you're not going to buy nothing else." And when I went out he said good-bye to me, wouldn't let me kiss him, and he started to cough, and Mother said, "You'd better go now." And I went out of the house, and I was crying all the way to the city. I realized that my father must be dying. Later Mother told me, "The five dollars Father gave you were his last five dollars he had for medicine." And I went and I bought that beautiful satchel. (crying) It had everything in it. It had places, narrow things for pencils, a thing for a pen extra. It had separate things inside, separated stuff for small books, big books.

I came to school next day with that thing in my hand and every kid [said], "We never knew you were that rich to carry." Only the doctor's daughter carried a thing like that. (crying) And I don't know what month it was, but in May he passed away. I didn't see him dead. You know, the Jewish people don't look at dead people.

INT: Who told you?

EVA: That day the circus came to the city. And nearly the whole gang of kids -- there were about six of us -- stayed over to see the circus. So every kid got money from the parents. And I got money, of course, too, and I stayed over. And we, all of us, being that we saw the circus in the evening, we could get home only at 11:00, there was a train. So we were waiting on the station in the city for the train to go to the village, and there my mother walks in. And I said, "Mom, what happened?" She says, "Nothing happened, I just want to go to Grandma for a day or something." "So who's with Daddy?" "Oh, his uncle came from Kowel, and he's with him. He came to visit him." Seems my mother wrote to, there was an uncle of his, I don't know if it was his mother's brother, or father's brother, a very nice man, I liked him. And she wrote him that he's dying, and he came there. The last month of his life, he was with my father.

And as the Jewish law says, there weren't many Jews around. Mostly Ukrainians where we lived, and Polacks. So when somebody had to stay with Father, even though he was dead, so Uncle stayed with him, and Mother went to tell the family. So she came on the station and I was there. And Mother came actually to the station not to go with us, but she came, if there was an emergency, you could make a telephone call. You asked the people at the station, and they would call the station in the village. And they would tell them that, "Please send somebody to this and this family and tell them that their son-in-law died." And my mother was talking still to the man who was giving the message there on the phone, and the head, the station master came out and says, "Well, whose father died?" And then I knew right away that it was my father. I was wearing white cuffs. I took them off. My uniform was black. And I couldn't get off the collar, so Jeanie helped me get the collar off. And she started to cry. (crying, pause) And somehow from that day on, I was no more a child. I knew I had my mother. I knew I'll have to protect my mother. My mother became sick again. They took her and they made her well again. Until the war she was all right, until Hitler came. Then she completely lost everything when Hitler came, because she was afraid they'll come and kill her sister, they'll kill me. So, I had to take care of my mother, and I did.

INT: Where did you go for comfort after your father died? Could you go to your mother to cry? Could you go to your grandmother? What did you do?

EVA: No. Let's say my father's funeral. There was just a few. It was a working day. People were working. But those families that knew came, that lived not far. And you didn't keep even, you couldn't make a funeral even tomorrow. If he died tonight, then today's the funeral, so how many people could you run around? There's no, pick up the phone, "Could you come to the funeral?" And I think, my school, the one I went to,

eventually the school was nicer than the one I went to, because of the Catholic. I went to the Jewish girls' school, five, six, and seventh grade, to a Jewish public school for girls. It was a brand new school, built just about a few years before. Brand new. A one-story school. A long one. But it was right next to the Jewish cemetery. I don't know, maybe they do it in Israel. Here, if somebody screams or cries, it seems like, in the funeral parlor. There they put you on a wagon, or they carried you through the **whole** city, till they came to that cemetery. And the wailing you could hear, when we had the windows open in school, and the wailing you can hear when they went out of the house. And everything was, I mean, it's funny how the classification of people was so that even, never mind giving a woman to darn the socks and pay if you're rich, you don't have to do it. Or wash the floor. But even to wail. To go, there were special women. You paid them, they were wailing, whether it's on the cemetery, and whether it's in the house. They came to the house, you pay them, and the more rich the person was that died, the more women wailed. I remember the teacher. Every teacher. The minute they heard the wailing, they would go over and close the windows, because they knew they come close to the cemetery, and nobody will be able to do any work in school. So every cemetery.

But my father had no wailers. I suppose mother understood. There were just, I wouldn't say that they were so much better off. They were better off financially than the poor. We were like middle class, I would say, when Father worked. There were not doctors or lawyers. But my father must have come from a better family. The Russian Jews were better Jews than the Ukrainian Jews or the Polish. They were always considered the better educated Jews.

INT: More educated.

EVA: Yeah. And there were no wailers. Mother cried. He wasn't on a wagon that the city gave you. You know. It was a little thing. Grandpa came with his wagon, it was a nice wagon. They put Father up on it, and they brought him to the cemetery. And you know, they did everything on the cemetery. They didn't prepare him [elsewhere]. On the cemetery there was a little house, and they did what they had to. They washed him, they put a tachichim on him, on the cemetery it was always done. And we waited for the rabbi, and then the rabbi came. It was a beautiful May day.

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

EVA: [No more] singing and dancing and playing ball. I knew I had responsibilities right away. A part of me died when my father died. (crying) Definitely. Because he...if it is possible, he was even a better father than Ray. Maybe because he knew he has a sick wife always. He always took me in his arms, he cuddled me if I cried. He...and he tried to suit me. If I came home, he wouldn't work. He would look out and look up, and if he saw me leave the school, and even when I was already in the school in the city, he would wait and wait and do nothing. He would run ahead, meet me. "Give me your report," and run with that report to his neighbor. "Well, what did I tell you? It's the same as last

year! It's excellent from top to bottom." He would show it to everybody. Mother didn't. Which I understand. I mean, they didn't have to. But Father was so proud of me. (pause, crying)

INT: Who could you go to for comfort?

EVA: When Father died? My aunt was my comfort. After the funeral, my mother, with that uncle that came, Father's uncle went back, because there was some furniture. They lived, it seems, in a very small one-room house only. Because Mother didn't want Grandma, she spent enough on her, and Grandma paid the rent most probably. So they lived in a very little house. Maybe it was a shed, I don't know. And they...that was the first time my parents lived, they didn't live long there, I think only about half a year. There was no, there was no floor in the house. It was just...I suppose they didn't want Father to go to a hospital to die, so they kept him at home. Grandma brought food and paid the rent. And he died there.

And my aunt took me from the funeral. First of all, she took me in, and we went into a place there. We got some pastry, and we got some tea, we drank and ate. And she was a rich girl. She always had money with her. She went in, she bought a, she loved to. She always gave me money to bring her from town halvah. But the halvah, I don't know. It's Turkish halvah here, and Turkish halvah there. I knew that they made it in Turkey, but it doesn't taste the same. The halvah there had a taste of heaven, and here it's dry. I don't know why. Not the same. Just not the same.

INT: This was the aunt that was ten years older than you, right?

EVA: And she, from that day on, she, when I got my menstruation, I didn't tell my mother, I told my aunt. My mother was in the house. We lived with Nana then already. We lived in the village.

INT: After your father died you went to live with your grandmother?

EVA: Well, I lived with my grandmother...

INT: Anyway. You were already there.

EVA: I was there and Mother sold her furniture, because Grandma had rooms of furniture. She sold her furniture, nice furniture, very expensive furniture. There was a breakfront that the doors, the upper doors on the upper portion, the doors didn't have plain glass. They had glass that was kind of made like crystal. Cut like crystal. It was very expensive furniture. So a teacher, the teacher from my grandma's village, bought that breakfront from her. She took just the clothes and when everything was sold, Grandpa went and brought Grandma, brought Mother home to Granny. We were both there.

INT: But you wouldn't go to her with personal things like when you got your period?

EVA: Well, I'm telling you. I got my period, I told my aunt. And then I wanted to kill her, because she ran into the kitchen, and my uncle, who was then about 25 years old, she tells him, and I mean, I didn't **know** she told him, but she says, "Okay, I'm going to the kitchen. Grandma says supper's ready, you can come." And I was in school late. I came home, the train was late. I came with the late train. Instead of landing after 4:00, I came closer to 5:00 because the train was late. And I came in, it was 5:30 already. Dark, it was winter. And I didn't know what to do. So I called her in, and she, those days you didn't have napkins. You just bought terry cloth, and you made stuff like that, and you had a belt with a button, and you pinned it. And she showed me what to do, gave me some of her stuff. And I went to the kitchen for supper. I come in, there's, I don't remember where Grandpa was. Maybe he was there, too. But there's Grandma, there's my mother, there's that, my cousin that lived with them, and there is Uncle Eli, and he, the minute I walked in, he picks me up into the ceiling. "Hurrah, hurrah!" I said, "What happened?" And Grandma said to him, "You're an idiot. What are you throwing her in the air? She's not a baby." "Well, she became a woman today."

INT: Oy vey. (laughs)

EVA: And I said to my aunt, "I'm going to kill you one day." I wouldn't talk to her for a few days.

INT: It was a little embarrassing.

EVA: How do you tell a man a thing like this? I didn't know that when you're grown up, it's a natural thing. The men know about it. Oh!

INT: But you had her. You had her to go to.

EVA: With everything. With everything, from my first bra. She took me to the city to buy a first bra. Those days, those days she had money. Shows you how rich they were. Those days, plain people, I mean, I saw kids in school wearing bras, and they looked like cotton or whatever. Plain, cotton, percale, but plain. And my aunt took me to the city. She got me, she wore them. She wore them, and she bought me, my first bra was a beige, it's like satin with lace. Beautiful.

INT: She took care of you. You knew you couldn't go to your mother? Or she just wouldn't be able to comfort you?

EVA: Mother had headaches always again. Headaches, and...

INT: The headaches came back after your father died, or they never stopped?

EVA: She became ill again. She became ill again, and Grandma took her to the doctors, and they gave her some medication. She got better. And you shouldn't disturb Mother.

Mother was always walking around with a wet compress here, or lying down with a wet compress.

INT: So you learned to go to other people.

EVA: Well, she loved me since, I remember we would come to Grandma just for a weekend, me, Mother, Father. And she knew when the train comes. And after about ten minutes after the train, she knew we would be coming into view. She would see us walking to Grandma's house, so she would run ahead. She was about, she must have been ten, twelve, no more, and she picked me up and fell with me together. (laughs) She just **loved** me. Because I was the only grandchild, a girl. All the others were boys. All the other women, all the other daughters had boys, and I was a girl.

INT: So you were special.

EVA: And she loved me. G-d! She didn't know what to do with me. She carried me on her back always. She was good to me, and she loved me. She **really** loved me.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's March 18th, 1996.

Mrs. Roitman, we ended last time with your, the death of your father. And I'm wondering if you could continue the story from there, unless there's something you'd want to add from last time. I'd like you to pick up the story.

EVA: Do you remember what I finished with?

INT: You finished with your father's death, and I asked you who your support person was, and you were talking to me about your aunt, that you were very fond of, and that she was helping you a lot. And could you talk a little bit about that time? What year was that? 1937?

EVA: '36. The best, I suppose the only way I could describe my father, I was young, full of hope and everything, but when my father died, it took...I was at the funeral. I saw him buried. But it didn't sink in. It took a while -- I suppose a couple of months -- and it just looks to me like, my father died, and the sun wasn't as bright, and the flowers didn't smell so good. And...I don't know. Maybe to describe it better would be that all of a sudden I left my childhood. I left that enchanted world of childhood and I was thrust into the world of grown-up, thinking that I had to look after my mother as much as I could, because I was still in school. And something just went out of me.

What I did is, I applied myself even more in school. My grades became better, and I hoped to continue my education further on.

INT: What do you think made you do better in school? Was it something in yourself that...?

EVA: I just, I was always good in school, but from being good I tried to be excellent. I tried to do everything doubly good, because that was my only avenue of...I knew my father excelled in everything, and I suppose I didn't understand it, but now I think I understand it: I wanted to be like him. Because my mother...she was exceptionally clean and very neat. But that was the sum total of her...what is the word I'm looking for? As a homemaker. She wasn't a very good cook. She couldn't bake except a challah. And some kind of a plain dough. If I ever ate anything that was a little better is when I went to Grandma's. Not so much better or richer, but a bit of variety. And besides, she was sick always, my mother. Always headaches, and always sickly. Not sick, ill, but sickly. She was never 100% healthy. So I wanted to excel, and I knew that my father wanted me to. He was proud that I was good in school, and he would have wanted me to further my education, and I knew that without Father, you had to, if you got, public school was without money, but high school, you had to pay. And I knew there is nobody. I didn't know whether Grandma would be able to pay for me, because two of her youngest children, that favorite aunt of mine, and my youngest uncle, her younger brother, she got married, and her and her husband, and that younger brother, left for Argentina. They were planning to leave for South America. Hitler had already invaded Austria, and they were talking that, and as a matter of fact, that summer when they left, he invaded Czechoslovakia. So they were talking, the people were expecting him to invade Poland, because Poland had two pieces of land that he wanted: they had Silesia, and they had Pozen. So they wanted to get away. They couldn't go anywhere else but to South America, and they went to South America. So I knew that if I **should** want to continue my education after public school, I will have to do it on my own merits. Maybe with a little bit pay, maybe without pay. Because my marks are very good. And I wanted it badly. The only thing in life that I wanted that much was education. I can **never** remember wanting anything or anybody as much.

INT: After your father died, especially?

EVA: When Father was alive, and after Father died, especially. I just loved school. Some kids don't want to go to school. I couldn't wait to. Even though I had to get up at 5:00 in the morning to be on the train at 6:00, because that was the only train that would take me to school. 6:30 I was in the city. I had to walk to school a kilometer. The train station was out of the city a little bit. I had to walk to the middle of the city. It was a town, but it was a kilometer. And I would come to school, but the, what do you call the man that watches the school and cleans?

INT: The superintendent?

EVA: The superintendent there in school, there were about two or three of us that came from out of the city to school, so he was told, in the summer not, we didn't want to go in. But in the winter he was told to let us in, because it was cold, and snow. So he would let

us in. And I would usually, some other kids would play, but I would always have my nose in a book.

INT: Do you think, looking back, that this helped you with the grief of your father, your father's death? Do you think this immersing yourself in schoolwork helped you?

EVA: This must, most of the grief that I felt after my, well, I got used to already, the two years that I was at Granny's, and my father was still very ill. That prepared me. I knew that Father will be dying one day. I knew it. I mean, I understood that much, that this is an incurable disease. In those days you couldn't cure it. I knew it. And when it finally happened, I was a little bit prepared for it. I didn't lack anything up to the war's end. I didn't lack. Whether it was the same shoes that Father bought me, whether it was the same boots, whether it was the same uniform -- we wore uniforms to school -- whether it was having money with me every day, that in case I lose my, I had a monthly pass to school, if I lose the pass. Which in the few years that I went, from '36 to '39, the three years, not from '36. I started from '34 or '35, I left at eleven, Father was ill. So about five years I went to school by train. I lost my pass once. But just in the eventuality. I always had money enough, more money than other kids. Everybody saw to it. If not Grandma, then...my mother, not. Well, she didn't have any money. She, there were so many people in the house, with maids and this and that, that she seldom did anything. She just took care of my clothing. She did, I always had already white cuffs for to sew on for the morning, the white collar, and socks, and stuff like that. She saw to it. And there were so many people to work, doing the hard work, that she was never asked. She was always considered not well.

So that was my main reason. The second reason was when my aunt -- I think I told you already, that before my father died he asked that aunt to come over to see him.

INT: To take care of you.

EVA: And he asked her. "I'm not asking you that you should, but if you can, if your husband will agree, as bad as it would be with her, being at your house, and maybe your husband won't agree to it, I would rather she has a bad uncle and a bad aunt instead of a stepfather. Because as bad as it will be, maybe you'll have children of your own, I know you will not hit her. But a stepfather might. And I don't want that to happen to my child." Because he was an orphan since he was two without a mother, and his father died, I think when he was six or nine, too, died when they had Black Death.

INT: But she went to Argentina.

EVA: Yeah, well, it never capitalized, because before she left, and she could only take me there when she becomes a citizen. She had to wait five years. She left in '38. In '39 the war broke out, and that was the end of everything.

INT: But she meant to take you, do you think? She wanted to send for you?

EVA: Yeah. She wrote me in letters, she wrote letters to me, very long ones, and I answered. I lived for those letters, and I wrote to her letters without, they looked like newspapers. And I poured my heart out to her, and she said, "Don't despair. You are still in school, until you come to me, you will be in school. When you come to me, you might be finished with high school, and you will come. I promised you, and I'm promising you. You will be here." She wrote me tales about Argentina. She wrote me, "You don't know what worth, or what esteem they hold a white girl in." And I thought to myself: wait a minute. Black people are in Africa. What do you mean, a white girl in Argentina? I asked her. She explained it to me, and I didn't understand it until I came here to Canada and to the United States, mostly in New York, there are an awful lot of people that come from Argentina. The people that were born in Argentina look like more or less Puerto Rican. Their skin is...

INT: Darker.

EVA: Like the Jews in Israel. Not the Sephardim, but the...

INT: Well, the Sephardim. They have darker skin. A little bit, black hair.

EVA: Oh, yeah. The Ashkenazi are white, and the Sephardim are...the Jews, so the girls from Argentina, they all have black hair, no girl has blonde hair, and if a European girl came with light brown hair, or with blonde hair, and white skin, it's like...A cousin of ours went away there. I don't know if my aunt had anything to do with it. The cousin had family that didn't belong to us, and my aunt went there and talked to them, and they sent her. She would have **never**, ever, ever in life gotten married. There were houses where there were three, four girls sitting, and dying maids, because if you had no dowry. If you were pretty, one would say, "The heck with the dowry. I fell in love with her, I want her. I don't care. Father, you want one with dowry? You take her. I'm taking her." But if you had no dowry, and you were not pretty, and you were not much to look at, and no education, nothing, so nobody wanted it. Sure enough, she kept on writing me. Even when she came to, I brought her for a visit when we were in Brooklyn. In '70 or the eighties. I brought her for a visit twice. And she told me that she's a multi-millionaire. She married a rich guy and he didn't know what to do with her, and she has a fantastic life.

INT: Could you tell me a little bit about what it was like up until the war? You stayed in school. You were going to school, you were living with your grandmother.

EVA: Yeah.

INT: And when did you know that things were getting bad? How did you know that Hitler was, were people talking about Hitler in your house, were people talking about...

EVA: In the house? Well, it was a middle class family. But don't forget, it was a village. One person in the whole village had a radio, so whatever he heard, the whole village heard from him, two, three days later, when he had time to come and tell

somebody or maybe he heard it on Monday. Until next Sunday he had time to sit down with his neighbor, he told me. I mean, when you're in a village, it was private property. It wasn't like, you belonged, like when the Russians came, they took it all away, and it belonged to, it wasn't a commune. So everybody attended to his land. Because summer, you had to take your stuff off, because you will not have anything to eat, and anything to feed your cattle with, or whatever it is. Horses. So everybody had work to do to prepare for the winter. And I have never seen a newspaper in the village. What I heard mostly is when I went to school. We kids didn't talk much, but in school there was a big difference. They started to teach us how to use a gas mask.

INT: What year was that? About '38?

EVA: '39. '39, already.

INT: You were fifteen.

EVA: Well, '38. '38. September, I went into first grade high school. So that was the beginning of '38 and '39. But that was, like from September to September. Except that I had, I never started the second year of high school, because in September we had war.

INT: So you were fifteen?

EVA: I wasn't fifteen yet. The war started in September, and I was to become fifteen in November. We started to, the teachers, I didn't understand it. I thought, this is what is supposed to be taught. But just an eventuality, we started to have more discussions, and a lot of propaganda about Blue Cross, and there was an organization, it was called, a Polish organization for...Poland had the Baltic, but a very small entrance to the Baltic, but they had a port city. And that was enough, as long as you could park a couple of ships, you had, it's like a window to the world. So you didn't have to pay another country to lug your stuff in and out. So I don't know. The name was so long in Polish, I don't know how to translate it into English, but it was the Polish League of Oversees Trade, or Home Trade and Oversees Trade, something like that. And a lot of kids, when you were in a classroom, every kid had to belong to an organization. It was a few pennies a year to belong. So most kids liked the Blue Cross, even way before the war, because Blue Cross always helps people. But when the war started, the big push was toward that League of Trade, with outside world, with overseas, with, we never heard so much talk about overseas as in 1939. And then at the end, before the year finished, late spring, and the beginning of the summer, before the school year finished, we were introduced to gas masks, and we knew that the war [was coming]. And all the elderly people, that one radio that was in the whole village belonged to a neighbor of ours. His daughter lives here. She's my best friend. She lives in New Jersey. She's a Polish girl. And her father.

INT: This is Jeanie?

EVA: Yeah. Jeanie's father had a radio, and he would not come once a week, but he started to come every day. And he would, you see, he couldn't listen to that radio

whenever he wanted. There was no electricity, so he had to take his, hitch up his horses to a wagon and go to the city every, he would go once a month before that. And he would go every week after the business with Hitler started. He was a terribly big Polish patriot. He hated the guts of the Russians and the Germans. So he would go to the, he had to spend half a day in the city. He had one or two big batteries. If I remember, the way he lugged them, a battery was as big as this microwave, bigger than a battery in a car. He would lug them, charge them in the city, bring them, and then he would listen every night to the news. And every time I hear him come and sit on the stoop the whole summer and discuss it with Grandfather. So he always said, "It's no good. It's no good. It's no good. I think we're going to have war. Hitler is not going to be happy. He's not only going to take Silesia from us. I think he will take us all together, because that's what I understand." So that's the way.

INT: So you would hear those conversations in the summer, with your...[grandfather]?

EVA: It sounded to me like it's still, you know, a kid. What did I know?

INT: You didn't pay attention to it?

EVA: I paid attention when I was in school more, how to use a mask. Besides, they kept drumming it into us, that our Polish army? (sarcastically) The best in the world. We not only will not give Hitler what he wants, we won't give him even one, there was a saying in Polish. The people turned it, I didn't like it, because no matter how it is, it was a homeland. And it was a free land to live for everybody, and everybody had a good life. That the Polish soldiers are so well-trained, and they are so prepared to defend their land, that they wouldn't, never mind give him what he wants the pieces of land on this north side and on the south side, but they wouldn't even give him a button from their uniform.

INT: That was the expression?

EVA: Yeah. And then in...the middle of the summer, the mobilization started a little bit. Before the war there was always, every guy who was 21 went in for two years in the army and came back. There was no war. Unless you wanted to be a professional soldier, so first of all you had to go in and have more than a public school education. Then you went to officer's schools, and you were a professional soldier. You worked yourself up like in any other land into the ranks. But otherwise, after two years you came home, and then they started to mobilize more. The last mobilization I remember was...the end of summer. It was late August, I think. They took those that just finished the army, let's say, about two or five years before, and who were not married yet.

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

EVA: When the war started, everybody up to fifty went into the army.

INT: Do you remember any anti-Semitism? Was it getting worse?

EVA: Well, anti-Semitism started in Poland in 1935 when Pilsudski died. Ritz Smigley took over.

INT: Now, who was he?

EVA: You want me to spell you the name?

INT: Yes.

EVA: He was a Polish general. I have to write it down, otherwise I...(writes Smigley's name, pause).

INT: And he took over when Pilsudski died.

EVA: Ritz Smigley. He became...actually we had a president. Pilsudski was a marshal. I don't know what he was, actually. He was called "Marshal." And then Ritz Smigley took over, and he wasn't called "Marshal." I don't know what. But the same president that we had that was president when Pilsudski was there, the same man stayed president. What was his name? (?) I think. And he stayed president. So the difference you saw is, we didn't feel it in the villages. Maybe in the towns. But I was never in the town since 1946. I was never in the town in the evening unless I was always in a school play. Then I had to stay over. I either slept over or went home with a late train, if I was not required to stay longer. And if we were really in rehearsals, then I stayed over. But I didn't take any, I had no problems. But there were talks that Jews didn't have it so good, and that Ritz Smigley -- Jews talked about it, even before the war, a couple of years before the war -- that Ritz Smigley, first of all, he didn't like Jews. He started an organization which was called, "The Camp of Polish Unity." The camp, instead of the camp, "Organization of Polish Unity." That would be the best translation. And no Jew could belong to it, and he wouldn't belong to it. Because they started to wear, whether it was special armbands, or uniforms, and he started to organize the youth. It was like, you could say a very, very light shade of gray in comparison to the black that was the Hitler Jungen. That was a very light shade of gray. But I suppose if Hitler wouldn't have invaded Poland and taken away everything, Ritz Smigley too, then he would have organized something like the Hitler Jungen. In time it was...And I remember Jewish people talking among themselves, and they said, "Yeah, Pilsudski died, and it's not the same."

INT: Did it affect you at all? Did you have any anti-Semitic incidents up till the war?

EVA: No. No, no. Well, you see, there were two high schools. Just like I couldn't go to the Catholic public school after I finished my Catholic school near the house. When I went to the city I couldn't get in there. I couldn't get into the Catholic high school. That was definitely out. Because only the crème de la crème went into high school. Who could pay 100 zlotys a year? Do you know what 100 zlotys was? It was like $100 here. In the thirties, when people here made, I don't know. I think someone told me in the

thirties a pound of roast, not roast beef, what was it called? Roast beef or...what is the other cut, you cut it in kosher delis to make a sandwich?

INT: Corned beef.

EVA: Yeah, corned beef, or there's another thing. Well, anyway, a pound of corned beef was like 75 cents. So... (pause)

INT: So you were in the Jewish public school.

EVA: Yeah. I finished the public school in Jewish. It was not, it was the same curriculum, except they had a priest coming for the religious training. We didn't have religious training. A rabbi didn't come into that school, because according to a rabbi we were goyim. We were all eating...

INT: Treif.

EVA: We were who? Girls wore dresses with sleeves up to here [shoulders]. Up to here [on the thigh], and...There was that one I told you that I started in the beginning, the Hebrew school. **There** rabbis came.

INT: That was a religious school, yeah.

EVA: But so we had a teacher who taught us Jewish history, that's it. One hour Jewish history. I think one or two hours a week. That's all we had.

INT: Were the teachers Jewish? In the Jewish school, were the teachers Jewish?

EVA: It was just Jewish children, but the curriculum was the same as in the public school.

INT: But the teachers were Polish?

EVA: Mixed. Our...what do you call the head of the school?

INT: The principal.

EVA: The principal was a Jewish old maid, never married. And there were two Ukrainian teachers, three Polish teachers.

INT: Were the teachers anti-Semitic towards the end, there? Towards the girls?

EVA: I never heard of it. I would have heard among the kids. No. Never heard. No, no, no, no. Never. They couldn't be, because the principal was Jewish. They couldn't be. She wouldn't, I suppose, allow a teacher like that to...No.

INT: Okay. So tell me what happened when the war came.

EVA: Let me just, one sentence I want to...To show you how the, the end of public school, in 1938, when I was in seventh grade public school, next to us was a Catholic school for boys. If it wouldn't be for the fence, two buildings, if it wouldn't be for the fence, we could have shared one playground. But the fence separated us. Our school did not have a lab for science, a science lab. I don't know if you call it here a science lab. In Poland you had live nature and dead nature. Dead nature, that was...what it was called. Here, live nature is zoology. And the other stuff, I suppose, is science. And we went there, every time, seventh grade started that business. Seventh or sixth. And we went, every time we had that science class, we went to the Catholic school. It was just like walking from here to there, across a yard, a big yard. And they had a beautiful lab. It was an older school. Ours was a long building, one story. They had a three or something story building, and they had a beautiful old lab. And since the first day I walked into that science room I was hooked, and I would have been most probably a science teacher or something.

I will never forget my first lesson in science. We came in, and in the middle of the lab there was a big tank of water. And the teacher says, "Well, we will start with something simple, but I want you to see what it means." She took one, we gathered, we all gathered around that tank, and we looked into it. She says, "Look at that penny." It was a copper penny. "Look at that penny, and look how big it is, and watch me throw it in. And look at the size of the penny when it will be covered (with water)." We looked in and the penny looked like double the size. And I was stricken with awe. I couldn't believe it. Then she told us, and of course, usually the kids that were good, somebody piped up, "What does it mean?" She says, "Well, this is not the only experiment, but this is the first experiment in water that we will begin with. I'll show you other experiments." She told us that this is the Greek philosopher Archimedes, and his law. That is called, that was called in Polish, the "Law of Archimedes underwater."

INT: And you still remember that.

EVA: Yeah. Because it's the first lesson. I will never forget it. I couldn't believe it. I looked at that penny. And then she took the penny out, it was the same size penny.

INT: So you liked science.

EVA: Yeah. I became hooked on it. I couldn't wait for the next week to go into that lab there. And when we started boiling things, and oh, I **loved** it, I loved it, I loved it. I just loved it. I could stay there day and night and put those tubes together. I loved it.

INT: How about math? Did you like math?

EVA: I wasn't crazy about it, but I was good at it. I just had a head for it. Somehow it came easy to me.

INT: What was your favorite subject, aside from science?

EVA: Before that? Drama.

INT: Oh, yeah. You were in all the plays, right?

EVA: I had no time to brush my teeth. G-d, I had always, when we finished one play we started another. There was a commemoration of some, Pilsudski's death, and Pilsudski's birthday. And like I told you, I guess, already, very few Jewish kids spoke a good Polish. They spoke, you see, the anti-Semitism was still remembered from the Czar's time, where people spoke Jewish. Jewish kids in the city spoke Jewish to their parents, and they played with Jewish kids. I suppose, I lived on the suburbs with my father, and I played with Polish kids, Ukrainians, and I learned it. A kid can learn ten languages at once, when it's small. And when I went to Grandma's house, there was one Jewish family, and the rest were all Christians, and I spoke the language. So it came to me very easy. And besides, I don't know. I think it was a family. Everybody on my mother's side of the family spoke a perfect Ukrainian, a perfect Polish, just like they spoke Polish. I had an uncle here, he died about six, seven years ago in Brooklyn. He came in '39 here. He married an American girl who came to visit somebody in Poland, and came here in '39 with the last ship that left Poland. And when I came here, he still spoke a perfect Polish. Besides speaking Jewish.

INT: This is Eli?

EVA: Yeah. That's Eli. And he knew how to daven very well. Grandma saw to it. Even during the First World War and everything, there was always a melamed in the house. The girls knew how to daven. I didn't, because my father already, he said, I have enough Hebrew school. The kid should get sick? Forget it. She's going to the school here.

INT: It wasn't important to him. It wasn't that important to him.

EVA: He loved me unconditionally. He said, and besides he adored his mother, like everybody who became an orphan at two, and never knew a mother. And he adored me, and he said, "She's more worth to me than anything else." He wouldn't jeopardize my...it was too far. Two kilometers to school and two kilometers back, for a little kid, six years old. And in mud up to here.

INT: Yeah. He didn't want you to do that.

EVA: Yeah, and across a river.

INT: Right. Okay. So can you tell us now about how the war started, and how it came to your town?

EVA: Well, we heard over the radio, again, the neighbor told us, that the Germans, hundreds of planes, throw bombs at Warsaw. We didn't, I mean, Warsaw was far from us. It was about, I would say, I don't know if it was, well, somewhere between 500 and 1000 kilometers from us. At least 700. So we didn't hear it.

But then one day, there was in the village a school, four class school, like a public school, for the kids, the Ukrainians and the Polish kids, in the village. Like, I was in the suburbs, four grades. They had four grades in the village. The village kids never went, even if they would have a school, they wouldn't go. The kids were needed on the farm. So that teacher of mine that I told you, the friend of my grandma's, she taught in that school, and she was one teacher, and the head of the school was an elderly teacher. We knew him, I knew him since I was born. His daughter was my age. She went with me to the school in the city, every day on the train, and his son was about two, three years older than me. He went to high school every day when he started high school before me, about three years. He must have been his last year -- high school in Poland was four years -- so he must have been on his last year of high school when the war started. He maybe finished, or he still had a year to it. I don't remember. And we were on good terms. My grandparents were highly regarded as people who worked, and are intelligent. They weren't regarded as "those Jews who make money as moneylenders." Granny never loaned money to nobody. Nobody came to her. Jeanie's father came in and needed, "You have a hundred dollars?" "Sure." But no money was lended for percentages. They had a dairy, they had a farm. They had a grocery. They made a living out of that. So mostly the dairy was very successful. So everybody knew that they worked for their upkeep. They had a beautiful house. They knew that Grandpa was in America, and came home in 1914 and brought money and bought the farm, and built a house with the American dollars. So nobody bore them any ill, that they made it of our sweat. If Granny needed someone, come time to take off the, to harvest the fields, and the people that worked steady, that wasn't enough. Because if it was...somehow without a radio, without anything, the elderly people could predict. "That will be a week without rain. So you young ones better get together, and we harvest this week."

So you had to go at 4:00 in the morning. Granny would disappear somewhere, and find the women that she knew already. There were richer people and poorer people. And the poor people, they would do their harvesting in one day. They were poor. But the rich ones, they would hire others. So Granny knew, most of all it was some of her school chums still, when she was young and they were young. They got married the same time. So she would go to them and they would always come and help. So for a week they would come every day about six, eight people. Granny would feed them. It was funny. My grandma would always send me to Jeanie's parents to borrow plates and forks and knives, because she couldn't feed them with her plates because they were kosher. And she would cook and oy. Once I took a spoon. "Don't you dare take that spoon to...this pot is kosher."

Anyway, and so they knew that the people worked. Everybody worked, and they make their money from work. They didn't bore them any ill thoughts, because they maybe make money out of their sweat. And if you hired somebody, I remember that a man who

worked a whole day -- work, you didn't look at the, very few people had clocks. Granny had a clock. Work started when the sun rose, you made breakfast, and you had a cigarette or something, you went into the field. At high noon, when the sun was right above your head, you stopped. We would deliver the meal to them, the noon meal, into the field. We would deliver. Usually Granny would get me, and another neighbor's girl, a friend of mine. She was my age, but she didn't go to the city. She finished four grades and stayed home. She was poor. She had to go to work. She would help me carry. And my uncle, who was four years older, until we found him, he would help us carry the noon meal there. And they would sit and eat the meal and then lie down in the shade somewhere under a tree, because there were scattered trees in the fields. They would lay down and rest for about an hour or what, and then go to work until sundown. Sundown they would come in, eat supper and go home. Everybody would get paid right away and go home.

So I remember, I think the women got like 80 cents for a day, and the men got one dollar. But that was in Polish money, a different currency, a different name. And I know that for a dollar you had to pay for two pounds of sugar cost a dollar. But you could get a pair of, I don't know. My boots always cost twelve, fourteen dollars, but they were imported from Czechoslovakia, boots for the winter. And the shoes for Easter, I got little pumps for Easter. They were patent leather, black patent leather, with little white socks. The shoes were about, I suppose, eight dollars, something like that. But this was expensive stuff. You could get for five dollars a pair of shoes.

INT: So...you heard that Warsaw had been bombed.

EVA: Yeah. And maybe because my grandparents were elderly people, and they have lived -- don't forget. They have lived through the First World War, and before the First World War, there were Cossacks. There were pogroms on Jews **always**. There was (?), there were all kinds of Ukrainian bastards. I shouldn't have used that word, I'm sorry. And then the war came, and the war lasted from '14 to '20. And during the war they had, when the war, I don't know when it was, but Granny spoke that before they were in Russia, or after the Czar went out, and Poland came into being, they had Franz Josef. They had...the Kaiser, the Kaiser, they had a golden life under him, they said. For a short while. And then Hungary took over for a short while. They had a mixture there, until it got settled in 1920, I don't know who did it. There was no League of Nations. Maybe there was in those days. Maybe I learned it and I forgot. But Poland got back what the Czar took away. And even though it was considered Ukraina, half of Ukraina Russia took away, the Bolsheviks, the Soviets took away, and the other half Poland took back, because it was hers.

INT: And that's the part where you were.

EVA: Yeah. And they always had some kind of war. So to them, when Poland came into being, in five years and five years and five years went by, and it was quiet, and nobody threw stones at you, and nobody said, "You dirty Jew, get out of that village," or something, it was really a paradise living. It was a good living. But they kept on talking.

But you see, like I say, once a week, Jeanie's father would come in and tell us what the news says, or something like this, and say that, he was a great believer in the Bible. He would always say, "You see what I heard?" To my grandfather. "What I heard yesterday right in the news, I read in the Bible a year ago. Do you remember I told you that? That will happen. And it will happen." And he kept, I remember ever since I remember him talking to my grandfather, sitting on the stoop there, when the sun was down, after supper, and he would say, "Mark my words if we live long enough. Communism will take away the whole world. Take over the world." And Grandfather used to say to him -- his name was Leon -- "Oh, come on, Leon. You're talking nonsense." He said, "You mark my words." He came to visit. Jeanie brought him here. He wanted to come here for the Bicentennial. She brought him here. He's retired long ago. Dead already. And he came, and I reminded him of that. And he said, "And honey, I will not live to that day," he said to me. "But you are still young. You will see communism disappear. It will take over the world, and it will disappear. It will never disappear in Russia," he says. "And blood will be running like a river." And he always said, "And so help me G-d, that the Bible said, that after all the nations in this world will fight, the winner of all the wars at the end, when peace, good peace will settle, a small nation from the east will be the winner." Well, the Jews always interpreted that that's Israel.

So they were talking about war. I was living for the letters from my aunt from Argentina. Vacation time, Grandma would say, "What are you doing?" I said, "What do you want me to do?" There were so many people to work, I never did anything vacation. So she said, "Well, why don't you go out and watch the cows in the meadow." Because there were no borders.

INT: No fences.

EVA: No fences. So she said, well, Jeanie would watch her cows, we would get together. The cows would eat here or there, whether on her side or on mine, we would watch them, and we would talk about dates and this and that.

INT: Were you dating then? Did you have boyfriends?

EVA: Who was dating? At fifteen, nobody dated. What are you kidding? I wasn't even fifteen yet. I had, that was the summer I got my first pair of pumps for Easter, that had about an inch heel. It wasn't an inch. Maybe it was an inch and a half. But I cried the whole winter. I said, "If I don't get that, I don't want nothing. I will walk barefoot." I don't want anything.

INT: You really wanted those shoes.

EVA: And my mother said, "Not on your life." But Granny, Granny is a granny, you know? She said, and then what happened, do you think? When I got those shoes, they looked stupid with white socks! But I wouldn't get silk stockings, because who ever heard of a kid wearing silk stockings?

INT: So they were useless, your shoes, huh? (laughs)

EVA: I wear them barefoot mostly, but a package came. The family, I told you my grandfather promised my great-grandmother, when he married my grandmother, that he will marry the two younger sisters of her, like they say, he will bring them into, he will help them get on their feet, marry them off. They were sending packages always. Even though they came to visit, and they saw that the sister's doing good, but their mother was still alive, so they always, my great-granny always got five dollars every month. That was a lot of money in Poland. You changed it into Polish money, it was 25 zlotys. It was a mountain of money. You had to work 25 days for 25 zlotys.

And when a package came, so of course, I was the only girl. Whatever they sent for little girls, I got it. And I don't know how, my mother took some stockings, so there were some leftover stockings. So I would wear those stockings.

INT: With your new shoes.

EVA: I didn't wear them much. Where did I go? The war started. There was nowhere to go.

INT: But let me ask you -- you were writing to your aunt, and you were waiting for her letters. And you had made up in your mind, obviously, that you wanted to go live with her, even though your mother was still, you were willing to leave your mother and go live with your aunt.

EVA: Because, I don't know. Mother, somehow about two years after Father died, Mother, for some reason up to the war, Mother always wore dark clothing. Even though, I hate to say it, I don't know if she was faithful to my father 100%. Being now a grown woman, maybe because he was my father, and I idolized him, but I don't ever remember Father even glancing at another woman, and he was, we packed up the pictures, but you saw them last week. He was a good-looking man, a very intelligent man, and he was the most educated in the **whole** family. The whole, all the son-in-laws and everybody. And I don't see no reason why she, but I don't think, but somehow she wore always dark clothes.

But I don't know. Granny, maybe Granny would go always with the dairy twice a week to the city to deliver the kosher dairy, and she always had talks with Mother, I don't know when and how, but I remember that one day Mother went to, she had a sister in the city. Two sisters, one in a small city, one in the one near us, the bigger one. And she came home and she said to me, "How would you feel if I got married?" I said, "Whatever you want to do, Mom. It doesn't bother me." I said, "Who are you going to marry?" She says, "Well, I met a man. He is a tailor, he makes a wonderful living. A good tailor. And in the middle of the town," she says. Here in America, the suburbs are the rich, and the...

INT: It was the opposite there.

EVA: The urban area is for poor. There, the richer you were, the more in the middle of the city you lived. The richest houses were in the middle, and in the suburbs the poor people lived. So she said, "He has a beautiful establishment in the middle of the city, in the center. Has his own two-story house. On the top he lives, on the bottom is the establishment." So I said, "What's the problem?" She says, "He's a good-looking man, not bad, but he is... " How did she say it? "He can't talk." I said, "What do you mean he can't talk?" "He's deaf," she said.

We had a deaf neighbor. We had a neighbor, where I lived with my parents in the suburbs, a neighbor, a Ukrainian woman. When her brother came to visit her, they were [moving their hands]. And I said to my mother once, "What is she doing [with her hands]?" She said, "Well, he's deaf, she's deaf, and they talk with their hands." So it's the first time I saw somebody talk with their hands, I maybe was four, five years old. So I said, "Well, it's up to you." Well, most probably nothing panned out, because she never went to the city to see him anymore. And she said, "But how would you feel? You wouldn't have any problem with going to school, with having good clothes, with having an education." And I said, "Mom, don't worry about me. As it is, sooner or later I'm going to go to Argentina, so you take care of yourself. Do whatever you want. You're still young."

INT: But how did you make up your mind to do that? Something inside you...

EVA: Do what?

INT: To go to Argentina. I mean, you were still...

EVA: Because my aunt always said to me, when she was leaving, she said -- I was crying bitterly. I thought that that's the second worst day of my life. First when my father died, and then she's leaving. She was only ten years older than me, and I felt like, she was like a sister to me. And she was...whatever she had, she split it with me. From when I remember.

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

EVA: ...more than halfway, she would meet us, and carry me on her shoulders. She didn't know what to do with me. I had to sleep with her, I had to eat with her, go with her everywhere. Whatever.

INT: So you were very, very close with her.

EVA: Very attached to her, like an older sister. I adored her. And she adored me.

INT: So it didn't matter to you whether your mother got married or not, because you were planning on leaving anyway.

EVA: No, it didn't. It didn't. And besides, she wrote me such, and later on I realized. I mean, if that cousin, that ugly cousin, without a figure, without a face, could get a millionaire for a husband, I suppose I could get somebody who at least makes a good living. And I didn't want to. I didn't care if I get married. I just wanted to be able to go to school. That's all that mattered to me. That's all that mattered to me, that I continue with my schooling, and then I'll see who I marry. What I'll be, I didn't know. But I just wanted to go to school. That's all.

So like I said before, the bombs are falling on Warsaw. Then one day, the head of the school in the village came in, and I saw him. I was standing outside, and Granny was inside, and I said to Granny, the window's open, "The schoolmaster is running, and going to us," and he was a fat man. And like this, [waving his arms, huffing and puffing] and when he came near I said, "He's all sweaty. I don't know what happened. Maybe they're throwing everybody..." He lived near the station. "Maybe they fall a bomb and we don't know on the station."

So he came in and he says to my granny, she had on one side of the house, I told you, was a big room with a kitchen. The other side, a big fancy dining room, and a bedroom. So he said, "I need a room." And Grandma says, "For what?" He said, "We have a whole, we have, people are running away because some cities close to the German border were taken away by the Germans, and we people are running away, and these are decent Polish people. I have," he said, "a few families of captains' wives with children, with what, and I need a room." And Grandma said, "But we are so many people. And my daughter from the city told me that she's coming, because they say they will be bombing the city." So he grabbed my grandmother, whom he **knew**. They grew up together, and they were always **friendly**. He grabbed her by the dress and said, "You Jews are all the same. Communists! You're waiting for the communists to come!" And Grandma says to him, "What are you talking about? Since when was I a communist, or anybody in my family? I don't know what you're talking about. I'll give you a room. All right." So he turned around and went out. I don't know whether he realized that he made a mistake, or he thought to himself, "Who knows?" And we didn't know yet that Russia will come. Everybody only knew that Germany will be taking over the whole of Poland. And he swore and turned around and went out and, I don't know if the same day, or the next day in the morning the train came into the station, and I don't know what he did. But he brought to us a colonel's wife with a daughter. Luggage -- the bedroom was too small for their luggage. And they came from the station, they were picked up with some kind of a -- military station wagon or something, looked like -- brought them, similar to a jeep, but it wasn't yet like a jeep, you know? Brought them, and unloaded them, and brought them in. And I had to take my clothes out of the closet, give them the closet, and she complained that it's too hot, so I opened the windows and stuff like this. And then Grandma, I don't know, most probably offered them something to eat. And there was a bed, she took over the bed, and there was a couch, so one of them slept, the daughter, on the couch. And we are all squeezed together in the rest.

And then next day we had to go and do something in the fields, because most of the young people were taken into the army. So every available woman, whoever, old, young, men, went, whoever could went into the fields to finish the harvest. And there were potatoes to gather and stuff to gather. Beets, potatoes. And we were all in the fields, and we come in in the evening, and that woman comes out. Her daughter was, the whole day she was sitting, putting polish on her nails and on her toes. And perfume was reeking all over the house. And she says to my grandmother, "Do you know that we didn't eat the whole day?" And Grandma says, "For heaven's sakes, why? I showed you before I left. You open that door." There was like what they called, I think it was called in England a scullery. It wasn't a kitchen, it was like, next to the kitchen. "I showed you there are eggs. There's butter. I cannot keep it in the kitchen," she says. "It would melt. But in there it's cool. And there's bread." "But something to **cook**," she says. "We need some cooked food." So Grandma says, "The garden is all around the house. You could have taken out some potatoes, or there are string beans, there are sweet peas. Everything is there." "I don't know how to cook!" So Grandma, after a whole day's work, had to go and cook for her.

And by nightfall, and next day, the Polish army started to march. And the **whole** night the Polish army marched. And when people asked them, "Where are you going?" they said, "We don't know. We just were told to come this way." They were walking, there was a third village about three kilometers from us. There was a village, and they said there is a very small airstrip in that village that was built. I think they built it specially before the war for a small airplane to land. That they have to walk to that airstrip there. And the army was walking. But continuously. Hour after hour, army and army walking, and pulling cannons, and pulling whatnot. I haven't seen a single tank, with all that we were told that there are so many tanks Poland has, I hadn't seen a single tank. Only army, or some of the cavalry. Nothing else. And when daybreak came, I woke up, and of course Grandma says, "We are not going to go into the fields with all that army around us. Who the hell knows what's happening?" And we started to hear noises, late at night, and they said that bombs are falling on the city, the one I went to school, about ten kilometers from the village. That a few bombs were falling there, and that the Germans have taken the city already. And that woman got up about 10:00, that colonel's wife, and she went over and stopped one officer. You know, every unit had some kind of an officer, and she stopped him and he said, "I'm sorry, Ma'am, I cannot tell you nothing." She says, "I am this and this colonel's wife." And he says, "Oh, yes?" So he called her on the side, and I was leaning out the window, and I heard what he told her. He says, "Ma'am, I don't know where your husband is, but we are going all, we were told to go in," it was like southeast. A little bit east, but mostly south, to Rumania. Towards the Rumanian border. "Because Hitler has taken over already two-thirds of Poland." And from what I heard he said, "I'm not in the high ranks." He looked like a young officer. Not a very big rank. He said that, "The Russians are coming from the east. And if you value your life, you get your whatever it is together, and the next unit comes over with an officer, you ask them, they should take you with them. Because you cannot go back where you [came from]." She came from all the way west Poland. It was like, we are here, and she came from the Pacific side of America. The whole west side. And she ran in and started to pack, and after lunch she was gone. She ate something with her

daughter, and then she stopped some, and he organized, I don't know where he got, some kind of a jeep or something, and she loaded up and she went away. And I was so glad! I had my bed back, and I had my room back, and I was glad. So that was the first taste of war.

And after that army kept on walking for about two days and two nights, and then finally stopped. And they said the town was already really taken over by the Germans, and they will be here tomorrow. And you heard shooting and shooting and shooting. The sky was alight with flying cannon fire. Usually like a comet, it streaks the sky. So the whole village, by ourselves, the village head said that it would be better if we would go into the, there were, you know, big forests, little forests. If we go to the little forest behind the village, instead of being here, maybe it will hit some house and it will burn, so somebody will get killed. So we all went away -- the Ukrainians, the Polacks, and us, too. Nobody touched us. We went with everybody, and we spent a night in the forest. We took some stuff, we slept, it was warm, it was night. We slept.

Next day we came back in the morning. It got quiet. No more shooting. Somebody most probably sneaked into the village early, or came running back. "The Germans are in the village." "How are they?" "They are very nice. They are washing themselves." We came home, and the first thing, we came into our house. When you came to the village from the city, Granny's house was the first one. And there was a road. On this side of the road was the house, and you crossed the road. It was a narrow road, just for two wagons to pass. Was Granny's garden, and by the beginning of the garden, there was a well. And the Germans were surrounding the well, and they were washing their socks. And they were changing and they were shaving, and they were everything. And I remember Granny saying, whether she said it to my aunt, or to my mother, or... she said, "Well," she says, "The Germans will always be Germans. They were clean when the Kaiser was here, and now they're clean under Hitler, too." So she says, "They're very clean." They were hungry, and Granny asked them if they want something to eat, and they said, "No, thank you. The cook is cooking, and we will be eating. We have our food." But I don't know what they asked. She gave them, and she spoke German to them, because she remembered still.

And then...

INT: Well, how did you feel about seeing Germans on your farm? You weren't afraid?

EVA: I didn't like their uniforms, because they were kind of grayish, and I was used to a green uniform. Army was in a green uniform. I didn't like their uniforms, and I didn't understand what they talk, nothing. And you know, I understood. I thought to myself, "Well, who the hell knows if they're nice, or not nice?" I didn't go out. Granny talked to them. They didn't come into the house. They behaved themselves, and then they went away. And we never saw. They were in there a few hours. They went away, we never saw any more Germans, until they take over. Then the Russians came. Next day we had the Russians. And when the Russians came, we had freedom. Every Jew was, the minute they heard you are Jewish, they became your friend. Every Jew was a friend.

INT: The very next day the Russians came in?

EVA: Yeah. And they were with us for two years.

INT: So they took over your part of Poland. And how did that change your life, when the Russians came?

EVA: It became very jolly. Because the Russians, like the Germans stopped and right away looked for a pail of water to wash themselves and wash their socks. The Russians make room, and somebody plays on a harmonica, and dance and sing. Jolly, jolly, jolly. And me, I was fifteen by that time, close to fifteen. My friend Jeanie and the other one that didn't go to school with us, and we danced and we...and I didn't understand a word, either, what they said. The first soldier came and said to me in Russian, "What nationality are you?" And I hid behind my grandma. And Grandma laughed and said, "Aren't you too old to hide behind my skirts?" she said. "Aren't you a little too old? You're as tall as me." And I said, "I don't know what the heck he's asking me." "He's asking you what kind of a nationality are you." I said, "I don't know. What kind of nationality? I never heard of the word nationality. I knew I'm Jewish, I was born in Poland." She says, "Well, so you're Polish nationality." But I said, "How do I say it?" Well, she says, "You'll learn."

And they distributed, they came and then they, seems they picked our village for more or less like a headquarters, over quite a big portion of the, there were like, I would say ten villages all around. They picked us because we had a station in the train, in the railroad, so they picked our village, and they established themselves there. They were there the whole winter until the war in Finlandia broke out, and they went to Finland. They were the whole winter, and they took over, and they came in very politely, asked Granny. Very few, like Jeanie's house, our house, there were about, I don't know if there were ten houses in the whole village that had floors. Most were just earthen floors. There was no floor, just earth. And he said, "I have," he said, "A few officers. We would like to..." So Granny says, "Well, I can give you the small bedroom. My daughter and her daughter," like my mother and me, "sleep. This room I sleep with my husband." And he said, "No, no. We have our own sleeping. We have cots. We want to open them up." So she said, "You can have that big dining room." So she gave them, and they...One thing. The first Russian soldier that came up and asked me what kind of a nationality I am, finally Nana told him that I'm Jewish, and she's Jewish. And he took his hat off and said, "How are you? Can we do something for you?" She says, "No, thank you." And he said, "I have some sugar." They came from Russia, where everything was always on...

INT: Rations.

EVA: Rationed. And he says, "I have sugar. Do you need some sugar?" And Granny says, "No, thank you. We have enough sugar." It was...a very happy time.

INT: Could you still go to school? You could still go to school? That wasn't interrupted?

EVA: No. My mother got sick. My mother got sick. I couldn't go. The schools changed. There was no high school. They had in Russia, they have it till today. You start school from first grade, and you go for ten years in school, and then you go, it's called an institute. You go to that institute, and I don't know if it's college or not. I don't think so.

INT: Is that like gymnasium?

EVA: Gymnasium is high school. Gymnasium is in Polish. In Russia there was no gymnasium. There was institute. You went for ten years. Well, you see, in Russia, in Poland there was no law yet like that. Kids that were needed at home finished fourth grade and stayed at home. And those that could afford to went further. But in Russia, you were not allowed to leave school till you finished ten grades. That's why in Poland there was still a lot of illiterate Ukrainians. A lot of illiterate. Take my granny. She could count in her head better than I could with my pen, but she could daven and read the siddur. But she couldn't read Polish. She couldn't write Polish. And in the whole village? Very few people knew how to write or read. Illiteracy was big. But every Russian who came knew how to read. There was a law, you had to finish ten grades. All schooling, with high education, with universities, without money. I don't know today by Yeltsin, but when communism was there.

INT: And you had finished ten grades already, is that it?

EVA: No, I had eight grades finished. But we became all very, it was a lot of...When the Russians lived with us, and then when they went to Finlandia, when they went to Finland, my mother's....

INT: What year was that, excuse me?

EVA: They went in 1940. The winter of 1940. They stayed with us till the end of winter. Well, winter wasn't finished like here in March. Winter went on till, I mean, it got a little bit warmer in April, but February, March was still very cold. They went in February. They came in September, they went away, I think, the beginning of February. They went to Finland. And they came back, but not all of them. Even those that stayed with us, one was missing. They paid dearly for Finland, when they took it over. They not only took over Finland -- they took Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All those four small countries they took over. There was that, I think, what was it called, the Maginate Line? And they said that they will never be able to take it. They did take it. It was one of those, Hitler had a line, I forgot what it was named. But in the north was the Maginate Line, that nobody would, and they paid dearly. An awful lot of Russians died there. It was a special, built underground bunker line, with all kinds of gizmos on the top of it that nobody could penetrate. But they took it. They paid very dearly for it, but they took it.

INT: So in that war they took over Finland, and Estonia, Latvian and Lithuania.

EVA: Yeah, all those four little countries. They went, they took over and the Scandinavian countries only, they went as far as, they stopped in front of Sweden and Norway. All the four small ones before them they took away. Like they took, you see, let's say this is the map of Poland. This is the east side of Poland. Here it went down, here it went down. And up here was Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. And here was a thing that jutted out up here, and jutted into the Baltic Sea. That was Norway and Sweden. These were bigger countries, already. And they knew that if they put one foot in there, Hitler will come from this side and will take it away. So they didn't, they were not ready to start a war with Hitler. But until they took, Hitler started with them, so they took away those four small countries, and they incorporated it into Poland.

INT: I see. So they left in the winter.

EVA: Yeah, and my mother's younger sister, who was married into a small little town, married a very wealthy man who had an import business. Food store, but only imported stuff, like olive oil and imported tea, imported all kinds of stuff. That was considered a very lucrative business, and she was very rich. And first of all, they started to weed out all those, some Polish people that were bad, that behaved very badly with people that worked for them, that were back to the Ukrainians, or to the Jews, or stuff like that, from our village, one man was taken away, right away, and within a month he was shot. There was right away, they took him to court. They had a court, and shot within a month. But he was a bastard. Everybody wanted him dead. Young and old.

And that was right at the beginning. Later on when they settled themselves down, they were already with us, the Russians, for about half a year, a year, they already knew who in the village was rich. Like I joined, what did I know? I didn't know anything. Everybody went to become a, there was one organization for the youngsters. There was a club. Everybody wanted to go dancing to the club. But you couldn't go dancing. You had to become a member of the organization. The organization was a (?). What do I know? To me it's a name. I didn't know **what** it meant. It meant a young communist. So I joined, and the one that was poor and couldn't go to school with us, but I was considered, by that time Granny wasn't rich already. They knew, I mean, everyone in the village knew that Granny sold out. When my aunt and my youngest uncle went away to Argentina, she gave them each 5,000 zlotys. She sold out most of the land. And she sold out the dairy, and she only left, and she sold out, they had a...beer thingamajig. I told you, they sold beer and sandwiches. She left only the grocery. And the grocery became very small, and a little bit of land, and it was enough for her. Just two horses, and two cows. And I mean, Granny was already in her fifties, and Grandpa was in high fifties. Granny fifty about, I suppose. And they left themselves what they needed. I suppose they had some money saved up. But they knew that I am an orphan. And I have nothing, just a sick mother. So they took me in.

We went all in one evening to become members of that club there. Me, the other one was Jeannine, and Jeanie. So Jeannine and me within a second, they had our names there. You just give your name, and the man that worked there knew already whom he should, he had a list. And when it came to Jeanie, he said, "I'm sorry. You're not on the list. We cannot take you." She cried, poor thing, going home, the whole way. And I told her, "When we will have a dance, I'll smuggle you into it." I didn't even know. We didn't know what it was all about. But Jeanie knew, but she didn't want to say nothing. Her father knew that they wanted, they started to weed out people that will go to Siberia. And in that small town where my mother's younger sister lived, it was the sister right next after my mother born. Her name was Leah, she was a beautiful girl. They were marked for Siberia, so she ran away from there, came to Grandma to the town, to the village, and from what I understand, that they paid off mountains of money. The head of the village, and the head of that whole commission, the Russian, who beated out everybody. And for what, I ask you? She had three boys. When Hitler killed them, the oldest was fifteen and the youngest was six. Out of those three boys, one of these would be alive if she would be in Siberia. Take a look at my husband. His brother came back with three kids. He's dead, the kids are still alive. Paid off. They nearly sold their shirts. Paid off not to go to Siberia. The kids went to school.

And my mother, that trauma that her sister, the word "Siberia" sent shivers through everybody. I mean, you read it. We read it in the history books when we learned the Polish history in school. Siberia, that was hell on earth. There was no worse place. We didn't know about concentration camps. To compare to a concentration camp, to compare to Dachau, Siberia was a pleasure place to go. So Mother became, had a nervous breakdown again, and started to curse the Russians, and everybody, the Russians came back from Finland, and they came to us, and Grandma says, "I'm sorry, my daughter in the town had nothing to eat. She has no work, I had to take her in. I have no place for you anymore." So he said, well there was the whole head, the oldest, the officer, who said, "Well, the youngsters I'll locate somewhere, but maybe I could just put up a cot." And she said, "Yeah, you can put up a cot." So he stayed with us. He was about 45 years old.

And he bought me, you couldn't get nothing. I couldn't get shoes. I think I told you, when the war started, Grandma gave me, she said, "Well, it's already September. Here is fifteen zlotys. Go get yourself a pair of boots before the winter, because your foot grew again." And I came back, I said, "There are no boots." And Grandma says, "What kind of stories are you telling me? What do you mean there's no boots?" I said, "Granny." So she said, "Maybe it wasn't your size. If one store was sold out, you could have gone," there were so many stores loaded with merchandise like here. They were yellowing in the sun in the window. I said, "Every store is empty, like even the shelves are gone." Granny couldn't understand it. We couldn't understand it. We never saw it, because before the war in Poland...So they brought me from their army PX stores, they brought me, what did I care if I had new boots? They were playing, I was dancing, and I had long braids, and he bought me ribbons for my braids. And you couldn't get even ribbons. But he came home, he heard me talk that I cannot get ribbons. So he brought me about ten colors of ribbons, about five yards of each.

So Mother got sick again. We kept her in the house, and it got to the point where she started to curse at the Russians, and her younger sister, my aunt, started to cry. "Mom, she's cursing." And my mother knew Russian. She remembered it from the First World War. She knew Russian. She was cursing them. "You bastards! You want to take my sister! You communist, you bastard!" And she said, "G-d in heaven, they will take us away any night now, Mom." And she simply went off her rocker.

So the winter came. And the army, there were very few army men left in the village, because the front, Hitler wasn't here, and there was no war, it was quiet, so very few were left. They were just manning the transports to and from the station. And in the winter she had one of those very strong attacks. She would have lucid days. A week would go by, and Mother would say to me, "My poor child, what am I doing to you? I know I didn't have a good day yesterday. Did I hit you?" And I said, "Mom, you didn't hit me." And everybody kept on saying, "You're not afraid to sleep with your mother?" I said, "Why should I be afraid? My mother won't hurt me."

Well, she had such a bad dream, most probably. In the middle of the night, she jumped off the bed. The windows for the winter, you put in double windows. In the summer you took them out. The windows were double windows. She put her fist through the windowpane and broke **two** windowpanes, and cut most probably one of the main arteries. We couldn't stop...I ran to the other side of the house. I got Granny. We couldn't stop, and Granny took a -- I don't remember what it was, but it looked like a half of a sheet -- and wrapped her arm, and said to me, "Get her out, because if Grandfather will get up and see the broken window, and I don't know where we will get glass to fix it even." So she said, "Take her to the neighbor's." So I took her to the Ukrainian neighbor. And right away after it happened, Mother became lucid and started to cry. Snow till here (chest high) and we walked to the neighbor's house about like From Rita to Linda (one block) and I knocked, the neighbor let us in. You know, people always had some kind of remedies without their doctors. They had their own remedies. She put something on, the bleeding stopped. She held Mother's head. Mother cried herself to sleep for about three hours.

And after that, I came home next morning, and I said, "Does Grandfather know?" She said, "Grandfather knows, but we will have to take Mom to a hospital, honey. And I'm sorry, but I have nobody to take her. You will." I said, "But there's no..."

(END TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO)

EVA: To [the hospital] in Lwow.

INT: How far was Lwow from you?

EVA: It was, I would say, about 100 kilometers south of us. It was the second big city in Poland. It was spelled L-w-o-w. And she said, "We will have to get a special permission." Because only the army was allowed to, and they were sending in reinforcements already. I suppose they had some spy business already, and they knew that the Germans might invade them. So the army started to come back, more army, and they were building bunkers. And we were only thirteen kilometers from the Russian/German border. And we asked a friend of my uncle's that went to America, a friend of his, a young Ukrainian, Grandma went and talked to him, and he said he will go with me to Lwow.

And I took my mother. (pause, sighs) And we came to there. It took us a whole night till we came there. And then you couldn't, it was a very big city. You had to walk from the station to the hospital, and then we brought her to that hospital, and you couldn't get on a train without a permission, you couldn't go into a hospital without a permission. Money was nothing. People, when they couldn't light a cigarette, they took a piece of paper money and lit the cigarette with paper money from the stove.

I was then sixteen, I think. We got to there, and Mother was lucid. "Where are we going?" I said, "We are going, Mom, to a hospital, and you will be examined." I was scared to tell her that we might leave her there, and I thought maybe they won't. I was hoping they won't. Then we got to the hospital, and we came into a reception room. We came in, and -- how much time do I have?

INT: You're fine.

EVA: Do I have about fifteen minutes, because what I'm going to tell you now, I cannot interrupt.

INT: I'm not going to stop you. Of course not.

EVA: Then she...I gave that piece of paper I had from home, from the doctor there, it was the regional doctor. And she read it and she says, "Wait here." Then two people came out, and they say to Mother, "Come with us." And Mother said to me, "Would you come with me, honey?" And they said -- they were bastards. Polacks, Ukrainians. They were not Russians. They were Ukrainians, I think, and they said, "Nobody can come with you. You come with us alone. We have to weigh you, we have to give you things to dress." And my mother turned around and slapped that man that helped me bring her there. I was too young to travel so far. Grandma was afraid, so he went. He was about thirty-something years old. Slapped him. "You bastard. You brought me here. You're gonna leave me here. That's why you brought me here, right? And you were my friend." And when they saw that they simply grabbed my mother. And my mother started to cry. You see, she had flashes like that. She slapped him one minute and was, I knew she's out of control again. And then in the split of a second, she said to me, "My child, where did you bring me?" And I said, "Mom, you'll be all right. Just go with them."

Well, they slammed the door, they took her, and they brought her back in about fifteen minutes, and if I wouldn't know it's my mother, I wouldn't have recognized her. She had (pause) she had black hair, a lot of it. Her head was completely bald. They shaved off her hair. And tears, she couldn't even talk loud to me. She was dressed in a white, some kind of a white gown with long sleeves. I figured that the sleeves are overlong. What I understand now is they must have tied the sleeves later. Her head was shaved, and she couldn't even, I know she was choking with tears. They were streaming down her face. (crying) And she said, "Honey, where did you bring me? Please take me home. Don't leave me here." And I said to the doctor, "Why did you take her hair off?" He said, "She has to stay." We were told in that paper that she has to be admitted, but if that didn't help, he said, "Why did she slap that man? She slapped him for nothing. She's violent. We have to take her."

I tried to keep from crying. (crying) I went over to her, I put my arms around her, even though I was never, I don't ever remember Mother putting her arms around me and hugging and kissing, like I did with my father, but I put my arms around her. She was only in her thirties. I was born, my mother was twenty, I think. And when I was sixteen, so she must have been about 36. And she looked like a young little girl. And I said, "Can I go?" And the man said, "No." But there was a woman standing, and she said, "Okay, honey, you can come with us."

And I went in. And we went through one room, another room, and then we went into a corridor. It wasn't a corridor. It was like in those stately homes, you come in and you see the entrance, the hall in the middle, and all the rooms go up, up, up on stairways. And the middle is empty all the way to the ceiling. And when I came into that hall, and we reached the middle of the hall, there were stairs on both sides to go up. The building was, I think, three or four stories. And I heard sounds in my life which, for the second time I heard sounds like that is when I saw "The Snake Pit," with Olivia de Havilland. One room, people were laughing hysterically, the next room people were **shrieking**, the third room you hear people, "She's tearing out my hair! Matron, please, she's tearing out my hair!" And I said to that woman, I said, she said, "Honey, you cannot go any further." (Crying) I said, "How can I **leave** her here?" She says, "Honey, I'm sorry. If you don't leave her, she will not get better." And my mother cried. She was completely lucid. And I said, "Mommy, I'm not going to leave you here long. You're not going to go into that..." She says, "Listen to...where are you **leaving** me?" And I said, "You're not going to go into that bad room, Mommy. You're not like those other people." And then she walked up the stairs and I... (pause, crying). I thought that I'm leaving my mother somewhere in hell. (pause)

Sure enough, that was...the end of summer, I think. (pause) It was summer and, the beginning or the end of summer, '41. The beginning of summer, I think, '41. And the fall of '41, the Germans came in. We just started to hear the shooting at night. The...sky was, towns were burning, and it took only one night. The Russians were here. The next morning we had the Germans, and they stayed with us. And the Germans were with us for a half a year. And one day I just looked up down the street, and there was Mother coming. She had like a little crew cut. And I said to Granny, "Mother's coming." She

says, "I don't believe it." And I said, "Yes." And she came in, with a matron. And she came in and she said to the matron, "You see? I told you. I have a mother, a father, and this is my daughter. You didn't believe me." And she says, "You really have a nice family." And Granny, well, we hugged her and kissed her and she looked very skinny, and very pale. And the matron says, Granny said, "Do you want to sleep over?" She said, "No, I have a train, sometime before the nightfall, I'm going back. Because it would take me a whole night again." And I remember Granny asking her how come they released her. She said, "Well," -- I heard her say to Granny -- "I don't know. First of all, she had a lot of treatments, and she is better. And she kept on saying that she has a family. So we decided to bring her home, and besides," she says, "they're trying to get out the Jewish sick people," she says. So she brought her home.

So she was all right for a few months. She was all right. And then she heard in the house that the Germans are killing people. This town had a ghetto and they're all killed out. The next town had a ghetto, all killed out. And she became very violent again, and every time she would see the German soldiers -- the army stayed only one night in our village, and they went away further to the...the front kept on running so fast that within a month they were near Kiev already, on the Russian territory. They took all Poland away. And...

INT: What year was this, I'm sorry?

EVA: Pardon?

INT: What year was this?

EVA: That was the winter of '41. '41-'42. And, (sighs) the Germans that were left, the trains kept only running full of soldiers. The wounded soldiers back, and the fresh ones to the front. And the front kept on going, and you heard that every week they are, another big town in Russia taken. At the end of the winter they were already deep, deep into Russia. And my mother, and she heard discussions about killing Jews and killing Jews and killing Jews, ghettos and this and that. The only Germans we had in the village were those, they didn't trust nobody to mind the station, because the Ukrainians were the bastards. The Ukrainians. Up till then, when the Russians were there, it was considered Ukraina, but a part of Russia. It was a Russian republic. When the Germans came, it was a separate country right away. They had, Poland, like this was the border between east and west Poland. This was Poland. They had their money, Ukraina where we lived had their own money. They printed money, they had their own president, they had everything. And what the Germans didn't do, the Ukrainians did to the Jews. And they didn't trust nobody, the Germans, so they minded the station, and they had posted guards all over the whole railroad, as far as from town to town, there were always guards watching the railroad, because anybody can put a grenade and disrupt the whole thing. So those Germans would come in, sometimes to Granny's house. And I was a young, pretty girl, and there was one young German, he started to come in. I forget what, I think his name was Helmut. And he said that he has a wife and a young child in Germany, but he was wounded already, and he's kind of behind. He was wearing civilian clothes like the railroad people wear here clothes. He had a navy blue uniform. And he started to flirt

with me, and I said to him, "How dare you flirt with me? You have a wife and this." He says, "I'm not telling you that I...I'm just talking to you. I'm young, you're young. I have nobody to talk to," he said. "And the others," he says, "in the village, they are like wild," he says. "They're all barefoot and dirty, and your house is clean." Granny was sick, and she had some infection in her leg, and it got infected. He brought her medicine to put on for this. And we figured that they are kind of nice. But we knew that they're doing bad things.

And Mother started to cursing the Germans. And it got worse and worse and worse, and finally sometimes an army unit would stop by. And one German simply, the army unit stopped just to feed their horses. There were just about ten of them. And one came into the house and says he needs -- that was the norm of the day -- he needs two wedding rings. He wants to get married, and he needs for him and for his bride. And my grandma says, "I don't have a wedding ring." So my mother, she says, "She lost her husband years ago. She doesn't have a wedding ring." And my aunt. And my aunt says, "We gave away a wedding ring. Last week somebody came in and I gave him my wedding ring." So he takes out his, what do you call that short army knife? Like a stiletto. He takes it out, he takes it out and wants to just **jab** her. And we all started to yell. And scream. And I don't know, by the grace of G-d, Grandma says, "I have two nice pillows if you want, down pillows." So he took all the pillows away. But that was normal. To kill a Jew, it was like killing a dog. I think a dog you couldn't kill. And he went away. And Mother started cursing him, and Grandma says, "Well, we have to get Mom to the hospital again."

So again, me and that Ukrainian guy went, and I left her there for the second time. And I didn't know that she is dead until a year after. Not a year. She was taken away, it was...I don't remember. About a half a year after, I was cleaning out, it was before Passover or after Passover, I was changing the dishes in the little, we had no more dishes much left. I used to go work for the people to bring home some food. And my aunt worked, I worked, to make do, because they took away the cow. One cow left, one horse left. And you couldn't go to the city. A Jew had to wear the yellow star and we couldn't go to the city. It was bad. Just that we had good neighbors. They would go shop in the city, bring us some salt and stuff like this.

And I was cleaning out a little cabinet Grandma had with dishes. There were some dishes left over. And I took off the paper, and there is a postcard lying, and I read the postcard that this and this woman passed away, and we want to let you know. And that card was already about three or four months old. And I said to Granny, "Mom died?" And she says, "Yes, honey." I said, "Why didn't you tell me?" She says, "Honey, you have enough. You are so young, you don't know what it means to go out, to have fun anymore. You just work and you..." And she said, "I'm sorry, honey, she passed away." I knew they killed her, I didn't know how.

But right after the war finished, I made my way, I didn't go home. Like I was here. I had to go home like this. I went straight to Lwow. I hitchhiked on trains. I went by foot. It took me about a month till I got by about 120 kilometers, but I got there and I came to

that hospital and the man that sat, there was a guy sitting always by the entrance to the hospital, at the gate. The gatekeeper. And I asked him, I said, "This is my reason for coming here. Do I have to go any further?" And I told him my reason. He said, "Honey" -- he was a Polish guy -- and he said, "Honey, no use going. The minute the Germans came in, within six months they collected all the Jewish patients. They gave them injections, they all passed away. There are about 500 of them in one grave. No use even looking for a grave. The grave is somewhere out of the city, far under a forest." Did I have money? Did I have...I had no means. I was left barefoot and naked. The war finished, and...And I never did manage to go in. And he told me, "If it would be individuals, maybe you could look, but they were all Jewish people from that hospital buried together. They were poisoned and buried together." So I never saw my mother anymore.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 15, 1996.

Mrs. Roitman, the last time we spoke about your mother, and how you had to take her to the institution, the hospital, and how you found out that she had been poisoned by Hitler during the war.

EVA: After the war.

INT: After the war. And I'm wondering now if you could go back and tell us, sort of from beginning to end, what happened to you during the war.

EVA: Where did we finish? The Russians left?

INT: No, we just got to your mother. We were just talking about your mother.

EVA: Yes, but where...in what period in time? I don't know where I finished. Did the Russians leave and the Germans were there already?

INT: No, the Germans hadn't come in yet. The Russians were coming. Can you start from where the Russians were coming in?

EVA: No, I think we finished already. No, I don't know. I don't want to waste your tape, honey.

(PAUSE)

EVA: ...going from the east side to cross the Polish border. By the fifteenth they were already by that river.

INT: The Bug River, the Russians.

EVA: Yeah. Well, they call it the Bug (pronounced Boog) in Poland, yes, but I suppose in England maybe they call it the Bug, I don't know.

INT: So how did that affect you?

EVA: Well, it didn't affect me. It affected me only like, I think I told you already, my granny gave me money to go and get some shoes.

INT: Right. And you said there were no shoes in the stores.

EVA: She couldn't understand. But everybody was in clothes and in shoes and in everything from before the war. So you didn't kind of feel it. But a year went by and a year went by, and you had to find where to buy salt, and you had to find where to buy this and that. We didn't know what it means to, I don't even know whether there were any rations, because Granny still had some ground that she didn't sell out for marrying her daughter, the last one, and sending her son to Argentina. And we had bread and butter and milk and everything. I had a good time until my mother became ill.

INT: And that was still during the Russian occupation.

EVA: Yeah, yeah.

INT: Were the soldiers in your town?

EVA: The Jews didn't, only the very rich, those that were really capitalists, very, very rich people, were sent to Siberia. That was Stalin's way of doing things. When he came somewhere, the people knew already who was bad to them, who was rich, who did them wrong. Those people were taken away right away. Some of them were killed and some were sent to Siberia. But the rest of the population, especially the Jewish population, we were free like the wind. We had, yeah, being that we were only thirteen kilometers from the border, there was not only the city, the city that I went to school with was only about a few kilometers from the border. So they had a lot of military in the city. And they spread out with the military. They had a lot, a lot of military, and a lot of, first time I saw a big tank in my life. I mean, enormous. Those katyushas, they called them, or something. The tank was as big as half of this room. Unbelievable. It's like a whole room is going there.

And so they had, I don't know what you call it, some kind of a unit, an army unit, stationed in that village where my Nana lived. And they stationed, the soldiers, I don't know where they kept them. But the officers, there was a village leader, and he came and said that we need to station some officers in some...the better homes, there were, in the whole village there were maybe, I would say, a dozen homes you could...that's already with the school and with the station, with everything, that had floors. The rest of the Ukrainian population didn't have any floors. They just had earthen floors.

INT: They asked to stay in your grandmother's house, right?

EVA: They didn't **order**, but they...So Grandma says, "Okay. I have four rooms, you can have a room." So she gave them the dining room. She said, "I don't have any beds." But he said, we had three officers, one elderly, one was like I would say a captain's rank, and the two officers, young ones. So they brought their folded army cots, and they slept on them.

INT: But they didn't bother you.

EVA: No! Oh, if they would have a meeting, because behind, I had to go to my bedroom, me and my mom we had a small bedroom that was behind…you had to go through the dining room to get there, there was a small room that was mine and Mom's bedroom. And so they might have a meeting, and all the officers that were in other houses maybe would come, and there would be a meeting. Nobody like, usually girls would come to me, my friends. Like I have a good friend here. She lives in East Rutherford. So she would come to me, because we had a, it was a very jolly group. The two young officers, every second Russian played an accordion, and a guitar or a balalaika, something. They played, and with the floor we danced the night away. Just the girls. I always had two, three girls came. But so the girls couldn't come. But they never forbade me to go through. When I would open the door, I would knock, and he would say, "Come in, come in."

INT: And you felt safe.

EVA: No, I went through the dining room, and I went to my room. That meeting what they had could have gone on, I don't know for...twelve, one o'clock at night, and I went to sleep. I closed the door.

INT: So there was nothing against the Jewish people in your town from the Russian soldiers.

EVA: No.

INT: It was an occupation but they didn't…

EVA: I would say, if I wouldn't have had a sick mother, and we would have lived in town, or if the Russians would have stayed with us and Hitler wouldn't come, I would be highly educated. Because every Jewish girl, for example, I have one year high school from before the war. I don't know how many of the kids in our school, but there were two seventh grades that graduated. It was a small school. Two seventh grades. It was only a girls' school, a public school. And there were about 30, 32 kids in a school. Out of those two grades, I don't know if five, six, at the most eight girls went to high school. The rest just finished. That's the end. And that was already highly educated, a seventh grader. Because in the villages, four grades, that's it. They went to work on the farm. And the schools, the one-room schools in the villages only had four grades. So a lot of those Jewish kids that had to go to work before the war, you had to pay in high school.

You had to pay high school a lot of money. It cost about 100 zlotys, and 100 zlotys, you had to, you could buy a cow for 100 zlotys. So you need the money.

My nana did it because Grandpa was a little, I heard him talk to Granny sometimes. "I'm tired, I'm 60 years old, I already brought my kids up." And Granny said to him, "You're old. You're an old fool. What is this child going to do? She hasn't got any father. She's very good in school. She has a sick mother. I have no dowry to give her." In those days you had to marry. I listened and I **laughed** at that. I didn't let them know that I know it, but they would talk quietly, and I would be in the kitchen. They would be in the...there were two dining rooms, one every day and one for a holiday. So they would sit in the dining room and talk quietly. But I would hear them. So I thought to myself, I would never take someone who wants a dowry. If he wants a dowry, he can have the dowry, but I don't want **him**! But that was the thing.

INT: That's the way it was back there, yeah.

EVA: So she said, "I would rather give her an education. What is she going to do without?" And I would have. But a lot of those kids that when Russia came, education, first of all the compulsory education, ten years. They had no public seven year, six or seven year public school in Russia. Ten years. From, you finished that ten grade school and you go to a, it's like a college, I would say. Yeah. And after, if you want to go further, you go to university.

INT: So you were expected to go to school for ten grades, then, when the Russians came in?

EVA: I would have gone. I would have gone. But I had a sick mother. And my nana, I didn't know, I learned about it shortly before the war. That nana, the family was very well off. If somebody was sick, like my nana took my mother to a doctor, she never took her to the doctor in the small city we were close to. She always took her to a big city. And she herself needed, like I had it '63 here. I went to the first hospital, and that's all, to remove my uterus. She went to Warsaw. And they discovered that she had a cancerous tumor on her uterus. So they removed the uterus.

INT: Your grandmother?

EVA: Yeah. And...she was for about a month in Warsaw. In those days they didn't, of course there was no chemotherapy, but they were receiving radium treatments. They were much different, I suppose, than what you get now, because you get now chemotherapy, and what's the other treatment?

INT: Radiation.

EVA: Radiation. But then they called it in Poland radium treatment. So they hid it from me, but I found, again when I was cleaning something in the kitchen, I found a piece of paper, it said, you know the famous, I suppose you heard about her. She was the most

famous, I think, Polish woman scientist. Marie Curie Sklodowska. So I found it, that Nana was, I knew that Nana went to Warsaw to have her appendix removed or something. And I found the radium institute, and the radium institute was called Marie Curie Sklodowska [institute].

(END TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE)

EVA: Like for example, there were three sisters, one born after the other. My grandmom had kids one after the other, and the fourth one was a boy. And those three sisters were each, and the boy, two years apart. So her next sister after her married a very wealthy, very wealthy, he had a grocery, but it was only imported stuff. Tea, olive oil, you name it, imported oranges from Spain or from Israel, from wherever. Nothing made in...it wasn't a regular grocery. They were called the colonial groceries, from the colonies, stuff came, from the British colonies, from India, from China, from wherever. So he was very wealthy. And she was in danger of being taken to Siberia. So I suppose, I don't know how Granny got in touch with her or she came to us, maybe, and Grandma I suppose told her, "Look, I have four rooms, and there's enough to eat on the farm, and there are schools. And so come here. Here we know who to pay off." Because the village leader was the one that pointed the finger who should be taken to Siberia or whatever. Or who should go first, and who should maybe go in a year or two, it's not such a big hurry yet.

So I remember they paid off, I don't know what, but once I was in the field working with my aunt, and we talked about something of payment, and she said, "We gave away everything we had." But that wasn't true, because when the Germans took her to be killed, she told them...she was grabbed with one child. The other two kids were separate somewhere. So she was grabbed with the middle boy, he was ten years old. And she said, "Kill me, but take the child, he'll take you home," and supposedly they found two tin boxes, candy came in, whether it's small or big, but the big ones that she used in the store, imported candies, were usually that high. Narrow, tall, they were found two big tins, with jewelry and I don't know, maybe even money, dollars or whatever. They killed the kid anyway. He showed them where, and they, it was in the cellar.

INT: What was the sister's name?

EVA: Leah. And they killed her. And they were such bastards. The neighbors told me when I came there after the war, and even when I was still in the forest, one neighbor told me, he came and he said that when they brought, they took the boy back on a bike, and he said, "But you promised my mother that you're not going to kill me." So they hurt him, took him on a bike and drove him there where the mother lay there, still not buried even. And in that same time, his father, his father was, they brought his mother and him to, there were a lot of forests all around. But the first forest was a small forest where they took him. And they killed his mother. The father was in the forest sitting behind bushes and watching it. And they brought him there, and the kid -- all her kids were very highly

intelligent kids. And he started to beg them, "Please, please, kill me with one bullet." So those **bastards**, and those were Ukrainians, not Polish people. They shot him in one arm, and then in the other arm, and the kid was...I mean, he was twisting like a snake on the ground, in the grass, there was grass, for a couple of minutes. A nice few minutes. And then finally they shot him to death.

INT: How do you know this story?

EVA: Because I was told by the people who saw it, some of the village people that were not so maybe friendly with the Jews, the Ukrainians. Looked up, and I mean, they weren't afraid. You could go and look if you wanted.

INT: What was the little boy's name? Do you remember?

EVA: (sighs) He was Leon, but we called him, in Jewish they called him Lusie, Luska, something like that. But his name was Leon.

INT: How old was he, do you know?

EVA: Ten. Ten. The same day they caught the older one, and they caught the youngest one. And my aunt and her boy were the first two to die, the middle boy. And her husband saw that they killed the child, he came out. He was **such** a person, that we had, there was no indoor plumbing on a farm. We had an outhouse. The outhouse was maybe, I don't know, twelve paces from the house, behind the house. I would go myself in the evening. He would, nobody would want to go with him, so he would [say], "Eva, please come with me." He was afraid to go. He was scared for even, if he had to go to the other side of the house, you used a lamp then. A lamp here. There was no lamp to go and carry, because there was no electricity in the village. So he was afraid, so I would go with him. He was scared. But when he saw his wife killed, he still sat there. And when he saw the child killed, he came out and said to the Germans, "You killed my wife and you killed my child. Kill me, too." And they killed him. So the three of them were buried in the same spot there. Under that... (pause)

INT: So how long were the Russians in your town?

EVA: The Russians were from September, '39, to July or August, I think July, '41. Two years.

INT: And then what happened?

EVA: One nice day we started...you could see the officers, about a month before that people started, they started taking people, they should go and dig ditches closer to the border. They paid them, the Ukrainians. And they said, "Something is going on." And some other people said, "Nothing's going on. We have a pact with the Germans. They have their side of Poland, we have our side. We wanted Ukraina, we got Ukraina, nothing's going to..." But I don't know, that went on for a couple of months, and then

one, you could see that that captain that was in our house, maybe because we were Jews, so he wasn't afraid to talk. He wasn't afraid, but sometimes like I don't know, a mass of those younger officers would be there. And then I even, Grandma would say, "Don't go in there. Don't go in." So I wouldn't go in. And they would have sessions and sessions, and he would talk, and he would talk, and he would talk, and he would talk. And then one day they said, I think at night we didn't know nothing yet, but in the morning. There was one of those soldiers that lived somewhere, I don't know where. A lot of those young boys wanted to go with me, but I was a **kid**, I was fifteen years old, sixteen. I said, "I don't want to go with nobody." And stuff like that. I mean, I still dreamt of maybe going to school, and I wanted to get an education and then go to Argentina to my mother's younger sister, the one that promised my father she'll take care of me. But one really got, and he was a very decent Jewish boy. He said, "Maybe you don't want the other ones because they're not Jewish." And I told him to me it doesn't matter. But I'm not...I said, "All the other girls are Ukrainian girls. They had four years of schooling, they know how to sign their name, that's one thing. I'm different." I said, "There are a few Polish girls, too, that will not get married until the time comes. Until the war finishes." I said, "I want to go to my aunt. I want to go to school." But he really, he had a terrible crush on me. Every night he would be there.

INT: Do you remember his name?

EVA: I don't remember his name.

INT: He was a Russian? Jewish?

EVA: Yeah. From somewhere from the south, Ukrainian. He was, I think, not far from Odessa. Very nice-looking Jewish boy. But very good-looking. Funny thing, I remember how he looked, but I don't remember his name. He stole maybe a couple of kisses from me. I didn't want to sit there outside with him and talk to him. I wanted to be inside better and dance, and this.

And...one morning when the whole rigmarole started already, they knew. He ran and came to us. And he said to Grandma, where am I. She said, "She's somewhere around, if not in the house, in the garden." And he came behind the house, we had a small garden, and he said, "We are leaving you. The Germans are getting ready to attack Russia. I'm telling it to you," he said, "because you're a Jewish girl and I'm Jewish. And please come with us." I said, "Where would I go? I have a mother who's sick in the hospital. I have two old grandparents. They can't even...I mean, I can't leave my grandma. She has nobody. And if Mom comes home from the hospital, who will take care of her?" But he said, "I know you're young. I'll take you to my parents. My parents will love you dearly, and you will go to school. And when I finish the army, you will be maybe close to twenty, I'll be..." He must have been about 21, because those days, you didn't get in to the army before 21. And he said, "We will get married, but my parents would love you. I'm an only child," and I don't remember. He told me his father's a doctor or a teacher or something, "And they would love you," and this. My grandma later regretted it. And he

begged my grandma, and she says, "I'm not holding her. If she wants to go, I will let her go."

And within one hour...

INT: How did you feel in yourself?

EVA: I didn't care. I wouldn't go with him. I didn't even have a crush on him. He was very nice. But from...

INT: But he was warning you of the danger, and you didn't go...

EVA: Yes, but I had better warnings than him. About an hour or two after him. That was a Sunday morning, I think, or Saturday morning. But I remember, since ever I was a kid that I could understand what man is handsome and not, I never liked men that had perfect faces, like Errol Flynn. I liked men that had a manly face. It's not beautiful. Handsome, but not beautiful. This guy was beautiful. Even if I would be 25 I wouldn't take him. (interviewer laughs)

INT: He was **too** good-looking. (laughs)

EVA: No, not that he was too good-looking. His mannerism. I had a father who was very manly. He wasn't very tall, but very manly, and that was, I suppose, my role model. And that was a Saturday. And at night we heard, and within an hour the whole Russians that were there for two years in the village, disappeared. And a lot of people went with them. People came, I don't know, people even from the city.

INT: Jewish people?

EVA: We were one Jewish family. But some of the Ukrainians that joined the Communist Party, and some of those, I don't know, very few, very few, very few, because the Ukrainians waited for Hitler to come, because they were like this. They were Nazis like Hitler. Some of the Polish people said, "Thank G-d that they are leaving." Like my friend who's here, her father was on the list to go to Siberia. So...

Anyway, they left. So for one night, and we didn't know what goes on in town, because there was still the third sister, my mother's third sister, Minnie, she was in that town with a husband and three kids. A boy of about six and two girls, two twin girls. But there were two or three, they were somewhere between two and three years old. And Sunday, between morning and noon, I don't remember whether it was a Soviet soldier driving a big truck. It must have been, because nobody had a truck. Jewish boys from the city. We were more east from the city. We were twelve kilometers east from the city, so they, my cousin, who lived here in Montreal with us, he, I knew him from before the war. He was older than me. But his younger brother, I went to school the same time, to public school with his brother. So we were very close relatives. And he made that whole truck not go with the main road, but go to a side road to come to the village and maybe me and

Grandma and whoever wants to. So Grandma said, "Did your mother go?" He said, "No." So she said, "You're young people." "But Auntie," he said to my grandma, "Let me take Eva with me." Well, they didn't call me Eva those days. They called me Yocheved. Because I have that Hebrew name. "So let Yocheved come." So Grandma says, "I'm not holding you. With you, certainly. I know who you are. You want to?" And I said, "Simon," his name was Shimon. So I said, "Shimon, where am I going to go? What are you going to do, what am I going to do? I have a sick mother in a big city in a hospital. Certainly she will come home one day, and Granny is old, and Zayde's old, and Nana's old. I'm not going nowhere." And he said, "You will regret it one day. I'm not telling you to go with me as a man. I'm your cousin. Come," he said. There were a whole," I said, "Who is there? Look at this. I'll be the only girl." I don't know if there were another girl. But it was packed, the whole back of, an open truck in the back. packed. Maybe there was some girls. But I only saw boys. The majority of young boys, like Abram and his brother. They escaped, too, that way. And they ran away.

And he waited an hour. And I wouldn't budge, and he went away. And Grandma said, "Maybe you should go with Shimon. Deeper into, maybe, even if Hitler comes, he will not get into Russia as easy as he got into Poland." So she said, "The war will finish, so you'll come back with Shimon." And I said, "I'm not going anywhere." What did I know about wars? What did I know about politics? I didn't even believe what they were talking about it, that Hitler will come and kill all the...what do you mean he'll kill me? I didn't do nothing.

INT: Had you heard these things, that Hitler was killing Jews at this point?

EVA: Well, they were talking that they're taking Jews into some kind of camps in Austria and Czechoslovakia. That was only...

INT: Did you know they were being killed at that point?

EVA: I never heard. You see, the thing, the real horror only started when he started, when he felt secure enough he had the whole of Poland, he made those camps in Poland. All those important camps were in Poland, that had those crematoriums. He found a kindred spirit in a nation, and he built those. I wouldn't say everybody, but there was a nice percentage of Polish people that...welcomed him.

INT: Were happy to help.

EVA: Happy to, they wanted Poland without Jews. Because I didn't know that, I didn't feel it. If I went away from the people that didn't know me, I didn't look Jewish, I didn't speak Jewish. I had a clean Polish, I had a clean Ukrainian. Among Polacks, I wasn't speaking Ukrainian. When I came among Ukrainians, they thought I'm Ukrainian. I knew the religious business about each other, but mostly about more the Catholics, because I went to Catholic school for four years. But...(pause)

INT: You didn't believe it. You didn't believe that they would kill the Jews.

EVA: I was a child. You see, maybe if there would have been a man who would have made it his business...you couldn't get a newspaper. We got newspapers from the officers, Russian. Grandpa read it. But that was printed, the Pravda in Moscow, and whatever they got from Moscow, they were getting in daily. It came only a day or two old. The troops getting everything. I mean, they were stationed two years. It wasn't like they're fighting. Two years they were peacefully stationed by the border, and that's it. So what, Stalin's propaganda, what news is that? People who had radios could listen to them. But some people sighed a sigh of relief. I don't blame them, like Jeanie's father. He was always packed and ready to go to Siberia. Her mother daily baked bread and dried, sliced it and dried it, whole big sacks of dried bread, it's like toast, you dry it out in the oven, it's like bone. You could take with you, as much food as you want.

INT: Because they thought they were going to get taken.

EVA: To Siberia.

INT: So they were glad to see the Russians go.

EVA: They were glad. That uncle, that rich uncle, my aunt Leah's husband, that was afraid to go to the outhouse. The Russians were leaving, and Sunday afternoon, Granny's house was the first one when you came from the, it's like in a picture, you see in the pictures. You come to a village, the first house is a Jewish house. It was, I suppose, the nicest house in the village, because it was a two-sided house. Corridor in the middle, two rooms on one side, two rooms on the other. It was a big house. So the girls and the boys that wanted, every girl had a boyfriend in the village, Ukrainians or the Polish, come Sunday they would get dressed, they would walk around, so they would walk by our house, and they would congregate. There was grass, and walk a little further to the left, and walk to the, to a small forest, and they were singing and dancing, and this and that. But people were always gathered around Granny's house. And I remember, that was the first Sunday, or the second Sunday. For one week we had nobody, neither Russians nor Germans. I think the second Sunday. The second Sunday, Germany managed to, no, wait a minute. They were already in Poland. No, the first Sunday. That was right after, Saturday the Russians went away, Sunday afternoon. We heard...shoot, I mean, cannons getting so close that we said, they must be already taking the city already. It was a small city, it was a town, about 39,000 people before the war. And the cannons were getting louder, and then the airplanes started coming. And I remember there were some Ukrainian girls sitting and joking with their boyfriends on the grass in front of Granny's house and drinking sodas and stuff like that. And all of a sudden, I didn't know what, I was in the house, everybody ran into the house, I said, "What happened? "German airplanes are flying low and spraying everything with bullets." They were spraying whoever was outside. Nobody got killed, but...

That was Sunday noon. I don't remember whether it was, I think that Sunday night the village leader said that the whole village is going to be evacuated and we're going to a forest for the night. And we all, we took some food with us and something to lie down

on the grass, and we got all in the wagon, and Grandpa still had one horse or two, I don't remember, and my aunt with the kids and everybody, and we went to the forest, and we stayed there overnight. We came back tomorrow, they said, it's quite, people went to look, they said, it's quiet, there are already some Germans in the village, and everything is quiet, nothing burned, nothing doing, and some Germans with motorcycles, people said those that stayed in the village. They didn't want to leave, some Ukrainian, old Ukrainians. They said that there were some tanks, but they went away with the main road somewhere else, but here we have about two dozen Germans, and they're washing themselves, and they're cooking something to eat.

So the leader said, if anybody wants to go home, so everybody went home back. And I'll never forget that scene. We came home. And we went into the house, everything was there, nothing was taken. In front of Granny's house, like this is the house, and right in front was a road from the city to go into the village, and on the other side of the road was a well. And by that well there were sitting about five, six, German soldiers, with, I don't remember, I think they had bikes. They were on bikes. And every soldier was half undressed, washing themselves with water from the well, and washing their socks, and hanging them to dry. It was hot, it was July, I think, and somebody was cooking something. And I remember Grandma went out. She remembered German still from the Kaiser, and asked them can she give them something, and they said, "Thank you very much, but we have everything. We appreciate it." And they were there for a couple of hours, and went away somewhere, and then we had nobody. But when we came into the house, and Grandma said, "Everything is all right." And we got settled in the house again.

And my aunt's husband, the one that was afraid for his own shadow, came out. There was a little like, you could say porch, just with two stairs. He stood on top of that second stair and said, picked his hands up to heaven and says, "I **thank** you, dear G-d, that I lived to the day," he called the Russians, what did he call them? That they looked like, there is a saying in Polish, or in, I forgot what it's called in Jewish, like a homeless person. I mean, a Polish soldier was dressed like an American soldier, a uniform and everything, fitted. The Russians, they came, they wore those, like you see in the movies. It was like a loose shirt, with a little collar closed on the side, and the shirt belted with a belt, and it was, he said, those, what did he call them, those "Smatches." A smatches is a guy who sells, buys rags from you. The rag man. "I thank you dear Lord that those rag men went away and I will never see them again." And my granny heard it through the open window and she came out and said to him, "I don't know why my daughter married you, you idiot!" (laughs) And she wasn't one to tell off people like that. She says, "I don't know why my daughter married you, you **idiot**," she says. "How did you ever make your money? Oh, I know how you made it. You **inherited** it from your father, the store and everything. Don't you hear what's done, what people say Jews go through in Czechoslovakia, never mind in Vienna, but in Czechoslovakia, what goes on with the Jews there in camps? They're dying of hunger and stuff like that." "Oh, what people talk," he said. "I thank G-d."

(Sighs) They were taken. They paid up, they must have paid a mountain of money, and I think at the end they would have taken them to Siberia, because who was the village leader? He was a little village leader. If the war would have been really finished, and a decent border would have been established, and Russia would have been there, and we would have never seen Hitler, they would have been taken to Siberia, because the real Russian authorities were busy with soldiering, fighting. I mean, there was, what do you call it, when the law becomes...military law was law. But if the military would have gone away, and civil law would come into the towns, a little further from us, further from the border, the two years that the Russians were there, we had civil people governing. So every big post was taken by a Russian. Not by a Ukrainian, not by a Jew. Not by anybody who was born under Poland. A Russian was there. The rest were already from the vicinity. So at the end of the line they would have. And one of the three boys would be alive maybe, in Siberia. Abe came back from Siberia and his brother, and his niece. I mean, his niece was born in Siberia and came back. So...

INT: So there were a few left in the village, a few German soldiers in the village.

EVA: No, they left. They were there for about...and within a week, within a week, with all their might and everything, I suppose they didn't want to lose people, and they didn't want to fight. If the Germans want to invest in Ukraina, let them have it. That was Poland before the war. Let them have it. But their real border that was there for twenty years between Poland and Russia, there they started to fight the Russians. They didn't give in so easy. The millions of people were killed on both sides. And when the winter came, the first winter came, what's memorable is...all those long, long trains, with, not passenger trains, but cargo trains, not cattle...cattle are usually open somewhere, but those wagons that you see that they open up and Jews come out. They had drilled some holes for air to go in, and if they would open at the station, train after train with German soldiers, the winter in Russia is bitter, frozen fingers, frozen toes, they begged, "Do you have maybe a tablet, do you have something to put on my fingers?"

INT: This was the German soldiers coming back...

EVA: Germans coming back from the front. Coming back from the front.

INT: But how did it affect you in the town, when the German occupation came in?

EVA: We couldn't get to town. I was the one that, first of all, a Jew had no right. There were no passenger trains. Everything was for the army, which it was military law. The army comes first, and every time when there is a law. There were no passenger trains. But if you, that aunt was there, Aunt Leah with the kids and the husband were there. And my grandfather's sister's one girl, that she was an old maid, she always stayed with us. She was there, and I was there and then my mother was sent back, when the Germans came they sent her home. They didn't kill yet Jews, so they sent her home, but she was...good for a few months and then...she got so bad that she, I told you she put her fist through the window. And she was cursing the Germans. And that uncle of mine, that one

that was blessing the Germans said, "She's going to get us all killed, she's going to get us all killed," so I took her back to the hospital, and that was the last time I saw her.

(END TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE SIX, SIDE TWO)

EVA: So I was the one, anyone, the Ukrainians or the Polish girls, usually you had to go to the city, you walked. It was twelve kilometers. It took an hour's walk. When you're seventeen years old, what does it make a difference walking an hour? So sometimes, you see, my grandfather lived in the village the whole of his life. But he wore a little Jewish hat, and he had a beard, and he didn't have ties hanging like the people from the Satmar. But he, by his dress, he wore a labsedeckel always. You could see, the village people never touched him, never bothered him.

INT: What's a labsedettel? What is that?

EVA: The tzis-tzis hanging here. What do you call it in English?

INT: Tallis? A tallis, or, tallis katan. A tallis katan is underneath. Tzis-tzis.

EVA: Tzis-tzis. The tzis-tzis are the hanging thing. But the whole thing.

INT: The whole thing is called a labsedettel?

EVA: No, no, no. In Jewish it's called lab is skin, detten is cover. It's a skin cover, under the shirt. I mean, I'm explaining to you the meaning of the word labsedetten. But they turn it all together in one word: labsedettel. But I understand the meaning of it. Lab is skin. To cover the skin underneath the shirt a man always wore that thing.

INT: So he did wear that, your grandfather.

EVA: Yeah. And he prayed every day. He prayed every day in the morning. He didn't go to shul anymore. I mean, Saturday he used to go to shul. Three kilometers from us was a very big village. It was like a central village. There was a little bit of a government that had about five, six villages under them. Every time somebody would be born he would go there and tell them, they had a seven grade school in that. In there they had a tiny little synagogue, so Grandpa would go pray there every Saturday, and for the holidays. But by the Germans he didn't go anymore, because the minute he stepped out of his village -- I told you, he went once to another village to grind some flour.

INT: And he shaved his beard off.

EVA: He shaved his beard off, and Grandma nearly fainted. I didn't know who it is. Absolutely, because from the first day I knew Grandpa, I saw him from the first half of my life (laughs), Grandpa had a beard, a white one. And then all of a sudden a man

walks in. I didn't know who it was. I thought it's a Jew from another village. Because he was dressed like...

INT: But he did it because the Ukrainians were bothering him, right?

EVA: In the other village, not in our village. And he never shaved it again. He let it grow again.

INT: So what were you doing all this time? You were staying with your grandparents. And not going to school.

EVA: What was I doing, I...

INT: You weren't going to school at this point.

EVA: No. I never went to school since the day the Russians came because Mother got sick.

INT: Right. But she wasn't there anymore, so you couldn't, you still couldn't go?

EVA: Somebody had to be there to...there was a piece of land. My aunt, my Aunt Leah, to save their skin, he wouldn't go to work. He never did work. He wouldn't go to work, so she went to work at the station. They had a cafeteria at the station, so she went to manage the cafeteria. That means that somebody works. I mean, by the Russians, if you don't work, you don't eat. That's their famous saying. Stalin said, "You don't work, you don't eat." Period. So she went to work. The kids were, the two older ones, were in school. They went to school. And the youngest one was only six when the Germans killed him. So he didn't go to school yet. But somebody had, there was a big garden, there was a piece of land. So like I went to help my neighbor. Usually the people, the rich people would hire the poor people when the time came to take the...to harvest. Nana had a lot of land, but she sold it away. She sent the three kids to Argentina. No, two to Argentina, and one to my uncle here. So she gave them money. So she sold off about three quarters of her land. She just had left enough, we had our own grains, and we had our own kasha, and we had our own, whatever you want to call it, what do you call it? Dairy, we had two cows. Plenty.

INT: But she needed you to help her around the house? Is that why you weren't in school?

EVA: I had to go to school to the city. I couldn't go to school in a village. I had to go already to high school.

INT: That's right. And you couldn't use the transportation.

EVA: And I couldn't use the, by the Russians, if I would have a healthy mother, I would have gone. I would have stayed with somebody. But I couldn't. I had a sick mother, and

nobody, there was nobody, like, let's say a harvest day came. And everybody, you couldn't hire. Everybody became, the Ukrainian kids that never went to school went to school. They didn't have to pay. Like I told you, the Jewish, the Ukrainians, the Polish, whoever went to school was without money. Before the war you had to pay. The rest, if you didn't pay, and so the kids went to school, all of them. A lot of Ukrainian girls became bookkeepers. They went to school. And I had a sick mother. Nobody, like Grandma would...I would go work for a neighbor, help him, like Jeanie's father. I would help them so Jeanie would come help us. But Jeanie, she married, the last year the Russians were there, Jeanie got married, because her father wanted to save her from Siberia. And they talked her into marrying a fellow who wanted to marry her. Until this day she complains always. (laughs) I just saw her about the beginning of...

INT: Is he still alive?

EVA: Sure! She already lost a son in Vietnam, the second son. The older son does the same thing that Ray does. But he and his wife both, they both are biochemists. But they bought their own lab. In Newark. And they are wealthy, very wealthy.

INT: Were your grandparents talking to you at this time about how you're going to survive with the Germans there? Was there any talk about survival, or messages to you about...

EVA: Nothing. Nothing because...

INT: Any talk about leaving?

EVA: No, because Granny never talked, because what can she do for me? She can't say, "Come, I'll take you." Like in the village I told you, there was three kilometers from us a village where me and Grandpa went there to grind grain into flour. There was a Jewish family, and he had that thing that you could grind it there by hand. So he had a girl, she was ten years old before the war. I was fifteen, she was ten. Five years younger than me. She had blonde hair and didn't look Jewish, and spoke Polish good. Her father, one nice day said to her, "You know, the Germans are taking away Jewish girls when they become twelve, thirteen, to work, and they take them to Germany to work." He didn't tell her they killed them. "And I'm going to take you away to a village at least 50 kilometers from here, and I'll let you," -- there are a lot of rich Ukrainians or Polish, would, like Jeanie's mother always had, my grandma had girls from the village, she had more than one, because she had a dairy, she had a grocery, she had all kinds of, she had a lot of people working. But Jeanie's mother only had the farm, so she always had somebody, so a poor guy would come and say, "I'll live in that village, and this is my daughter, she's ten or twelve. Could you use a girl?" So somebody would take her in. They would feed her, they would dress her, and give her maybe a few, I don't know what they would settle with the parents, not much. But the girl would be, they would watch over her, of course, that she should have a decent, she shouldn't be a bad girl and stuff like that. They would feed her, dress her, and she would go home for the holidays if she wants to, stuff like that, and some even got married in those villages where they worked.

So he took her, he said, "You're going to watch, I'll find a rich farmer. You're going to watch his cows." You needed a girl, Granny didn't have a girl watching the cows, but I would bring the cows out. Before the war we had six cows. I would bring the cows to the corner, and there was a blind guy, he would watch our cows, Jeanie's father's cows, and there was one more rich family. Three families. He would, the cows had to graze in a certain place, they cannot go eat the stuff that will bring grain later, so he had to watch them. He was kind of three quarters blind. So he would, Granny would pay him, every family would pay him, and he would watch the cows from morning till whatever.

INT: So he was going to hide his little ten-year-old girl, as a non-Jew?

EVA: And he took her, and he took her. And that little girl is a millionaire in Winnipeg now. And she lives with my aunt together. And he told her, "I'm leaving you. I will leave you there. Your name is this and this," whatever they made up. She was, I think already twelve. Because that was, she was ten before the war. So with the Russians two years. Twelve, she was twelve or thirteen. He took her there. And he said, "Now you forget that you are Jewish. And I am, me and Mom," and there was, I think she had a younger brother or sister, "We're going to hide. But you are..." She was like her father. Her father didn't look Jewish. He looked like a goy, period. That's it. He didn't look, he didn't talk. He talked good Ukrainian and Polish, and he didn't dress like a Jew, because my uncle, the one I had here, he was always dressed to the nines. So he dressed like a goy and he looked like a goy, and he said, "But Mom looks Jewish, and your sister was, the brother looks Jewish, so I have to hide with them. And then when the war finishes, you just, if you cannot stay here, and I cannot find you, you come back to the village, and we'll find you." Of course, she went back to the village, but there was nobody there.

INT: What happened to her family?

EVA: Killed.

INT: They were all killed.

EVA: Sure. Killed the same time as my grandmother and everybody.

INT: What was her name? The one that survived the war.

EVA: From home, I think, well, her name was Faigie. Now they call her Fela. Her name was Grossman. I don't, something with a m-a-n at the end. And it's funny how people are afraid. She knew that her father had two brothers in America. And they were living around New York. And she didn't know anybody. She had no way of finding them. She was a kid, more a kid than I was. She wasn't sure whether they lived in New York State, or New York City. To make the story short, she was sixteen years old, not even sixteen, when she was liberated by the Russians again. Because we had the Germans only for two years. And she worked by that farmer there. And she was liberated, and they were near the state capital, it was called Luck, and that was a farm

near Luck. And she went, I don't know whether she told the farmer that she's Jewish, or she just went to town and there were a few Jews, and she found one woman from another village that she knew, and they congregated. The Jews, even in a big city, the Jews when they came, and a few were together, they congregated and lived in one house. Whether my house, your house, nobody cared. It's a Jewish house, we live, we have a right to live in it. Because Russia was back, and if you said, "I'm a Jew and this is my house," you could have all the houses that belonged to Jews.

So she congregated there, and she met a boy. She was sixteen, he was nineteen. She wasn't sixteen yet. And they got married. She was barefoot and naked, and I was barefoot, too, when I came to my town. And she...I came to that town because I went to look, I was here. That was me. That was, I had to go like that from my town, from here to my town, I had to go like this. But I couldn't go, there were no trains. I had to jump trains, steal on trains, stuff like this, jump off when the train is still in motion, get on when the train was in motion. Soldiers. There was a war near Cracow. So I went, this was Lwow, there was my mother. And then I made an L shape. Instead of like this, I made an L shape too. And I came to the capital town. I couldn't go to my town, because it was a small town. This was a city. So trains were going more. I got there. I went to Luck. When I came to Luck, on the way to Luck, somehow I managed to get on a passenger train. And the Russians, everything, even a passenger train, was manned by Russian personnel and military personnel. Older usually, those that cannot fight already. And two of them come to me, "Passport." You don't go around in Russia without, even if you live in Moscow a hundred years, every time you go shopping you have some documents with you. You don't go nowhere without documents, and you are registered. You live there, this one lives there. There was a list on the apartment who lives in this apartment. There had to be.

So he comes to me, "Document." And by that time I had a Kennkarte from Germany. When I was in that town with, I ran away with all the Polacks. The Ukrainians started to kill the Polacks on Ukraina, and the Polacks started to run deep into Poland. I ran with them, and I became completely Polish. If so many Poles, one more. So everybody got Kennkartes. And they said they knew me for two years already. I was there. So I got a Kennkarte. I had witnesses that knew me. So the Russian says to me, "What did you do, where are you from?" I said, "I'm from this and this city." I figured I'll tell him the truth from which city.

INT: Wait. We're way ahead of ourselves now, and I'm not following this story very well. We were talking about your friend who, and she had some relatives in New York or something, that's how we got off on this tangent. But I think we're way ahead of ourselves.

EVA: I'm trying to explain to you. On the way from Lwow to Luck I got on a passenger train. And next, in the same compartment was sitting a man, and I thought to myself, "I don't know who the man is, but I saw him somewhere in my city. He must be a Jew." He looked a little bit Jewish. He was about my mother's age. And then I remembered, I think his name is Katz. And I didn't remember where I saw him. Then I remembered that

my mother pointed him out once to me and she said, "You see that Mr. Katz? He wanted to marry me for about five years, and I wouldn't have him. Since I was sixteen or fifteen he was after me." And I said, "Mom, he's good-looking." "Well, I fell in love with your father." And of course, I liked my father. (laughs) And that Mr...I said, "Are you Mr. Katz?" And he said, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm Regina's daughter. You remember Regina Sztul?" "You're Regina's daughter? Good. You're not dead. Who is there?" I said, "I'm all alone. I don't know if somebody's left, but I just ran away far," I was about 500 kilometers from my town. I said, "I don't know. I don't think, because I was still there when they got killed, so I don't think anybody's there." And he says, "Well, you're not alone, honey." And I said, "How do I get to Wlodzimierz?" He said, "We're going to Luck, because I was in Luck already. There are about 50 Jewish people, and we all live in one house." That's how I came to Luck.

And then they come to ask us for the documents, and I take out and I say I'm from...When he saw them he said to me, "Now, listen, honey. What are you going to tell them?" I said, "I have a Kennkarte." "Don't you dare tell them that you are Jewish and you have a Kennkarte as a Polish girl. The Russian mind doesn't work that way. They have a one-track mind. You're either this or you're either that. You stick with what the Kennkarte says. When they arrest you and they bring you to Wlodzimierz, then you have a hundred people who will say they know you. Don't do it, because you might go with this train straight to Siberia." So I listened to him. I didn't know. And they said, "What were you doing?" I said, "Well, the Germans wanted to take me away to work, but I ran away from the train." They did catch Polish girls, Ukrainian girls, not Ukrainian, Polish, and they would take them to work in Germany as house slaves, without money. And I said, "But I escaped, in (?) I escaped from the train, and I worked in a factory there." (Laughs) "Ha. Did you have a German lover? And he left you and he didn't take you with him?" And he called me that **real** name, "You German whore," he says to me. (laughs)

Well, I stood it. And he said, "Well, you're not going anywhere." So when we got to Luck, that Katz said to me, "Don't worry. Whatever happens, I'm here with you." And I said, "You just leave me here." They took me, he said, "I want to see where." So they took me and they put me in a room on the station. Just a plain room. They put me there and shut the door, and he says, "I don't know. We have to see what to do with you." And the train went away. And that Katz went away, and they kept me there overnight, and I don't know what they did, what they thought, but next day they let me out. So when they let me out, and they say, "Go to hell. Go." So I thought to myself, "I'm hungry." I had a silk scarf that the woman I worked for gave me for Christmas. So it was the end of summer, the beginning of fall, so I took that scarf and I went out, and I knew that any Soviet girl will see the scarf, she'll buy it. She will buy it, and I said, "I want 100 ruble," and she bought it from me on the station there. Somebody lived near there, Russians, and she gave me 75 rubles, so I asked her, "Where do I go to buy some bread and something to eat?" She told me there is a little market in the middle of the town. And she told me how to walk, and I walked there to the market, and I come there, and I see there is, the village next to us on the other side, not where this girl lived, were three old maids. I see one of the maids -- they were all very ugly and very old -- is standing there and selling

apples. And I said, "Do you know who I am?" And she said, "Yes. You lived through?" I said, "How did **you** live through?" Because my G-d, she looked Jewish and she's ugly. Who? She didn't have any Polish friends. She said, "I just hid. They killed my sisters, my father and mother. And I hid." And I said, "Wait a minute." I went, I bought some bread, and I said, "Sell me some apples." She said, "You're an idiot. Eat the apples." And I went with her to sleep already, and I asked her, "Do you know who's left, from this village, from that village, from any village?" She said, "Yeah, you know who? Fela's alive."

INT: Oh. Now we get back to Fela.

EVA: She told me who's Fela, and I said, "Where's Fela?" "Oh, she left, she got married." I said, "What do you mean, married? I'm only 21, she's five years younger than me." "Well, she was all alone, and he fell in love with her, and she found a nice fellow." I said, "Where is he from?" "He's from a city right across the border from Poland, called Zamosc. He's from Zamosc." And I said, "I want to see Fela." So she says, "Okay, wait another hour or two, maybe I'll sell some more of my apples." And she put together that stuff, we carried that stuff. She showed me where I had that little bag with something of mine, and she showed me where she has a room, and where I'll sleep with her and that. Those are three story buildings, or two stories, and there were just Jews. Ten in one room, but they were just Jews. And I said, "I was here with Katz." And she said, "He lives I think downstairs or something." I said, "I want to see Fela."

She takes me across town. I said, "Why don't they live here?" She says, "Well, her husband, they got married, they didn't want to be with people together, they just got married." There's a church, and the church has in the back a little house attached to it, and the house has only two rooms, and only one room is finished. A **tiny** little church, and a tiny little house, two rooms. And she knocks on a door, and a kid answers the door with braids till here. She was like, what was the year Tirzah was Queen Esther? (laughs) You know how tall and skinny she was? That was Fela. With long blonde braids, answers the door with a long skirt like the women in the fields wear, and some kind of a blouse. And there is an army cot standing there, and she knew her already, and she said, "Fela, this is a girl from this and this village." And I said, "Do you remember me?" She says, "No." And I said, "I came with my grandfather to your father, we made the flour." And she says, "I don't remember you." I said, "Anybody left from your family?" She says, "No." And here comes in a person (laughs) he looked as tall as David, but your David and divide him into four. Just skin and bones. About David's size, but just skin and bones. Nineteen years old, like a **kid**, in a uniform, in a soldier's uniform, because there was nothing to get. A uniform you could buy from the soldiers very cheap. A Polish uniform. And she said, "Oh, here's Fela's husband." Then Fela said, "Would you sit down?" There was no place to sit. I sat on the floor, she sat on the floor. Fela and him would sit down, and he was, right away he struck me as not a stupid fellow.

And I said, "So what are you doing?" He said, "Well, I'm buying and selling whatever is for sale. I buy it and then I sell it. But we won't be late here, long here," he says. "If they finish up with Poland and they get with the front into Germany, we will go to a big city,

to Warsaw, or to Lodz or somewhere." Sure enough, I went out of there. We were there for about half an hour, and I said to her, "These two kids got married. What happens if they have a child? They are two children!" Who ever heard before the war a Jewish girl at fifteen, not yet sixteen, getting married? My gosh. I said, "How are those two kids...?" She said, "Well, who was supposed to tell her don't do it? She was all alone." She went away from that man in that farm because she wanted to be with Jews. She could have gotten there a fellow somewhere and marry. She was a very pretty girl. And I said, "My G-d, if those two kids stay married, I'll be a monkey's mother." (laughs)

INT: Did they?

EVA: Are you kidding? You know, oh, you don't know. There is a Mark Green. They live in Wynnewood or something. That's her oldest daughter. Her husband is an M.D., but he works in research. He does the same thing that Ray does, but only in cancer research. And he works at Penn.

INT: She stayed married to that man?

EVA: Oh, she's married with the man. Fela's already 62. Wait a minute, Yumek is about two years younger than me. He's from 1926 and she's from 1931 or '32 born. So they both retired already, multi-millionaires. They had hotels in Winnipeg.

INT: These two kids, huh?

EVA: The two kids. She had, you see, as young as he was, I noticed that he's not stupid. He wasn't a bad-looking fellow. I don't blame her, she fell for him. As skinny as he was, he was very good-looking. And he never worked a day. He was always buying and selling whatever was for sale. And when they came to Germany, then they ran away to Germany from Poland, and in Germany she had her first child. Whether it was stillborn or something, I don't know. Then for about three years she didn't have. Then she had Bela. Bela is here with her husband Mark. Has three children, all the kids are in college already, and Bela is Rita's age exactly.

INT: Do you keep in touch with Fela after all this time? Are you friendly with her? No.

EVA: Her husband, I never asked him, but he must have had some more education than my... Abe is not a stupid guy, but he had very limited education. Abe didn't even read an English newspaper. Even the "Daily News" in New York, which is so easy to read, a kid could do it, he would buy his "Forward," and whatever was there before the "Forward." All the Jewish newspapers. Yumek -- the other one's name is Yumek. I came to Winnipeg the first time, I said to myself, "Fela knew what she was doing. And she was a kid fifteen and a half years old." He was, not only you have reading the "New York Times" in Winnipeg. He had a copy of the "London Times," he had a copy of the "LA Times." He had of every, a copy of the "Wall Street Journal," he had all the important papers of all the world. You know, did you ever see papers from, like a "London Times" delivered in America what they looked like? They're made on paper like tissue. Tissue,

really, you can see through the paper. And I thought to myself, he's always with stocks and bonds, he had hotels in Winnipeg.

INT: So they did all right. Fela did all right.

EVA: Oh, very well. First of all, when he came to, I don't know, in Germany, he came, my Aunt Gitchi told me that Yumek came with at least a million dollars from Germany to Winnipeg. Do you know what it means in 1948 or '47, they came a few years before us, to come. He bought a supermarket. He bought an A & P Supermarket, a gigantic one, and bought a house.

(PAUSE)

INT: Okay, I wonder if you could just think back and...tell me what was going through your head at this time. I mean, were you...

EVA: Well, I was trying first and foremost, especially...

INT: I'm talking about when the Germans were occupying, that's the time I'm talking about. Not after the war, because we haven't finished the war years yet.

EVA: When the Germans, when they came and little by little the front went deep into Russia, and they became stronger, the governments. Every station, even the little station in the village, was managed by Germans who were already wounded, but could still function, so they were the personnel in the station, and they...

INT: But these were German army people, they weren't SS necessarily, were they? Or were they?

EVA: No, but you could go to the station and see SS sometimes. For the first, I don't remember when they made the ghetto in the city. Was it the first year they came or the second? When they got all the Jews. Because the Jews was scattered. It was a town, not a city, not a very big thing. They were scattered all over that town. They got them into one quarter of that, there, in the middle of the city. I don't remember. I was never in the ghetto.

INT: So tell me what happened. Tell me what happened.

EVA: Then I remember that...(pause) Granny and Grandpa used to somehow try to cover themselves up. Grandma didn't look Jewish, but Grandpa with his beard. But the Ukrainian men, the old ones, had beards, too. So it's his Jewish hat. So maybe he put on another hat when they went there. They would go and bring food. It was her daughter there with a husband and two...the third sister, my mother's [sister], Minnie. And they would bring her bread and whatever they could. We weren't swimming in sour cream and bread and all those things anymore. If I went to work for somebody, helped them in the field or whatever, I didn't want them to give me money. The money was worth

nothing. It was Ukrainian. Ukraina became, that part of Poland where I was born, Poland...

(END TAPE SIX, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE SEVEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: But the rubles didn't mean anything. They printed Ukrainian money. So the money was no good, you could burn it. What would you get? You couldn't get nothing, anyway. And so I would ask them to give me some butter. We youngsters, we all ate. My aunt, my uncle, I don't know if my uncle ate, but my aunt, me and her kids, we ate anything, even if it's not kosher. Whatever you had, you ate. Grandma and Grandpa wouldn't eat. I don't know if he ate.

INT: So they were hiding more when they would go into the village. They were hiding their identity, their Jewish identity.

EVA: No, when they went to town to bring food to their other daughter. I **think** so, because...

INT: And what was happening with the Jews around? I mean, what were the Germans doing with the Jews in the area?

EVA: In the city we heard, a lot of Jews started to come to the villages to work for the Ukrainians, and because they thought that if it comes to the roundup of Jews to be killed, or whatever, to a pogrom or something like that, they maybe will hide, and they will know a village. Because a lot of boys never went out of town. Mostly boys. One girl came out. And she was from the same town that Fela's husband was from, Zamosc, which was about 75 kilometers west from us. And she came, and asked if somebody needed work, she could teach somebody. And Grandma says, "Honey, who are you going to teach? There's one Jewish family." There is no Polish school anymore. She had high school finished. She must have been from a good family, a rich family before the war. She was older than me, quite older, because she finished before the war. She was eighteen and graduated high school. So she was, in Poland that was very highly educated, high school. **Very** high. And the education in Europe those days was better than now. On a very high level, the European education. So she...so Grandma says, "You want, you can stay with us here. Maybe you could go work for somebody." But she was a very delicate girl, so whatever we ate, she ate with us. And even when I was painting her room in the house, it was dirty or something, she didn't know how to do it, so I say, I forgot what her name was, I said, "Honey, leave it. I'll do it myself." She wasn't used to that.

INT: And all this time you were still thinking about, you know, possibly getting out and going to Argentina to be with your aunt? And you still had hopes and dreams?

EVA: No, no, no. We just hoped and prayed that the war would finish maybe. And at the beginning, there was no hope. Because Hitler kept on waltzing through Russia, until he came, at Leningrad he stopped, Stalingrad he stopped, and shortly before Moscow he stopped. And then when he got to those cities, I think that's where England, the Polish army that ran away from Poland, they formed an army under General Anders, the Anders Army, and a lot of them were in Palestine, in the war. They were fighting there, and they were taken out of there, and they were all, being that they spoke Polish, they could converse more with the Russians, and they made a pact, and the whole Polish unit that was in England, everybody came over and tried to help, and America started to send in food to Russia, the tins and the cans and all that stuff.

INT: And it started to turn around.

EVA: And that's when England, mostly, got involved with helping the Russians, because they realized that if he takes away Russia, there goes the whole of Europe. There's nothing to it. So that's when the front started to, it felt like through a thick wall, someone said that someone told him that someone told him that someone read somewhere in a newspaper that the Russians were going back. But who would tell?

So...they were, I have learned it when I ran away from home already after everybody was killed, and I lived with Polish people in (?), that's when I learned that a lot of the Polish people have radios, short-wave, and they listen to England, and they listen even to Moscow, and they get an idea. But I suppose Jeanie's father had a radio before the war, and maybe he had it when the Germans were there already, again, but he didn't have the radio, I know, unless he hid it somewhere when the Russians came, and he was afraid of Siberia. That was one thing, to have a radio to listen to England or something. So either he sold it, or he maybe hid it somewhere. But he could have had it hidden, but if he told my Grandma and Grandpa something he wouldn't tell a kid like me, and I wouldn't know about it. And if he listened to the radio, maybe that was a time when Jeanie would go away from the house. And then she was married already. So if he knew something.

But I heard him talk to my grandpa and said, "Benjamin, there will still be a free Poland. We just have to pray." He didn't like the Germans, either. But he wasn't afraid that he will get killed.

So things started to filter through, but then Jews...maybe if I would have been in a young family, or in the city, where people have radios, where people, you could read a German newspaper, you could get an underground Polish newspaper in a city, things like this. Grandma and Grandpa, Grandpa didn't read newspapers **before** the war. He was davening here every day. He had his prayers every day. He had his work. In the evening they would sit and count the money with Grandma, and this goes for this, and this will be for that, and this will be for that, and this will be for that.

INT: So you weren't getting any news. So you were pretty isolated.

EVA: And besides, as five months, six months went by, six months went by, six months went by, they are already killing people in Sokal. Sokal was only about 30 kilometers from us. I remember a neighbor's girl, a Ukrainian girl, was getting married, and she invited me to the wedding. I knew already that Jews are not the same, because nobody touched me, nobody touched anybody of the family when we went, when we were around in our village. Nobody ever said, "Don't walk here, or don't sit here, or don't talk there, or don't whatever." Nobody ever. They were all the same as they were before the war. But when they would sit and sing songs, I never heard those songs before the Ukrainians. They were singing, like the first song I heard became very famous. The words were like, "Our young Ukrainian nation" -- not nation, "Our young Ukrainian populace," how did they say it? "Our young Ukrainian people will never kneel in front of a Jew, a communist, or a Polish landowner. We are free. We are free." I never heard that song before the war. Never. If they sang it, I didn't hear it. The songs were about love, about...rivers, about forests, about whatever, but I never heard that song. The minute Hitler came, first time I heard it, Hitler was there maybe for a couple of months, then they sang it. So I knew that that's the first time I smelled discrimination.

I could still knock on any door, if I need something. Grandma said, "Could you spare some onions from the garden?" The same as before the war. But I knew that behind doors it's not the same. And then the pogroms came nearer and nearer and nearer. Till, I don't remember whether it was, it must have been August. That's when the harvest is. We did the harvest, and we heard, and that girl was getting married. And she came to me, they didn't have everything like they had it before, too. She said to me, "I have this veil." Everyone borrowed something from the other. And she said, "And I don't know, I can't wash it with that thing that Mom has. Do you have anything delicate?" I said, "I still have," we had like, they were like flakes, like take Ivory Soap and shave it into flakes.

INT: Soap flakes, yeah.

EVA: Soap flakes. Very delicate for stuff like bras and stuff, satin bras before the war and things like that. So I said, "I still have a few flakes somewhere," and I found it. And I said, "Leave it," and I washed that veil for her. She said, "I want you to come to the wedding." And I said to her, her name was Anna -- I said, "Annie, what am I going to do at your wedding? I'm a Jew." She said, "I don't give a hoot. I want you there. So you're not going to go to church." And she was marrying somebody who she would never have gotten. She was marrying -- the Ukrainian priests get married, they have families -- a priest's son, with a university education. She became a bookkeeper. Before the war she couldn't even sign her name.

And I went to the wedding. I mean, I changed my dress. I only had two dresses by that time. I changed the dress and I went in there, and the whole family, they embraced me, they said, "Come sit here, sit here." And they went to the wedding, and then her mother stayed home. They went to church, and we prepared the tables and everything. And then there was dancing, and the fellows that knew me, the neighbor fellows, were dancing with me.

And about, I think it was dark already, 9:00, Nana came in. And of course, that bride's mother, her grandmother and my grandmother were born there and grew up together. "Oh, Chashu, come sit down. So nice you came in. We're so glad. And would you maybe..." they knew she wouldn't eat, but, "How about a little bit of wine or something, a fruit?" And she said, "No, no, I just came to take Eva home because I don't feel good and I want her with me."

And when Nana said, "I don't feel good," I knew that it's something else, but she wouldn't say it in front of them. And I was dancing, and then when the dance finished, I came over and I said, "Nana, what is it?" She said, "They are rounding up Jews in (?), and they killed some already, but so far it's only very old people and very sick people and stuff like that. And they think that the big pogrom will be soon. So I would like you to go home. Maybe you want to go and not sleep at home." But they didn't round us up, that was, I think spring, early spring, it was still cool. They didn't round us up until August already. (sighs)

I would sleep a lot in Jeanie's house. There was a third girl, a Polish girl, Irene. We went to the city together with the train, and back to home. So I slept at Irene's house a lot. And Nana wanted me to sleep out of the house. But when they came to round us up, I wasn't in the house, I was sleeping in the shed, not where the, where the cows were, there was a shed just for the grain and for the straw and stuff like this. On top of the straw I slept. And nobody came to tell me, but I heard noise, 4:00 in the morning. I look out, the house is surrounded by Germans and Ukrainian police, so I knew. I could have stayed there, but I wouldn't. I saw Grandma and Grandpa coming out of the house, and then my aunt, so I went, too. Grandma said, "Why did you come out?" I said, "Because I want to be with you."

And they rounded us all up into that big village, that main village that had, I told you there was a seven grade school. They rounded us out there, and they had, there was a big empty barn, a **tremendous** big, empty, like a barrack, like a tall building, a very big one. Like bigger than a house. Just four empty walls. And from **all** the villages, the Jews were there. And Fela's father was there, and Fela's mother was there.

And one night I slept with them, they took us away 4:00 in the morning, with my aunt, with the kids, with the uncle, with everybody. Everybody went. By early afternoon, my uncle managed to pay up some Ukrainians. Who was watching us were Ukrainian police. But they were the same as the Germans. My uncle managed to pay up somebody, and they let him go to the station, and I don't know, it seems that he was paying already some Germans money. Or something comes back to me, that he was paying up some Germans money. They gave him at the station a piece of paper that he works for them, for the Germans. And he came back with that piece of paper, and took his wife and children with him. And they went back to the house. The house was half looted already, but it was all right.

One night I stayed with Grandma. The next day I stayed with Grandma. And it was a very funny situation. There were, I don't know, I never counted them, 50 people or 100 people, on the floor. I mean, just on earth, sleeping on it and sitting. Next day at dusk somewhere, like the twilight just started to set in, we had a Ukrainian neighbor who was a **very** wonderful, decent human being. He had a son. And he was about, I would say, five years older than me. A very rich neighbor, a very rich Ukrainian. And when they were taking us all away from the house, his wife ran out, "Oh, please," she says, "I don't have more, but I have one and a half breads left over. Take it with you," and gave us a piece of butter, and this and this, and we took it with us. Very, very nice, decent people. And I remember she was talking to Grandma for a second. That son of hers became a policeman when the...well, they would have been gone to Siberia, maybe, too, if the Russians were there. But the Germans freed them, so her son became a policeman. But he was a decent fellow.

And I remember her talking on the side with Grandma for a while, and then she kissed my grandma and kissed me and she started to cry and went away. Back to her house. And the second day at twilight, her son the policeman, I didn't see him. I saw some policemen, but I didn't know the guys. And all of a sudden, he came driving up in his police uniform. And he says, "Can I talk to you?" I said, "Peter, what's the matter?" He said, "I can't talk to you now, come outside with me. You have a right to go with me, and I have a right to ask you. I'm in uniform. Are you scared?" I said, "I'm not scared of you." He said, "So come out."

I went out with him. And of course, the police, "Oh, Peter, you picked one?" He said, "Yeah. Isn't she cute? I kind of like her. I might take her with me." "Take her, Peter, take her." They could take any girl they wanted, do whatever they wanted. Anyway, he said, "I want to take you away from here." I said, "Where are you going to take me?" He said, "Listen to me. Tomorrow they're taking everybody away from here to the ghetto, and the day after tomorrow will be the first pogrom." And that was true. It happened. And he said, "First I'll take you to my mother's. We will hide you. And then if you have any idea who could do, because if they look for you, first thing they will look, they will know you might be in my house, because they see me with you."

So I said, "I don't know what to do." He said, "I'm not lying to you." He said, "I talked to my mother, and my mother said to me, 'Please, son, do it. She doesn't look Jewish. You cannot save the old people, but she's a young girl.'" And he said, "I want to give you a way out. You can stay for awhile with us, not very long, but then you can go somewhere else," he said. "Another village, another town, another city, nobody will know who you are. Because the pogrom is coming, and this is your last night here." And I said, "I don't know what to do." He said, "Call your grandma out."

I went and I called Granny out, and he said, "Chashy, I want to take Eva." And she says, "Bless your heart, your mother did it." So I suppose his mother was talking to my granny in the morning or that night when they were taking us away. And he said, "Well, I had it in mind myself, but when I talked to my mother she said, 'Yes, son, I would like you to do it. She can be saved. Why don't you do something?'" I said, "Will you have trouble?"

He said, "I can take anyone out of here if I want to. But of course if I take an old woman, they say, 'What are you going to do with her?' But if I take a young beautiful girl, I'll tell them that I'll bring her back tomorrow. They're all Ukrainian fellows. They won't say nothing." There were no Germans there.

And he took me away, and he brought me to their, not to the house. He had a brother-in-law he knew who was a son of a bitch, he was a Nazi that brother-in-law, and he took me to the barn and he said, "You just stay here, when it gets very dark, I'll..."

INT: Did you say good-bye to your grandmother? How did you say good-bye to your grandmother?

EVA: Yeah, I had a little, well, I didn't tell Grandma what he told me, that they will be going to the ghetto tomorrow. I didn't tell. I said, "Peter don't say nothing. And don't say nothing about the pogroms." And he said, "All right." And he told Granny only, "Chashy, if not tomorrow the day after or the day after, they won't keep you here for long. This is somebody's barn. We just took it from the Polack or the Ukrainian because we needed it, and he needs it. So we will take you to the city. So why should she go to the ghetto? She can be free, or she will be with us." And Grandma said, "I trust you. Your family I trust." So they brought me there, and he said, "When it gets dark and the neighbors don't see, either me or my sister will come and bring you something to eat." And he came. It took about two hours. He said the younger brother had to fall asleep, and the neighbor talked, and this and that, and he said, "I'm a big man, I'm a policeman. Everybody talks to me." Finally, he came, he brought me.

INT: What made you decide to go **this** time, when the other times you didn't want to go? You had other chances.

EVA: Because I believed him. I knew him. We were born and brought up together, neighbors, and I knew that he will not...he always was very extra very nice to me. I never did like Ukrainian fellows, especially. If I liked anyone, it would be more Polish fellows, because I went to a Polish school, and I was associating with Polish people more. But he was very good-looking, and it never dawned on me. He was always kidding me, and joking with me, and sometimes I said, "I'm going to hit you one of these days," because he would play dirty tricks on me and kid me till I would nearly be in tears, and Grandma would say, "Peter, leave her." "Oh, Chashy, but she's such an idiot, she believes everything I tell her."

That evening he brought me my supper, and I ate, and he said, "You're very tired." And I was crying. He brought me some blankets and a pillow. He covered me up and he said, "I'll see you tomorrow morning early, before sun up." He came in the morning, he brought me something, he said, "This is food for the whole day, because I don't know if in the day time we can come over and bring you food." I said, "Could you do me one favor and go over and tell Leah that I am here, because she's in the house." He said, "I don't know if I should do it, because Leah won't be long in the house." I said, "But they

paid up the Germans." He said, "That doesn't mean a damn thing. One German took the money, so what? He's sending the money to his wife. What's the big deal?"

Sure enough, that afternoon, they took them all away.

INT: And that's the story you were talking about earlier.

EVA: Yeah. And his sister ran into the house. She said, "Germans are all over your house there. They got Leah, they got the whole family." And she said, "If someone runs away, they know how many people there are supposed to be in the family, five or six. If they don't have the six people, they start to look at the neighbors, they might find you here. Go run into a field or something." So I ran into the garden, that's how I met with my Aunt Leah. And we were together until she heard that they caught a child, and I couldn't hold her. I tore her skirt, and she said, "My child, my child!" and she ran. She ran and she met her death, but she ran. That's how I could say myself, if, G-d forbid, if anyone would catch Rita or Elizabeth, would I want to live? Some people do it. My aunt in Winnipeg. [Gitchi]

I went to see her first time after the war. I never knew her actually before the war. That's the town where I met Abe and married. And I came, and I was with them for the holidays. And the night when we were, Uncle was getting ready to go to Kol Nidre, she was crying terribly. She lit the candles and was crying. And I started to comfort her, and Uncle said to me, "Let her cry. She has a right to cry. She has plenty to cry. She buried a husband and three children. She can cry." And Uncle went, and Auntie said, "Go, go, it will be late. Go to the synagogue. I'll come a few minutes later." And then I said, "Auntie, enough crying already." And she said, "My child, I don't deserve to live." I said, "How do you figure that?" She was only 42 years old! "How do you figure that?"

INT: This is your Aunt Gitchi?

EVA: Yeah, Aunt Gitchi. I said, "How do you explain that?" She says, "Because I saw, never mind my husband was killed, they told me, somewhere, but they told me my husband lies killed there. And I was running to see **him**, and I run by the road, and there were ditches." By each side of the road there were ditches in Poland. They dug ditches the water should run down into the ditches from the road. And she said, "In the ditches lie my three children dead, and I run and hide. So do I deserve to live?" she says. "I saw my three children dead, my three babies." The youngest was only three, I think. The oldest was the same age as Fela was, ten years old before the war, and the youngest two or three. She said, "I saw my three children dead, and I didn't say whatever, 'I'm going to die.' I ran and I hid. I looked for a place to hide," she says. Till today she always says it.

INT: She feels guilty for...

EVA: Yeah. Well, anyway, going back to my story...

INT: You tried to hold onto your Aunt Leah, but she ran away.

EVA: Yeah, and she ran. Of course, every time I heard, that the front was about at least six, eight kilometers from us, so you didn't hear any cannons, you didn't hear any shooting. If you heard a shot, somebody got killed. Nobody had any ammunition. Only the Germans and the police, the Ukrainians. So if you heard the shot, who got killed? Only a Jew. Every time I heard a shot, I knew somebody got killed. And each member that got shot, I knew somebody's missing again. I counted it.

Then... (sighs)

INT: How were you feeling? You were all by yourself.

EVA: I was seventeen years old, eighteen. I...yeah. And then the shots stopped. And I thought to myself: they know that I did not go to the city. They know that I disappeared from there, because the police saw me, and I cannot go to this neighbor anymore. And I'm in the garden. Our gardens, my granny's and theirs [Peter's family's], met. And I thought to myself: I have to get across. There was a small road going to the station. I have to look both ways. It was a brilliant summer day, a cloudless sky. **Beautiful**. And I thought, and somehow I managed to get across the road. There was a field that was not harvested yet. And I crawled on all fours for about, I don't know, a long while, till I lay down, and looked up at that sky. There was a Ukrainian church in that village. There was no Polish church, no Catholic, but there was a Ukrainian church. And once a month they had services, because there was only one priest for four villages. So that particular Sunday they had the services in that village. And I heard, they had a small bell, of course, a small church and a small bell. Such a beautiful sound that bell always made, and I heard that bell peal, and I looked up at the sky, and I thought to myself, I couldn't cry. Couldn't cry for nothing. And I thought to myself: I would go right out now, and I heard the commotion. It wasn't far from my house. I heard, that was the commotion that they brought back my aunt's boy, and he showed them where to dig. It was a number of hours, about five hours, until the commotion died down, and I knew that it's finished. Whoever was caught already. And I thought to myself: I would go right out and tell the Germans, "Here I am. You don't have to look for me." If somebody would just come and tell me why I should die (pounds table). Explain, give me an answer to that why, I would go right now, period.

INT: You remember thinking that to yourself?

EVA: Yeah. That was...I would go out right now, but just tell me **why** I'm supposed to die. What did I do? What am I guilty of that I'm supposed to die? And I lied there till it got dark. Not dark, the twilight started. You could see lights already in the windows, and I sneaked back into the garden, and from the garden I thought to myself, I was hungry like anything, and I thought to myself: I have to get back to that Peter's barn, because Peter will help me to get into a forest somewhere. I knew there is underground, Polish underground. I didn't know where, I didn't know what. And if I tell them I'm Polish, they'll believe me, and I'll hide with them in the forest. And...later on I learned that there was a Polish underground, and there was a Jewish underground, too, but I

mean, the fields I couldn't stay long, because they will harvest them, in a day or two, another week, there will be nothing. And I thought to myself, I have to get to Irene, which is on the other side of the village, and she's not far from a forest. Maybe something will be done there. I didn't know, and I didn't prepare anything.

And then all of a sudden, I was sitting in the garden, thinking what I'm going to do when it gets dark. First I'll ask them for some food, and then I hear coming a truck.

(END TAPE SEVEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE SEVEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: A whole truck full of policemen come and they go into Peter's house, the Ukrainians, all of them. And I see everybody's going out to the well washing their hands, and I figured they'll eat supper there, most probably. And I thought to myself, what am I going to do in this garden? I'm afraid to go into the barn. And then all of a sudden one of the policemen comes out, and another one, and they have a couple of girls with them, and they start walking in front of that garden. I thought to myself, how long can I stay here? What if...I mean, Ukrainians do those things. Village people do it. If he wants to do something and there are grown up people in the house, he'll go in the garden where nobody sees him. So I jumped into their outhouse. Yeah? And then I thought to myself, what did you do now? They're eating in the house, and what if they want to come out here to the outhouse to use it? And then all of a sudden I hear somebody coming into the outhouse, somebody walking, because it was a little distance away. I hear steps. So what did I do? I jump into that hole where the human waste is. I jump into that hole, and I crawl in, and kind of curve myself, because if you look in the hole, you see me. My head was out of that thing. And I curled myself and held on by the hands, and with my feet, to the sides. It was made of wood. And held on to that, so that whatever they do, they shouldn't see **me** there. Because the hole was small, and there was a board. So I was like under that board, like a snake. His sister comes in. And I don't know why, she looked down, and she must have, I asked her later, "How did you see me?" She says, I saw -- I was wearing something, a skirt or something, and she saw a piece of color, of thread, of some kind of a shmatta hanging. And when she looked in, and I thought to myself: well, whatever it will be, good Lord. I said, "Who is it?" She says, "Eva, is that you?" I said, "Who is it? It's me." I said, "Nina, it's me." She said, "My **G-d**, you're lucky that they didn't come out!" She said, "How long are you here?" And I was there for about an hour, sitting already inside in that human waste. And she said, "My G-d, this is a...I don't know, a miracle." And she said, and she knew it, too, that her husband doesn't like Jews. And she said, "My husband is home, and there's a whole party going on in the house." She said, "Come out of here. Come out of here and get into the garden." I said, "But I'm smelly." She says, "That doesn't matter. Just get rid of them, I'll wash you. There is a well with water. We'll wash you." There were no hoses those days.

Well, I said, "Okay." She stood by, I went out of there, I was full of shit. And I got into the...and she said, "Just sit there and wait for me." It took about an hour. And she came out, and her mother. Her mother was carrying a pail with water, and she was carrying a

pail. They started, and she said, "Strip all your clothes." And I said to her, "How did you manage to get rid [of the policemen]?" And her mother said, "I told Peter that Eva is in the outhouse, and he said, 'Okay Mom, we're going to make it short.'" And he got them out, after an hour, they were half drunk and this and that, but he got them out. And she said, "You're going to the barn." She brought me, her daughter gave me, her sister gave me some clothes, I put them on. And she brought me something to eat. And well, they washed me for an hour till I... And they brought me something to eat, and she says, "Don't worry. Tomorrow we will decide something. You can't stay here," she says, "You see they come here." I said, "I know. I don't want to bring," because they could have killed him and the whole family. They did kill whole families that hid Jews.

So tomorrow morning early, Peter came and brought me something to eat. And I said to him, "Peter, why are you doing all of this for me? You got to empty the house yesterday because of me." He said, "I always told your grandma you're an idiot, and you are an idiot. I have loved you since you were a kid." I said, one of the most beautiful girls in the village once said to me, but he was, he had school, and he had finished seven grades, and he was a very rich boy. She was a poor girl and had four grades, but was beautiful. And she said, "I am so in love with Peter." She says, "I look at him and I know it will never happen. He's rich, I'm poor." And I said, "But you're so beautiful." And I don't know, I was like a brother. I said to him once, "Peter, you know, Daria is so in love with you. She's such a beautiful girl." He says, "I'm not getting married yet, you idiot, I'm only nineteen." I talked to him still before the war, the Russians were there. He said, "I'm not getting married, and I wouldn't marry Daria. She's beautiful, not to me." And when he was telling me that he loves me, he said, "You remember you told me Daria loves me? You were a kid, I didn't tell you then. But I was in love with you already," he says. "And I would like to save you," he says, "but I'm afraid if I try to save you any longer here in my house, we will all go together." I said, "Peter, I don't want it." And I said, "Just get me to the forest."

Next night he drove me on his bike to the forest. We said good-bye.

Next I saw Peter was when I came to my town already, and you could not get any documents in your name. I still had that German Kennkarte, until you went to the place where you lived. And there were a lot of Polish people there, who ran away because the Ukrainians were killing them, and I was there, so we had to hire Russians with guns. There were about ten of us, and about ten Russians with guns, because the Ukrainians, those that were in the police with the Germans, Stalin, they were catching them and hanging them. Four were hung, they hung a whole winter month, the whole of December, they hung them in the middle of the city. And I said, "I have to go and see a Ukrainian policeman hanging." I went.

When we went to that village, I got my name back. I went to the head of the village. I said, "I want my name." He said, "Of course, I'll give you." And we didn't linger long. We were all together, all the Polish people and me, we were there for about an hour. And I said, "I just want to go see my neighbors." And I said, "I want you to give me a piece of paper listing a house, buildings, whatever the Germans burned down, and the earth. The

earth didn't disappear." Whatever belonged to my grandma, he gave me. I said, "Because I will leave it to who **I** want, not just whoever wants to get it." He gave me. I gave it to the Russian government. I said, "Give it to whoever you want."

And I went into that neighbor. And she saw me, they cried so much. That sister's husband, the one that didn't like Jews, my grandma ran away, on the way from the city to the ghetto, when they were rounded up, and they were all on the way walking to the ghetto, she kind of disappeared into a field, and went back to her village, waited till they all went by -- it was like a march -- and went back to the village and went into the same neighbor that I was, Peter's mother. And the mother said, "The best thing would be with you, you are an old woman. Just to drive you away somewhere," she says. "We will have to wait till after the harvest. Stay here in the barn. After the harvest," her husband's name was Andrei, she says, "Andrei will get you on the wagon, harness the horses and drive you away about fifty kilometers. You're somebody's grandmother." She didn't look Jewish, she spoke perfect Ukrainian, perfect Polish. "You will mind the kids, you will help out in the house. We will drive you away." So that son-in-law went and told the Germans. He gave her out. So he knew that he has no way when the Germans started to run away, and he knew. When the Germans went, and the Russians came back, he went, he belonged yet into the army, and she came. When I came to the house, his [Peter's] sister said to me, "Are you going to do something about my husband?" she says. I said, "I wouldn't, because if, first, he's in the army. Maybe he'll get killed. You don't know if he'll come back." Because when they were...and I met a few people in the village and they told me, walking from the head's house to my house, I had to go through the village. "You know who gave your grandma away? The whole way when she was walking, they were taking her, and they took her there, where the graves of her daughter and the grandchildren were, and they killed her there." They buried my grandmother. She had to undress. Every Jew had to get undressed naked before they killed them, because they took the clothes. So my grandma begged them, "Leave my shirt on. I'm an old woman," she says, but they wouldn't. She had to get all undressed, and they shot her and she fell into the grave. She had to kneel. "Because you're Jewish, you don't want to kneel, so kneel," they told her. And she kneeled, and they shot her. That's the Ukrainian police. And they buried her so, two of her Ukrainian friends, very nice women, I know who they were -- no, one Polish, one Ukrainian -- went and made a funeral for her when it got dark, because one of her feet was sticking out of the grave, it was so shallow. So they put a mound on top of it. She says, "And we said a prayer, the way we know how, we said a prayer, and we made her a little funeral," she says, "And we covered your granny's foot, and if you want to, we will show you where." And I said, "I don't know. I just got my papers back. If the situation stabilizes," and I did. I thought that I'll be living there. I said, "If everything gets to be more or less, if it becomes a stabilized situation, a government, and the war is already in Germany, not in Poland," I said, "I would like to transfer all those people that lie there, to a cemetery in the city, and bury them there." Well, I never got around to it, because I went away, too.

INT: Who told you this story about your grandmother? After the war?

EVA: Yeah, yeah. They told me the story.

INT: Those women that buried her told you? What happened to your grandfather?

EVA: Oh, he was killed in the ghetto. In the first pogrom.

INT: There was a pogrom in the ghetto?

EVA: He was killed, and that niece of his, the old maid that lived with us, the oldest boy was with her when they jumped out the windows. The youngest boy, I don't remember what happened to him. The middle one was with my aunt. So they killed her and they killed him, and the husband came out of the forest. The oldest boy, she ran with him to the city, that old maid, and they got killed in the ghetto, too, and my grandfather.

INT: So, what, the Germans came into the ghetto and killed people in the ghetto?

EVA: No, they couldn't, they couldn't. What are they going to do? They killed 12,000 people in three days. They took them out, out somewhere near a forest, they dug, 500 people in one grave.

INT: Oh. They shot them in the forest.

EVA: They loaded people, and half-dead people were in the graves, too, because people after the war told me. They covered them with earth, and no matter how much earth they piled up, the blood shot through, because some were half-buried, half-alive, still. They just went with machine guns. A row would stand in front of the grave with the machine gun, they would fall in. And second, and you moved and you moved, row after row, and you fell, one on top of the other. So some people dug out, I spoke to one man. He said he was one of the last ones, and he was not killed, and he dug himself out and lived through.

INT: So who in your family was killed in that pogrom?

EVA: As far as I know...

INT: Your grandfather.

EVA: My grandfather, the oldest boy, Leah's oldest boy, most probably the young one was there, too, because I don't think the young one was under the forest. I knew only about the middle one. And the aunt in the town, Minnie, her husband got killed, and her kids, and when she saw her twins, they looked like two blonde, blue-eyed golden angels, those two twins. They were two and a half or three. When she saw the children killed, she went off her rocker, started to dance and sing. So the Germans took her out and didn't kill her. And some people hid, some people were still important to work, some doctors, people that they needed, and people that paid off, maybe, somebody. So there were some, a few thousand people. There were 18,000 Jews. So 12,000 went away in three days. The rest, there were two or three pogroms. The last one cleared everybody

out. So they let her -- Gitchi told me already, my Aunt Gitchi -- that she recognized her, and she asked them, "Why is she running around crazy like this, singing?" And they told her the story, that she saw the twins being killed in front of her, and she went off her rocker. And they said, "Let's let her run around, we'll have entertainment." So they liked to see her dance and sing, and that's the way she ran around.

INT: This is your mother's sister?

EVA: Yeah. My mother's third sister. And I'll finish it up soon, because I'm coming to an end, more or less, of a period. So I went in to that neighbor, and I said, "What am I going to tell them? Your husband is fighting right now. So maybe he'll kill a German or two," and I said, "Maybe he'll get killed. Who knows if he'll come back?" As a matter of fact, I heard that he came back alive. But I said, "I want to talk to your mother." So I went into the house, and I said to her mother, "Come with me to the barn." And she came. And I said to her, "Listen to me." Her name was Pauline. I said, "Pauline, listen to me. You heard that they hung four of those policemen. I know that Peter is still hiding. Tell him, when do you see him?" She says, "He drops in at night sometimes there in the forest." I said, "Whenever you see him, tell him to come out, because," I said, "you don't know it, but in today's papers and on the radio in the city I heard that Stalin gave out a manifesto. Whoever of those Ukrainians in the forest comes out and gives himself out, he lets them free. But if not, they will be shot like dogs in the forest. They'll be shot, period, and the families will go to Siberia." And I said, "Tell him that I said it, and that I love him dearly, and tell him if anything, come and get me. I will stand by him and I will free him. Nothing will happen to Peter, I swear to you," I said. "I will tell them that he saved my life." And I went home. She started to cry. And I said, "Please tell Peter I want to save him. I want to save his life. He saved my life." That was a Sunday; next Saturday Peter came to me in the city.

And he said, "So, I'm free. You freed me. You're alive. Could you marry me, maybe?" And I said, "Peter, I can't stay in this part of the..." I said, "It's like a boiling pot." "You know," I said, "My aunt and my uncle..." I mean, he knew the whole family. I said, "You know Leon is in New York." My aunt and the youngest child of my grandma's, my mother's youngest brother was born the same year as Peter. I said, "Your friend, he's still in Argentina," I said, "And I want to go there." I said, "Peter, you want to go with me to Poland? Come." He said, "How could I leave an old father and mother?" He said, "I don't know if that bastard will come back," he said, "My brother-in-law, from the war. But you're all alone," he said. "Let me take care of you." I said, "Peter, I love you like a brother, but I could never be a wife to you." And I said good-bye, we both cried. I think he slept over.

I stayed with my neighbors, Polish neighbors. The Polish people, there were very few Polish people, and the Jewish people stayed close in the houses near to where the Russian army stayed, near the barracks, because they protected us, because the Ukrainians still killed Jews and Polacks. So we stayed close to the Russian army. That was the last time I saw Peter. And I never know what happened.

INT: You don't know what happened to him?

EVA: Didn't stay in contact. But I don't remember who told me that her husband came back from the war.

INT: And you didn't testify against him?

EVA: I was, honey...

INT: You were gone by then.

EVA: I saw Peter the beginning of, that was...Peter, it was in the middle of the winter? In March I left Ukraina, because it was said every Jew and every Polack who wants to, the border is open. Just show who you are. You just can go. And the Polish people got papers. That's when I went to Minnie's house, and there were Ukrainians living there. And I went, I don't remember with who I went. Someone of the Polish people went with me. And she had a two-sided house, too, like two rooms, two separate units. A room and a kitchen, a room and a kitchen. And half of the house somebody else lived. But the guy said, "Who's the owner?" And she said, "The other side is the owner." So I went and I said, "How did you get into this house?" "Oh, well," she says, "I'm in this house already for about, three, four years." I said, "This house belongs to me." She said, "Who are you?" I didn't look Jewish. I said, "My mother's sister lived in this house." "You dirty Jew! Hitler still didn't **kill** all of you?" I said, "You bastard. You know what? If you would have been a decent person, talked to me like a person, maybe you would have given me a few pennies and I would have let you stay in this house." But I said, "Just because you called me, you said that Hitler didn't kill all the Jews yet," I said, "you're not going to be in this house if I have to die on the spot." And she started to rave and cry and this and that. And I went away. I said to her, "Forget it." I said, "Tomorrow I'm going to go to town."

I went, and there, the army that stayed behind, the front was already in Germany at that time. The army were eighteen-year-old kids, the Russian army, and usually the commander was already a fifty year old man. There was nothing in between. So one of the commanders was a Jewish guy. And he told me. One day, they would come in, they talked to my neighbors. The father was already in his fifties. He would talk to them about this, about that, politics. And when he heard I am Jewish, he kind of talked to me from time to time. And he said to me one day, he said to me, "Honey, I'm talking to you like a father now. What do you think of doing?" I said, "I don't know. I don't have anybody in Poland. I don't know if I'm going to go to Poland. I don't know anybody there." I said, "I have family in America and Argentina." He said, "Please go out of here. Because if anything ever happens in Russia, if there is anything ever in Russia, you see," he says, "Every head of something is a Jew. They will blame the Jews, as they do now." He said, "The Jewish blood will run in Russia just like it ran in Hitler's Poland and Germany. That will be the same thing," he says. "Honey, go. From Poland, go to Germany, go to the Americans, go to the French, go to the English. Get out of here, please, honey," he said. "I'm talking to you like a father," he said, "of three or four

children. He said, "Some of them are married already. Please, if you wouldn't be Jewish, I wouldn't tell you." And I took his advice. I wouldn't have gone. I liked the Polish people there, the family I stayed with my neighbors. Another neighbor. But after a year, they came, too, because there was nobody left. All the Polish people left.

So that's how I left. I left. Peter came to me in the winter, and in March I left for the last time. I never managed to go to see the graves, nothing. I just, he said, "Save yourself and go," he said. "Because if they get rid of Hitler," he said, "the West might as well try to get rid of Stalin and communism." Which Churchill wanted to do, and Roosevelt said no, and de Gaulle said no. And if they would have listened to Churchill, they would have been much better. But anyway.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 17, 1996. You had been rescued from the outhouse, when we left off the last time, and I wonder if we could continue with the war, and tell me what happened to you next.

EVA: Well, I think I told you that I slept through the night. The next day, I mean, I think I told you that, that Peter came out, and he talked to me. And I said, "Peter, I can't stay here. I have to go." And he said, "That's what I wanted to tell you, but where?" He said, "I don't want you to go just into the fields." I said to him, my uncle had a, he was a friend of my uncle's, a Ukrainian guy. He was kind of half Polish, half Ukrainian, and he lived near the forest. And I said, "You get me close to there." There were a lot of forests, but I told him the particular one I wanted. I said, "You just get me there tonight, when it gets dark, and leave me there."

So his mother gave me some food, and I said good-bye to them, and everybody, his mother started to cry, and he said, "Mom, it has to be done. If she's to survive, it has to be done." And I went. And of course I knocked in the window of that friend of my...as a matter of fact, he's the one that helped me take my mother to the hospital. He was supposedly, supposedly, a good friend of the family, and was always very friendly, and was a good friend to my uncle. And I knocked, and of course he opened the door, and I came into the house, and he had only a wife, no children. And his wife had a brother, a young guy about 20, 21. He was sleeping. He didn't know. And they of course, took me, like everybody else, into the barn, and she gave me a blanket and a pillow, and what not, and he said, "Just go to sleep. Tomorrow we will think of something else." (pause)

Meanwhile (sighs) I'll try to make it short. A couple of days went by, she would bring me food, and everything seemed quiet, but I realized, and after about two days, he came up. I think he came up every day, I don't remember. But the second day his wife had to go away somewhere, and he came up. You had to, I mean, I wasn't in the barn just low. You had to go on a ladder where they keep the straw and the hay on the top, in the hayloft. And he came into that hayloft, and to make the story short, he said to me that, "I like you." He wasn't an old guy. He was about 30, 32, I would say. And this and that. And I realized what he wants. I knew that they do it to Jewish girls. I knew that they did

it to a lot of the girls in the ghettos. I knew that if a German says, you don't say nothing, you just do it. What are you going to tell him, no? But beside me, that I was very innocent, by that time I was already deeply religious with Catholic faith. Because I was attached to Catholicism since I went to that first school in my life, and when the war started, and they started to persecute Jews even more, I got more attached to the Catholic religion, because I realized that the Jewish G-d doesn't care for His people. He doesn't. Why would they be killing young kids and stuff like that? And I became very religious, and I was praying day and night that...I didn't pray that I should survive. I just prayed that my death should be swift. And I was deeply, even though I wasn't converted, but I was a religious Catholic girl in my soul.

Anyway, I put him off. I put him off. But before that, I remember, that must have been the second day. I think the first day he came over and he said to me, "I don't know how long you'll be able to stay here, because everybody knows," well, people were afraid and I don't blame them, because they would kill somebody who was harboring a Jew. And he said to me, "I don't know if you can stay here for long. Everybody knows I was a friend of the family. I took your mother to the hospital with you twice. I was Eli's close friend." So I said to him, "I'm not going to stay." Well, I said, "My problem is that I ran away. I don't have any clothes. It will get colder. Fall will come. I have no boots, no shoes, no nothing to wear." And I said to him, and I was thinking, I cannot go to Jeanie, I cannot go to Irene, I cannot go to the kids that went to school with me, because this is the first place they will look for me. What am I going to do? But finally I settled. Jeanie was married. I knew that she hasn't got the power to do whatever she wants. She has a husband already. Then I thought to myself, Irene is not married yet. And I said to him, "Do me a favor. Go to Irene and tell her that I need a prayer book, a church prayer book, and if she can spare, a rosary, one, and if she can give you some clothes or something." And he said, "But Irene cannot do nothing for you. She's a girl. We need somebody who should be able to get you. What are you planning to do?" I said, "I'm going to try to get out of not only the district, but then out of the city."

(END TAPE SEVEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE EIGHT, SIDE ONE)

EVA: You asked me once what happened when they took me away. Grandma gave everything away, supposedly. Later I heard that she buried some stuff, too, but nobody told me. She gave me a little gold watch that was in the family, a very old gold watch. And when I was leaving Grandma, when Peter took me away on the bike, I said, "Nana, you take the watch." And she said, "You take it." I said, "I'll always, if I don't get to eat, I can steal it from a garden or an orchard or whatever. I won't go hungry. You in the ghetto will get a bread for that watch." And I gave it to her. So I had nothing on me to buy or do whatever.

So he said to me, "You need a man." And I said, "Well, you cannot, her father is old, and Jeanie has a brother who is married. Don't involve more people than need to be. Just ask her to give me a prayer book." But he said, "Who is the man?" And I said to him, I don't

know if I told you. There was a, I think I did told you, early in the interview. There was, before the war, a landowner, and there was a big house with people working there. And the man that ran that whole business, that administrator, had a wife, she was a teacher, she was my grandma's friend. And when the war started, that whole thing fell apart. The government took away the land and everything. And in that house, where the administrator lived, they made some kind of a cooperative, and they made, people would bring their grain there from other villages. You paid your taxes in grain. The farmers paid their taxes in grain. And there was a whole business. Anyway, they needed those, what do you call those, those sacks, the big sackcloth, cloth sacks, for grain. So if they were torn, somebody had to repair them. Of course, Irene and other girls got office jobs there. I couldn't get an office job, because I was Jewish. But it was good to be working somewhere. And Irene said to me, "I'm going to talk, there is this guy who is the manager of our office. He's kind of Ukrainian/Polish, too, so he looks a nice guy. I will talk to him and let's see if we can fix you up with a paper that you have a job." Because they said if you have a job they might let you live longer, or not kill you, or I don't know.

So I went there, and for about half a year I worked there, before they took us away, and I used to fix those torn sacks. And I said to him, "You know what? Go over," -- I forgot what his first name was, but his second name imprinted itself in my mind. I said, "Go over to that guy -- he's not stupid, he's a little educated -- and tell him that I would like to see him." He had a wife and two children. It never dawned on me how people turn into turncoats. But anyway, he said, "Good. So we have now somebody. Because," he said, "You know, if you go away from here," he said, "I cannot disappear for a day and take you somewhere because my wife will know. As it is she's already mumbling that you are here, and a young pretty girl, and she brings it up that I look at other girls, and stuff like that."

Well, to make the story short, he...went, it took a couple of days. He went and he brought me, he brought the guy. No, he did not bring the guy. He brought me from Irene that...

INT: Prayer book?

EVA: Brought me the prayer book and brought me a rosary, and I don't remember what she sent me. She sent me some skirt and some blouse. She was bigger than me, of course. But couldn't give me shoes because she wore a size eight and I wore a size six or five. So...and he said, "I figured something else," he said. "I am going..." I didn't know, he told me that. I didn't know till then. There was an overseer of that small forest where he lived. Every forest had an overseer. That overseer had a wife, and this was his girlfriend, the one that I stayed with. And he said, "So I'm going to talk to her. And I'll take you there one night. And her husband is always out in the forest. He doesn't know what goes on in the house at all." I think she had no children, either. And he said, "She will do for me anything, and she can keep you there indefinitely." And I told him straight, "I'm not planning on staying in this district. Sooner or later something will [happen]." But I said, okay, I figured he doesn't know. I realized by then that I don't want him to know everything that I'm going to do.

Well, to make the story short, he said, "It will take a couple of nights till her husband goes away somewhere. Sometimes he goes away deep into the forest and sleeps there and comes back, if he's needed to do something, they decide whether to cut that side of the forest, or not to cut it, or plant, or whatever." So he said, "So that's the night that I'm going to take you there."

Meanwhile, he comes in next day and says to me, "That guy that you worked for," his second name was Korzec, but I forgot his first name. He said, "He wants to come and see you." I said, "Fine." Because he lived in another village altogether. So I figured, the more connection I have with more villages, I'll be able to go from one to the other and away from here.

INT: Who was Korzec, the manager, or the Ukrainian man that you're staying with?

EVA: No, no, no, the manager.

INT: Okay, what's the name of the man you're staying with, just for the record?

EVA: Well, his name was Vasily. So the first name, the last name I forgot. So I said, "Fine." He brought that Korzec to me, and he said, "Okay, you need me?" I said, "No." And Korzec said, "We don't need you, you can go. I'll talk to her." And of course, that Korzec said, "I'll do anything for you, but you have to become my lover." I said, "I never had anybody, you know that." And he said, "I'm not going to hurt you." I said, "What will become, if I become pregnant? You have a wife and two children." He said, "That has nothing to do with it," he said. "My wife and two children. I can promise you one thing: you will not become pregnant. I'll see to it."

And he was the one that took away my virginity, that bastard. I couldn't even cry. And he said, "I'll be coming around, if I can, every evening, except weekends, because I go home." He lived in another village. "And we will start to talk about getting you out of here." Right then and there I decided that I don't want him to know where I am. But the man I counted on, my uncle's best friend, of course, that Korzec left me there, it was about 10:00 at night, and most probably he spoke to that Vasily, because late that night, Vasily came up to me. And said, "Well, Korzec told me that you did it with him, so you might as well do it with me." And what am I going to say, where am I going to go in the middle of the night?

And then, so I thought to myself: that will be my end. I'll get pregnant, most probably, and that will be my end. I don't know what it means to have pain, to lose virginity. I was so scared, I was...so...devastated that I...I promised myself that I will be a virgin for my marriage, always. Girls did the same thing they do these days. But I promised myself, no. No way. I'm going to be a virgin when I get married. And I'm not going to be, if I live through even. But when they both left me that night, after that I cried. Sure enough, every night that Korzec came up. And the next night, the three of them came up: Korzec and that Vasily and his wife's brother who lived with him. The three of them. His name was Peter, too. And I said to Peter, "You are getting married." I knew he was getting

married. "So what has that got to do with it?" he said. "They will kill you anyway." So one of them would stand by the...and that Peter showed me that he had a gun. Usually he would be the last one. He would stand downstairs and watch that his sister shouldn't come out, or somebody of the neighbors, or somebody whatever, I don't know. So he said, "I have my gun here. Nobody will come up. You two can do, and after you're through, I will." So those three would come up. Finally I said to that Vasily, I said, "If you don't get me over to that other woman, I don't even know if I want to deal with you. Because if you could have brought Korzec to me and allow him to do it, and then your brother-in-law, and I don't know who will be next," I said, "You don't want to save me. You want me to get pregnant, and that will be the end of me. Because if I could find work somewhere, I could maybe live for a while, still, because nobody will know who I am. But if I'm pregnant, nobody will take in a pregnant girl to work, and then a baby." "Oh, you're not going to have the baby. My wife's mother knows what to do not to have a baby. Don't worry. She'll take it from you." Most probably she did abortions in the village for the girls.

All I could do is pray. That prayer book that Irene gave me saved my life, my sanity, that I didn't just became a raving maniac and didn't run around the fields. And I told him that if you don't do it for me within, I don't know, it was a day or two to the weekend. I said, "If you don't take me this weekend over," I said, "I'm going to disappear. That's it, whatever happens, happens." I said, "Nothing worse can happen to me already that happened."

INT: How long was this going on? A few days?

EVA: A few days. Every night.

INT: Every night. And how old were you?

EVA: Seventeen. Seventeen or eighteen. It was in '43. I was eighteen. Eighteen.

And sure enough, he came up next day and said to me, "Korzec is going home today, it's Friday. I'm going to go over to her tonight. Nobody's going to come up tonight." And he said, "I'm going to go up to her tonight and talk to her, and if anything tomorrow night." So he brought me over next night to her. That was a different forest already.

INT: This was the woman whose husband worked in the forest.

EVA: Yes, and it was his girlfriend, that Vasily's girlfriend.

INT: Oh, he was fooling around with her.

EVA: And I know the names sound confusing to you, because...She took me in. She made me again a place in the loft, in the hayloft, and she would bring me food three times a day, and for a couple of days I thought that my ordeal was over. And she said, "You can stay here as long as you want."

Next day was Sunday. And he, of course, stayed, they both left me, and he stayed with her the whole night in the apartment, in that house, it was attached to the house. Because he said, "I'm going to stay here the night, because her husband isn't home." So he stayed with her. So I knew that I'm safe from him. And I told him, "If you ever had any shred of love for your friend, my Uncle Eli," I said, "don't tell Korzec where I am." (sighs, pause) And he said, "I'm not going to tell him."

Next day was Sunday, and every time I heard a shot somebody had to die, and it was a Jew. It didn't matter whether I knew him or not, somebody had to die, because nobody killed nobody except somebody killed a Jew. And nobody had, if somebody had a gun, the Germans found one gun with a Ukrainian fellow, they shot him right there on the spot. You're not allowed to have any ammunition, nothing.

I heard three shots. At night. That Sunday morning... I heard a voice, and I said to myself: I know that voice. I looked down. I knew in that village close to her on the other side of the forest there were two Jewish families, or three. One Jewish family had three old maids, one of them was Carla, the one I found after the war in Luck, and the other family I don't remember, but the family across from them, there was a very sick mother and three beautiful girls. And there was always talk. I heard talk about why my aunt and my uncle would never go visiting there, three beautiful girls, because they were no good. They slept with soldiers and this and that, all those girls were not considered nice girls. So nobody came. I mean, my aunt wasn't friendly with them, my uncle wasn't.

And I looked, there was a hole. The part of Poland where I come from, in a village, all the roof was made out of straw. So I bore myself a little hole with a stick to be able to see her house, because you sit there and you sit there and you look at the cows, and you look at this, and you pray again and you pray again, and sometimes you look out. And then I heard a voice, I look out, and she's standing in front of the house talking to one of those girls. Those three bad girls.

INT: Who's she? The woman that you're...

EVA: The woman that I'm staying with. And she's talking to the oldest one of those two younger sisters. And I hear them discussing, I don't know who brought up, whether she started or the Jewish girl started, and I hear the Jewish girl said, "I heard that they kill everybody out in the next village, but I hear that Eva was, nobody ever saw Eva dead. So she must be somewhere." And she says, "I wish I knew where Eva was," the Jewish girl says to that Polish woman, "Because she could come and stay with us. Me and my sister, we are safe, because we have a lot of friends in the military and the police and everybody." And she says, "I wish that Eva would, I could bring it somehow to her through someone, wherever she is. I don't know how, but she could come and stay with us. She would be safe with us because we had promises done to us that we are not going to be touched, me and my sisters."

I listened to that, and at night that woman, it got dark, she came up with supper. And she said, "I had a visitor today." And I said to her, "I know. I looked out." And she said, "Did you hear what she said?" I said, "Yes. But under no circumstances am I going to go to them." Here I was raped already by three, yeah? And who the hell needs German soldiers? And I knew that that wouldn't save them. If my rich uncle with my aunt couldn't be saved with their, I don't know, thousands or maybe millions in jewelry, who's going to save those three girls? Just because they put out?

In the afternoon, I heard three shots. And the woman says to me, "You know what those three shots were?" I said, "Someone got killed." She said, "Those three sisters were killed." I said, "My **G-d**, my heaven." I said, "She just talked today in the morning." And I couldn't believe it. And she said, "Do you know what they did?" The oldest one was shot first, then the middle one. And the oldest one, before they shot her, she said, "Please, take my," -- the youngest sister was maybe a year older than me, or two. No more than twenty. And she says, "Please, take my sister, take her wherever you want. Please don't kill her." So they did with that youngest sister what they did with my cousin, the little cousin. They shot her once, they shot her twice, they didn't kill her yet. And finally, they put her in the grave, they didn't shoot her dead. She was still screaming, they put her in the grave and covered up the grave with her alive. So the three sisters were all in one grave and they covered it up, and that poor girl screaming to high heaven, not dead, and they covered her up, and she said, "That was the end of the three sisters."

And she says, "You're welcome to stay here, honey. As long as my husband doesn't know, nothing will happen to you." And she says, "They are clearing, they are cleaning, they are doing a big cleaning. Wherever there was a Jew left in a hole, they find him now and they kill him. So I don't know." And I said to her, "I got to get out before winter starts." And the fall was beginning already to come in.

INT: What was this woman's name, do you remember?

EVA: I don't remember. I met her, I was with her maybe a week, and I never saw her in my life. I never saw her any more in my life. I didn't know her, until he told me that he has a girlfriend.

INT: Can I ask you a question, just to interrupt you for a minute? Do you know why, why do **you** think that some people, like Peter and this woman, were good Ukrainians, or Poles, or whatever?

EVA: She was Polish. That woman was Polish.

INT: Okay, she was Polish. But Peter was Ukrainian, and his mother was Ukrainian. And yet there were other Ukrainians who...did horrible things.

EVA: In the same family. Peter's brother-in-law was a son of a bitch, and Peter was good, his parents.

INT: Why was Peter that way? What made him different?

EVA: The same way that there were good Germans and bad Germans, very few, and far in between. While I was still with Nana, we were all still, the first year the Germans came, they started killing Jews the second year. The first year they came in, I told you all the personnel on every station was German. Germans who were either not well to go in the army, or were already injured. One of those Germans happened to like me. He had a wife and a child in Germany. He was a guy about thirty, I would say, 32. A very nice fellow. And one day he walked by and said, "Good afternoon," in German, and I answered him -- I don't know if it was German or Jewish. I didn't know either very well. But, "Oh," he said, "You speak German." I said, "No." I didn't hide it, because everybody knew him. I said, "No, I know a little Jewish, and I suppose it's..." He said, "Yes. At least to you I can talk, because when I go over to a girl, she's Polish or Ukrainian, she doesn't know what I say, and I don't know what **she** says." And he would start, and I would work in the garden, and he would come, stand outside the fence with me and we would talk, and he would tell me about his wife and his child. And then...

One day, he didn't find me in the garden. And my grandma developed, when she had her youngest daughter, the one that is still, I think she's still alive in Argentina, my aunt, the one that I was supposed to go to. When she had, after her birth she was left with one leg very swollen. Until her dying day she had that one leg swollen, and from time to time, she had like, it was like attacks. She would get high temperature, the leg would get red, she would have to stay in bed and take some kind of medicine, I don't know what, and after a week it would subside, and the redness would go away, and she would start walking little by little and go back. Once in a year or two it would happen.

Well, she had that attack, and I stayed in the house and took care of Nana and maybe cooked something to eat. So he knocked on the door. And he said, "I didn't see you in the garden." I said, "My grandmother is sick." And he said, "Can I come in?" Well, what am I going to tell a German? Don't come in? He came in. And he started to spoke to Grandma, Grandma spoke a good German. He said, "What a pleasure to speak to somebody German." And he asked her what's the matter, she explained to him. And he said, "I'll see if I can bring you something." And he said goodbye and said, "I'll see if I can rustle up something." And within two hours, he was back with medicine for Grandma. Something to take by mouth, something to put on her leg, rub it in, and some bandages to bandage the leg, and he did the bandaging himself, on my grandma. The leg looked very ugly. Very swollen, very big and red.

INT: So why? Why do people do...

EVA: Then one day, and he would always come by and ask how Granny is, and she was better, and this, and he would talk to Grandma. And she would offer him a tea or something if she had, and he would bring over some biscuits. And I don't know what happened one day. I think I was washing the floor, and he walked in. And I said to him, "Why do you walk on my clean floor?" And he mumbled something, and I said to him, "What did you say?" And he said, "Nothing. It's all right, nothing. I didn't say nothing.

I'm sorry I walked on your floor." And then Grandma looked at me, and she invited him. And then when he left, she said to me, and then he was leaving, and he said, "Could you come out with me? I would like to talk to you." It was day time. And I went out, and he said, "Not because you made that face and you said something to me," he said. I did say, I think, a word that wasn't nice. I called him an oaf, or something like that, or "You big klutz," or something. And he said, "To me, you are just a girl. Like any other girl. But if you say that to another German, and he is not like me, you will get into trouble, because you're Jewish, and he will not have any respect for you," he said.

And you see, I don't know. He was just, he helped my grandma. He used to come up from time to time, and didn't demand anything, didn't ask for anything. If he could, he would help. Bring a box of cookies, crackers, cookies, dried cookies in a package or something. And help Grandma get her well, and stuff like that. And he didn't touch me. In either way. He had respect for me.

INT: But I just wonder if you have any feelings or thoughts about why some people would risk their lives to help you, or...

EVA: I can just go back, what I can draw from is my own life, my own experiences. If my parents would have sent me to a religious Jewish school, I would have never gone to a Catholic school. I would never have been affected by Catholicism. If my parents were more religious, I would have been more religious. Your children have to be religious, until they grow up and maybe one of them decides he wants to become, travel to Africa, whatever. I don't know. But so far as you can tell, the children go, they absorb what they...

INT: What you teach them.

EVA: They absorb not only your teachings, not only what you, the wrong and the right that you tell them what to do in life, and try to guide them to the right side of life. But they absorb the atmosphere in the house, and they grow up with it. They just absorb the atmosphere that it's a...I don't know. Live and let live, or everybody's human, and we all have red blood, and we all have two eyes and one nose. Whatever. But this is my idea. Because why would a German be so good? He didn't go to bed with me, he didn't lay a finger on me.

INT: And also Peter and his mother.

EVA: Peter is something else. Peter...that father of his was his stepfather. His father died very young, and his mother had him and his sister, and married another guy, whose wife died in another village, and she came to live in that village. And since she came, she became a neighbor and friends with my nana. (Pause while she turns up the heat.)

And they were always in each other's houses. Grandma was there, his mother was here. His sister was getting married. I was an invited guest to the wedding. And it was just like...in a village, you ran out of bread and you couldn't bake it today, so you went to the

neighbor, you got a bread, you took a bread. Then she took a bread from you, or a piece of, Grandma wouldn't take butter, because she was kosher. Or something in the garden. Maybe onions or your carrots didn't come up good, so you went there, and you picked yourself a carrot or two if you need it. They were very friendly. And that stepfather of his was a very decent human being. A very, very. He saved my friend Jeanie, the Polish girl that lives here in New Jersey. He saved her family. The Polish family, because the Ukrainians, after the Jews were gone, the Ukrainians started to kill the Polacks. So he saved her family.

INT: So you think it's tolerance that's taught in the home?

EVA: First of all I think it starts with the house. But then the person himself has to be good-hearted and believe that everybody really is equal in the eyes of G-d. That everybody of us, whether the skin might be yellow, or dark or white or whatever, but we're built the same way. We bleed the same way, we hurt the same way, we laugh the same way, and we have joys the same way. You have a baby, everybody's joyful, I suppose. Every...race, let's go by race. Or every religion has good and bad people in it. I know quite a few bad Jews. Quite a few. I nearly took a rabbi to prison in Montreal, because we paid him money, he didn't deliver what he was supposed to deliver for that money, and it was a very important issue, making papers for my, we had two people to bring from Israel to Canada. We made papers for my husband's brother to bring over, so we couldn't make paper for another family, and my cousin kept on begging, and so he told me there is a rabbi in Montreal. We went to that rabbi. My cousin paid somebody money in Israel, and he told them about that rabbi. And I went to that rabbi, I said, "I'll give you again something, if you need." And I gave him money. And then my cousin was sitting, finally he got out of Israel, he was sitting in a hotel in England and kept on daily calling me from England that, "I'm running out of money with a wife and two kids." So I went to that rabbi's house, and I couldn't find him, and his wife, he wouldn't come to the...

(END TAPE EIGHT, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE EIGHT, SIDE TWO)

EVA: "I am Jewish. I am going to go to jail, too, because I'm doing something illegal. But your husband the rabbi will be in jail if I don't see any results." In a week's time, within a week I had a telegram that my cousin is coming. I told her, "I'm going to put your husband into jail."

INT: So there's good and bad in all people.

EVA: It doesn't matter. There are good and bad people in every religion, in every race. I am a firm believer in that, because...G-d knows, I...I didn't have any gold to give anybody. I wasn't hid for money or whatever. As a matter of fact, except those few weeks that I was in my district, after that, I wasn't raped anywhere. I wasn't...people just took me in. I suppose they suspected who I am.

INT: So tell me what happened from there.

EVA: So where was I? With that woman.

INT: You were staying with the woman, right. The girls were shot.

EVA: I told her that next time Vasily will come, I want to see him. She said, "He will not be here till Friday night." So I said, "Fine." So what did Vasily do? He came and brought Korzec with him again. And he was so sure of himself, Vasily came and said, "You can come down. Her husband is out of the district altogether. I'm going to be staying the night, and you don't have to sit here. Come down and there are two beds in the house." So she was with Vasily on one bed, as far as I know, they were sitting and talking. I never watched them. And Korzec did his business with me on the other bed, in the other corner. Even there was no lamp and dark, but she let me know that, "We heard everything, and we saw everything." And...(pause) If that wasn't enough, that bastard Korzec came, I don't remember whether it was the next night, or the night after that. He most probably got it out of her that her husband's not going to be home for a week or something like that. Vasily kept on coming. Vasily did, I don't know, maybe one of them did it. And Korzec brought two Ukrainian policemen with him. They weren't dressed as policemen, but I knew they were policemen. And all three of them. I didn't go into the house. I was up in that loft. And one stood outside, and the others did whatever they wanted.

INT: How were you getting through all of this in your head? How were you dealing with it?

EVA: I prayed. I prayed. I don't think there was **ever**, I suppose there are, I mean, some people become saints and some people dedicate their life to Christianity completely. But those Catholic girls that I knew, I don't think any one of them believed more than I did, and I prayed. My favorite saint was Saint Theresa, and I prayed to her constantly, and to the Holy Mother, and I begged them to take care of me. That's all. I didn't say, "Do this or do that." Just, "Take care of me." (Crying) I suppose it helped.

Anyway...(pause) it was Friday night. And they all came. And I got hold, I said I want to talk to Vasily. Somehow that Friday night Korzec didn't come and the other guys didn't come. And I told her, "If nobody comes but Vasily, I would like to talk." That whole week, when I had all those men, I kept on thinking: who can help me? This one has a wife and that one has a wife. And this one has a wife, and that one is a bastard. And I remembered that next to the village where Grandma lived, on the way to the station there was a small, I don't know the, in Polish it was called a colony. I don't know what you call it. Like just about five, six, ten houses. Not a whole village. So there was this little colony, only Polish people living. Some of those kids went to school with the train. The Polish kids all went to school for higher education. The Ukrainians, only one went. And there was one, that he was about, I would say, 32 years old. To me he was very old. And he...was never married. And when the war started, I heard that he's going around

with one of the girls, her name was Frances, that she went to school with me. On the train. Not the same school, but the same train we took every day. With me and Jeanie. And his name was Tony. I mean, he was called different in Polish, Anthony, actually. And he was called Tony. And Tony, I remember he took a stroll. He would take a stroll, sit there, talk to my grandma. There was a little, I told you, like a little porch, he would sit on the porch, on the stairs with my grandma and talk. And with Polish people, Grandma knew them very well. He only had an old mother, and a married sister living next to him. And I knew there's a married sister somewhere out of the state, married somebody.

And he was a very nice guy, that Tony. And I remembered, somehow it **came** to me, I woke up in the morning and I said, "Why didn't I ever think of Tony? He's Polish." The Polish people were against the Germans. 90%. Not all of them, but I would say 85 good, but maybe 90% were against the Germans. And I thought, he came one Sunday, the Germans were there already, but we were still all home. And I remember I was sitting with Nana on the stoop. We were either shelling peas or something. And he came and sat down. And he said, we started to talk about where the front is, where the war is. And Grandma said to him, "Tony, I don't know if we will live through that war." And he said, "Don't despair. They say that Hitler's not running in Russia like he was running in Poland. Don't despair," he said. "He's not running that fast. You see how the trains are coming back with them half frozen?" he said. "Don't despair. The war will finish and we will live through."

And then he said, "Speaking of war," he said, "Mrs. Benjamin" -- they called my nana Mrs. Benjamin. Mrs. Benny, actually. "Mrs. Benny, why don't you do something about Eva?" And she said, "What am I supposed to do about her?" He said, "If there should come a time when they would take her, you know there's a ghetto in the city already. You are free here. Why should she go into a ghetto? She doesn't look Jewish, she speaks perfect both languages that she needs. She could go away 50 kilometers from here. And somebody would take her to work, and she could live through the war." (phone interruption)

Grandma said to him, "If she wants to go, she can go, but who will drive her? I'm old. We only have one horse left. And my..." -- Grandpa, I don't know what happened, he was trying to hold the horse, it was a young horse, and the horse pulled him very strongly and dislocated his arm. And there was no doctor a Jew could go to. He went to some kind of a faith healer, every village had one, and he did something with that arm, the arm was crooked, and Grandma couldn't move the arm, so I always helped him feed the horse and this and that. So she said, "Who's going to take her there?" He said, "If you want me, I'll take her. I'll take her out. Any place." He said, "I would love for the war to be finished, and I should bring Eva back and they should see that she's alive." And I never thought of it, but that particular day I woke up and I thought to myself: why didn't I ever think of Tony? And I didn't have anybody to send. Who am I going to send to Tony? It was on the other side of the village. I just had to rely on Vasily.

INT: By that time the village was Judenrein, probably. There were no Jews left.

EVA: There was nobody. We were the only family. We were the only family. Anyway, when that Vasily came, I thought to myself: I'm going to talk to him in front of her. Not by himself, so that he can say, "Oh, I didn't promise, I didn't say it." I said to her, "Could you do me a big favor?" I didn't tell her what it is about. I said, "I would like to talk to Vasily." And I knew that she would rather I talk in front of her, because she was jealous of him, too. And I said, "And could I please have a little bit of warm water? I didn't wash myself for about two weeks." And I needed, I don't know what I needed after those men. I needed a shower, and a mikveh, and everything put together. She said, "Of course, I'll prepare some water, you could eat supper inside. But it has to be really dark." It was still like the end of summer. So about 9:00, 10:00 she came. And she says, "You can come down."

I came to the house, she had a little alcove there, separated with something, and I went in there, and I washed myself, and I came out. And I said to Vasily, I said, "I have a big favor to ask of you. Could you get in touch with Tony?" And I told him who it is. "And could you ask him if I could come to him? Just ask him and hear what he says." And I said, "Could you do it tomorrow, over the weekend?" And he, in front of her he promised me. And I said, "Because I cannot stay here. It will get cold. I have to get somewhere." And right then and there I decided that I'm not going to go to Tony, but he didn't know it. And I had said, "Please, I beg you, don't tell Korzec." And he said, "Well, I told you I'm not going to tell him." But I knew that he's going to tell him.

To make the story short, next day he went to Tony, and Tony said, "You can bring her." Tomorrow was Saturday. He went Saturday to Tony, Tony said, "You can bring her to me tomorrow," or tonight, I don't remember. But...that evening Korzec came, again. And he said to me, and Vasily was with her, and Korzec came to me. And he said to me, "You shouldn't tell Vasily everything. You should have asked me to do something for you." I said, "Why?" "Because Vasily said to me, 'Well, she wants to go to Tony. So what's the difference? If she puts out, anyone will take her in. As long as she puts out, they will keep her.'" So I knew that Vasily's a bastard as much as him. I said, "Well, all right, but I cannot stay here. She has a husband, and it's no good." And Korzec went away. And I said to Vasily, I said, "Could you just walk with me through the..." because there is a road on the side of the village. "Just till the village finishes. We have to get through the little forest, then starts my village, then through the village." And I said, "I would do it late at night. And at the beginning of the colony," I said, "Just leave me." Because I decided right then and there I'm not going to Tony.

INT: Why did you decide that?

EVA: Because I didn't want him to know. I knew that I'm going to go to one of the girls.

INT: You just wanted to get out of that house.

EVA: One of the Polish girls that went to school with me, to Frances. She lived in the same colony. And...and he said, "Okay. I'll walk with you." And I said in front of that

woman, I said, because I don't want to endanger anymore Mrs. whatever her name was. I said, "I put everybody in danger and it's time that I get out of the district." And I said, "Tony is the only one who has no wife, no sister, nobody. He can take up today and go away, leave his mother alone. Nobody will tell him what to do. He is his own boss. Everybody is attached to somebody. He's his own boss." He said, "That's right." I said, "Vasily, try to remember it. If I live through the war and nobody knows that Tony took me away somewhere, it will be your benefit, because I will see Eli. If I live through the war, I'll see Eli." And he said, "I know that."

INT: Eli was his friend.

EVA: My uncle.

INT: Yeah, but his friend.

EVA: The one in New York, yeah. And I saw on his face maybe a shadow of regret, but it passed just like a shadow, because he thought to himself -- **I** didn't believe I'd live through, I mean, how long can you go, the machinations from place to place to place to place?

I was walking and while I was walking I walked by Jeanie's house, my friend's. She was married in another village, but I knocked on the window. Her father opened the door. When he saw me, he crossed himself. "My child, where are you? What are you doing? My G-d. Why are you here? Get away from this village," he said. "They keep on asking about you, everybody. They know who got killed and who didn't." Oh, what I forgot to mention to you, while I was sitting by that woman, on top of the loft there, Vasily's friend, I heard a shot one day. That evening Vasily came and said, "You heard a shot?" I said, "Yes." He said, "That was your grandmother. She was with Peter's family for about two weeks," he said. "She ran away on the way when they were taking them to the ghetto, she ran into the fields, and from the fields she went to Vasily's parents, and they kept her there hidden. But their son-in-law gave her out. And your grandma," he told me how she died and where they buried her with the foot out and stuff like this. And he said, "And all the time when they were taking your grandmother, police, to the place where they killed her, they went through the village, Grandma kept on talking to everybody. "I want you people to remember, if any of my kids from America or Argentina come after the war here, you tell them that this and this guy gave me out. He told the Germans to come and take me." That's how the whole village knew that he did it, and they told me after the war.

So where was I? Anyway, Jeanie's father saw me, and then he said, "Do you want to stay with us?" I said, "You know I can't stay with you!" (laughs) "First of all," I said, "there's someone standing here. He's taking me to the end of the village." And he said, "Who is it?" I told him. He said, "He's not going to tell the Germans." And I said to him, "You're a decent man, Mister." I called him Mister. And I said, "You're a decent man Mr. Murza, but what's the use? I don't know how long I'll live." "Can I help you, my child?" I said, "Could you have maybe a few pennies in the house, or something to eat, because I

am trying to get to the Polish colony. Up till now I was dealing with Ukrainians, and I have to get away from them, because they're going to kill me. Or they're going to call the Germans." And he said, "You're doing the right thing." I said, "I know I can't go to Jeanie, I can't go to Irene." And he said, "Just go to the colony," he said. "If you cannot go to nobody else" -- he had a sister living on the colony -- "go to my sister, to Jadwiga." And he woke his wife, and she nearly fainted when she saw me. And he said, they had some money in a mattress there. He said, "Whatever you have." In those days it was Ukrainian money. Something, I don't remember the name of the money, but it was 300. And she said, "That's all I have." He said, "Whatever you have, put it all together." He gave me that whole wad of money, and she gave me a bread. And I don't remember whether she gave me butter or a piece of pork or something. And he blessed me. He said, "G-d keep you," and I left. (cries, pause) Next time I saw him was here in Rutherford, he came to his daughter, for our Bicentennial in '76. (Crying)

And then we walked, next house was my house. We walked by the house.

INT: Was this at night? This was all at night.

EVA: That was all at night. Vasily went ahead of me. He was on a bike. I said, "You just go on the bike. And if anything, start whistling a tune, and then I know I have to stop." And all of a sudden he whistles. So I stopped, I sat down by the road, and I was sitting. And I hear him talking to someone. Who do you think was in that house? It was Vasily's brother-in-law, his wife's brother, the one that raped me, too. And he got himself, he took over my grandma's house. And I recognized the voices. You're young, you have such hard hearing, and at night it was so quiet, you could hear the grass move. And I recognized Peter's voice. Vasily wouldn't tell me it's Peter, but I recognized Peter's voice. He was talking to Peter. And I recognized the girl's voice. She was the village leader's daughter. He got himself the village leader's daughter.

INT: This was not the good Peter, this is a different Peter.

EVA: This is the Peter, Vasily's brother-in-law. So he moved in with that girl. And later I heard they got married. Because all of a sudden he, being that's the way he got the house. He would have never married her, she wasn't a beauty. But she was the leader, the leader could tell him, you could take that Jewish house, or you couldn't. But it was empty, so being that he took his daughter, he said, "Take the house." That was a house, and that was grounds, and that was everything. Four rooms with wooden floors, and beautiful furniture and everything. So.

And then he, the talk stopped, and Vasily came back, and he said, "They went to bed. They went to bed." And I said, "You'd better go ahead and wait for me." The third house was the good Peter's house. I said, "You wait there. Stop and wait for me," I said. "I will go on the other side of the road, and I will go into the field, and walk with the field and meet you there." Because I was afraid maybe they would look out the window and see. And that's what I did, I met him there. And we walked for about another half a kilometer, and I said, "That's it," I said. "I know now where Tony lives," I said. "You

can go home, and I thank you for everything." And I said, "I don't know if Tony is home." He said, "He said he will be home." I said, "Well, that was a week. Maybe he went dancing or something." And I said, "I will get there." So he walked me, you had to walk like through railroad tracks. He walked me to the railroad tracks, and I said, "Leave me now please. Leave me and go, because I don't want nobody, two people, you with a rover." A rover. A rover is a bicycle in Polish. I said, "You with a bike." I said, "Go back home and leave me here."

So we were close to Tony's house, and the minute he left, I turned left. And I went another half a kilometer in another direction, and there lived Frances. And lucky for me, I thought I would have to stay outside, till I get her. She had a father, a mother, a sister and a brother younger than her. She was the oldest in the family.

INT: She was a school friend, right?

EVA: She wasn't a friend. She just went, we went with the same train. We were friends from the train, but close friends was only Jeanie and Irene. Jeanie, actually, but when Jeanie got married -- her father wanted her to get married not to go to Siberia -- so Irene and me. But Frances was our age, about, maybe a year younger than us. But lucky for me they had, when he was a rich Polack, too. He was very good friends with my grandmother, her father. And I knew him to be a very, you knew who is decent. A very decent man, a gentle man, with gentle nature and a very decent man.

When somebody was rich, and there was a lot of ground, and you didn't have enough place, you put the hay in a loft. That was important, that was food. But the straw that was left after you took the grain out of it, there was straw. You needed the straw. The animals slept on straw, but they didn't eat it, they slept. You mucked out, you cleaned out their whatever you call it, they stayed there, the cows and the horses. What do you call that thing?

INT: Droppings, or...

EVA: No, no, no, the place where they live.

INT: Oh, the barn.

EVA: The barn. So you clean it out every day and you put fresh straw. That's there, sleeping on it. But you keep the straw usually outside. You make a big pile. The pile is as big as a house, a small house. Like you see those silos that the...Amish have? Like you put four or five silos together. That's how wide it was. Not that tall. And one on top of the other. And that lasts for the whole winter. So that thing was, the harvest was finished already, and that thing was there, and it was a ladder attached to it. And I thought to myself: I'm saved. I crawled up on the ladder. On the very top I could see the rooftop from their house. Their house was not closed. The colony was on the other side of the railroad, and they were on this side of the railroads. And nobody was nearby. And...I made a hole, crawled in, covered myself, and for the first time since that whole

thing began, in three weeks or something, I slept. I wasn't worried that I'm not going to wake up tomorrow morning. Because nobody knew where I am. That was the first night that I felt free. It didn't work out that way, but that's the first night that I felt free. And I slept without any interruption.

And another thing happened that night. I got my menstruation. And I just went down on my knees in the morning, and I thanked G-d and I prayed again. (tearing up)

INT: That was like a miracle.

EVA: Yeah. Of course I prayed again, still, that I shouldn't have any venereal disease. But I figured all of them are, this one getting married, this has a wife, this has a wife, so it's not that bad yet. And I didn't know about those two policemen. So I...(pause)

It took me the whole of next day till next evening. I couldn't get...her, Frances, but I somehow I knew instinctively, that I could... her father was a lot outside. And once he came out of the house, I don't know for what, and it was dusk already. I think he was standing and smoking. Her father must have been around 45, 50, something like that. About 50, I would say. And I kind of gave a low whistle, and he looked around. And then I whistled again, and he went further away from the house and looked around. And then, I don't know, I just took it upon myself, I called his name. I called him. And I said, "Look up." He looked up, and he saw me. He just saw me and I went down. And he understood it. He didn't come up. But when it got dark he came up and I said, "It's me. I came because I know Frances. I was with Ukrainians up till now, and I disappeared. They don't know where I am." I said, "Because I realize if anyone is going to help me save my life, it would be the Polish people." I said, "Maybe you're against it," but she was my build, Frances. I said, "All I want, I'm not going to stay long. All I want," I said, "is maybe Frances could spare a skirt and a blouse, or a pair of shoes." I told him, I said, "Irene gave me a skirt and a blouse, but I have no shoes, it's going to get colder, and I want to get out, get to town, if you could somehow get me to town, close to town, get to town, and I will walk across town and up to the river to that Bug and across the Bug and I'm in Poland," I said. "I will be out of my state and out of the country." And he said, "My child, I have nothing against you staying here." I said, "How come?" I said, "I know you're a good man." He said, "Because one hand washes the other," he said. "When I had a problem sometimes, and I was short $50, $100, $200, I went to Grandma and she always had it for me. And if she had a problem, she came to me. So I'll gratefully return the favor," he said. "Nobody will think that you are here." And then I said, "You'd better go back into the house," I said. "And tell Frances." And he said to me, "Now, listen, honey, I can know. Frances can know. Sophie can know." That's Frances' younger sister. "But my son and my wife are not supposed to know, because you wouldn't be safe. Because if my wife knows, the whole village will know." And that's the way it stayed. And he said, "I will talk to Frances. When everybody's asleep, she'll come out."

INT: What was his name? Do you remember his name?

EVA: Well, I only remember his last name. Chugala. Mr. Chugala. Frances came up at night, she brought me a blanket, a pillow, two blankets, a pillow, and she said, "Too bad," she said, "that tomorrow is Monday." That was Sunday. She said, "Because Sunday my mother and my brother go away to the church. We usually all go to church, but I would stay behind. And I see that you could use a wash." She looked at my hair. I said, "I'm not complaining, Frances. I don't care. I have no lice."

(END TAPE EIGHT, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE NINE, SIDE ONE)

EVA: "I'll prepare water." She said, "You know there is no neighbor around here that can," everybody's across the railroad, and the railroad was like on a little...it's like, not a hill, just an incline. You couldn't see the colony on the other side. She says, "Nobody will see. You'll just crawl down on this side, come around, come into the house, and that's it. I'll close the curtains and you will wash yourself and you'll have a good, from top to bottom, I will fill up," they had a small tub.

Anyway, and she brought me food every day. And every night she would come up and stay with me for a few hours. And you know, like girls, we talked. I didn't tell her anything what happened to me, because we were never close. But I knew she's a very decent girl from a very decent family. And I said, "If you ever have a chance, and if you are in the village, just," I said, "I will disappear from here, Frances. I don't know when and how, but I will disappear. That's the only way I can live is to just change places and go away further west, go into Poland." And she said, "I wish I could go with you to Poland," she says. "I'm tired of the Ukrainians, too." But I said, "If you could ever get hold of Irene, tell her that I'm alive."

And I told her, "You will never have a chance to meet Jeanie, because Jeanie's about twelve kilometers from here, but if it should happen you should meet her, tell Jeanie and Irene that I am alive. You don't know where I am, because you won't know. You won't lie."

INT: How were you figuring all this out, that this is how you need to survive?

EVA: Well, I don't know. I don't know. Sometimes I think to myself -- not sometimes. Constantly, since ever I lived through that horror of a war. I think to myself: I'm not a stupid person. But I was...I'm fairly intelligent. But after all, I was a kid. These days, eighteen is not a kid. My days, eighteen was a kid. When I was sixteen I had to cry for a half a year till I got the first shoe on an inch heel. And I still couldn't get no silk stockings. Forget it. I wore the shoes with the heel with white socks.

So I was, I don't know. I think that my prayers were just answered, and someone was guiding me, and telling me: do this or do that. I had no money to pay somebody to keep me. I could not, at the beginning, Frances said, "You can stay here as long as you want. But what will happen in the winter?" She says, "Oh, I know. We can get you into the

hayloft, and you'll stay there." As a matter of fact, it got cold, and her father said, "You're not going to stay outside." One night he came and he took me in, all the stuff, put me in the hayloft. He said, "Nobody knows that you're here. What's the difference? My wife doesn't come here, my son is a small boy, ten years old, he doesn't come up here. I'll see to it that nobody gets up here, the two of them. The rest, the three of us knows, so it doesn't matter."

And I thought maybe I would stay with Frances for awhile. Meanwhile I heard about the pogrom, that everybody got killed already. Whoever I figured, so Minnie's gone, her family's gone, Leah's gone here, Minnie's gone there. I didn't know that Minnie's alive and running around and crazy on the streets of the city. But I knew Grandfather's gone, and everybody else is gone.

And it was about, I was there about three days. And again I made myself a little hole to look out, to see the yard and the house. And I hear a commotion. It was about 10:00 in the morning. Before noon. A beautiful day. It was an Indian summer day. And I look out, and the yard is crawling with Ukrainian police. And I think to myself: My G-d. Dear Lord in heaven, **who knew**? **Who told**? Vasily, nobody else. So what did I do? Let's say this is the loft. I got off from there, and I'm lying here. I look out on this side, that corner, I tore off, I made a big hole and simply figured, if I break a leg, I break a leg. I jumped off. It was no taller than the ceiling and here. Well, you know, you're agile and you're young and you're springy, and you're everything when you're eighteen. And I was used to jump and to crawl on roofs. I always played with that young uncle of mine. He crawled on a roof, I crawled on a roof. And I crawled on trees to pick apples and cherries and everything. I jumped down, and just...

INT: But they were in the yard. They were there.

EVA: But they were on the other side. They were on this side, and I jumped out this side, from that loft. Left everything. Covered it up with, well, they were used to it that some people sleep in the loft, they don't have enough place to sleep, the big families. So some in the summer slept in the loft. There was no place to sleep in the house. Somebody had a lot of kids.

But I think, yeah, I took my prayer book and my rosary with me. That's the only two things I took. And I just...there was just clover in the fields left. So I just started to roll. I rolled and rolled, and when I rolled away about a quarter of a kilometer from that building, I stopped and I lied there, and I didn't move. I didn't move. Lucky she gave me some kind of a skirt and a blouse, Frances, that was dark. And I lied there with my head down, and my feet straight, and I made myself as flat as I could, and I lied.

And then the commotion stopped, and I thought to myself: my G-d, if they look in that loft and they see, and they maybe suspected, but I was sure that somebody told them that I'm there. And they'll see the hole in the thing, in the roof that I jumped out, they will kill them. They'll kill Frances and kill the whole family. But I didn't hear any shots, and I didn't know what, and I couldn't lift my head. So I thought to myself: I'm going to lie

here till night, and if nobody comes to look for me, then I'm not going in there anymore. I don't know. Unless somebody comes to look for me, I'm not going in there anymore, because somebody knows already where I am.

This is Frances' house. If you go back this way, like here we have Lancaster Avenue. A little further, let's say about three blocks further, was the main street to go from the city to the village. Across that road was a Ukrainian cemetery. And I was lying there and thinking, and thinking and thinking. I'm going to stay here till it gets dark, then I'm getting on the cemetery. I'm going to get across the road to the cemetery. And I'll stay on that cemetery. There are cherries growing. I knew the cherries are growing, I'll eat the cherries. And I don't know where I'll go again. I'll have to get to Tony's house by myself some night.

Yeah, I spoke already to Frances about Tony, and she says, "You know what? You wouldn't believe it. Me and Tony, we're going together." I said, "Fine." She said, "But I see him only once a week. Being today's Sunday, we saw each other, I'm not going to see him till he'll come next Sunday. We meet after church, usually, we spend a few hours together." But I said, "Do you like him?" She said, "He's very decent, but he's too old for me." She was a year younger, I think, than me. She says, "He's too old for me. Father likes it, because there is nobody, he is his own boss, and he's not poor, and Father says it's a very good match. There is his mother, but she's so old, she's not going to live long, so you'll be your own woman." So she says, "I don't look for getting married yet." She was only seventeen.

So anyway, I lied in that clover till it started to get dark. Nobody came looking for me, and I didn't hear any shots, and I was afraid to go back to Frances' house. And I went. It got dark, and I crawled over to that cemetery. I got on that cemetery, and I lied. I just lied. Between the graves there was grass. I lied. I was on that cemetery for three nights and three days, and finally I realized that I'm dying of thirst. I'm dying of thirst. I was praying for rain, no rain came. And I thought to myself: I can't. I can't. There is no way to get a little bit of water. If it would rain, I would, I don't know, pick it with my hands, or suck the rain off the leaves, or whatever. And I developed bad diarrhea from eating just the cherries. And I decided that next night, the third night, I got to get off that cemetery. For some stupid reason they were going back and forth from the city to the city. I couldn't, it took me nearly till daytime, and I got through there. And I crawled up again on Frances, on that thing with the straw.

INT: The loft.

EVA: The loft. And stayed there the whole day, and at night, I got hold of Frances. It was dark already. And she said, "Where did you disappear?" I told her. She said, "That's stupid. They didn't come for you." I said, "What do you mean, they didn't come for me? They were swarming all over!" She said, "Well, you know my father. He doesn't drink. But now," she says, "we took the harvest off, and we have a lot of grain, so he went and he gave in whatever he owes the government. He took it into the village, and we have a lot of grain, it was a good harvest, so he said he's going to make," I mean,

you couldn't buy. You didn't have money, you couldn't buy. "So Father likes to do it." Some Polish people, some Ukrainians, everybody did it. They made their own moonshine. And they sold it. But he didn't sell it. She says, "Father said we do it now. Some people will think we do it, we bake potatoes, because there is a smoke coming out." You have to burn a fire. You have to boil it, and it goes through little glass wires, like a distillery, and it comes out on the other side, "So he said we have a lot of potatoes, a lot of grain. We'll make a few bottles and we'll have for Christmas. And someone," she says, "saw that stupid smoke and went and told the police. So they came, and they broke the whole distillery and they took away all the things, and they said to the father," and she says, "Lucky that some of the policemen were from the village." And she didn't know anybody from the village. She was a purely Polish girl. She didn't live in the village. She says, "Because they said they're going to look around. And if they find more moonshine, they will take my father away. They will arrest him. And my father swore that he never made, he was trying to just, he doesn't sell, he doesn't make it, he was just trying to make a few bottles for the holidays." And I said, "Do you know the policeman from the village?" I explained to her, "Was he dark and handsome?" She said, "Yes, his name was Peter." She says, "I don't know the name, but he's the one that said, 'You can believe him. I know he doesn't make moonshine for sale.'" So Peter again came into it. He didn't know. (laughs)

INT: He didn't know you were there.

EVA: But you see? It's Providence. Providence works somehow. If the good Lord decides to save someone, He does. And she said he said to them, "You can believe them. He doesn't make, he's not one of those who sell it for profit." And they just broke the distillery, took what we made, and they went away. And she says, "They didn't come for you." So then I said to her, "Tonight is too late, but tomorrow, I want you to wait. Get in touch with Tony." Tony told once my grandmother he has a sister in another state. "So I want to ask him if he could get me there," I said, "Your father cannot go away from your mother, take the wagon with two horses on a Sunday and say he's going to another city. He can't do that." And she said, "You're right." And the next night she brought Tony over. And he said, "You couldn't have come straight to me?" I said, "Well, Tony, it's a long story, but here I am." So I talked to him. We talked it over, the three of us, and he said, "I can't go now. Because I have to get the potatoes out of the ground. I have to wait till I harvest the potatoes. It will take another week at least. And after I'm finished with the potatoes," because he said, "It will take me a week to get you there. I have to stay for a few days with the sister, and to come back." And he said, "What am I going to tell the sister? I'm going to tell my sister...my sister," he says, "is a little short up here. So I'm going to tell her that you're my girlfriend. And right here and now you have to make up a name for you. You can stay Eva. But you have to have another family name." And he said, "I'll tell her that your family was taken away to Siberia by the Russians. They saved you from Siberia, and you're my, I'm going to marry you, but I cannot marry you now." So the Germans were catching Polish girls that were like without family. If the father proved that he needs the girl to work, they will leave her. If not, they would catch them nights, days, whenever.

INT: And take them to Germany.

EVA: Not only girls. Girls and...they wouldn't rape them, do things like that, but they took them. I spoke to Germans when I was in Germany. Every German woman had a maid. That was slavery, without payment. Without payment. So he said, "I'll tell them that they want to take you. I have to hide you, and I cannot hide you anymore, and I cannot get married right now, Mom is very sick," and this and that. "I'll make up a story. And I'll tell her that I'll get married with you next year, but she should keep you over winter. Next spring we will get married." And I said to Tony, "Whatever. Just get me across." He said, "Nothing doing. You will get dressed, Frances will lend you something to cover your head, like a woman goes to church. On Sunday morning," he said, "with everybody else, I'll come here after the family leaves, I'll take you on the wagon, and let's hope it's a rainy Sunday" where, because the Germans in every city, even when I was deep in Germany, deep in Poland, closer to Cracow, where I lived through a year and a half or two in that little town, there, on every corner was a German soldier. And if he felt like saying, "Kennkarte, please. Kennkarte," you had to show him a document. So he said, "Let's pray." But if it was raining, he said, even the Germans would not stand on every corner. "And we will get through the town. I'll try to go around the town as much as I can. But there is a certain..." I said, "I know, Tony. You have to go through town." So he said, "The good Lord maybe will watch over us. I'll get you through town. And once we're out of town, that's it. Nobody knows you. Because in town, somebody can recognize you." And that's what happened. That's what happened in about two, two and a half weeks time, he came up Saturday night, and he said, "We're going tomorrow." So Frances brought up a warm -- because it was already fall, it was cool -- she brought me up one of those shawls, a warm shawl, a dark one. And some jacket and stuff like that. And I said, "I'll send it back with Tony." And we left.

We left next day. We left Sunday morning about 9:00, I think, and late, late afternoon, early evening, we got to his sister's. We got to his sister's.

INT: You got through the town and nobody recognized you.

EVA: Nobody stopped us. Would you believe it? And we went through, you had to get into our town, the town had two kinds, there were army barracks, only they were not barracks. The Polish army had brick buildings. They lived in brick buildings. Our town had a cavalry on one end of town, a big cavalry unit, and on the other end of town they had an officer's school, and an army unit. So there was a lot of soldiers always, Polish soldiers, before the war. And we had to get through about five blocks of just army barracks. And there were Germans all over. Nobody stopped us. But the truth is, we were not the only ones. There were quite a few people coming to church, to town, and stuff like that. Not one German stopped us. We got through the whole town. And then he started to gallop. And we galloped and galloped, and then we stopped, of course. And he had some food with him. A piece of salami, some bread. We ate something. We rested the horses, and then we got to his sister's. It was very far. It was over fifty kilometers from our town. And the roads were not the best, you know. He didn't go with main roads. He went with side roads. They were not the best. And would you believe it,

that it was drizzling the whole day, and there were clouds? There was no sun. He said, "Maybe G-d will help." (laughs) "There won't be sun." And it was drizzling. Maybe that's why the guards didn't feel like stopping.

INT: They weren't out in the rain. Wow.

EVA: It was drizzling. And he got me to his sister's, and of course he told his sister. And then he took his brother-in-law, because later on I realized why, because his sister was a half-wit. She had affairs with other guys there in that village where she lived. And the girls, she had a girl and a boy. The boy was...she told me that the girl, she said, "I had with my husband. You know," she says, "I would have never married him. He's not good-looking." And he **wasn't** good- looking. He was a tall, schlimazel looking fellow, but he was a little smarter than her. So Tony disappeared with him somewhere. He said, "You talk here, you two women. You will be related one day when I get married with her. And me and Tony, we're going to have a man-to-man talk." So I suppose he talked to him and told him that, "You know, Sophie's a half-wit, and she will be jealous, maybe, of Eva, but there's nothing to be jealous about. She's a very decent girl, and you just keep her here over winter. I'll pay you for that upkeep." He left him some money.

INT: He didn't tell him you were a Jew.

EVA: No! He said, "They are not to know, because they are too stupid. Not that they are bad," he said, "They are just too stupid." And I said, "So what will I call them?" And he said, "We will get to it when I'm there." And then he came back, later on, Tony came to visit me, after about three, four months, he came to visit me. For Christmas Tony came to visit me. And he said to me, "I gave him some money when I left here. Now I brought some money more." And he brought him, you know, people were not hungry for money. He brought him a piece of leather to sew the shoes, and brought him a whole tire. People made, usually on the farm, the farmers wore soles made of, they cut tires and made soles. And he said he was so happy with the tire, because you couldn't get a tire for love or money. Tony could afford it. That's another thing. Tony had no father telling him, you can't do that, or you can't sell this, or you can't buy that. He was his own boss.

INT: About how old was he?

EVA: Tony was about 32, I would say. And he wasn't the best looking guy, but he was built nicely, as tall as your David, slim, and he had an enchanting smile. I would never fall in love with Tony, but he had something about him that everybody liked him. And he said to me when he came for Christmas, "If you live through the war, would you marry me?" I said, "Yes, Tony," without thinking twice. "I would be honored to be your wife." He said, "From now on the only thing I would be living for is, for the day when I can put you, not covered up with a shawl, but open and dressed nicely. I'll buy you the best money can buy after the war is finished, and drive up with you, with not my every day wagon" -- but everybody had an every day wagon, those that could afford, and had a wagon for the, they called it a....there's a name for it, where people just ride. An every day wagon was for potatoes, for grain, for this. But there was something with seats.

INT: A carriage.

EVA: It wasn't covered, but a seat in the front, a seat in the back. And he said, "If I could bring you in my fancy wagon, and drive into the village, and all those Ukrainian bastards should look at you, and I would say, 'I saved her, she's my wife.'" He said, "For that only thing I'm going to be living from now on." I never saw Tony again. The Germans killed him.

INT: They did? What happened?

EVA: I don't know. Someone told me that there was a rumor that he hid a Jewish girl. Someone told me he was in the Polish underground. I don't know.

INT: You don't know what happened.

EVA: I don't know exactly. I couldn't...I couldn't, I told you, I went only for one day to my village, to get my papers, my name back. And the papers, all the stuff that Nana had. I didn't want to leave it to the Ukrainians. I gave it to the Russian government. So I don't know. But I came back to my town fully expecting to marry him. But when I came and I asked, I got with that Mr. Katz, we got to the middle of town. It was fall of 194...4 or '45. I was freed in '44. In '44. It was fall, 1944. We got to the middle of town, and Mr. Katz said, "Well, there is one house on that road that goes to," he told me, "that goes toward your village. There is a house Jewish people live." And I said, "Mr. Katz, do you know where there are any, I don't want to live with Jewish people. Because I need some clothes." I had a pair of wooden sandals only, and I said, "I need something. I don't have anything." And I said, "I have to find some Polish people from my village. Maybe my neighbors are there." I thought maybe Jeanie's father, maybe. I didn't know. But I didn't find...so he said, the Polish people are all congregated, like the Jews were living in a house on this side of the barracks. The street kept on going on. It was one of the main streets in town. And you had to walk about five, six blocks to the other side of the barracks to Polish people. And the whole barracks on both sides of the road were filled with Russian soldiers. That's the way the Jewish people and the Polish people lived close to the barracks, because they were afraid. The Russian people protected the Polacks and the Jews.

INT: From the Ukrainians.

EVA: Yeah. So he said, "On the other side of the barracks, there are a house or two or three that Polish people live." Sure enough, I left him, I thanked him. I said, "I'll see you." I never saw him again. Because I kept staying with my Polish friends. And there was another neighbor of mine, a Polish neighbor. His daughter, we were friends with his daughter, me and Jeanie, but his daughter, that was a poor Polish family. They were only poor because the father drank. He was Jeanie's father's best friend. Two friends. One became very rich, the other one drank everything what he made. He was a first-class cabinet maker, but whatever he made, he drank it up. And they lived in a shack, and...so

she only went to the village school, and never went to the city, because he couldn't afford it. And she married a Russian soldier. And she lived with him, had kids. So I found them, and the minute they saw me, "You're not going anywhere. You're not going anywhere, you're not leaving us." And she started to cry. Her name was Jeanine. And she says, "You're not going. You're staying with me. And if I have a bread, you will eat, and if I don't eat, you don't eat." And she says, "Here is a pair of shoes." I said, "They're yours." "So if I need them, I'll use them. If you need them, you use them." And I stayed with them over winter.

So why did I come...

INT: You were talking about the...

EVA: They told me about Tony. I asked, "Do you know if the people from the colony are alive?" And they told me, "As far as we know, most of them are in Poland." I said, "What happened to Jeanie's parents?" She said, "Jeanie's parents and us, Jeanie's father saved us." But I said, "Who saved him? How did you know? The Ukrainians are killing Polish people." She said, "You know Peter's father?" His name was Shushka, Andrei. "You know Andrei?" I said, "Of course, I know Andrei." She said, "Andrei just," and I made sure I asked Jeanie, and she told me it's true. One sunny day, it was in 1944, I think, or '43. That Andrei took a pail and walked through from his house, past my house, past Jeanine's house, and came to Jeanie's house, and of course, he stopped with that pail, didn't go into that house, to Jeanie's. And didn't, but Jeanie's father on the side worked as a blacksmith, only shoeing horses, that's all. Like in the winter, he had nothing to do with the farm, so he shoed horses. And he was doing something in that blacksmith shop of his, and he had a window, saw him, came out, and said, "Hello, Mr. Andrei." And he said, Andrei didn't say hello, just said, "Mr. Leon. I can't talk to you." And he kept on going. "Just take your wife and children and run, and take your wife and children and run, and please don't talk to me, and take your wife and children and run," and he said he understood. He ran into the house, and her mother's name was Jeanine, too. They had a grandchild and one daughter, the youngest one. "Take the kids, dress them, take a bread and get on the horse." He settled the carriage, they got on top, and he ran to the colony. He had a sister in the colony. He came there, they told him, the sister left already. Someone told her, he left. But he, before he left, he told next door, Jeanine's, his best friend Andrei, the one that was a drunkard, and they ran, too. So they all ran to my city. So Jeanine's family had a daughter married in the city, so they stayed in the city with that daughter, that's where I found them. But Jeanie's family, the blacksmith, the one that...

(END TAPE NINE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE NINE, SIDE TWO)

EVA: Because the Germans, by then, that was already the second day or the third, that Ukrainians kept on killing Polish, and Polish people started to run into towns, and close to the river to get across. And the Germans knew, and they would let them get across, the Germans, get into Poland.

INT: What did they say happened to Tony? What did they tell you happened to him?

EVA: That's what they told me. That someone said he's hiding a Jewish girl. I said, "The girl was me," and they couldn't believe it. I said, "But I wasn't at Tony's, I was at Frances'. Where's Frances?" She said, "Frances' family's somewhere in Poland," they told me.

INT: They got away, too.

EVA: And Jeanine only stayed there because they had a sister. She had a big house in the city, and they stayed with the sister. And they were close to the...the sister had a house close to the barracks. There were German soldiers, so the Ukrainians couldn't do nothing to them, so they stayed with her sister. So they told me about Tony. He came for Christmas, and he said to her, to his sister, her name was Sophie, "Sophie, I'll be here for Easter. When I come for Easter, I'll take Eva home and we'll get married. You can get ready."

INT: What year was this now, do you know? '43?

EVA: That was '43. The end of '43. That was Christmas '43, '44. For Christmas, Tony didn't come. I don't know. Maybe they killed him already. I never find out when he was killed. But his sister said, "Ha!" When he didn't come for Christmas, she became completely different to me. "Hm! See?" No, Tony wasn't killed yet. "See? He's not going to marry you. I didn't want to tell you that. He went around with a lot of them. Why should he marry you?" I said, "Maybe because I'm very rich. My parents left a lot of things. They are in Siberia, but they left a lot of...I'm not a poor girl, and I'm an only child." "Well, he's not poor, himself. He doesn't look for a rich one." And I said, "Maybe because I'm educated." "Mark my words! He's not going to marry you." She went to me like that. I said, "Well, look. He's not going to marry me, he's not going to marry me. But at least I'll be safe. I won't get to Germany as a slave worker there. Because if I get to Germany, how will I come back to Poland?" And her husband mixed in. I know he didn't know. He's too stupid. Tony couldn't tell him that I'm Jewish. Tony told me, "I'm not going to tell him," and I believed him. And he said, "Well, it's winter. There's nothing to do on the farm. You two can manage. After New Year's, I'm going to take the horse and carriage and I'm going to go up to Tony and see what's going on there." Now I remembered. And he went up, and he was gone a week, and I thought to myself: I'm a goner, now. I have no place to run, I don't know where to go. If I go away, how will Tony know where I am? And I have no papers, I have no money to make papers. How, what do I do now, and it's winter, snow up to here. Where do you run in the snow? Every step you make, you leave a trace. What am I going to do, and he will find out now.

Tony...you know what? Tony came once more. No, he didn't. No, Tony didn't come, no. After a week he came back. And I just prayed, "Dear Lord, I'll leave it up to You. You protected me up till now, Thy will be done. That's all." And he came back. And he said,

"Tony couldn't come because Mom is very sick, she's dying." And he told her, he brought home another tire Tony gave him, and most probably Tony gave him money, too. And Tony sent me a pair of soldier boots or something. And he saw his sister. Tony told me, no Tony didn't come anymore, but when he was, the one time he came to visit us, he...it wasn't, most probably it wasn't for Christmas that Tony came. You know, I don't remember clearly already. Tony brought me there in the fall, and he must have come a month after that or later, somewhere before Christmas, because for Christmas he didn't come already. And when he came, he told me that "I told my sister, the one that lives near me, because she's the smart one, she won't tell nobody," he says. And he told me that she knows. So he said, his wife kept on asking him, the one that came back, Tony's brother -in-law, and Sophie, his wife, kept asking him, "Did you see my sister?" He said, "Yes, Tony's busy with Mom. She's very sick and she's dying. And I saw your sister and everything." And I don't know. To me, he said, he came onto me once, her husband, after that return. He came over and he said, "Sophie's gone for the whole day to the city to buy something. So maybe you could play around a little?" And I said, "I'm not the playing around girl," I said. "I'm going to marry Tony. I'm not that kind of girl." "Well, okay, if you don't want to, you don't want to." And sometimes I think, maybe he heard something, but he didn't know nobody there except his brother-in-law and his sister-in-law, and the two of them, mother didn't know about me, so nobody could have told him, so I don't think so. But I never saw Tony anymore. No, I never did see Tony.

INT: So how long did you stay there with his sister?

EVA: Over winter.

INT: And what did you do with your days? What did you do all day?

EVA: Oh, she didn't do nothing. I milked the cow, I fed the cow, the pigs, everything. They had not a big holding, a small one. I did all the work. I cleaned the house, I washed the windows. She cooked. Sometimes she would say -- yeah, cooking, I told her. "I'll gladly cook, but I don't know how. I never cooked." First she said, "I'll teach you." But then when Tony didn't come anymore, she says, "He won't marry you," so she started to treat me like a...First she said, when Tony was there, she says, "Well, it will look stupid to people if I tell them that my brother-in-law, this is my brother-in-law's fiancée, but he cannot marry her now. They will say, 'Why not? If he's alone he can marry her.' So you'd better call me Auntie." So I started to call her Auntie.

But I was a pretty, young girl, and there were houses not far from her. One house had three brothers, and all three brothers wanted to come in and keep me company sometimes. Well, I settled on the oldest one, because he graduated public school, and he was a little bit educated, and we talked about books and this and that. And he came fairly steady every evening. We would just sit for an hour or two and talk. There was only one room. What could you do, where could you go?

But after Tony didn't come, she started to treat me like a, "Eva, go there and do that. You didn't do the chores yet. You talk and talk and talk with him, and you didn't do the

chores." So she started to treat me, so I thought to myself: if she's going to treat me like a maid, I might as well go become a maid at somebody, and they will buy me a skirt and buy me a shoe and give me something. And if I finish the chores, they won't bother me.

INT: Get paid for your work.

EVA: I didn't want to get paid. I worked through, until I became free, I worked till I was liberated, and I never took money. I always said, just give me something to wear, and something to eat, and a place to sleep.

I was with her over winter, and I was planning on how to get together and get into that city. That was the city called Sokal that my grandma came to take me from the neighbor's wedding and tell me that they killed out all the Jews in Sokal today. And if I could get to Sokal, maybe hire myself out in the city to work for someone or something, and I'll say that I don't have any documents because the Ukrainians killed my family, and I don't have nothing to show for it.

It seems that the Ukrainians started to kill the Polacks going from the Russian border coming to the German border, gradually. There, there, there, and then where I lived with his sister, near to the Polish, the border between Ukraina and Poland a border, that Bug River, the Polacks were still living peacefully. That was winter. At the end of winter, one day we heard a shot. Well, it didn't bother me, because my family was gone, and I knew there were no Jews there. And about an hour later, a neighbor came and said, "You know who got shot?" Like this way from her, not that way, this way from her, there was a house, lived a husband and a wife without children, a childless couple, and I don't know who told the Germans that he has a gun. That guy. A Polish guy. Sure enough they came into the house. They found not a gun, he had a, the long thing?

INT: A rifle?

EVA: A rifle. They killed him right in front of the house. And she was left alone. She was a sick woman. And I thought to myself: I'm sorry, dear Lord, that you took her husband, but this is my opportunity. It looks like an opportunity opened up for me. And I said to his sister, to Tony's, I said, "You know what? You don't actually need me," I said. "I'm just sitting here doing nothing. You don't have much to do." "I know that, but I promised my brother." I said, "You know what?" The other woman's name was Marinka. I said, "You know what? Marinka's alone now. They killed her husband about a month ago. I'm going to ask if she could use some of my services. Then you wouldn't have to feed me." "Well, that's not a bad idea," she says. And then she told me, you know what she told me? That that guy that used to come in and see me, the three brothers, the oldest one came. He kind of kept company with me every day. "His younger brother is my boyfriend, his name is Joseph," she says. "Because he knows I'm not in love with my husband. I never was in love with my husband. I only married him because he got me pregnant with my daughter," she says. "Adele is...I somehow got Adele. I was two months pregnant before I married him."

INT: Was anybody faithful to their husbands in this... (laughs)

EVA: I don't know. I don't know. Well, this was not the usual thing. They were very decent. In my times, things like this happened, but very seldom. So she said, "I'm in love with that younger brother of the one you're going with. And I said, "I don't care. I'm not going to marry this or that. I'm still waiting for Tony." "Well," she says, "It's a good idea, you should go," she says. "Because it seems to me that sometimes Joseph would come into the house, or you would kind of look at him and look at him and look at him, and I don't like you to look at Joseph." I said, "So it would be good for both of us." I said. "If you need me sometimes to help you with something," I mean, I had to keep peace with her. I was afraid to injure anybody's feelings. So I went to that Marinka next day. And she said, "I'd be very glad." She was an ugly woman with an ugly character, but she says, "Oh, yes, I could use some help, because I'm a sick woman." She had something wrong, she had constantly the menstruation. She needed most probably a hysterectomy or something. But what did I know about those things those days? She kept on taking pills and pills and pills. Those days, you didn't even get pills. Over the counter, medication came in a powder form. So she kept pouring that powder, swallowing it a few times a day. For the night, every night.

And then I lived with her from the beginning of spring till late summer. I lived with that woman. That was...

INT: 1944, right?

EVA: No, that was still '43, I think. You know, I'm mixed up where the years go. It was '44 I think already, yeah.

INT: Because you said when Tony took you it was '43, and you were there from the fall of '43 through the winter.

EVA: Yeah, '44. That was already '44. And I stayed with that woman. I chopped wood, with the two of us. She had a little piece of ground. We would work the ground, because I showed her a little how to harness horses. She showed me. She had two horses, one cow, a couple of pigs. And at least, the other one, whatever Sophie gave me, I ate. And plenty of times I was hungry. Because I did the hard work, she didn't do nothing. But with this one she said, "Well if you're hungry, there's bread and there is pork, and there is, whatever it is, or milk. So you can have it."

INT: Now all this time you were posing as a Polish person, and you had changed your name, and you were speaking Polish only?

EVA: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. All the time I was Catholic. I was Catholic. In my mind, in my soul, I was Catholic. I only wasn't baptized, but I was Catholic. I felt Catholic 100%.

INT: Did you still have your prayer book with you and your rosary?

EVA: Yeah. I had my prayer book with that woman. I lost my prayer book when we ran away with that woman. Anyway, I was with that woman, it was already the end of summer. We would go, there was a little town, not far, three kilometers. A little tiny town, just, I don't know if there were about 1,000, 2,000 people in that town. It had a little church, and we would go to church there.

She got me, she was my size. She wore ugly clothes, but she gave me a pair of shoes and a skirt. I washed it. I wore whatever she wore. She had a brother not far from her living. So I got to know the brother, and the brother and the sister-in-law told me that they were in America, and they regretted that they came back. They were two Polish kids who went to America after, about 20 years ago, and they made some money, and they got married and came back to Poland, and why didn't they stay in America. If they wanted to talk something, their kids shouldn't understand, and we shouldn't understand, they talk English. And I thought to myself: what a funny language and stuff like that. And they both got killed by the Ukrainians. The whole family got killed. No, she lived through the war. She lived through. She somehow ran away. The rest got killed.

But anyway...the hand of G-d was guiding me. All of a sudden, the woman says to me, "You know, if we could get to town, maybe we could buy some material. They could make maybe a jacket for me and for you." I said, "Who would make it?" "There are some Jews, you see." And like she lives here, and like an L-shaped, there were Ukrainians living. There was a big Ukrainian village, and that was a Polish colony where we were, the Polacks. And she said, "The Ukrainians have some Jews that ran away from Sokal, and they are here. And they are living with them, and they are sewing for them, and doing things for them."

At that time, there was like this. At night, one night, where the village is concerned, the Ukrainians would come to the village, and the Ukrainians had an underground, the Bulbowce, they were called, the Bulbowce, and they would come, and they would raid the Polish houses, and take away whatever. Whether they needed a cow, they needed a pig, they would take it from the Polacks. Next night the Polacks most probably would let know the Polish underground. The Polish underground would come and raid the Ukrainian houses. So, but nobody came to that woman. Nobody got killed. They would just come, and well, somebody would start crying and say he only had one pig, they would sometimes go away and not take it. It depends how many kids you have. But they would never kill people. Because both of them, both sides were afraid of the Germans. Because the Germans liked the Ukrainians, but they didn't want a free Ukraina. They wanted to have their foot on top of them. And that underground wanted a free Ukraina, just a separate country, like they are now.

So nobody came to that woman, because they knew she's poor, and she's all alone, and this and that. But there I am, chopping wood. It was...twilight was just about to begin in about half an hour, an hour. And I'm chopping wood for tomorrow morning, it should dry up overnight a little, and we would have for cooking in the morning. And it was...the harvest was done already. I'm chopping wood, and a man comes, keeps on going to me.

He came about as close as that wall. And I think to myself: that's a Jewish fellow. Because the way he was dressed. Nobody was dressed, the Polish guys in the village and in the colony, and the Ukrainians certainly didn't. You could see that he was dressed in city clothes. They weren't new. He was a handsome young Jewish guy about 23 years old. And he came and spoke to me in Polish, and I spoke to him, and how are you, and how are you. Then I finished chopping, and he said, "Can I chop for you?" I said, "No, thank you. I'll do it myself." I thought to myself, "Dear G-d in heaven, take him away from here, please." And he stayed about ten minutes, and I said, "You have to excuse me, I have to go in. My lady doesn't feel good, I have to make supper." And he went away.

Sure enough, next evening he's back. And I didn't say nothing, and I didn't talk to him. I said, "Would you like to come into the house?" There was one room, and he came in, and he talked to her a little bit. "Maybe you need to sew something?" And she said to him, "Yes, we just have to get to town. How do we get to town? We have to go through a border, to Sokal, to buy material." And he said, "I could arrange material for you." And she says, "We'll talk about it." Right then and there I decided, this association is not for me. But he said goodnight and he went away. Next evening I chopped my wood early, and I was sitting waiting for him already. He came. And I say, "Won't you sit down?" We were sitting on a big log. And I said, "What are you doing here? Are you Jewish?" He said, "Yes." Because the Ukrainians knew that they were Jews, so he wouldn't hide it. And I said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Well, we finished sewing for the Ukrainians, and now we are sewing for their underground. Each of them went into the city, they have machine guns and everything. They go whenever they want with a car to the city, they get material, they brought, and we're sewing for the underground. And they told us that if we want to we can come and live in the underground there with them when, so that the Germans wouldn't know, and we would be saved. They would save us through the war." And I said, "The Ukrainians are not going to save you." He said, "Oh, yes, they will. Because they need us." I said, "How much can you sew?" And I realized that I can't, and he said, "They will save us, because they need us." And then I said, "All right." And right then and there I made a decision. I said, "Why are you coming over here every evening?" He said, "Because you're a very pretty girl. And are you her daughter?" I said, "No. I'm just...a hired hand." "So where are you from?" I said, "I'm a Jewish girl from Wlodzimierz." If he would be older, he would have fainted. He said, "Dear Lord in heaven, you are Jewish?" I said, "Yes." "You don't look it." I said, "That's what saves my skin. And if you have any feelings for a fellow Jew," I said, "you will go away, say good-bye to me, and never come here again," I said, "because nobody knows I'm Jewish." And he said, "Yes, I will do that." But he said, "Why should you slave for her? I saw you with the horses, and carrying heavy stuff, sacks of potatoes. Come with us into the underground. We will be working, you will be just cooking for us something. We will make you a dress and we will make you a skirt, and you will be dressed, and you will be warm, and you don't have to work." I said, "Please, please, please leave me. G-d willing," I said, "if we live through the war, we will meet in Jerusalem after the war." He said goodnight and went away. I said, "Please don't come here anymore." He said, "I'll fulfill your wishes."

Next day was Sunday. (pause) You heard shootings in the village, there was a little forest, not a big one. There were not as many forests there as where I lived. You heard, but we knew the underground, sometimes they killed wildlife, sometimes they killed, they fought with the Polish underground, [and they] fought with them. You heard shootings. And nobody paid attention. Sure enough that Marinka went to visit her brother and comes back to me, and I'm sitting there in the house, and she says, "You know the Ukrainians killed all the Jewish fellows that worked for them?" So if I would have had any thought of going with him, I would have been dead next day.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 18, 1996.

We left, the last time, the Jewish young man had been visiting you, and he said, "You should come with us to the forest, and we'll sew for you and whatever, and you'll stay with us," and you didn't go with him. You told him to go away. And they were all killed. He was killed, and all the Jews there. And if you could pick up the story from there.

EVA: Well, after that happening, I felt again that somebody's watching over me. Even though I ran away with nothing, people had to pay money, I had to be hidden. I was...I was, I didn't get maybe enough to eat sometimes. I felt hungry, because you grow, I worked very hard on a farm. But I was always, I didn't have to sleep underground. I was always, I had fresh air, I could eat, if there was an apple tree or whatever, I could eat whatever I want, as much as I want. So I...was still faring better than some of the other people.

Then it was, I don't remember, but I think it was...kind of towards, in the middle of the summer, or maybe a little past the middle of the summer. It must have been about two months after those Jewish guys were killed. And I don't know. I used to go with that woman to church sometimes, if it was a big holiday. And mostly, she was a sickly woman, so she would stay home. Maybe I wouldn't have gone every Sunday, but I got to church, I sat down, I relaxed. When I was in the house, I always did something. So I would go, and I would meet some young people and talk, and you know. There were a lot of people going.

So that Sunday, I don't remember feeling bad or what, but I just said to her, "You know, you didn't go to church for a number of weeks already. It's not very hot, it's a nice day, why don't you go to church? Maybe somebody's driving up, go with them," stuff like this. "I'll watch the cow" -- I think she had one or two cows -- "while they graze, and I'll take them in, and I'll prepare dinner." And she went.

And when the sun got kind of a little high, it must have been about 11:00, I took the cows in. And I was in the house or outside, I don't remember. Outside. And all of a sudden, I see that woman running through fields. And behind her property was a tiny little stream. It was so tiny that sometimes in the summer only the bottom, the soles would get wet.

But if there was more rain, it was a tiny little stream, like maybe up to your...where the calves begin, not further. A little stream. With a lot of those greenery that grows around.

INT: Ferns.

EVA: Yeah. And no trees, just, no, there was a special green thing in Poland.

INT: Fern?

EVA: No, no. It looked like you carry it for Sukkos. It was a long green...

INT: Like a reed or something?

EVA: It looked exactly like what you carry. What is that, the esrog?

INT: The lulav.

EVA: The lulav for Sukkos. It exactly looked like that. If you tore it up and put it on the floor.

INT: Like rushes. Yeah.

EVA: Oh! It smelled. For Shavuos you used to cover all the floors. It smelled delicious. Anyway, that was growing. There were no trees, nothing, by that little stream. And she's running, and I see she goes into the stream, and I knew she's wearing good shoes. And she's screaming to me, "Come here, come here!" Because I don't know where I was going. Maybe I was going to her brother or to a neighbor, and I started to run to her, and I come closer, and her whole blouse is full of blood. I said, "What happened?" She says, "There was a pogrom in church. We were halfway through the mass and all of a sudden," -- there's a little church, one main door and two doors on the side by the altar, like usually a church has it. "And the Ukrainians ran in from all three doors, and with machine guns started just shooting. There were young boys as altar boys. The priest and the boys were the first to fall. And people, they were just," she says, "going like this with the machine gun." I said, "Where is the blood from?" "I didn't get hurt," she says, "but I fell and somebody fell on me, and they were most probably wounded," and then she said, "I just lied there, and there was such screams." And when she said, "I thought to myself, anyway they will still come and look if somebody's alive and kill me." So she says, "I crawled little by little." And she was a little woman, a skinny woman. And she says, "I crawled to the side door, and crawled out and just said, "Dear Lord, You take it up from here," and I started running. And I run, I didn't run to the road. I ran with fields." And she ran without an end. I was three kilometers [away].

(END TAPE NINE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: …"Pork left over. Let's take the pork, let's take a bread, and let's hide somewhere."

INT: So the Ukrainians were killing the Poles.

EVA: Yeah. She's telling me that, and I look out, and she had like three windows. And I looked out and I said, "Here come the Ukrainians." And she said, "The hell with everything. Leave it." We didn't even grab a bread. I just grabbed my prayer book, my shoes -- I had one pair of shoes left over, those little-heeled shoes that was my big thing -- and a sweater, and we ran through, from the house you could get into the barn where the cow and the horse was. In the back there was a door. We got through that door, and there was a field with potatoes, and we got into the field and into the stream. And we just sat down in that water and sat.

INT: So now you're being chased as a Pole. First you were chased, now you're hiding as a Pole and you're going to be killed that way, too.

EVA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And we said, and she said, "We have to sit here, quietly." She says, "We have to sit here till it gets dark, then we will just keep on going south till we hit the border," -- it was kind of southwest -- "till we get to the border. There will be some Germans at the border. There are always Germans, because," she says, "This is the only place where we will be safe from the Ukrainians." And it was already 9:00 and she was afraid to go. Finally, I suppose, I didn't have a clock, but I realized that it mostly doesn't get dark -- it was the middle of the summer -- until about 8:30, 9:00. She waited. We waited. Lucky for us, it was a night without stars. And she wouldn't go with the field. So we walked with that stream. In the stream we kept on walking. This is when I lost my shoes and when I lost my prayer book, only the rosary left. And we kept on walking and walking and walking. And the village was already way behind us. And she said, "I think we could go with the fields already." Both of us wet till here.

And we got out, we wrung the stuff out and we kept on walking. Then all of a sudden, and we were in a big potato field. The potato fields are always harvested at the very end of the summer, beginning of fall, when it's a little cool already. So it must have been before...We were in a potato field. And then, she didn't hear maybe, but I hear somebody talking. (Voice low throughout this story) And I look around, and I said to her -- her name was Maria, but for short they called her Marinka, and I said, "Marinka, take a look." I said, "Do you see there people crawling?" You could see like hunchbacks crawling in the rows of potatoes. Potatoes when they grow they are about this tall, the green stalks. The potatoes are in the earth, but the stalks are about this tall.

INT: Two feet tall.

EVA: And I said, "You see people bend, crawl? They must be Polish people." She said, "I don't know, but I'm scared. Don't go nowhere. Let's just crawl by ourselves." And we kept on crawling and crawling. And all of a sudden, and we were talking very quietly in Polish. And she, all of a sudden, two men materialized, right, was it on this or on this

side in front of us, and they said, "Where are you ladies going?" And I said, "We are going to Sokal." Because that's the way you got to Sokal. You crawled through the border, and then you bought salt and you bought sugar, and you crawled back next night. You smuggled through the border. I said "We're going to Sokal to buy salt and we need some soles for our shoes." And he spoke Polish and I spoke Polish. And then most probably he realized we're just two women, and they were two guys, so he wasn't afraid. Then he said, "Are you Polacks or Ukrainians?" I said, "We are Polacks." He said, "Good, we are Polacks, too." So he asked me, I asked him, and she asked him, and he told her he's from a colony not far from the village. And he said, "Were you in church?" She says, "I was." And he said that his whole family was killed in the church, one of them.

Anyway, so we crawled with those guys already all the way, we crawled so slow that it took us the whole night to get to the border, which was no more, I think, than about fifteen, twenty kilometers. And it started to be daylight already, so there was no use hiding. We just got up and walked.

And we came to the border. The Germans already knew. And at the border I met that guy, the oldest of the three brothers, and he said, "You don't have to be afraid. You're not alone. You'll be with us, with my family." And the Germans already had big pots of coffee and bread, and I didn't butt in, whatever anybody will do. I had, for some reason, unexplainable, I had the first feeling since that whole nightmare started, that I'm going to live through the war.

INT: When you got to Sokal.

EVA: No. I was a Polack.

INT: I see.

EVA: I left my Jewish identity, nobody knows me, and I'm accepted as a Polish girl, and I have a chance, and by then we knew already that Hitler's going back, that he will **never** reach Moscow, just like Napoleon, he will not step into Moscow. But the fighting in Leningrad and in Stalingrad was very fierce. But you see, whatever they are, the Russians, they were starving for -- what was it? Two years by Leningrad or something? I forgot how many years they were there. At least a year and a half or two. And they were without bread, and they wouldn't let go, the Russian people in Leningrad. He closed the electricity, closed the water, he closed everything, and they persevered.

INT: So explain this feeling again. It was once you left your town behind, and nobody knew who you were...

EVA: No, when I left my town behind, Tony still kept coming to his sister. His sister was scatterbrained. She was afraid I'm going to start [with her boyfriend], what can I do if he comes in and talks to me, too? So...but...

INT: But by Marinka, already, by the time you were with Marinka...

EVA: I didn't know, and I didn't, she wasn't in the group of people that we met. It was not Sokal, it was just the border. But like that...guy's name that he kept company with me was Vladek. And I mean, the whole name is Vladislow, but in short it's Vladek. And I said to him, "What's going to happen to us? Are we going to sit here?" He said, "No, no, no, the Germans told him, my father talked and some other people talked, and they will organize cattle cars, trains, and they'll get us deeper into Poland. Because they can't keep people at the border, so they will organize, the Red Cross will take over, and they will organize the trains, and we will go wherever the train takes you," he said. I said, "Do you know where?" He said, "I don't care," he said. I mean, who can stay there?

INT: But now you felt less fear now, is what you're saying.

EVA: No, because I was...

INT: Because you're a Pole.

EVA: I was Polish. I was Polish.

INT: You weren't afraid you would slip up and let it be known that you were Jewish?

EVA: Nobody had documents with him. All right, everybody had brothers, sisters that could say, "Hey, he's a Polack. He's my brother. Or this is my father." But I already had people who knew me for about a year and a half. And who knew that I am...believed me. Maybe they didn't know, but they believed me that I am Polish. And they are in the same situation I was. That woman ran away with nothing. She had no documents. So...I felt that maybe, I wouldn't say I was 100%, that maybe I will live longer than Hitler. I felt a glimmer of hope.

So I started to, we were there, I don't remember whether we got into, we must have gotten into the station somehow, and they organized those trains. Where we stayed, I don't remember. It was just a matter of days, and the trains were organized, and we were loaded into trains. And we just went west. And the further west we went, the better I felt. But I kept on plotting my life ahead. What I actually wanted to happen is the Germans should catch me and take me to work in Germany. Then I'm Polish. That's it. Nobody knows me in Germany. That's it.

INT: The further away you get, the better off you are.

EVA: Sure. But I said, I didn't tell that to the boy, to Vladek, but I said to him once, I said, "Well, I don't know what's going to happen to me. You all have families." And I said, "The Germans are looking for people who are not attached," and stuff like that. "And what am I going to tell them, I can't leave my old mother or somebody?" I said, "Well, okay, if they take me to Germany." He said, "They're not going to take you anywhere. You're going to be with us."

And when we came, all of a sudden the train, I don't remember how long we were traveling, for a day, a night, or two days. And the train would stop. Some people had money with them. And he told me, next to that guy, just something that about what happens in a war. I think I told you that once, I don't remember. I must have mentioned it, because it's another one of the horror stories. Next to them was a house with Polish people, and a mother and a father. Or the father, I think was dead. A mother. And she had three daughters. The oldest daughter, a Polish girl, married a Ukrainian guy. It happened very often where we lived. And they had a little girl three years old. And I don't know. We were already together for about, me and his family, for about, we were on the train already, I think. And I said to him, "What happened to the," I asked him certain things. He said, "I don't know." Then I asked about another. "I don't know. I don't know. We just ran. We just took the, put the horses into a wagon, and we got piled up and grabbed some bread, and just, that's it," he said. "We ran. We don't know where anybody ran, or where anybody is. Whoever came to the border, we know he's here. So a few people came." And I asked him what happened to those three sisters. I said, "Those two girls." He said, "The two girls, someone told me, ran away, too." But I said, "Do you know what happened to the one that married the Ukrainian?" He said, "You shouldn't know from it. What happened." It seems she was living separately. Maybe she was, not like the Polish colony. She was, colonies near our village were mostly Polacks. They lived separately, like they make their own ghetto. And the Ukrainians were in the village. So she was living with that Ukrainian husband in the village. Anyway, the Bulbowces came in. They...I don't think they killed her. And I don't know what they did to him. But they took that child, an innocent three-year-old child, a girl, and one bastard took the child by one leg, and one the other, and alive, a child, they tore in half. (pause) That's what he told me. I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Well, one of the sisters told me."

And I said to him, I said, "They can have their Ukraina. I'm never going to live there anymore. I don't know about you." He said, "Not me."

And it's things like this. And you know, talking to you and yesterday night I was lying in bed, and I was thinking. And you know how many things I remembered that I forgot to mention that were important? Like the Germans came in once. They took away already, let's say a German had a tenth cousin in Germany who was getting married. So he wrote in a letter, "I'm getting married, we don't have rings." So this one came to a Jewish house, "Give me two wedding rings. Or give me a diamond ring." And they took away, according to me they took away everything, because I didn't have, and Grandma said she doesn't have, and my Aunt Leah said she doesn't have. And finally they took away our pillows. There was no such thing as foam pillows. If you had a feather pillow, they took it away.

And once, I don't remember what that German, there were a couple of Germans, and one was a lieutenant. Real military, not private, not civil, like the station people. But military. They came with a jeep and they stopped, and of course Granny's house was the first one, so everybody always came in the first. And the minute they saw my grandfather, oh, "Juden, Juden, Juden." And I don't remember what he wanted. And

Grandma says to him, "We don't have. We gave away to the Germans whatever they came and asked us, we had it. We don't have anything anymore." And he said, "Well, somebody's going to be dead today if I don't..." Whether he wanted a ring, whether he wanted...And then, Grandma says, "I have vodka if you want. Whatever I have, I'll give you. But we don't [have rings]." We were, me, my Aunt Leah, my granny, and the smallest boy were in the house. The rest, I don't know where they were, all of them. They must have been outside somewhere, or in the garden. They didn't come in when they saw the Germans, maybe, I don't know. But he backed my Aunt Leah in the corridor into a corner, and drew his, that short knife, it's called a...how is it called?

INT: Bayonet?

EVA: Bayonet. It's short, but with a sharp edge that you can stick it into a stone, I think. It's always here, and it's about that long, a foot long, maybe. He drew it out and grabbed my aunt by the collar. "You dirty Jewess. You have vodka, what are you giving me? A bottle of vodka or a bottle and a half? If you have vodka, give me more vodka, or I'll kill you." And my grandma started to scream, and I started to scream. So we made such a racket, and the child, that little, his name was Yankele. We called him Yankush. He was six years old, he started to scream, and he grabbed my aunt. And my aunt started to say to that German, I remember, "I don't have what you want. If you want, you can take me," but she says, "I don't have." And you know, I couldn't look at it anymore. He was standing over her with that bayonet holding her like this. And he pinned her hands in the back. He said, "Hold your hands in the back." She held her hands in the back. She was only in her thirties, a young woman. And I ran out of the house. And it took about an hour till that German left. And I came back, everything was quiet. And I don't know. Maybe he took my aunt to bed. I have no idea, I don't care. But it didn't save her anyway at the end. So things like this. And it was still a lot of other places.

There was a time when I stayed with that woman, and she would, in the forest, near the forest, where I stayed. The guy that first raped me, my uncle's friend.

INT: Vasily.

EVA: Yeah. And he took me to his girlfriend in the other village, and her husband was an overseer in the forest. And one night she comes in and she said to me, "I don't know, but my husband is never home the whole week, but he's coming home now for a number of days, and he might be home the whole week, so I don't know what to do." I said, "Don't worry. I'll go to the forest." And she said, "Well, stay the night. He's coming tomorrow." And before daybreak, I crawled into the forest. And the whole week, not a week but a number of days, I stayed in that forest there. And sometimes at night it would rain a little bit, and I was afraid to go into the house, because her husband, those who worked in the forest, all of them, had machine guns. Not machine guns, rifles. And I thought to myself: the guy will shoot me. He wouldn't know who I am. Maybe he's nice, but..." So I ate berries, and I drank rain water, and...it was miserable, but look. I didn't want to...

INT: How did you get through all these things? One nightmare after the other. How did you...

EVA: I was young. And as much as every time, I mean, like when he came, that Vasily said, "Did you hear a shot today?" I said, "Yes." "That was your grandma, and she's gone already." And he told me how they killed her, how she had to undress completely. As much as it hurt me, it wasn't a child of mine. I didn't understand it, but when I got married and had Rita, I understood why my aunt couldn't stay in that garden with me, because she heard her child, the Germans got him. I said, "You stay here. Stay here!" She said, well, she wouldn't have passed. She spoke a good Polish, but she looked Jewish. She was a **beautiful** girl.

INT: This is your Aunt Leah, right?

EVA: Yeah. She was, all the girls, even though they were, like they say, the city girls laughed, Oh, she's beautiful, and she's this and she's that, but she's a shiksa from a dorf. What are you going to marry? But my grandma, all of her girls got married under twenty. They were beautiful. Each one had at least seven grades of school. In those days it was a lot of education.

INT: So the fact that you didn't have children, do you think...

EVA: I didn't have a mother. I didn't have a father to worry about. Grandma was taken away, and then they killed her already. And when Peter was taking me away, and he told me, I said, "I don't know. I don't know how I'll leave Grandma." He said, "Okay, I'll get Grandma." I told you, he brought her out, and Grandma says, "Peter, she could go anytime she wanted. She could have gone with the Russians to Russia, I would let her." But she says, "She doesn't want to. Well, she was hoping maybe her mother's alive. Now her mother's not there anymore. She can't help me, but with you especially?" she says. "She can go. If you want to help her, I'll be very glad, she can go."

INT: So do you think it helped you that you didn't have, that the relatives had been killed? That must have been very traumatic.

EVA: It didn't help me. It didn't help me. Just, I was not responsible for nobody's life. Grandma was gone, Grandpa was gone. I couldn't help them. Grandma was gone because that bastard told the Germans. Grandpa was killed in the ghetto. And my mother was dead already for a year or whatever. More.

INT: But you didn't know that.

EVA: No, I did. I found it out when I cleaned the thing. So, but...if I would have a child, I would never want to hide. If my child was taken and killed. If that silly uncle of mine, saw his wife killed, and he still sat in the forest and looked through the bushes. But when they killed his child, he was afraid to go to the outhouse, and he came out, and all the Ukrainians told me he did it. He came out of the forest and says, "This is my wife

and my child, and I want you to kill me, too," and they killed him. He wasn't afraid. I mean, to me it just is incomprehensible that someone should want to...like yesterday. Every mother is the same, I think. That woman [on a TV program about a pogrom in Poland after the war] that woman, I think that was in Atlanta, that short woman. Not the one that had the beautiful silver candlesticks. The second woman. Was telling a story how they kill her mother **after** the war. They came back to the shtetl. The Polacks killed her, yeah? And she said, "My mother froze, and he took the gun out, and she said, 'Please, kill me first.' So he killed the baby first."

INT: That was the story, almost exactly, that you had told that day.

EVA: No, but my aunt at least they did it. She was the first to go. She was the first.

INT: But with the sisters.

EVA: Of the nuclear family that was in that house, she was the first to go. That they did for her, because she said, "Take my child. He will show you where there is a whole box of gold and silver and you can take it."

INT: So the fact that you were alone. And you didn't have responsibilities.

EVA: Yeah. I had no responsibilities. Now, I would have run even if Grandma and Leah...once Peter took me away. You see, I don't claim to be the world's smartest woman, and highly intelligent. But I had a head on my shoulders always. And since Father died and I had to take care of Mother -- I mean, it's not like I had to feed her and go and work and bring food. Grandma saw to it. But I watched over her, whether it's medication, or she has a bad day or something. I tried to quiet her. Everybody said, even to my grandma, "Why do you let Eva sleep with her mother? She can hurt her." I said, "My mother would never hurt me." And she never did. I wasn't scared. After all, she had moments when she didn't know what she was doing. And I wasn't scared. I was the only one, and Granny was the second, that could quiet her. And I...Leah came to me when I was at Peter's. Peter brought me there at night, next day Leah came to see me, because they told her that they have me. And she said, "Well, you don't have to sit here in that barn. You can come into the house and be with me and with..." I said, "Leah, no Ukrainian, nobody will ever see me unless I live through the war, and then they'll see me. I'm dead, period. I decided," I said, "And don't you dare tell the children, especially your husband, that I'm here. If he doesn't know." She says, "Well, he knows." So I said, "Okay, keep it to yourself. The children don't know, leave it at that. **Nobody**," I said. "Even if Jeanie comes. Even if Irene comes." I didn't know they'll kill her in a day or two, or a week. I didn't know. Because they paid up so much, everybody, with a lot of money, and maybe silver or gold, that I figured that she might be, that was only the first pogrom. In every town, like in our city there were three pogroms to kill everybody, more or less. Or unless somebody hid already.

INT: But I'm trying to understand, how did you...

EVA: So I decided. I decided that once I break my ties with the family, whether they're dead or alive, nobody's going to see me. That's what I decided from the **minute** I sat on Peter's bike and he went away with me.

INT: But how did you get that, how did you figure that all out? You were all by yourself.

EVA: I figured it out that wherever I go, even if I have to pay with my body, I will try to get to live. And if I could get away far enough where nobody knows me, and find some idiot who would want to marry me, or something, I'll live with him. And I mean, like I told you, Hitler didn't go any further. He was already stationary, and some people said that he's coming back already. So I had some hope. You had to have some hope, or people in Warsaw Ghetto wouldn't have fought. Or the Polish soldiers would have given up, or even the English would have given up. You had to have hope.

INT: Did you ever give up? Did you ever feel like you didn't want to go on anymore? Did you ever feel that way in the war?

EVA: No.

INT: You never felt that way. That you're just going to lie down and that's it.

EVA: Honey, I was young. I was young. I knew that, I was young. Here, I lived through that whole rigmarole in my city. Now out of the city, nobody knows me here. So...

INT: Did you ever get tired, or you just couldn't go through any more?

EVA: Yeah. No, I must tell you that G-d guided, I mean, something guided me. G-d was looking out for me, that's for sure. I prayed an awful lot. And when I ran away with that woman, when she was hurt in that church, when they had the pogrom in that little Polish church, when we ran away and I met up with the others, with Vladek and his family, and we settled, the transport stopped one nice day. I think it was a weekend, in a little town called (?). (sighs) It would have been from my town, I suppose, about 800 kilometers, I think.

INT: Very far.

EVA: And...I, on the way, it took us about a week to get there. I mean, it's not like the President travels by train and all the tracks are empty. Or Amtrak has to go. It was a war. First of all the military, and then the supplies. And if there is an empty track they let you go. So it took us about a week to get through there, because a regular train would have made it in a day and a night, I suppose. But anyway, wherever we stopped, Red Cross...and the Polacks. We got into Poland where there are no Ukrainians. And here are Polacks who have been killed by the Ukrainians, and dislodged, left everything, some of them quite rich. That Vladek was from a very rich family. And some of them very

rich. So the Polish people brought whoever came. When a train stopped, they brought anything anybody had. They brought to the train. Just like if there would be a Jewish town and Jews from somewhere coming, saying they killed people in our town, so they would do the same thing.

So we finally reached that (?). That week of traveling by train I came to a conclusion, which I didn't tell nobody, even that guy. I said, Look. I am going into service in a home. And I have to find somebody that is really in need of some service. A sick woman, maybe an important woman, maybe the mayor of the little town. I don't know where we're going to stop. But I'm going to go into service, because when I said, "I wished to go to Germany," he said, "You're talking nonsense. The Germans are going back and you're going to go into Germany? You're going to wait another month till the war, who knows, maybe in a month we will be free," he said. Well, it took another winter and another summer, but we didn't know it. So I said, "I'm going to try homes, I'm going to go into domestic service, because I'll have a roof over my head. I have no family." I said, "I cannot stay with your family. Let's face it," I said. "You can't even give me a kiss. Your mother's there. What am I? I'm not your fiancée. Everybody knows that Tony brought me to his sister, to Sophie, and here you're paying attention to me." And he said, "Nobody will say anything. I'm the oldest of the sons. I can pick. Maybe your Tony's dead already. What does anybody know now?" he says.

(END TAPE TEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE TEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: ...the Red Cross, wherever we stopped, that they should get me a position as a domestic. But me myself, what I didn't tell Vladek, is I decided like this. It doesn't matter where that position lands me. Whether it will be in a prince's house or a cobbler, like it really happened, I am going to pretend I don't know how to, I barely know how to read, I barely know how to write, I'm dumb, I will never get dressed like I should, everything will be one this, one that way. I will pretend that I'm a schlimazel. Because I don't want...boys should look at me. And I don't want, I don't know where I'll land. Maybe they'll give me onto a farm somewhere. Maybe I'll land on a farm. And farm boys, they're not so particular. So if my hair is never combed, and I look like an idiot, and I wash once a month and stuff like that, that will be my...and even German soldiers wouldn't want to look at me. If they see me walking, they won't ask me for a Kennkarte. That I decided myself. I don't know where I got it. I was eighteen years old, or then I think I was nineteen already. Because in two years it was over and I was 21.

INT: This is because you didn't want to have happen what happened to you before with Vasily.

EVA: Yeah. I wouldn't have been raped. A Polack doesn't rape a Polish girl. But I could have gotten into some kind of a situation where they would say, "Who are you? What's wrong with you?" And then I thought to myself: I'm going to see that Vladek. I'll tell Vladek that whoever I work for, if it's in the same town, my woman that I work for

doesn't want nobody to come here. So I'm going to come and see you once a week. Nobody should come.

Anyway, we came there, and the head of the Red Cross was a woman, if there is a walking saint, she was one. Most probably she's dead, because at that time she was already about 50, I suppose. Her husband was a veterinary doctor. They had a beautiful house. It looked like a miniature White House, with a balcony on the top, with columns. Beautiful. And she employed, the Germans allowed her to employ, being that she worked for the Red Cross, she employed a woman, a cook, and a girl. No, she only had a cook. Nobody for cleaning. And I don't know, she just talked to everybody. That whole train of people that stopped there. No, some wagons went away to a next little town, and some were left before. In this town I think there were about just two wagons of us. Two cattle cars that landed in this little town.

INT: Could you spell that town, by the way?

EVA: Yeah, I have to write it down for you. You can write it down in English underneath and you will know how to pronounce it. (Says the town)

INT: Okay, go ahead, I'm sorry.

EVA: Where did I stop?

INT: This woman at the Red Cross.

EVA: Yeah. She just had a few words with everybody. And of course, me and Vladek, we were always standing one next to the other. And she asked everybody, the youngsters mostly. She was, she knew, she didn't want the Germans to take the young people, so she asked education, this, that. In front of Vladek I couldn't lie to her. I told her I have a year of high school, and Vladek told her he has seven grades finished. And did you read any books? I told her. And she said, very nice, very nice. And there were about, I would say, ten, fifteen young people. And she asked everybody their education level and this and that. And then she said, "Well, I have places for all of you, except," she says, "for this young man and this young lady." She pointed to Vladek and me. And his father said, "Well, wherever we're going, he's going to go with us." She says, "If you don't mind, I really can use somebody. We used to have a chauffeur, we don't have. And your son tells me he knows a little. My husband has a car. As a veterinary, the Germans give him an allocation of gasoline, and he's allowed to go to the farms to treat the animals." And she says, "We had nobody to help my husband even wash the car sometimes." She saw us together, she realized, she told me later, that we are together. And she says, "You just weren't the same as the other girls, and he wasn't the same as the other boys. You looked to me different. You didn't look a shiksa from a farm girl. You were too delicate looking," she says. And she says, "And to me, I badly need somebody who should help my daughter with the cleaning." They had a first and second story house, which was an exception in a little town like that. And she says, "I badly need somebody, so if you would be willing." I said, "Of course I would be willing."

And that's the way she located us all. Vladek slept over the garage, was where they had a chauffeur. There was a room in the kitchen, so she gave him a room in the kitchen, and fresh linen and a pillow and this and that. And me she gave a little room in the... she had a lot of empty rooms. His sister, the husband from Czechoslovakia ran away and she was living with them. I mean, everybody was moving somewhere around. And I slept in the big house, and I would help, like if the cook would have to make pirogen today, you know, so she would ask, "Could you, honey, help the cooks a little bit to make pirogen?" So I did everything necessary.

And then she said to me, right at the beginning, she said, "I took you two away because I didn't want you to go to work in a factory." Vlakek had one thing wrong with him. The Soviets -- he was in the Polish underground when the Soviets were there, in Ukraina. And he, I don't know what he did, but they caught him, a whole bunch of them, and they threw them into a prison without heat, and he was a week without heat, and all of his toes were frozen and they had to be cut off. So he had two feet without toes. But he walked all right, and he danced all right. But if someone really paid attention, you could see that he's not bending his shoes, you know? And she noticed that, and she asked him, and he told her. She says, "You two I have to find something better than a factory," she says.

Well, then I stayed there for about a week in her house, and she says, "I really can't keep you, honey, because we have allocation, one woman, and that's the cook. But I have in mind something for you." And she told me. "In our town there is a big landowner, a prince." He was a very famous one, Prince Lubomirsky. And she says, there was a little palace, and she says, "They need somebody to help in the kitchen, scrub vegetables, do this, do that, and they could get a lot of girls to scrub. The princess is a former actress, a famous one in Warsaw." And you know, she didn't say that she's not a nice woman. I found it out later when I worked in that princely house. But she says, "You know, actresses are a little temperamental. So she sometimes says something to her husband in front of the people that work for her." But she says, "I don't want, whatever happens in the palace, I don't want it to go outside. It happens, and it stays within the walls of the palace. And you are the only one I could think of that I could depend on." Because she asked me already a few times. "People are coming, I need some help, I need some help. So would you try it?" I said, "Definitely, yes." I thought to myself: working for a prince!

And she went and talked to that princess, and the beginning of next week I went to that princess. First time in my life, I thought I'm on a movie set in Hollywood. I saw white provincial furniture, which I haven't seen in my life. White furniture with gilded edges, and the crest by the bed. And two walls. Her wall, his wall, just closets. The bedroom was as big as I guess Rita's whole downstairs. The living room with the dining room, and two walls, his closets and her closets. And I have never seen such an enormous, the biggest bed I've seen in my life, and we had a nice bed. Granny had a nice bed for me and my mom. We slept both in the same bed, a twin bed, mahogany. But white furniture I haven't seen in my life, just in a film. And all kinds of crystal and porcelain, and a table full of makeup. And so many different things.

But I just cleaned it up, and she was such a bitch, that princess. (interviewer laughs) She would go over to the dining room and she would put on white gloves and wipe the floor under the table. And it's not perfect, and it's not perfect, every day. But I thought to myself: Heck with it. If she doesn't like me, she will tell the woman, and she'll get somebody else for her.

And I had to serve at the table, also. That woman, the Red Cross had, she was so, I can't describe how nice she was. I told her that I come not from a poor family. But of course, she didn't know I was Jewish. No matter how rich you were in a Polish family, the girl had to learn how to cook, and how to serve, and how to do, even if you had two maids, three maids. You had to know. Because they said it like this: If you grow up and marry rich and have a maid, if you don't know how to cook, you cannot tell that maid that her soup is no good. You have to be able to prove to her that it can be made better, that this is not the right way to mash the potatoes. So...but Jewish women, there were two categories of Jews in Poland: either very rich, that had help, or very poor. The very poor went to work and Mother cooked. And the girls, when they had to get married, the mother taught them to cook. I was a kid before the war, fifteen, and there were more women in the kitchen than one needed, and there were always maids, and then when the war came, there was nothing to cook, that's it. When I went to work for somebody, he gave me a piece of bread with a piece of pork, and I ate it, or whatever they gave me, I ate it. Who cooked? There was nothing to cook. So she figured that I would know how to serve. I don't come from a poor family, but in my grandma's house and in my mother's house, my mother always had a maid. But the maid didn't serve. And we were not poor, but we were not high class. I didn't know which side. And I never went to restaurants. I mean, later on I learned it. I saw that what that princess was telling me, in every restaurant, the waiter never came on my right side. He always came on my left side. When we did go to restaurants with Abe, I made him to go to the Russian Tea Room, to the best places in New York, because if he had money for the women, he had money to go with me any place. So it's always the waiter came onto my left side, and the way the princess told me, you don't serve the platter on the right side. You serve it on the left side.

Anyway, once I brought the food from the, it wasn't actually my fault. There was one cook, one chef and one cook. So the chef looked over what the cook prepared, and he made the platter ready. He adorned it. And when he gave it to you, you could take it to the table. I took it to the table, but he left the spoon there. And she got mad at me, not at the chef. He left a spoon that you make soup in the kitchen, and she had a table full of German high ranking generals and this and that, and they came, so the prince got up and took the spoon and took it to the kitchen. And she was so mad that I thought she's going to eat me up. And I said, "I didn't know that it's not supposed to be there. The chef gave me the platter and I brought it." But she didn't say, "You're dismissed." She kept me, because it was hard to get.

INT: Let me just ask you: while you were serving a table full of German officers, aren't you terrified?

EVA: No, I wasn't then terrified. Because if I worked in a house of a prince, then the prince must know me, or the family. No, no.

INT: So you felt safe.

EVA: Like I told you, I felt more secure when I was very far from home. I was only afraid that all those trains still kept coming, and they would always drop off another, like that, I was in the house with that...head of the Red Cross. I was in her house for a while. And she says, she used to say, "We had another train today. I couldn't take two cars. I just took one car of people, because until I allocate those," she says, "we are a small town, and I don't know where to put the people. After all, they have to work, they have to eat something. The Red Cross has limited supplies." And she said, "Work, where do they find work?" So I only prayed that somebody from Wlodzimierz shouldn't come, which it happened later. And they didn't recognize me. So somebody was watching over me.

So finally came Sunday. And she said, that I couldn't have the Sunday off. I said, "Could I please just go to church?" Because this was my, first of all, I wanted to go and pray. Second, I rest for an hour or two. Sometimes I would just, I would sit in the back of the church and fall asleep. Because at 4:00 in the morning, I had to be up and prepare the vegetables and help in the kitchen. And at night, who knows when I went to sleep? Wash those big pots and everything, me and another girl. There were two of us.

And so I went to that, I worked there for a month, and she paid me every week, that princess, and I had a few marks already in my pocket. And I went. Finally she gave me a few hours off, a Sunday, and I came, where did I come, I came to that woman, the head of the Red Cross. And I started to cry. And she says, "Why are you crying?" I said, "Because she doesn't let me go to church." "Oh," she says, "That's really not nice of her." She was a **very** religious woman. **Very** religious. Every day she would get up at the crack of dawn. It wasn't far. Wherever you went in that little town, it was two blocks. She went to church every day in the morning. And she said, "That's really not nice." And I said, "Whatever the cook doesn't do good, the chef gives me the platter, I carry. And she complains that I don't serve it good, and the cleaning is no good, and I don't know," I said. "If she doesn't give me even two hours off on Sunday morning to go to church, I cannot live without the church." And she says, "Okay, honey. I'll find another place for you, and I'll find somebody for her when somebody new comes into town." But she says, "Please promise me that you will never repeat it to nobody," and I never did tell it to nobody. So she said, "You come back to us when I find somebody." And next week somebody came, a train came again, left a couple of those cars, and she found another girl for the princess, and I stayed with her again, and she said, "I have another place for you, and again I have a problem. It's a problem place." I said, "What is the problem?" She said, "The problem is this. There is a father and a mother. A couple, he is our shoemaker. He actually, he started to put soles on shoes in the war, but before the war he only made shoes for me, for my husband. The intelligentsia of that city had hand-made shoes by him. He was brilliant. He would make a shoe, it would look like an Italian shoe made by hand." And she showed me. And she says, "She needs eye surgery, and from

what I know, she will lose that eye. She always had someone help her clean the house, because they could afford it. They have a nice house, four rooms, very elegant." And she says, "But now that she's sick, the government, I'm sure, will allow me to give her somebody, because she will lose that eye." She says, "I can promise you, she's going for an operation all the way to Cracow, which is a big city." But I said, "So what's the problem?" She says, they had no children. So they, the husband, had a sister. I don't remember how she told it to me. Whether the sister had an illegitimate baby, or whether she died and left a child, a boy. They took the boy and they brought him up. She says, "If you know what a Hollywood actor looks like, that's that boy," she says. "He's somewhere between 25 and 30. And as many girls as I have sent there, he took them to bed." And she says, "Some of them came crying to me, and I found other places for them." But she says, "Honey, they were just different than you, and you are different, and I don't want the same thing happening to you." And I said to her, "Don't worry. It's not going to happen to me. Because I'm not going to look the way you see me now."

INT: And that was your plan.

EVA: I told her. She said, "It's not a bad idea, but I don't know. His aunt, he calls her aunt and uncle, the people, they adore him. He's their child. Whatever they have will be left to him, and she is so neat, so clean, that you walk in this house and it smells with cleanliness." I said, "I'll see to it that my work is good. Cooking I can't. I never learned." I said, "I went to school." I told her the truth. Not who I am, but I said, "Before the war, I was in school. In the war, there was nothing to cook. They took everything away, the Russians, from us." And she says, "I understand it." I told everybody the truth, that my father was a bookkeeper. I said there was nothing to cook anymore. My mother had not much to cook. So she got me into this house.

And the woman says, "How much would you like -- payment?" I said, "I don't want any payment from you. I just want a place to sleep and some clothes." She was, I was then a size six, and she was about a 12, but I didn't care. I said, "Even clothes from you, it doesn't matter. And when winter comes," I said, "maybe you have a pair of old shoes." She says, "That's no problem. My husband has plenty of shoes that people didn't pick up, and shoes you will never lack," she says. "You won't have to wear old torn shoes. We have plenty of shoes." But I said, "A pair of stockings or something. And I would like," I said, "to be able to go to church on Sunday. Have at least a half a day off." She says, "If you don't go, I'm going to chase you there," she says, "because we go to church unless I'm sick. The only thing is," she says, "we always go to the 11:00 mass, and I would like you to go earlier, so that I started cooking, you watch it when we come back from church we have something to eat. Sleep, I cannot give you a room." She says, "We have two bedrooms and a dining room and a kitchen, so my son has one bedroom, we have the other. In the dining room, there's no place." But every Polish family had a bench which was about as wide as this thing, a wooden bench. And my grandma had it, my mother had it, everybody had a wooden bench. My grandma and my mother had two -- one was milchig, one was fleishig. But the Polish people had one bench. That was her bench to make pastry, that was a bench to put the pots on. And at night I cleaned it off, and she gave me there some stuff to put on it. But believe me, I was so tired, I didn't care. I

could have slept on a rock. She gave me a pillow, she gave me a blanket, and I slept. Of course, I had to wait, I was bone tired, till everybody finishes reading the papers and this and that. The son's name was Edward. They called him Edek. And he was gorgeous. I think he was the most handsome man I've seen in my life. Gorgeous. Built beautiful and tall like he should be. Everything about him was perfect.

And so she did. She gave me a skirt and she says, "Well, you'll have to make two seams." She had a sewing machine. I said, "I don't know how to sew," because I figured, I knew how to sew on a machine. Granny had a machine. But I figured, first of all, she'll tell me to do the reparations. I have enough work as it is. Every night, if it was raining, I had three pair of boots to shine. And I couldn't go to sleep till Edek came. He sometimes came, I don't know where he was. Maybe with a girl. He would come home 12:00 at night. "Could you warm up something, whatever it is Aunt left me?" I would warm up it. Then I would clean up after him. He would go to sleep, and clean boots that were up till here, it was winter, and in mud, and they had to shine in the morning. But one thing I knew how to. My father being a former military man, I knew how to clean a shoe. So I was bone tired, and I figure I still have to do the alterations, maybe of something she has. So I said, "It's okay, I'll do it by hand." But I didn't do the skirt by hand. I just took a piece of string somehow, and I hitched the skirt up and tied the string around (laughs) -- one side was like this, one side was like that, and then she didn't say nothing.

But after a while, she comes over, I was there a couple of weeks. She comes over to me, she says, she read for the operation. And the way I looked, she gave me a pair of stockings, it was fall already, cold. The stockings used to have a seam, silk stockings. They were torn. She said, "If you fix it, it's all right." I never fixed the stockings. The seam was never straight. It was always... (laughs)

INT: You did that on purpose.

EVA: Yeah. And Edek never touched me. And she said to me, "Could you maybe read that what it says on top of that article here?" She came back from the operation already, and she came with a glass eye, and this eye was completely covered, and she had a dark lens. And I said, I started to read, it took me about five minutes, and she says, "That's how you read?" And I said, "Well, I never learned how to read good. I don't know, I wasn't good in school." And she believed me. (laughs)

And she says, then after about a couple of months, she says, "If you wouldn't look like such a schlemiel, if you could wear those clothes looking decent on you, I would have bought a piece of material and maybe you would have made yourself a dress or a skirt, I would have helped you, for Christmas, and I would have given you a pair of shoes with a heel. But the way you look," she says. "Look how you wear the stockings! Look how you look." And I said, "I'm going to try." Well, I never did try. The only time I did fix this thing, is Sunday afternoon she gave me off after lunch, so I would go to Vladek's family. It would be a happy house there. His nieces, he had no, one sister married. Nieces and his younger brothers, they would always play a record, we would dance. So on the way I would fix the stockings and fix that skirt somehow a little bit. So I looked a

little presentable. And combed my hair. But when I went back home, the hair was never, and I had long hair. So I had two braids, so one would be smaller, one would be thicker, one would be this, one would be that. And she said, "I know what I'll do. I'll get you for Christmas something to cover your head, because it's never in order." (laughs) And she got me a silk scarf. That's the scarf I sold when I was with Mr. Katz, and they arrested me, the Russians, and the Russian woman gave, I was so loathe to sell it. It's such a thing to me, that it's from the war, you know? (laughs) I earned it! And a silk scarf. It was a beautiful, beautiful scarf, a silk scarf. She says, "So you can go to church, cover your head on the holidays." Because she says, "On Christmas you'll go with us together for the 11:00 mass." So that's the way I lived through in that house.

INT: How long were you there?

EVA: I was freed there. I was...

INT: Liberated there?

EVA: Liberated. Not completely there. What happened is...I don't know where she went. She went I think, she would go every few months for a checkup with that eye. Most probably there was a tumor they took out, and she would go to Cracow, like going there a day, going back a day, staying there two days. It would take a few days, and I would be home alone with Edek. I don't know what happened. He never came home early, and one evening he came home early. Maybe the date didn't go right, maybe whatever, I don't know. And I washed myself, and I had on already my bra. I made my, she gave me a piece of linen, a small piece of new linen, and I made my own bra. And because I just, I mean, so young, I couldn't walk without a bra, you know. These days kids walk without bras.

And it was very muddy, and he used to take his shoes. He had shoes and overshoes. And it was muddy, and he took, there was a porch, a closed-in porch, going on top of the stairs into this porch. We got into the porch. He took his overshoes off and took his shoes off, too, and left them there, and came into the kitchen, and I didn't hear him. He came in so quietly I didn't hear him. It was about already 11:00 at night, but I didn't expect him yet. And I finished washing, and I was in my panties and in my bra. And all of a sudden, he's there. I mean, I didn't have a housecoat to cover myself, and I grabbed my skirt and put it in front of me. He said, "You don't look half as bad without your clothes," he says. (laughter) "If you would only look like that with your clothes." And I most probably got red in the face and stuff like that.

(END TAPE TEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: That's all that happened. And I had this bench made up already, and he says, "So what about my shoes?" I said, "Don't worry, they'll be polished." So I got up next morning at 4:00 in the morning. It took me always an hour, a pair of shoes. First of all,

they were wet, so you had to wipe it off. You can't use water on leather, because it will break. And it wasn't like I do the job today, and I'm gone tomorrow. I'm steady here, so I have to do it good. So I used to get up at 5:00, so I got up at 4:00 and did his shoes. But that was the only time. And I thought to myself, after that happened, I thought to myself: Who knows what the hell? She goes from time to time away, what might happen next time? What if he starts bothering me? So I went again to that, and that was already...the winter of '44, '45.

There I am, she came back. And of course, you had to stand in line. Even if it was rationed, but even for the rations, you had to stand in line. So she says, "Well, today is the day they will be giving potatoes, so go stand in line there." All the stores were, there was a little square. The square was as big as, G-d. Like your and Rita's house put together. Maybe three houses. That was the square, and a big city hall with a big going up, a tower. And from that tower, on that tower, on the top there, looked like a church steeple, only without a cross, and it wasn't so pointy. But just a tower, an open tower on the top, about two, three stories high. Because the city hall was just on the bottom. And there was a big amplifier. You were not allowed to have a radio at home. But through the war, through the wall I heard Edek listen in his room to, because the BBC had a special signal. When he listened to the London broadcast, before they started the broadcast in Polish, at 9:00, from 9:00 to 10:00 every evening, they would go like this: Boom, boom, boom. Boom, boom, boom, for about a minute maybe. Boom, boom, boom. When I heard the boom, boom, boom, I didn't hear what they talked, but I knew that he had a shortwave radio there.

So what the Germans did, you heard, sometimes they played music, but the last six months when I was there, they didn't play music, because their heads were already mixed up. They were going back very fast. Here I am, one day she sent me, it was spring. It was still cold. It must have been like March. And I was wearing her coat, and I'm standing there in line, for I think that day they were giving beans or something. And all of a sudden, it's 12:00, and I was always listening. Up till now always, 12:00 the news was beamed all over, whoever wanted to hear it. That they were retreating, but it was still Russia. I said to myself, "What good is it to me if he's still in Russia?" All of a sudden, we didn't hear any news, but every time they retreated, like they left a town, they said that the German military decided, they planned it, and they finally left. It was a planned leaving. It wasn't like they had to leave the town. They left the town, and they retreated. It was made to plan. I mean, it was done by planning it like that. And I stand there. It was raining, miserable. And here he says that today the German forces, as planned, left Tarnopol. And that was one of the big cities in my part, the northern part. It was going from my city to down there about, I would say, 150, 200 kilometers. It was parallel to my city. I thought to myself: the whole, half of the east of Poland is already free, and I'm here? And that was when I started to think: here I'm afraid that if Edek catches me sometimes, who knows when she will go away again. And here Tarnopol is free already. So Wlodzimierz must be free, because when a front goes, that's the way they went. The Russian army in the north and the Polish army in the south, and they were pushing Hitler back. Only when they got closer to Warsaw, the Polish army said to the Russians, what was his name, that Polish, Anders. Anders said to Stalin, "Look, you

got to put me in the middle. We have to free Warsaw. It's our capital." So Stalin said, "All right." So they let the Polacks go in the middle.

So I thought to myself: I got to go away from this place. But what am I going to do? And the Germans started to make raids nights, catching girls. Young girls. And to Germany, to Germany for work. For work, we need hospital workers, workers in the hospitals, so many soldiers are maimed and whatever. And the women are alone. So they started to make raids at night. And I thought, so who knows? Maybe they will come and take me from here. I just decided, I don't know, the hand of Providence was guiding me.

One Sunday afternoon instead of going to Vladek, I would go from time to time to see her, because I adored her, that doctor's wife. I went to her and I said, she always greeted me, I kissed her. I said, "Do you have any time, or are you busy?" She says, "Honey, I always have time for you." I said, "Could I talk privately to you?" I don't know what made me do it. She said, "Come, my daughter and son-in-law went away." They had a small bedroom. "Come into my daughter's bedroom, and I'll close the door, nobody will hear, it's at the end of the house." She closed the door. And I said, "I'm Jewish. And I'm afraid to stay with," -- their name was Mr. and Mrs. Chmiel -- I said, "I'm afraid to stay with them, because the Germans are looking for girls specifically, and if they take me to Germany, I have lived so far, I would like to live through the war." She broke out into such a crying spell. She says, "My dear child. Why didn't you tell me? I told you I noticed that you are different. You are too delicate to go to a factory. If you would have told me that, you would have been with, I have four Jewish girls in a nunnery, from the beginning of the war, their parents entrusted me the children. You didn't have to work." I said, "Well, they were maybe younger. And now that, as I'm sure you know, the east side, my town is already free," I said. "I don't know what to do," I said. "Should I maybe voluntarily go to Germany? Will that save me?" She says, "You're not going anywhere. I have a place for you. And he is entitled to have somebody. He had a maid and she got sick." The fellow who, in Poland, in a big church there was a choir. This little church, and in the war they had no choir. Just the man who plays the organ, the organist, sang, had a beautiful voice. He would sing, and the congregation would sing after him, you know how it goes in a church. And he would play the organ. And he had a beautiful little house next to the church. There was a bigger house where the priests lived, and a smaller house, he and his wife, and they were a couple that waited about fifteen years when they were married, or something, and finally she got pregnant and had a boy. And it was heaven on earth to them. And her maid got sick. She always had a maid. She grew up with them. And I said, "But now," I said, "you know I don't know how to cook. That's why I have some schooling, because I'm Jewish." And I said, "I don't know how to cook. I learned a little bit with Mrs. Chmiel. But I cannot," and I told her that, "I think Edek is beginning to pay attention to me, and I don't want it to go, something should happen." She says, "No, no, honey, I wouldn't allow it." (pause)

By that time, when night came, we could hear distant rumbling already of the very heavy Katyushas that the Russians had. They could shoot 100 kilometers from you and you would already hear -- the earth would shake a little bit. So we realized that the front is

going very fast. And she said to me, "Honey, I wouldn't let you go anywhere, because the front is right behind us in (?)." That was the big city closest to Przemysl. Przemysl was about the size of Wlodzimierz, maybe a little bigger, even. Maybe 50,000, 60,000 people. And she said, "You're going to work in his home. And I'm going to talk to her. I'm going to tell her that if she can, she should do the cooking herself. You will wash the dishes, you will peel the potatoes, but most important, she needs somebody should take care of the baby when she takes, she's a very delicate woman. She nearly died when she gave birth to that baby, because she's already not a youngster. And you should take the baby out in the carriage every day, in the morning, or in the afternoon." I said, "Fine." "Can you diaper a baby?" I said, "Yes. I diapered my cousins. In the war I didn't go to school, I diapered my cousins. We had twins in the family."

And she said to me, "Is there anything I can do for you?" I said, "Yes. But it's impossible. I would like to be converted. But it makes no sense. The war is still on." She said, "Yes, I can do it for you." I said, "How are you going to do it? My belief has brought me so far. And if I do it now," I said, "People will think I did it because I wanted to save my life. Well, I'm not doing it, because I'm nearly saved." But I said, "I'll wait till the war is over." She said, "But honey, if you really believe that much in Christianity, I don't want you to be without the blessing of the Lord." She said, "I will talk to the priest and hear what he has to say."

The head, what do you call the head? There are a few priests, and one is called the...

INT: Bishop?

EVA: Not the bishop, no, no, no. Just there could be three priests in a church, but one is the eldest of them. He has the say over them. Oh, I forgot the word. Anyway, she says, "I'll talk to him." He was an elderly man, close to 80 years old, but a very sweet and gentle and very smart man. She says, "I'll talk to him. We know each other for years and years. He came as a young priest into that parish." And I said, "All right." She says, "Come next Sunday, and I'll have an answer for you."

Next Sunday I came, and she says, "Do you think next Sunday, I have something in mind. Would you be able to stay without food? I know," she says, "you're not sinning." I said, "I'm sinning plenty." But she says, "It doesn't matter. You don't have to go to confession, because you're not a Christian yet. But could you stay without food next Sunday?" I said, "I could." So she says, "From midnight Saturday night, don't eat nothing. Make up an excuse." I said, "Nobody's going to ask me. They don't watch me, whether I eat or I don't." "And come in the afternoon."

I came and she says the, in Polish his name was kanonik. But how do you...

INT: The canon?

EVA: The canon. The canon. She says, "The canon, we put our heads together and he said to me, 'I know you.' Like he said to her, "I know you. You are a very religious

woman. If a woman could be a priest, you could be one," he said. "I'm giving you special rights. You can baptize her. Just you need a witness." So I said, "Where are we going to get a witness?" She says, "My daughter knows the story. I told her." She was a very lovely girl, a beautiful girl. She said, "Not even her husband knows it. She promised me. Her husband goes away somewhere in the afternoon, my husband sleeps, my son is working." So she says, "In her bedroom we will do it." And that day she baptized me.

And she cried, and I cried, and...I started to work for that couple.

INT: How did you feel when you changed your religion? How did you feel?

EVA: I felt very good. I felt very peaceful. She said to me, "Honey, you are without sin now like a child that was just born." And I felt peaceful, and I said, "Somehow I feel I'm going to live through the war." She said, "Yes, you will, honey. Yes, you will."

And she asked me a few questions. I told her what happened, certain things, to me. She says, "G-d has watched over you up till now, and your prayers were answered, so you will be alive," she says. "Hitler will leave, and you will be alive." And I worked for them. (pause) And I said, "How are we going to tell that lady that I'm leaving?" She says, "Tell that lady that you're working for, Mrs. Chmiel, that you came to see me, you visit me sometimes, and I would like to see her." And I told her. And she was very, very respected in that town. Very. They adored her, everybody. She was like, more respected than the mayor's wife. So she went there, that woman. And she spent there the whole afternoon. I don't know how she told her or what she told her, but she came back and she says, "So you are going to leave us?" I said, "I'm sorry, but I have to, because I'm scared. I don't want to lose my life now at the end, and we hear already the canons shooting far off." And she said, "You know what I'll tell you? I will be truthful with you. I don't believe that you are Jewish." I said, "Just who do you think I am?" "I think you are Ukrainian, but you know that if you tell us and the Polish people would stone you alive." I said, "No, I'm not. One thing I wouldn't want to be is Ukrainian." I said, "I never did like them."

And I said, "How can you say that I'm Ukrainian, when you know that family I go to visit every Sunday? They have three sons, they know me from back where I come from. Vladek, his family. I can bring him here if you want to, and he will tell you that I'm Polish." "Well, if you put it this way, then I'll believe you." I said, "I'll come to visit you after the war, and you will see me baptized in a church."

Anyway, that was spring already, nice spring. Must have been April, May. And the summer came, and in the middle of summer there is the Feast of St. Mary the patron of...growing things. They call it the Feast of the Greenery. Like they have St. Mary's Feast of the Harvest. But that was the feast of the beginning of the things that grow, the orchards, the fields, they grow. And we were in church, but then I had no trouble. I could go to church the whole day on Sunday, because him working in a church, so they were religious. And the maid came back. But I don't know whether that woman talked to

his wife or something, that...I forgot her name. How could I forget her name? It's unbelievable. But she said, "Would you stay on? She's doing the cooking and the cleaning, but could you just watch the baby?" I said, "Fine." And I stayed on. I had very little to do. She would play with the baby, and the father would play with the baby, but then I would take the baby. The mother would give it a bath, I would help her, wipe the baby. Dry it, hand her the powder, this, that. I had a very easy job and I got paid, and I didn't have to cook. Sometimes I asked the...maid, I said, "Can I help you with some cleaning?" "No, no, no," she was fiercely, she was afraid that I shouldn't maybe take her position later or something. She wouldn't let me do anything.

So I stayed with them, and then we were in church. The church was packed. And I was, like always, at the back of the church. No, not at the back. I didn't go to the back anymore. I was like sitting in the middle of the church. And...the minister started the...it's not a minister, it's a father. Wait a minute, a minister is not a Catholic.

INT: Yeah, it's Protestant. Priest.

EVA: The priest starts the homily, and we sit there listening to him, and all of a sudden, I hear a commotion at the back of the church. And the priest says, "Please be quiet." But the commotion gets louder, and people are screaming, "Come out! Come out!" I ran into the side, that was a very big beautiful, I think it was the most beautiful church I've ever seen. A beautiful church inside. And I run to the, I thought that somebody is going to kill the Polish people again. I didn't know **what** to think, because who would disrupt a...And I ran out through the side, and when you got out through the side you could see about half a block between houses a little narrow street. You could see the square. And the square is full of people. And all of a sudden the people get their hands up and start clapping. And everybody looks up and I look up and on top of that tower, where the city hall is, they're taking down the German flag, and they're tearing it into pieces, and the Polish flag is coming up. And I started running, and I pushed people left and right, and I thought to myself: where is anybody? How did we get liberated? There is nothing, nobody. And I pushed myself. Finally, when I came close to the middle of the square, and I mean, the whole town, 5,000 people, must have been in that little square. Because when I came about like from here to the wall, there was still people. I saw three tanks, and on the top of the tanks were Russian soldiers. I couldn't go any further. I was like somebody who's going to faint. I just dropped down to my knees and bowed down and started to thank G-d, and cried. And cried, I was down there, and people asked me, "Do you feel bad, did you get hurt?" I said, "No, no, no, I am all right. I am very well." And I thought to myself: but you see, it was, I knew it wouldn't be good if I go over to those Russian soldiers and start talking Russian to them, and tell them that I'm Jewish, and I'm glad, because I thought to myself: who the hell knows who it could be? It could be a Ukrainian. No, I'd better keep quiet till I get home.

And that was the day I was liberated.

INT: What day was that, do you remember the date?

EVA: That was a Sunday. All I remember. It wasn't the middle of the summer yet, because that feast is when the things begin to grow.

INT: So it was in May, 1945.

EVA: It could have been June, because the harvest usually was in August, so that could have been June, the end of June or something like that. And I don't remember. That feast is not celebrated here in America. The Catholics here don't do it. The Polacks do in New Jersey. But the Catholics, the Italians, don't celebrate that feast.

And in that house where I was with that Edek, where I worked before, when I got, I saw the Russian tanks. I waited till night. I didn't want to leave those people in the lurch. I knew one thing: that I have to go east, whether I go by foot for a month or two. But I have to get east. I had hope maybe somebody of the three kids of my Aunt Leah survived. It didn't matter to me that I feel not Jewish, but I mean, it's my family. Children. Maybe somebody was left. And my Polish friends, I wanted to see who was left. But at night when the maid went to sleep, and they were sitting, I don't remember, reading, both of them, I think, in their living room. And I asked them if I could talk to them. And I told them. "I'm not going to leave you till you find somebody, but I come from A Jewish family." And I told them where I'm from, and so forth and so forth. And they were **very** surprised. And she said, "Of course, honey, we understand." And I stayed with them for two weeks, or three, I don't remember if she found somebody.

And one of those Sundays during those two, three weeks, I went back to that Mrs. Chmiel with that son, Edek. And I don't know what happened. I said to her...But that was already after the, yeah, that was when I was liberated already. And I said to her, "You remember when you asked me to read the paper?" No, I came in, and she didn't see me since I started to work for the other people. I didn't go there. Because I started to dress like a human being. My skirt was straight, my stockings were straight. And I came there after I was liberated, to her, and I said, "I quit my job, and I'm going home. So now maybe you will believe me, that I'm Jewish. And I pretended that I don't know how to read. I read very well, and I write very well." And at that moment, that son of hers comes in. I don't know where he was. And she said to him -- she wasn't a very educated woman. Not a stupid woman, but she wasn't very sophisticated. And she said, "Would you believe it, that Eva knows how to read and write?" Yeah. I forgot to tell you something. It was kind of funny. I told you I was standing in line for something and I heard that Tarnopol was liberated, and I just felt like I could fly there. And I came home. I was so excited, that I came into the house, and I took off my coat, left it on the porch, because it was raining, and I came into the kitchen, and her and her husband were sitting there, and starting to eat lunch. And I said, "You know what I heard over the radio on the square?" "What did you hear?" I said, "That Tarnopol was liberated." And in that moment, her son comes in. He knew it's lunch time. And she says, "Edek, did you hear Tarnopol was liberated?" He said, "Who told you?" "Eva told us. She just came back from the city." "Oh, for crying out loud. The girl doesn't know how to sign her name, can barely read, and you believe her, she knows what she's talking about, that Tarnopol was liberated? That's not far from us," he said. But he didn't hear it yet. But he came in,

and I told her that I'm going home. I said, "Now you can tell everybody. I'm not afraid anymore." And she said, "Well, my husband knew from the beginning." I said, "I know, you told me. But you have neighbors," and she had a niece living not far from her. And I said, "I'm going home." And he came in, and she said, "Do you believe that Eva knows how to read and write?" "You're kidding," he said. And I picked up the paper and I started to read, and he said, "G-d damn it. And look at you," he says. I said, "What are you looking at? I'm still wearing your aunt's skirt." And I said it to him, there's a saying in Polish, you know, like they say, "You ain't seen nothing yet." I said, "Wait a year. I'll come and visit you."

And I did come there. I came there, I couldn't make it in '46 because I was, '46 was the time when I...'46 winter when I came from Ukraina to Poland, till I got settled in Poland. It took up till I think it was either summer, no '47, most probably. I wanted to go to that church. That was my first church that I attended regularly, that I loved. And I loved that woman from the Red Cross. And I wanted to be baptized there, with that woman present. And I came. And she said to me, that Edek's aunt, she says, "Well, will you stay with us when you come?" I said, "Well, maybe they'll build a hotel." She says, "No, they'll never build a hotel." I said, "I'll stay with you. I'll sleep on the same bench."

And I came, I stayed with them for a few days, and I was baptized. Really, by a church. By a priest. The priest, that canon was very old already, but a young priest. His name I remember. You see, what's important you remember. Priest Franciszek Jara.

INT: He was the one that baptized you?

EVA: It was, I think it was on the Feast of St. Paul and Peter or something. They have so many feasts in Poland it's unbelievable. Every two weeks there could be a holiday in Poland.

(END TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE TWO)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 22, 1996. We left you last time at liberation, and I wonder if you could just think back and tell me, if you can remember, what you were feeling? How did you feel in those days after liberation?

EVA: Disbelief. Disbelief. Well, I suppose after a little while, I don't know whether it's days, or a week or two, but the moment when I saw that Polish flag go up and the German flag come down, and the Russians, there were three tanks, I think. And Russian soldiers coming out. I didn't believe it. I saw it and I didn't believe it, that I lived through Hitler. I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't.

INT: And what did you think about what you were going to do from then on?

EVA: Try to get home and see if somebody's alive.

INT: So tell me what happened.

EVA: Well, I was working for that, the one who played the organ in the church. I told them, and I waited for two weeks. They got somebody. And then they gave me some money that they owed me. I mean, you could buy something. There was always a market, you could buy used shoes, used dresses. But I wanted to use the money to get back northeast to where I come from. But there was no railroad.

INT: Did you think anyone was still alive?

EVA: I was hoping that one of my, nobody ever saw the oldest boy of my Aunt Leah's being killed. The two youngest ones, I heard. The middle one, everybody saw him. The small one, they said that he, a cousin took him into the ghetto, and most probably in the ghetto he got killed. But the oldest one, nobody saw die. And I hoped, he was fifteen, maybe he ran into a forest. Maybe he met some...stranger things have happened.

INT: So you wanted to go back and find him.

EVA: It took me, and then you, and to simply, there were no trains unless you were a high official for private people. Everything was taken over by the...it's...what do they call it? War time. War was raging. 25, 30 kilometers, there was, in front of us there was a bigger town than the one I was in. And there were...blasting it away. They blasted half of it away for about a week, I think. And then they stopped at Cracow. The big battle was raging at Warsaw. All of those things were, from the town where I come from, Warsaw must have been, I have no idea, but at least 500, 600 kilometers.

INT: So just because you were liberated didn't mean the war was over. It was still going on, as they were moving...

EVA: No. I was liberated in fall, '44. The war finished when I was already back with my neighbors in my home town in '45. I mean, Hitler was fighting to the last. The Germans were fighting to the last pile of rubble in Berlin.

INT: So what happened when you went back?

EVA: I tried. It took me...it took me, I wanted to go, I could have made a diagonal trek, with a train, or by foot and train or what not, and got sooner to my town. But I wanted to go to that big city where I put my mother in the hospital. I knew that she's not alive. I read the card, the post card. But I thought to myself: maybe there are some graves, maybe what, maybe how. I just have to get there. And I came, it took me about a week to get to that town. And then by asking around and asking around, I asked people about that hospital. I forgot now, but I remembered those days the hospital. It was a sanitarium. And they told me, so I walked. It was the fourth large city in Poland.

INT: Lodz, wasn't it?

EVA: Large. Large. No, the first was Warsaw, then Cracow, then Lodz, and then Lwow.

INT: Oh, you were going to Lwow. She was in Lwow.

EVA: Yeah. And that was southeast. And I was kind of between the north and the south, middle east, like straight. So I went there, and then I asked around if they know somebody from my town. And they told me that they know somebody, and I found Tony's sister. Tony, the one that took me out of my city. And her husband, I don't know where he was, but she was alone. And she was, I don't know, selling, making lemonade. And the girl, she would go buy lemonade if mother didn't make, and sell, and that's the way they lived. I stayed for a night or two with her and I realized that I don't...I told her then who I am. And she says she could -- well, she was a very plain, not too smart woman. She said, "You are this rich woman's granddaughter?" I said, "Yes." And I said, "Well, I'll tell you what, if I find Tony alive, I'll be your sister-in-law, because I promised him I'll marry him, and I will." "Oh, brother, he would be the lucky one, get a rich wife."

Anyway...

INT: It didn't bother her that you were Jewish?

EVA: No! Our family was different. Nobody looked like the Jews that you see here, and like when you watched Bransk (a TV program on a shtetl in Bransk, Poland). Everybody spoke a perfect Polish, like that guy who spoke good English and good Polish, and nobody looked typically Jewish, except maybe Grandfather, because...but you see, if you came to the village, a lot of old Ukrainian men wore beards. So he wasn't the only one with a beard.

INT: But she didn't have a hatred of Jews necessarily?

EVA: I never asked her. No, I never heard her to say anything against Jews. But she wasn't one of those that would discuss politics. She didn't know whether you eat it or talk about it. She was a very plain, simple character. A real simpleton.

Well, I stayed for a few days with her. She wanted me to stay there. We will maybe get, "Well, you know how to run a business." I said, "I don't know anything. I went to school. I don't know how to run a business. And I wouldn't run a business in the market."

So I went to that hospital. It took me a half a day's walking, from one end of the city to the other. It's a sprawling city. Not too many, two, three story buildings, but sprawled all over. And I didn't even get to the hospital. There was a big gate, gates opened up. Being that it was a hospital for disturbed people there was a very big fence around it, and there were gates. The gates were open, and there was this old man. And I, something told me, and I asked him, "What happened to the Jewish people that were here?" I told him that

about two, three years ago I brought my mother here. I received a card that she died. "What happened?" So he told me. I said, "Do you know where they buried the people?" He said, "Honey, it's somewhere near a forest around here, and they were close to about 500 Jewish sick people. They poisoned all and buried them in one day, in one grave." In a way, I was relieved that they didn't shoot her, because when they shot people, then one was half dead and one was dead. At least when they poisoned them, she was dead. She didn't feel nothing. She was dead when they buried her. And he said, "You would have to turn the whole grave bones over and find your mother." He said, "It's a losing thing." But I promised myself that if I would stay in Poland, who knows what, nobody knew what tomorrow will bring. So if I ever, if I stay here and I don't go to America, or to Argentina, and if I ever get rich, I would still like to exhume whatever. Maybe there would be other people. Maybe we could get together and exhume the bodies and with dental records or something, maybe. Fine, then if they couldn't, it was only about a matter of two years, maybe. I don't know. But nothing happened to it. I couldn't even, I promised myself that if ever Stalin goes, and maybe in Russia something will happen, that communism will disappear, that at least I know where Grandma is buried, and I know where Leah is buried, and the kid, and that I could at least take them and put them somewhere. I didn't care which cemetery. But not where the cows walk around on graves. But nothing could be done.

Then from that town, from Lwow I tried by train. I spoke to some people and they told me, "You cannot make a straight line to your [town], because there is no train." You would have to go either half way west, or halfway east, and then back to your town. So I decided to go east, because the more east you went, the quieter it was. The more further away from the ravaged places you went. And I, that's how I got to our capital of our state, to Luck, and that's on the way there, I met somebody, he wanted to marry my mother. Mr. Katz.

INT: Mr. Katz. You told me about that story.

EVA: Is it on tape? So that's where I met Mr. Katz. We got to Luck, and I stayed there. The girl that I met, the old maid from the other, and I met Fela there. Fela didn't know me. She didn't remember me. But the other girl, "Stay with me. Stay with me. We're the only two that we know each other." I thought to myself: what the heck am I going to do with her? According to me, she was older than my **mother**. She was at least 45. My mother, if she would have been alive wouldn't have been even yet, I don't know. Mother had me when she was nineteen, I think, or twenty. And I was twenty. So she was older than my mother. And what am I, I had nothing in common with her.

So I went, that Mr. Katz and some others, they hired a couple of Russian soldiers with machine guns. Because you had to go, the road from Luck, you had to go to Kowel. Kowel was the, like you could say the next big city. My city, Wlodzimierz, had about 40,000. Kowel had about, I would say, 50,000 people. Had more schools, more...like a two year college, stuff like that. In our town there wasn't anything like that. So you had to go to Kowel, and then from Kowel, anyway, whatever it is. All those roads that were traveled, you didn't see any army. All the army was at the front, fighting. And the

railroads were full of soldiers. But on roads you didn't see any soldiers. So you simply had to, we traveled a whole day and we got to Kowel. And then we had to sleep over in Kowel. I don't even remember where, but that Mr. Katz must have found some Jews, so we slept. And I mean, the way I remember I slept, when I took my mother to the hospital. Just like on the cement floor near the station, on the sidewalk. Nothing hurt me the next day. I slept. That's it.

So next day we made it from Kowel to us was about...an hour and something by train. It would have been, I suppose, about 60, 70 kilometers from us to Kowel. Next day we got from Kowel to Wlodzimierz. I came in, it was afternoon. And I didn't see anyone I knew, but I...I asked if there are any Polish people that lived outside. I spoke Polish, I spoke Ukrainian. I started to ask about, Mr. Katz said, "You want to stay with me?" I said, "No." I thought to myself: he was a man maybe in his forties, and I was a young girl. Who needs it? And I said, "No, I got to go. I have to find some of my neighbors." I thought Jeanie's there, I thought Irene, maybe, is there. Well, they told me that some Polish people from Granny's village are near the, all the Polish people are congregated near the army barracks. Nobody lives away from army barracks, whether Jewish or what. And I went to the army barracks, and there I found Jeanine. Jeanine, the one that was our neighbor, too. But she didn't go to school like me and Jeanie to the city. And I stayed with them over winter.

And they started, I don't remember whether it was before, most probably after New Year's. Somebody read a newspaper and said that Stalin made an agreement with Poland that he's, all those Jewish people and Polish people that want to leave the Ukraine can go. He will let them. All you have to do is show a piece of paper that you are Jewish or Polish, and you can go. There was, I think he gave us six months or something like this. And you can take whatever possessions you want with you, and you can leave whatever it is you have, a house or whatever, to whoever you want.

INT: And go where?

EVA: Go to Poland. Well, I of course...

INT: Oh, now, your town is part of Russia now, is that it?

EVA: Yeah. It is Ukraina, not Russia. Ukraina. I mean, it was the Soviet Union till a few years ago. Then when they had the revolution in Russia a few years ago, it's not Ukraina again.

INT: Can I ask you something? When you're in this army barracks, you're staying in your town, do you remember how you were feeling? You have no one. There is no one from your family. You're really all by yourself.

EVA: Well, I knew by then that nobody's left. I'm the only one. By then I knew, and if you remember I told you at the beginning, I think, that we couldn't get, when this thing came out, everybody, all those people, the neighbors, there were about three, four

neighbors that came from the village. And Jeanine had a sister who married before the war, and she lived. So the whole family, uncles, aunts and everybody came, and if they didn't live with her, they took a neighbor's house. Maybe a Ukrainian moved away or something, or just rented something, and they stayed all together. And I don't know.

INT: Do you remember if you were depressed, or how you were feeling?

EVA: No. Then when I found already my neighbors, I was happy that I am alive, and I knew that my aunt is in Argentina, my uncle is in New York, and one of those days or years, I'm going to get there. Unless I fall in love and get married. Then I learned that Tony is dead, and of course one of the most handsome guys, he was about 30 years old at that time, in the village. Every girl would have **died** if he would marry her. Everybody from the village came. They didn't know that I am alive and that I am in the city, but we had to get together those Polish people, and I was the only Jewish kid from the village, because there was only one family. And we made up, and they rented, I had no money. Jeanine gave me her coat and a pair of shoes, and what not, and we hired an open truck, with Russian soldiers with machine guns. And we made a trip. Sunday morning we went. It was only ten kilometers. It took us only about an hour, and we were in the village. And I saw that the...I mean, the minute you came into the village, you saw Granny's house was gone. Just a pile of rubble. And they went further into the village. They went straight to the village head, to get papers, that I have this portion of earth, you have this, you have that, and he gave them. He knew them all. And I wanted to get to Peter's house. I just stood there.

What I didn't know, that on the side, on one side of my bedroom there was a window. There grew a jasmine bush, a beautiful. And on the other side, a lilac bush. What I didn't know is when I got, later on when I went to live in Danzig with that teacher friend of my grandma's, and I lived with her for about a year and a half in Danzig, she asked me, "Did you try to find the stuff that was buried?" I said, "What was buried?" She said, "Your grandma gave me," was it Grandma or Leah gave her a fox stole, and said, "If I die, keep it." So she said, "I have the fox stole. Do you want it?" I said, "You're welcome to keep it. What would I do with a fox stole? What do I need a fox stole? I don't even like it." I'm a kid, 20-year-old. What will I wear a fox stole? It was a beautiful Australian white fox. And she said, "Grandma told me that under the jasmine Leah buried something, or under the lilac, Grandma buried something." I said, "They didn't tell me, I would have dug it out." Well, I wouldn't go back there when I was already in Poland. But I just, when I came to that pile of rubble and sat down, there was just the chimney standing. And a pile of bricks broken up around the chimney. The house was made of wood, but there was an oven, there was a special thing built in the other side of the house where I slept, and the big dining room was to warm, so all of that was made out of bricks. So just bricks, a pile of bricks. I sat down and I started to cry. That's when I really realized that I'm the only one. That's it. That's when I realized that I'm the only one, and then I went to Peter's house.

And before that, if you remember, I told you that in the middle of the winter, that must have been already close to the winter already, but...right about a week or two before, we

went to the village, all of us, to get our papers. That's when I got the papers in my name again?

INT: Right.

EVA: And they hung four of those Bulbowces there.

INT: The Ukrainian police?

EVA: They were hanging for six weeks. The frost was, they were stiff like anything. They hung them, and surrounded by military day and night. They should see, the time for killing people, just because somebody's Ukrainian or Jewish or Polish, is over. And then Stalin gave out an amnesty that any Bulbowiec will come out of the forest, and join the human race, he will let them off free. Otherwise, whoever will be caught will be dead. And I wanted to get to Peter's house, and when I came, his mother crossed herself over, and said, "My G-d, my child, you lived through." I said, "Yes, Peter started it and I finished it." "How, where?" I said, "It's a long story. One of these days we will have more time. Now I just came because I have papers, they're not in my name, and" -- she wanted me to sleep there, and I said, "I can't. We came here with soldiers." And I said, "I don't know. All I want to tell you is, do you see Peter?" She says, "Sometimes at night he comes home." I said, "Tell him to come out, to give himself up. And if anyone wants to hurt him, come to me. Just get on a horse or something and come, drag me, and I'll come with you." I said, "And I will not let anybody hurt Peter, because he never did hurt nobody." She started to cry, and then we got the papers.

We stayed there in the village only for about two hours, and we went back to the city, because it was afternoon. And that was Sunday. Next Friday, I think, Peter came to town. He said, "Well, I did it." I said, "Do you need me?" "No," he said. "Stalin is true to his word," he said. "We gave ourselves up. There were a few of us, and that's it." I said, "Peter, I'm still here if you need me."

So I was, when Peter came I was there already for about three, four months. In those three, four months, I had about three, four proposals.

INT: You stayed in your town for three or four months.

EVA: Yeah, yeah. I was with Jeanine. And then when Stalin announced that Polish and Jewish people, if they want to go to Poland, Jews maybe want to go. To Israel, he said, it doesn't matter. If you're Ukrainian, you have to stay here. Ukrainians wouldn't leave. They've got now Ukraina without Jews, without Polacks. So they wanted it. But...that very handsome rich single man came and he said, "I was told that you were in the village. And I heard that you're alive. I come straight to the point," he said. "I always had my eye on you. Would you marry me?" His name was Mark. I said, "Mark, every girl in the village and around the village would give her eye teeth." I said, "I'm sorry, I'm not going to stay in Ukraina." "Too bad," he said. "We would have made a good couple." He was educated, he was handsome like a Hollywood actor. And I told him, "I'm going to

Poland. And from Poland I'm going to either New York or Buenos Aires, one of the two." He said, "Yeah, you're trying to get to your family." I said, "Mark, I don't have anybody here."

And then there was one of the neighbors that I lived with near the barracks there, in Wlodzimierz, with Jeanine, and her cousin, he was about two, three years ahead of school of me. He was living there with his parents, too. And he wanted to marry me. His mother was one of my mother's best friends. She didn't know what to do with me. "Why do you stay with Jeanine? I have three rooms, come stay with us." Her son Joe, she says, "Joe's in love with you. Why don't you marry him? G-d, I would be the happiest if he would marry you." They all thought that whatever was there, I'm going to stay, and I was a rich girl. Besides being not so ugly looking, I was **rich** -- especially the uncle in New York, with dollars.

INT: But you weren't rich.

EVA: Of course, I wasn't rich! (laughing) I didn't have a pair of shoes. But nobody had much. Nobody, but they went, if I would have wanted to live in the village, I would be rich again.

INT: Why did you want to leave Ukraine, the Ukraine?

EVA: All the Jews left.

INT: Everybody. No Jews left.

EVA: There were just a couple of Jewish, Aunt Gitchi knew a Jewish girl. She fell in love with a Russian soldier. She said, "You've got to be crazy! Who knows, the Polacks might make another Hitler, and I'm not leaving Russia. Stalin is not going to let nobody get [killed.]"

INT: But you saw there was nothing there for you and that it was dangerous to be there?

EVA: Maybe I would have stayed, even though, I wouldn't. I felt closer to the Polacks. Even though I knew that they're not, all of them, gold and silver, but they were not...[they were] better than the Ukrainians. So I would rather be in Poland than in the Ukraine. Because in Poland, I knew there is a border there somewhere on the west side past Cracow, past Lodz, there is a German/Polish border. And so I...(sighs) I decided that, I told Jeanine's parents. And I talked with Joe's mother. I said, "Are you going to stay here?" She says, "No." I said, "So we will all go to Poland. We'll see what happens. Maybe I'll marry Joe, I don't know," I said. "I have to find out from somebody," get, I didn't have no address. Neither my uncle in New York or my aunt in Buenos Aires. I didn't have their address. I said, "Maybe somebody's there." And Irene. Then I don't know who told Irene, and she was living in a town thirteen kilometers on the other side of the Bug.

So somebody went, people started to right away fold up and take whatever they have and left. They got papers. If you left a big holding here, you got a big holding, the Ukrainians kept on coming from Poland here, and the Polacks went from Ukraina to Poland. It was an exchange. So I did all those things. I found my Aunt Minnie's house. There was a Ukrainian woman living, and she made a ruckus, if you remember, that "Hitler didn't kill you yet?" And I said, "You're not going to live in that house," I said. "Maybe I would have taken a few pennies from you and left you here," I said. "This is going to the Russian government." She called me names, but "There is nothing you can do to me." I went to the, there was a military government, but I found a woman. She was a captain's wife, I think. "Can you help me?" "What's the problem?" I told her. I didn't tell her I'm Jewish. I said, "This is my mother's sister's house. I want that house back. Hitler took it away from me." So she says, "But she's living here already about four, five years. How you can throw her out?" I said, "Why not?" She said, "Well, the only people that are allowed to do those things are Jewish people." I said, "I'm Jewish." "Why didn't you tell me?" she says. "I'll throw her out today." I said, "Don't throw her out today. But I just want papers." She said, "Come with me." She went with me. There was a little city hall there, whatever. And she gave me papers that this is mine. And I said to her, "Now you take this piece of paper, because I don't need it. It's not worth a penny to me. And you sell the house to whoever you want, or move in a family from Russia. Move in Russian people in that house. Because," I said, I didn't tell her that I'm going to Poland. I told her I might marry someone from another town and move away from here. "I want to give that to the Russian government. They freed me, I want to give it to them. They brought me freedom again."

INT: But you didn't want to kick that woman out right away.

EVA: No, but I said, "Give her a chance. If she just drags her feet, throw her out." But it was winter. I said, "Tell summer, tell her, either you go or you're getting out." There was on one side a kitchen, a room, and the other side a kitchen with a bedroom, a big one. I said, "You can get two families. Get some people, there are plenty of Russian women whose husbands died in the war, and she doesn't got a decent place to live with a kid or two. Give her that."

INT: Let me ask you something: did you have any feelings after the war of revenge, of wanting to take some kind of revenge for what had been done to you and your family, or do you know of any people who did take revenge after the war?

EVA: Yeah. I met one man. He was Abe's cousin. He, the minute, he was in Russia, and the minute the Russians with the Polish government in England made a pact, and the Polish people started, the Polish army organized itself and started to fight with the Russians against Hitler, and Stalin freed all those people from Siberia that he had. Anders army, and they started to fight together. He joined the army as a volunteer.

INT: The cousin of your husband.

EVA: Yeah. He didn't look Jewish, and he spoke a good Polish. He just came. He's from the same town, he was born in the same town Abe was born, Zulkiewka. So when he came to that town, any town he came -- he's dead already. But any town he came...

(END TAPE ELEVEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWELVE, SIDE ONE)

EVA: The whole family that they killed out of his, aunts, uncles, Abe's family, anybody. But he was that kind of a kid. Grew up hungry always, and poor and everything. And here he was walking around with ammunition.

INT: Did he kill people?

EVA: I don't know if he killed somebody. But he was looking just for a chance to kill civilians. It was like this. You could kill. An army man didn't get persecuted if he killed somebody. When? When the front was going through. But once the front was away, about thirty, fifty kilometers, you had no right to kill civilian people, because...

INT: Even collaborators?

EVA: That, catch him, give him to the government. They killed, a lot of them got shot. They made very fast business of getting them to court. And sentenced, and shot. That's all.

INT: The Russians did.

EVA: Yeah. So...

INT: So you had met this cousin of your husband's.

EVA: I didn't meet him. He told that story to us when we, he lived in Rochester, New York, and he would come visit us in Canada, and he said, that, he said, when he heard that the whole family died, whether it was mother's family, father's family, or grandparents, cousins, if he had a chance, he said, "I was just looking for a chance." I don't remember whether he said he killed somebody or not. But beaten them to death, he said. If a Polack answered something to me, he didn't look Polish. He looked like a real shaygetz. So he said, "I beat them to death. They were bleeding and begging for their lives. And that was my satisfaction." Well, I wouldn't do something like this. What I felt mostly, when the war was finished, is I don't want to be anymore a Jew. Like you say, why shouldn't I live in Israel? I would be the majority, not a minority. Why should I be a minority, and if I ever get married, have a child, she should come another Hitler and kill her, she should be persecuted. I don't want to be part of anything Jewish anymore. Let it start with me. That's why I was...

INT: You felt that strongly when you were...

EVA: I didn't want to belong to some, to a people that are always persecuted. Rightly or wrongly, but persecuted. Persecuted and prosecuted. Even if a Jew got into a court, he never won anything. If a Polack said something against him. So I didn't want to be one of the minorities. I didn't. I didn't. And when I came across the Bug, I decided to go in March. What am I going to wait for? I gave the possessions in the village, I signed over to the Russian government. Quite a few, the village, head village alone said, "I'll buy your grandma something." I said, "I'm leaving it to the Russian government, because they gave me my freedom again. I'm not selling it. Maybe I'll use it." I didn't tell him that I tried to go away, or move away, or go maybe to America or something. I said, "Maybe I'll use it. But meanwhile, let the government do with it whatever they want."

And I told Jeanine's parents that I'm going to leave. I had a right to take whatever I want. So Jeanine's parents loaded one full wagon, and her husband drove me across the Bug, and Joe, the one that, my mother's friend's son, that Jeanine's cousin, who wanted, he was in love with me crazy. He wanted to marry me. And I said, "Joe, hold it. I'm not running away. I'm going, you're going to come there in a month or two. Let's see what develops. Maybe something will, I don't know. Let's get to Poland." I said, "There's no freedom there, there is an open world. Here," I said, "I can't even read a newspaper, because I don't believe anything they print."

So I left in March. I left the Ukraine in March of '45. The war was still raging. It was, I think already in Germany, but it was still raging. And I went to Irene. I came to Irene. She was very happy that I came. I had to send back Joe. The two wagons that were loaded, one belonged to Jeanine's parents, and one to Joe's parents. I don't know what they did with the stuff, but I had, I told on the border that this is my stuff. I have some furniture, I have this, I have that. This is all mine. You could take ten wagons if it's yours. And I brought it across the border. I came to Jeanine, and Joe came after. I don't know where he unloaded all the stuff, and I had to give him Jeanine's coat to take back, and the shoes. I had nothing. So Irene said, "Don't worry." She married a cousin of hers, who was a first-class tailor. She said, "Don't worry." Her husband's name was Steve, and she said, "Steve will make you something to wear, and we'll buy you some shoes, don't worry about it." And it was already the end of March, spring was not far off. And she said, "Don't worry about it." And she made me a pair of sandals, it got warmer, and he made me a jacket from something, I don't know what it was. I took it apart, and cleaned it out, and he made me. And I started to look a little bit like myself. She gave me money to go get a permanent, cut my hair, stuff like that. She had a baby, so I helped her with the baby. And I told her, "Irene, I'm not going to stay with you." She said, "If you want to, maybe you want to learn how to sew or something. Steve will teach you how to cut and how to make a pattern yourself." I said, "I don't want to. I want to get to somehow I have to get either to New York, or to Buenos Aires. One of the two things." She told me that that teacher, that woman, with her husband, who were, he was the overseer of the whole estate. There was a big estate. The owner of the estate had a lot of villagers that they belonged, half of the village belonged to him, practically, where Grandma lived. So he had a lot of them. He was the overseer of everything in our village. And I learned from her that their name was...in Poland if your name is finished with a ki, cki, or ski,

then it's a better quality name. They were the only people that had that name. They were called Piasecki. And I said, "Do you have the address?" Yes. And I wrote to them that I am alive, and this, and then she wrote to me, "What are you going to do in that little town? Irene has a husband with a child, I understand. What are you going to do? Come here." You didn't write nothing openly, because communism was still raging in Poland. Stalin was still alive. And she wrote me in the letter, "Every day people go and see Eli or your Aunt Ann. It seems every day people go to America across the border, and people go to Argentina. It means people go across the border." And they lived in Danzig. It was not far from Stettin. Not too close, but you could get there by train in about five, six hours. And I was on the other side by the eastern border. And she said, "It's a big city, and why don't you come to us, and why don't you," and she wrote to me the whole time, and in the summer when it got warm, I went to Gdansk.

I left Irene, he made me a...

INT: Gdansk was the name of the city?

EVA: Gdansk, yeah. It's a big seaport. It was, before the war it belonged to Prussia.

INT: I thought you said Danzig.

EVA: Well, in German it's called Danzig, in Polish Gdansk.

INT: I see, okay.

EVA: And the capital city of Prussia was Gdansk. It was a big port. And after the war, Poland was given Prussia, the whole of Prussia, with Gdansk together, and they still have it. So I went there, and I stayed with them. Well, before I went to Gdansk, I still found a girl that lived not far from me when we lived in Wlodzimierz with Jeanine near those barracks. There was a Polish girl, and she said, "We are going west," because, was it her brother or her cousin. If you had somebody in the military, then when they took over a Russian village, or a town, let's say you were a Polish guy, and the Germans killed somebody, or he died in the war, or in a concentration camp, you had the first privilege. You could take a whole house, a three-story house, from a German and say, "They took it away from me, I have a right." So they gave it to you. But if somebody has somebody in the military, whether dead or alive, they took over the front started to move very fast. The war finished, what was the end of war? In May, I think, or June. I don't remember. I think June, the beginning of June. And it started to move very fast. I was still at Irene's. And I met this, her name was Jeanine, too, and she said, "We are going west." Because I think it was her first cousin who was in the army. And Father got a paper that says that someone in the family's in the army, and we live here, it's such a lousy little town. Smaller than my city, a small town, only about 10,000 people. She says, "Nothing to do, no prospect of getting married, nobody even to marry, never mind, and nobody to go out. So we decided to go west." And I said, "You know what? If you go west, I'll go with you." So I went with them. That's how I became, I was there with Jeanine over the

whole summer. I was there with them. We were near Stettin. In Poland it's Szczecin. So we were near Stettin.

And he got a beautiful house, and land and things like this. And I stayed with them, and they started to beg me I should teach, because the kids were running around. No, there were no teachers. There was a shortage of everything, because the important people were all, people that were able to work, the working force was on the front. Very young and very old you could find. Or women with children. And that was a village, but the difference from a village where I was with Grandma to that German village, the German village had sidewalks. It had electricity, which you never saw in a Polish village. And the kids were running around. There were an awful lot of houses still empty. Those that came, the privileged, picked the nicer houses. And there were still an awful lot of beautiful houses left. And they, the kids were running around, and grenades were exploding, and some kids got hurt.

So I don't know. It came out that I'm the most educated person in that whole village, whoever was there. There were some Russian soldiers stationed there. The front was about 50 kilometers from Stettin. And someone came and asked me, "Would you please do something with the children? Could you teach them to count, to write?" I said, "I'm not a teacher. I have one year high school. What am I going to do with it?"

INT: How old were you now? 21?

EVA: 21. I wasn't yet 21. I was born '24, that was '45, so I was supposed to be in November 21. I was kind of close to 21. It was summer. And I said, "What am I going to do?" Because first of all, if like one kid was fourteen, and one kid was seven, and one was eight, there were about, I don't know, ten, twelve kids. "We'll give you, we will pay you whatever you want." I said, "If I decide to do it, then I don't want payment. You would give me whatever you want, but not payment. Whatever you give me is all right. Any kind of food." Because I realized that Jeanine's father, I didn't know before, is drunk every day, and the land lies there, nobody does nothing with him. The girls look for work. They walk ten kilometers to a town every day to find some kind of work. The mother doesn't have anything to cook for supper, so I told her. She says to me, "Are you going to take the job?" I said, "If I take the job, it will be only because I'll tell them to give me, whether it's a chicken or a piece of meat, or a piece of pork, whatever, that there should be something for you to manage with." And they gave me, they gave me butter, they gave me pork, they gave me flour, they gave me everything. What did I do with the kids? I taught them. Some of the kids were born to Polish people that the Germans caught them. Like I was hiding. They want to catch a girl, take her, she would be working for nothing in Germany, or a guy. And when the war finished, or when they, even when they were in Germany, some of them got married, and they had children. So the children didn't even speak Polish. They didn't read. So I taught them "Our Father" in Polish. I taught them how to sign their name. I read them stories. I divided that classroom, one big room, I divided it in two. Those that were small and that could speak Polish, anyone, and those that spoke German. I didn't know a lot of German in those days, but I could understand what it's about.

And I was there for about...I would say, all through the summer. After about three months of taking care of those kids there, I don't know how, I don't remember, I got a map out and told them how to look at a map. How to read a map. So I remember the fourteen-year-old said, "Well, when you stand this way, you say this is north. When you stand this way it's not north." I said, "If you hold the map, it doesn't matter which way you stand. Up is north, down is south." So I taught them whatever I could put into their heads.

Anyway, one day, I was there about three, four months with those kids in school, and she was very happy. I told her, I said, "I'm not going to stay with this. I'm not cut out to be a teacher. I have no patience for the kids," and stuff like this. "I couldn't be a teacher. And besides, I have no education to be a teacher." And she said, "Honey, as long as you teach." They gave me a woman, a girl to clean every day the room I had. So she cleaned the whole house. And she was very happy, that Jeanine's mother.

And finally, there came somebody, more or less it got stabilized, stabilized more and more and more, and some people who were slightly wounded came back form the front, and they took over their position. If he was a doctor or a teacher, he took it over. So there started to be people doing things that know what to do with it. And then the head of Stettin came, a man one day, and they showed him where the schoolhouse, he came in, and he said, "I am the regional inspector. The school inspector. And I heard that you're taking care of the kids. You're teaching." So I said, "I don't know what I'm doing. I just remember what the teacher did in the classroom. The people ask me, 'Please take the kids for at least a half a day off the streets, because we are afraid if they step on a mine, or a grenade or something.' So I did it," I said. And he said, he asked me a few questions. He said, "Well, you have enough for these kids. But you don't have enough for the fourteen-year-old." And I said, "It doesn't matter what I have. I don't know what I'm doing. I gathered some books, someone gave me this book or that book, and I read from the book, and I explain to them where north and south is and I tell them about history, a little bit, whatever it is." And he said, "If you're willing to be a teacher, we're going to pay you. You're going to get a steady pay from the government." He asked me if I get paid. I said, no. What am I going to do with money? Money means nothing. They give me a piece of butter, a piece of pork, a chicken, an egg, something. I said, "I live with a family, and I bring it home and we all use it." So he said, "You will get a steady pay from the government. We will pay for your schooling. You will teach half of the time, go to school, or you will have a correspondence school. And if you want to go to school in the city, we will provide you every day with a chauffeur, with a car, that will take you, and you'll come back from school. It will be hard work, but if you want to be a teacher, we'll do it." I said, "No sir. I am not going to stay in Poland," I said. "I want to get across the border, and I have a family in America and Argentina." Well, he said, "In that case." But I said, "I'm not going to leave the kids until you find someone." He said, "I appreciate it." It took a month or six weeks. And a girl came, and he came with her, and she did. She had two years more of high school than me, I think, and she started to go to school. They paid everything for her, like he said they'll do for me. And I went to Gdansk.

And when I came to Gdansk, I told that teacher friend of ours, “How do I get across the border?” And she said, "That we don't know." But she says, "There are some Jewish people living upstairs." And while I was at Irene's, in that city not far across the Bug from me, when I came, first originally from Ukraina to Poland, I found someone. I went to the marketplace once or twice a week, I think Monday it was, was a market day. And the farmers used to come. One woman came and she said, "I know who you are." And I said, "Who are you?" She told me that she had a sister living. Her sister or her cousin married someone in my village. And I said, "Yes," I said. "I know your sister," but she said, "Do you remember this and this person?" I said, "Yes, but they went to South America." She said, "Yes, and you have an aunt in South America." I said, "Could you get me her address?" She got me, she wrote to her family while I was still at Irene's, got me my aunt's address. But by that time, till I got that address, Irene sent it to me already to Gdansk. It took about a half a year. I mean, it's not like you drop it and it goes. It was still war. And when I was in Gdansk, I got my aunt's address. And when I went to Gdansk, the war was finished. It was over. And people were going across the border like, I don't know. Like from us to Mexico or to Canada is harder, I think. People were just walking back and forth from Germany to Poland.

So then my aunt started to send me packages, and I started to work. I worked as a cashier. And her older daughter was fifteen years old. She was in high school, and I started to study with her daughter together. I even learned some Latin, which I completely forgot. The mother would go out of the room that, her name was Miroslava. She would curse. She said, "Damn it! Do I need Latin? I'm not going to be a doctor, I'm not going to be a farmer. Just what the heck do I need it?"

But anyway.

INT: But you learned it with her, huh?

EVA: Yeah, I helped her. And I had a mind like a sponge. It just, it sunk in and stayed there.

INT: Well, you always loved school.

EVA: Oh, yeah. My dream was to, they don't do it here, but in high schools and in colleges in Poland, and I think I saw the same thing in Germany, every college had a special hat. Like I think they have it still in England. So they have special uniforms, special hats. And I thought to myself: if I ever wear a college hat on my head, nobody will be able to talk to me. All I ever wanted in life is a lot of education. Nothing else.

So I was with them. And I went to Gdansk. It was, I think, the end of '45 or the beginning of '46. And then I thought to myself: before I go anywhere, I'm going back to (?) where I worked during the war. And in that beautiful church I'm going to change my religion. That's it.

I didn't know whether I will get to Poland, get to America. It was...I wouldn't go to Germany with everybody. I had nobody in Germany. Polish people went to Germany. They had somebody whom Hitler took away during the war, and they wrote them, "Come, we have a house, and we have good, and we get American government helps us a lot." Everybody had somebody. I didn't know. What am I going to do? So I'm going to stay in Poland until I get papers sent to me. My aunt in Argentina was so rich that she got, they had Peron as president then, and he was good to the Jewish people. And she said, "Don't go anywhere. I want you to stay with Piasecki," because I told her, I knew already where Aunt Gitchi is. Her husband, bless his memory, he kept on writing to me papers. "I knew you when you were a little caca, you ran around still with your diapers. And now I have to beg you you should come and I should see you? I knew your father, I knew your mother."

INT: Who is this?

EVA: Gitchi's husband.

INT: Okay, but how is Gitchi related to you?

EVA: Gitchi's aunt, I don't know if she was her mother's sister, or her mother's second cousin, it was an Aunt Gitchi's, married my aunt in Argentina's husband. My mother's sister, my mother's brother-in-law, the one that was in Argentina married to her sister, the youngest one, his brother, my mother's (laughs) brother's in-laws', my mother's brother-in-law's brother, married Gitchi's aunt. That's the relationship. Honey, after that war, there were about 200 Jews left, maybe later some more came from Russia, because a lot ran away to Russia. But after Hitler, from the 18,000 Jews, there were 200 Jews when I left Wlodzimierz. So everyone was related to somebody. And everybody felt related.

INT: But where was Gitchi from? What town was she from?

EVA: Wlodzimierz. She's from Wlodzimierz. Too bad you didn't have an interview with her. She was underground mostly. They were catching rats and eating, and they were urinating and drinking it. To speak that **I** lived through.

INT: What do you know about her story, because Rita mentions her a lot as being like a grandmother to her.

EVA: Yeah, because I'll come to that. When I came to Gdansk, she even told me. "You went through so much in the war. I worked, my husband works." She became, instead of a teacher, she already had a lot of years of experience. She must have been about, between 40 and 45 that teacher. And she was, became a school inspector, because of years of experience. And there were no men, mostly women took over. And if you had the qualifications you were revered. And her husband couldn't be an overseer. There were no big holdings. It was communism. So he worked in a wholesale fruits and vegetables place. And the kids went to school. But the youngest was at home. The youngest's name was Julia. She said, "Stay home with Julie. And we don't eat meat

every day." Everything was rationed still. In Europe, I don't know, now maybe, but as long as communism was there, and even before the war in Poland, I come and I live with you, I have to go register, that I'm not living here on Edgehill Road. It took us a while when we came to Canada. "What do you mean we don't have to go register, that I live on Church Avenue? I don't understand it. How will they know?" "Don't worry, they find you. You have a social security number." We couldn't understand that. In Europe you had to register. In Russia, especially, when we had Russia for two years, the communists, on the door, outside, were written the names of the people that live here.

INT: Now tell me again who these people were in Gdansk that you were staying with.

EVA: That was the teacher from the village where I lived. She was a teacher. I knew her as Mrs. Piasecki. They were very rich people. Her husband had a good salary, she had a good salary. He was the overseer of everything. They had a beautiful house to live in. She had a cook, a maid for the kids.

INT: She was friendly with your grandmother.

EVA: She was a friend of my grandma's. So she said, "Stay home. There's enough to eat for everybody." And then of course, the minute I came to Gdansk, I wrote to my aunt and I told her, I said, "Gittel is here. Do you remember Gittel?" And she said, "Never mind Gittel. Never mind David." Her husband's name was David. "Never mind Gittel, never mind Dovid. You stay with Piasecki. I know that they are decent people. I know that in that house if you stay there a year, you will learn more than you will learn in a school. They're intelligent people, educated people. I know you are in a good house and in good hands. Stay there, and I'm going to send you papers." She spent money like water. She got to Peron himself an audience. And she sent me a letter from Peron. A copy of a letter. That I am to be admitted and given the Argentinian...

INT: Citizenship?

EVE: No, no, no. Visa. The minute I come. She would send pictures in a little frame, and under the pictures would be no less than $50, always. She went to hospitals to buy, there were no dollars in Argentina. There were pesos. But she would buy dollars and send me. She was rich. They had a big business. Two. One, a store with dry goods, and the other store was with furniture. So she sent me a copy of that letter. So I don't remember what I sold. She sent that teacher's husband, that Mr. Piasecki, she sent him long johns. I told her that he works in the open, it's very cold. She started to cry, that Mrs. Piasecki. She said, "My G-d, G-d bless them. We didn't see a pair of woolen socks since before the war." And she sent me packages of food and my uncle already. And then she sent me my uncle in New York his address. And I wrote to him, "I'm staying with your friend." Her husband was my uncle's friend. They went hunting together, they went dancing together. They were a young couple, so they went with my uncle. So he started to send food packages. I was, I think, the only one that received every month a care package from America with raisins and olive oil and white flour. She got the first package of white flour, she says, "My G-d, I forgot what white flour looks like!" And the

first package I got, it was a big can of lard. Pure lard. She said, "You're taking that can, before we open it, and you're going to the drug store, and she will give you a whole bucketful of money, because he makes his own," I mean, during the war, the pharmacy started, I mean, after all, they know chemistry. They are chemists. So they made up creams, face creams, this, that. They made their own, because you couldn't get nothing. Factories didn't make those things. So she says, "He will give you anything to get his hands on pure lard." And the truth is I sold that lard and I bought material for two dresses, and I had money left over to pay a dressmaker to make me a dress that is made for me, and I got married in that dress.

So...

INT: How long were you in that place?

EVA: I was about a year and a half.

INT: Oh. That's a long time.

EVA: But I will have to go back. How long do you want to stay?

INT: That's fine.

EVA: I have to go back when I was with Irene in that...

(END TAPE TWELVE, SIDE ONE)

EVA: The end of 1945, I think. The end of summer. And I asked her about this one. And she says, "You know what? Not far, about ten kilometers from here, in a village, lives this family from that colony. From that colony." Jeanie, my friend who lives now here in Rutherford, she was a kid. She was a year older than me. So when the war started, I wasn't yet fifteen. She was fifteen and a half already. And she was going on sixteen. And when the Russians came, she was sixteen, and from another Polish colony, started to come by a guy who was maybe a little too old for her. He was closer to thirty. And he seems to fall in love with her. And she liked him. He was from kind of from a better quality people. He had a brother who was in the officers school, going for an officer before the war. And he was in the army, and of course, they were defeated within two weeks. In September, '39, within two weeks there was no more Polish army. He came home with two legs, two arms, and that's all. And he was there. And didn't get hurt, even.

But the Ukrainians became all communists. And the police became Ukrainian when the Polish came. At least I didn't know a single Polack who became a policeman. Before there was no police. There was militia. The Russians, they haven't got police, they have militia. So I don't know how and what it happened, but we heard that on that colony there was a family Mizerski, that the younger brother got shot by a guy who was in the

Ukrainian guy who was in the militia. That I don't know what happened, but of course he was a militiaman like a policeman, so he didn't get punished. But the guy lost a leg.

And I remember thinking to myself: I saw him once before the war. I have somewhere a picture. I'll dig out, I'll show you. Me and Jeanie, we are working, the last, it was about vacation time for me. She wasn't in school anymore. Her father said seven grades is enough for her. Vacation time for me, and they were going to the city, and she said, "Come with us." I said, "I don't know if Grandma will let me go. We have stuff to do." And she said, "I have nobody to talk to there. They are just Mother, Father and everybody will be with wives, and come, come." And her mother said, "Go, go, go get dressed." Anyway, her mother screamed across the two gardens, we were adjoining to each other, and she said to my grandmother, "Chashu, let Eva go with us to the city, because Jeanie has nobody to talk to." So Grandma says, "Okay, go." So I got dressed, and somebody snapped a picture of us walking. It was a beautiful day in the end of May, a Sunday.

And I saw him, and he was as handsome as a Hollywood actor. Tall, slim, beautiful looked in that officer's uniform. Gorgeous, and had a little mustache here. He was looking a lot like Clark Gable. And I thought to myself: Good L-rd, what a picture." And then Jeanie told me, I said, "Who got shot?" She said, "You remember? He was in an officer's uniform. That's Leon's brother, and Leon's the one that's coming." But then when he started, they started to make artificial legs, but in (?) you couldn't get. You had to go to Kowel, to that bigger city. So it took them about, it took him about, they lived further away from the station. We had the station. So his brother Leon would bring, his name was Nastas. It's a real Polish name. Mizerski. And he would bring him to the station, and then in two days he would come pick him up. So every time he would bring it to the station, you should go, they would make a leg, he would wear it, and it's no good. He had to go back to Kowel, and they should fix it, or make another one, whatever. But for a year he kept on going. And every time he went, he stepped in and visited Jeanie. And every time I heard her holler, "Eva!" So I heard it, wherever I was. I heard it. And, "Come on, he came." And the father wouldn't, a girl wouldn't sit alone in a room and talk to a boy.

INT: Is this still before the war?

EVA: No, the Soviets were there already. The Russians were there. And then the Russians went away and the Germans came. No, she got married when the Russians were still there. Anyway, that Leon would come in and spend there an hour or two. So her mother said, "When she hollers, you come here. Because I don't have time to sit with her, she should entertain him. Father's not going to let her alone, but," they were three sisters. Well, the youngest one, Annie, was only six years old. Jeanie was sixteen and the older sister was married already. She was the beauty in the family. I mean, Jeanie doesn't know it till today, but her mother would say, "Jeanie's not a beauty," she says. "I got to marry her off some day. But her father is not going to let me do anything. I have to sit there and diddle with him while she entertains him, to hear what they're talking about. I

got to milk the cows, I got to do stuff. It's not before the war that I had people working for me." Nobody had people working for them.

So every time he would come, Jeanie would yell, and I would come there. I would sit down, read a book or something, and she would talk to Leon. But a few times when he would pick up that brother on the way back from Kowel already, they would step in. So the brother would be there. So I would look at this gorgeous hunk, and I said to Jeanie, "Good L-rd, is he good-looking. I could fall in love with him."

To make the story short, when I was at Irene's. I came there, it was winter, and then she made me a jacket and made me a pair of sandals.

INT: After the war.

EVA: And she told me, you know who is, Joe, Jeanine's cousin, lived there, about ten kilometers in a village. And she says, "You know who lives in the village next to him? Mizerski lived there. You remember Leon and Nastas? And their two sisters were not married there, and their old mother. They all live there." I said, "I'm going to go visit Joe, and maybe I'll see the Mizerskis."

I don't know. You might not believe me, but that's what happened. I went for the first visit, and I stayed with Joe's family. His mother was my mother's best friend. Joe was going with another girl. "You're here." he said. "You're going to stay here? Can we start something going?" And oh, his mother.

INT: He's the one that wanted to marry you, right?

EVA: Yeah. And I said, "Joe, please. I love you dearly like a brother. I'm not going anywhere, I'm just biding my time until I get some addresses from Argentina." They all knew the family that went away. My aunt went away in '38 and my uncle in '39 with the last ship. So I said, "Either I get to Leon or to Anna. I am not going to stay here. What's the use?" So his mother, "So he will go with you, honey. He can go to Argentina." I said -- her name was Mary. I said, "Mary, I love you dearly. He's going with another girl," her name was Jeanine, too. I said, "She's a nice girl." She was in love with him. I don't know, I left, whether he married her.

But I was there for about a day. She says, "Tomorrow is Saturday. We are invited to another family who is related to someone from her side of the family." Anyway, I said all right. She was a nice girl. She was from my village, but married into that colony where that Mizerski lived. So I said, "I would like to see Mizerski. Leon and Nastas." She said, "They'll be there, because they are related to her husband." Sure enough that gorgeous hunk. Even though he had, below the knee his leg was amputated. And he wore an artificial leg. He could dance, he could ride a bike. He could...walk. It wasn't as good as these days. Sometimes you can't even notice when somebody, but I mean, he didn't have to wear a cane. He did everything.

They took over a Ukrainian family, a big house. I saw him. We sat, she put us both together, sitting next to each other. And we talked and we talked. And he calls me, there is a saying, when you have dark hair in Polish. It's like to explain, I don't know, for a dark-haired girl, it's not "dark-haired beauty," but something in that family. The word "beauty" doesn't come into it. But "Czarniutka." And he said, "Czarniutka, you lived through the war," he said. And the whole evening, and everybody left, and he would still sit and talk with me. And we talked till about 1:00 in the morning. And he said, "Well, can I see you tomorrow?" I said, "Yes, but I'm not staying here. I'm going." He said, "Okay, I'll...I have the bike, but I'll walk you to Joe's house." He walked me to Joe's house. He said, "Can I see you tomorrow?" Tomorrow night he came, and he asked me to marry him.

INT: That was fast.

EVA: And I liked him very much. But I stayed there for about a week, and he came every night to see me. And I said, "I'll give you an answer." And at the end, when I was going back to Irene's, I said, "I'm not going to stay in Poland. I'm trying to get to my family." I asked him, I said, "How did you come to the conclusion? I like you very much, but how did you come to the conclusion that all of a sudden...I never talked to you. You came with your brother Leon, and he wanted Jeanie. Where do I come in?" He said, "I noticed you, don't you worry. I realized that you're still a kid. You were about fifteen years old, and I was about 26. Where do I come to talk to you? But now, you're over 20. So I'm 30. So what? Now I can talk to you." But he said, "I saw you. I liked you then and I like you now." And I said, "I'm not going to get married without love. It doesn't matter." He said, "We're not going to live here."

I said, "First of all, I want to go to Gdansk and live with my teacher friend of the family." He said, "I would love to go to Gdansk and find some kind of a way to make a living there." And I said, "I'm not going to get married without love." And he said, "Who says that I don't love you? I wouldn't ask you to marry me if I didn't love you. The minute I saw you, I said, 'Look at that. What happened to that little kid? She grew up. She's beautiful, and I want her.'" And the sisters came and talked to me. "Oh, there is money enough. You could have a business. You could live in Gdansk, make a house. We are rich, we are not poor." I told them, I have nothing. I told him. I was rich. I could go back to Wlodzimierz and be rich again. But I have nothing. "You don't need, we have enough. But he cannot work." They had a very big farm, a very, very big farm. They were rich. "But he is not, he was supposed to be an officer, and he has schooling, but he's now with the leg not the way it used to be. He cannot work on the farm. So you could live in Gdansk or Warsaw, wherever you want." And I said, "I'm trying to get to my family." And I told him. "I'm not saying no. I'll still see you. I'll be coming here." I gave him Irene's address. And I said good-bye to him. He kissed me, and I realized that I care for him very much. And he said, "If your answer will be no, I just want you to think about it twice before you say no to me when you see me next time, or whenever it is you're going to give me the answer, because you're losing a very good prospect of a husband. You are going to lose a very good prospect of a husband."

When I came home and told Irene, I thought she was going to take my head off. Steve wasn't in the room. He came in, he said, "What's all the yelling?" "She's crazy! She met Mizerski." He said, "Who, what?" I said, "The guy wants to marry me, and she's yelling at me." "She's crazy! He's with one leg. What are you crazy? You're going to marry someone without...!" And I said, "Irene, you want to know something?" And he said, "Who are you to mix in?" She says, "Well, someone has to tell her. I'm married already for five years. I know more about it. You need two legs, two arms, to make a go of something in life. What are you crazy! You want to marry someone with one leg, whole in one half." And he said, "Maybe she loves him." "Do you love him?" She **yelled** at me like hell. She says, "I'm older than you three years. I can tell her off." I said, "Do you know what? I love him." And I realize that I am in love a lot with him. That was my first and last big love. To this day I still love him. He's dead already and I love him.

I saw him once or twice. (sighs) And I said, "I'm still not ready to give you an answer." I went to Gdansk. I told him that I'm going to Gdansk. I wrote him a letter, and I said, "I found my aunt and my uncle. And I'm getting letters from overseas. Would you be willing to go with me overseas?" And he said, "I can't. I have a pension here from the government. I don't know the language. What will I do overseas? I can teach in a military school. I was a middle rank officer already. But what am I going to do in another country?" And we wrote to each other. And I wrote him, "I love you, but I can't stay here. I've got to go to my family."

INT: And what were you feeling inside? What was the pull of each?

EVA: And then finally I decided, my aunt sent me Peron's letter, and I went with the letter to Warsaw. I went straight, I bought a ticket. Sold something and bought a ticket, and you could already travel by train. And I took a ticket to Warsaw. I stayed with somebody who, she gave me Piasecki, that teacher, an address. I stayed with them for two days. And I went to the Argentinian Embassy, and the Ambassador took me right in. I showed him Peron's letter. And he said, "Honey, you give me a passport and I give you the visa right now." I couldn't get a passport. The communist government in Poland wouldn't give. They gave Gitchi a passport. She was 45 already, her husband was 50. But the young people, you didn't get a passport. I said, "Isn't there any other way?" He said, "Honey, I got to put the visa on something. The visa's a stamp. What am I going to stamp? Your hand?"

INT: So it was useless.

EVA: The ambassador himself told me. "With this letter in hand," he said. And then, when I realized that I cannot leave Poland, it doesn't matter who sends me papers, for about half a year I didn't write to him. And if I wouldn't write him, he wouldn't write to me. He was hurting. I understand it. He wrote to me that he loved me very much, and told me that plenty of times. And then when I wrote to him that I cannot get the visa, I'm going to stay here, we could get married. I've decided to marry you. I received a letter from him. He said, "I still love you, and I always wanted to marry you, but I don't want marriage out of pity."

INT: Why did he think you would marry him out of pity?

EVA: Because I think he was hurt. If I get the visa, I don't marry him. If I don't get the visa, I marry him. And he said, "Maybe in time." The last letter I had from him was in '47. In '48 I married Abe. The last letter I had from him was in '47, and he wrote, "Maybe the time will come when my heart will, my mind will forget a little bit, and my heart will heal. I would still like to marry you, but it hurts," he said. "It seems to me I have to take second place to a visa." And I loved him. I cried day and night. That Mrs. Piasecki didn't know what to do with me. She wasn't as wild as Irene. She didn't scream at me. But she said, "My goodness, you're young. You're beautiful. If you want, I'll put you in a school. Schools don't cost money, and you could go to work if you want," and stuff like this. And she said, "You don't have to marry someone who is with half a leg." And I said, "I would marry him today, but now he doesn't want to marry me."

INT: What was it about him?

EVA: He said, "Maybe in time." I don't know. I just loved him. I never loved anybody like I loved him. Maybe because it was unattainable at the end. I wanted him and I couldn't get him. Maybe that, I don't know. I married Abe, I had a child, I dreamt about him. Although, I just regret like hell that when I had money already, Jeanie went to Poland to see her parents. Her father came here, I made a party for her father, he came here for the Bicentennial. She sent him money. And my uncle came, and they got together, everybody who was ever, knew anyone, and I made, I had a big, beautiful apartment. I made, I had a living room and dining room together. I made about three tables together. Everybody who we knew that they knew Jeanie's father, my uncle, was there, and I made a big thing. And I should have taken a ticket, go to Poland and see him at least. That was, you know, there was always, Abe had a heart attack, and then Abe's brother died, and Rita got married, and the marriage went sour, like in a family, you know?

INT: Did you ever...

EVA: No, I never wrote to him. What was the use? He told me. One thing I promise you: if we don't get married, I'm never going to get married. He died, never got married. Never got married. The one that wanted to marry Jeanie, Leon, his brother, died of cancer. He wasn't very old, not even 60, or even 60. But Nastas died about, I think...she didn't want to tell me, but when we were with Abe there about, when were we, the end of last summer. In the fall we went to Jeanie for a week, and Abe came from New York, I came from here. We spent a weekend with Jeanie. Her husband, he is retired already for about ten, fifteen years, and he likes to go to church, and then she takes the car, goes home, and he stands there, and sits by the church and talks. Meets people from other colonies. So I said, I asked Jeanie, "Do you know about Mizerski anything?" She said, "I don't know. I'm not in touch with them. What do you want with him? It's years already. Maybe they're all dead already." But Jeanie went away to buy milk, we were out of milk, and he says to me, "I can tell you that Nastas is dead already. But we didn't

want to tell you. He's dead already for about five years." He told me. "He simply died of old age." He must have been about, I don't know. If I'm 70, he was 80.

So...

INT: That's a sad story.

EVA: I had no desire to go to Poland, that's true. But I regret it that I didn't go and see him. A lot of people went. Abe had a good friend, he still has him. Abe lives in Brooklyn, a good friend lived. They went to school together, they were neighbors in Zulkiewka. Sidney Zucker. And he lives in Long Island, in New York. And Sidney one day, his daughter wanted to go with him, about three, four years ago. They went to Zulkiewka. They visited Zulkiewka, Lublin, all around there. Every...all around those towns that you heard when Abe talked to you. And they visited, and she said, "I don't know what..." I remember I said to her (laughs), "Esther, so how do you like it, what you saw?" She said, "There's nothing to see. Why is everybody talking: oy, we did this and there was that. What was there? Shacks," she says. "And you talk about it." I said, "Shacks, but it was home."

And so a lot of people I know went back to Poland to see. I just regret I didn't go to see him. I never loved anyone like him. I had a lot of crushes, but I never loved anyone like him. Too late, he told me, "You lose a good material for a husband," and he was right.

INT: So you stayed in Gdansk.

EVA: I stayed in Gdansk till...Uncle David, Gitchi's husband, kept on writing me that they are giving, they will pay school for me. There was a Jewish committee in every town. A Jewish, I mean, there was, every town had a head of town, whatever you want to call it. A mayor and those things. So usually it was Polish people. But the Jewish people had their own little...community, and there was a head of the community. He was not a, he was a little educated, Uncle David. So he wrote me and he said that, "You could get school without money and everything. Why do you have to work in Gdansk? And why do you this and why do you that? Why don't you come, we're going to Canada, we will adopt you, and you will go with us together. We will say that we didn't even know you're alive. We will adopt you. You are our daughter." So I wrote them a letter: "I'm over 21 and I'm not up for adoption. I mean, what am I, sixteen years old?"

Then, do you know what Haganah means? There was after the war the resistance. They were very strong. So one day, I am home. And my teacher, that teacher, Mrs. Piasecki, she worked too far. She wouldn't come home for lunch. She either took it with her, or maybe they ate there somewhere. But he worked not far, so he would come for lunch, and me and the youngest, Julie, would be home. So we would eat lunch together, and he would be home for about a half an hour, rest, and go back to work. And then all of a sudden, he's sitting here eating, I'm sitting here, Julie's playing outside, in front of the house, and somebody's ringing the bell. And I go to open. "Eva?" I said, "Yes." "May we come in?" I said, "Who is it?" "Oh, we came from the Jewish committee in Lodz." I

said, "Who are you?" By then I already was converted. I said, "Who are you?" "Can we come in?" I said, "I wouldn't let you in, but I'm not alone in the house. Mr. Piasecki's home. I live with some friends from before the war." Sure enough, they came in. Later I learned they're from the Haganah. I found some people from Wlodzimierz that lived in Gdansk. A boy who was, Henry. Hank was about two, three years ahead of me in school. And I knew him slightly, because we were kind of, a girls school, a boys school. So I knew him slightly, but I remembered him. And I met him in Gdansk. So we kind of had a small, a few boys and girls from Wlodzimierz, so we would go to the movies together. But even then I was over 21. But Mrs. Piasecki, when he came, "Henry, she has to be home by 9:00." The movies were like from 7:00 to 9:00, from 9:00 to 11:00. "She cannot come home at 11:00." I couldn't stay out later than 9:00, even though I was 21. He even said something to her, her husband. She says, "Well, I would let her stay out. After all, she's not a kid. But your daughter is going to be sixteen years old next year, and she'll say, 'If Eva can stay out, why can't I?'" So she says, "I'm sorry." And I told her, "It's okay. I don't mind. I haven't got nobody steady yet that I care to." So anyway...

INT: The Haganah came.

EVA: And I said to him, "Come in." And he was eating lunch, and I said, "Can I [offer you something]?" "No, no, no, maybe just a drink." So I don't remember whether we had beer in the house, or lemonade. I gave them a drink, and I said, "What is it?" "Can we speak to Mr. Piasecki?" I said, "You want me to leave the room?" "No, no." But I said, "Okay, I have to do something in the kitchen." I figured, I have nothing to hide. Let them speak and ask him questions. So I left the room for about ten, fifteen minutes, and they asked him. He later told me, and his wife in the evening. They asked him, they thought I'm living with him. So why do I live with such an old man of 45? He said, "I have a wife and three kids. I knew her when she was born. I knew her family." So it seems that Uncle David wrote to somebody and they sent two young, handsome Jewish guys, young ones, from the Haganah, and they thought that there is a young kid of fifteen or sixteen, and they will just take me. Take me away. I will go, or maybe if I'm willing, they will still take me. But they realized that I'm over 21. Then I came back, and Piasecki says to me, "These gentlemen want you to go, want to talk to you." I said, "Okay. What is it about?" Well, he said, one says to me, "Would you like to leave Poland?" I said, "Yes. I'm waiting for my family to send me papers, either to Argentina or New York, whatever happens." And he said, "You're not going to get a Polish passport. You'll never get out of Poland unless you pay somebody to take you across the border. The right way you're not going to go. They don't let young people get passports." So I said, "Well, you never know what will change. The law might change." Stuff like this. I said, "What do you have in mind?" I ask him. He said, "For example, we are organizing trains of orphans, Jewish orphan girls. You are over 21." I was then, I think, 22 or something. "But you're not tall, and if you let your hair grow and have two pigtails, you could get on for 16. And up to 18, we still consider it that we can, we take the kids out to France." I said, "I don't want to go to Israel." I said, "Are you from Haganah?" He says, "Yes." I said, "I have nobody in Israel. I don't wish Israel nothing bad." Those days there was no Israel yet. I said, "I have nobody there. I have family in Argentina.

South America or North America." Okay, he said, "We're going to help you." I said, "How?" "We will take you by train to France. You're in the free world. In France they will let you go if you get papers from a family." I was stupid. I should have taken them at their word, and I wouldn't have gotten married with Abe.

But sure enough, I said to him, "I'm not going anywhere. I'm a grown woman. I'm not going anywhere." And I was in love with Nastas. I still hoped that maybe he'll change his mind and we'll get married. The more he wrote that it's hard for him to forgive me, that I threw him, not over for somebody, at least, but just for a stamp on a piece of paper, it's very hard, it hurts.

(END TAPE TWELVE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: But what they did, when they left me with Piasecki, I told him I'm not going anywhere. I might stay in Poland, or if I get papers, I'll go to my family. They found out that I go out sometimes with that Henry that went to the boys school, and I went to the boys school. They went to talk to him, and they said, "Don't start a romance with her, because you'll be in trouble." When Henry told me that, I said, "How dare they? How **dare** they?" Piasecki knew, and Henry knew, that I converted already. I said, "I'm not even Jewish anymore. How dare he? What am I, fourteen years old? I want to become a gypsy tomorrow, I will. I'm free. I lived through Hitler. Nobody's going to order me around." And well, Henry wanted to go out with me. Henry had a brilliant mind. He wanted to run away to England. His father had a, Henry was taking courses in college, just night courses. And they were just dreaming about electronics stuff. But he was, I forgot what courses he was taking. He was learning English. Henry could speak already a little English, and I envied him to death that he can understand something. We go to a movie, the subtitles are Polish, they speak English, Henry laughed before I read it. I said, "Damn it, I hate to sit near you. You understand what they're saying." And his father was fixing and selling fixed and new typewriters. There were very few new ones. Of course, it was a port city, so some of the sailors came from France or from England, or from Germany, wherever. Or from America. Ships came. And they sold new stuff. But his father managed a typewriter business, and he helped his father and went to school. He was only about three years older than me. A very...intelligent guy. But not my type. I would never marry Henry. But his mother was crazy for me.

And anyway, so I got very mad. At the beginning I said to Henry, "You're lying." He said, "Why the hell would I be lying?" He was talking to me, we were sitting in his kitchen. And he said, "How would I know that Haganah came to see you? Why would I be lying? I'm telling you." And his mother came in, and she heard us yelling at each other, and she says, "Yes, honey, they were here. I saw them." And I said, and then I was wondering if they know already about Nastas. Maybe they went to him or something. But he kept on writing to me. Once in awhile I would write, he would answer after a number of months. About two, three letters a year, no more, and they were always full of hurt. My letters were full of hurt, and his letters were full of hurt.

The last letter I will never forget. I had it with me till I ran the border. I was pregnant with Rita and married to Abe already. I had the letter with me, and he said in the letter, "Sooner or later will come a day, and you will join my family. You're still not an old maid," he said to me. I never wrote him that I got married, that I'm getting married and stuff like this. (sighs heavily)

So I stayed with them. And then my uncle, I didn't believe it. My Uncle David wrote me a letter. "We got papers from Canada from my family. And we are going to Canada. And if you want to see us, we are leaving in the fall after the holidays. We are leaving for Canada. If you want to see us, come and see us." By then I got tired being in Gdansk. I couldn't get a visa to go nowhere. I couldn't get a passport. And I thought to myself: I should have gone with the Haganah, but it was too late. It was too late. And I thought to myself: If I go to Gitchi, maybe I'll get in touch with the Haganah. Maybe they can still smuggle me out of Poland some way. I mean, I had no Jewish connections in Gdansk. I completely eradicated everything. All the neighbors knew that I'm Catholic. I went to church openly. I went to confession. Nobody except Piasecki, and Henry knew me from home. Otherwise nobody knew who I am.

And I thought to myself: If I am to stay in Poland, I will marry someone. I will marry someone and live somewhere in a place where nobody knows me. That's it. Finish with the Jewish business. I don't want my kids to be afraid to say who they are, and I don't want them to be killed or whatever. And when he wrote me, I was working as a cashier. Her sister had a big wholesale place. She had cashiers and everything, a wholesale place with fruits and vegetables. And I worked for her sister because the cashier went away for vacation, so she said, "Honey, you're the only one." I said, "I'm not a cashier. I don't know how to operate this darn machine." She says, "I'll teach you, but please. I cannot take one of the salesgirls to put her in the cash register. They steal everybody. You're the only one." So her sister asked me and then that Mrs. Piasecki asked me. Her sister's name was Valeria. And she says, "Well, okay. Valley asked you, do it for her. It's only for three weeks, four, and you'll get paid." And I said, okay, so I did it for a month. And I wrote to Uncle David that, "Next month I'm going to come visit you."

So next month, I got paid for that month's work. And I had two new dresses, and I had beautiful shoes, and I had nylon stockings, and I had a permanent, and I had everything. And I had a little valise like this, and I packed it up, and I went to, I told Mr. and Mrs. Piasecki that I'm going to Lublin. I don't know, I might stay there for a couple of months. I will write to you.

INT: They lived in Lublin?

EVA: Yeah. And I went, like they say, "If it has to find you, it finds you under the cover." (interviewer laughs) And I met my future husband, and the moment he laid eyes on me, he wouldn't leave. He was there. We met. Did he tell you how we met?

INT: Well, I want to hear how you tell me. You tell me how you met. First you went to your Aunt Gitchi, right?

EVA: Yeah. She was still there. I went there, it was kind of, I would say, in August some time. The second half of August. And they were talking. They were going to go to Warsaw. They had an appointment with an American. The American Embassy, I think, in September, to get a visa. They had a passport already. They had everything. So she was telling me that he didn't hear good. She says, "I have to find some way to pay off that doctor, because they wouldn't let him into Canada."

INT: Can you tell me about Gitchi now?

EVA: Oh, she's a sweetheart. You met her. She was always like that. The minute, I never knew her before the war. Maybe I knew her. I was a kid. What did I pay attention if someone came to visit Mother or Father? I played with the kids if they brought kids. I don't remember seeing Gitchi before the war. I remember like through, Gitchi had another husband and three kids and they got killed. And David came out from one of the better families in town, and married a very rich girl from a very good family. And he lost a wife and kids. And they knew each other before the war, and they got married. And she could have married somebody very rich. There were some guys who had money after the war. Either they hid it, or they sold a lot of stuff. But she didn't. She wanted David because she says he was educated. So she wanted him.

INT: How did she survive the war?

EVA: Oh, they were a few of them paid off a farmer, and he dug a hole in the ground under the barn. And they were lying like spoons, one to the other. And if one turned, the rest had to turn. And at night they could go outside only, if they had to do something. But they would go days without food. And...her husband got killed, I told you by the...

INT: In the pogrom that your town was in?

EVA: No, no, no. She lost her husband, got killed. She lived on a, she went to her aunt in a village. The aunt was related to my aunt. My aunt married that aunt's brother-in-law. So she went to that aunt in a village, not our village, another village. And there her husband got killed by the Germans. And when they told her, "Your husband lies dead over there," she ran to see him. And while she ran to him, she saw her three kids lying dead. And she says, "I'm alive. I should live? Why should I live?" she says. "I saw my three kids die and I went and I hid and I was hiding and I wanted to live. And I'm still living."

INT: Do you know the name of her children, for the record, just for the record?

EVA: The oldest one went to school with Fela together. That means he was, she had three boys, I think. The oldest one was five years younger than me. I was fifteen the war started, not full fifteen, another couple of months, and they were ten. So he was the

oldest. And the youngest was only, I don't know, two, three years old, or something like that.

INT: So she lived in a hole in the ground, basically.

EVA: Yeah, first she was in the ghetto. That's where she saw my Aunt Minnie running around crazy and singing. She saw the twins killed.

INT: How did she survive the ghetto? Because everyone was killed in the ghetto.

EVA: Well, they went underground. I think she said that some of the men had money, or somebody had money, and she begged them, "Please take me with you," so they took her. Honey, the stories. One of my very, very close friends, I consider her a sister. She was in Lublin. I met her, she was four years younger than me. She's that bitch that Abe went to Israel and left about $30,000 there. Furnished an apartment for her. Put in radiators, put in air conditioning. You name it, he got it. Curtains, wallpaper, everything. Refrigerator, double stove, half gas, half electricity. So I mean, to me she died. She was, I considered her a sister, but she is dead to me.

But she told me a story about her mother. It seems that when they went underground, they were in ghetto and then they went underground, because there came a time when in every town they killed, killed, and all of a sudden the few that were left realized that they will be killed, if not today, tomorrow. So some of them, they had money. Her parents had money. They went to a farmer, and he kept them there for money. And her mother was pregnant. And she had the baby underground. And they just choked the baby to death. Because if the baby lives and it cries, you can't have a baby. So she told me that story. The stories that you hear people tell is, can you believe a Jewish mother having a baby and choking it to death? The baby was born a girl. And they waited till night, and the father went out and buried the baby somewhere, not far away. A parent killing a baby. (pause) So things that happened to people are sometimes undescribable, but that's what it is.

INT: So you went to your aunt and you stayed there for a little while?

EVA: Yeah. I went to my aunt for just one month. I said to Piasecki, "I'm going to be back in a month." And I wrote to her that I'm going to stay two months, because my aunt is leaving in two months, so I'll be here till she leaves. I didn't write. I didn't know what to call Gitchi. I was 22 and she was 45, so I called her, "Auntie," I didn't know what to call her. "Can I call you Auntie?" She says, "I would love for you to call me Auntie." And there were Polish kids, little kids all around, and Gitchi baked cookies every day and the kids loved her. Everybody loved Gitchi. And what she did, I didn't eat a piece of Jewish honey cake for five years. She baked a honey cake. But there were no pans like here, tall ones, for a cake. They were just a big pan. So she baked it in a little town there, a low pan. So it was like a whole thing. I ate that cake up in one day. So she told it to me when we were in Canada already, and I went to visit her with Rita. She says, she baked a cake of course. Gitchi bakes cakes for the whole of Winnipeg. She still bakes

them, bless her heart. She's over 90. She must be close to 95. And Uncle says, "How come you don't eat honey cake? In Lublin you ate up the whole cake." And she said, she started to scream at him. I said, "Auntie, why do you scream at Uncle?" "Because he's stupid. He shouldn't have told you." I said, "Now I want to know what you didn't tell me." Because the Uncle said, "I'll tell you. When you came to us in Lublin, Auntie baked a honey cake. And I had a piece in the morning, before I went to daven on Shabbas, and Auntie had a piece. And when in the evening I wanted a piece there was no honey cake!" (laughs) "And I said, 'Is she crazy?' And Auntie said, 'Leave the kid alone.' He said, "She's not a kid, she's a grown woman." So Auntie said, "So she's young she didn't eat it the whole war. I'll bake you tomorrow another cake. Don't say nothing." So he says, "If you would have been mine, I would have given you a good lashing on your behind." I said, "Not on your life. Nobody lays a hand on me after Hitler." I said, "I'll buy you the eggs and bake another cake." (laughs)

So he couldn't understand that I came to Winnipeg and I wouldn't eat the honey cake. I said, "I don't need. I have plenty of cakes already." I worked in a bakery those days, in a Hungarian bakery. I brought home the best of European cakes.

So you see, when I was with Piasecki in Gdansk, things were rationed. The rations went away, I think, in '47 at the end or something like this. Not everything. Meat was rationed, butter was rationed. We had, Sunday we had a good dinner with meat for everybody. During the week there would be a piece of bone with a little piece of meat maybe, to cook a big soup, and the little piece of meat went for Julie. She was the smallest one. And she always complained that she's very skinny. And nobody touched that little piece of meat. Even he wouldn't eat it. It was for Julie. And Julie would get butter. We wouldn't have enough butter for everybody for the whole week, what we got on rations. We would get butter, bread and butter on Sundays after church, and the whole week Julie would have butter, because she was the baby, and we would have marmalade. Marmalade you can get or make your own. But she was a fantastic cook, Mrs. Piasecki. See, that's the European intelligentsia. She came from a rich home. She married a rich man. She always had cooks and nannies and everything. But she herself was taught by her mother. When I, I couldn't look at a fish for about, I don't know how many years. Because we ate only fish in Gdansk. Fish you could get...

INT: Well, it was right there.

EVA: A whole...like you could fill the bathtub with fish. You could get as many as you want. Meat, not. But fish you could get. Because there was a lot of fish. We lived on the sea. And Mrs. Piasecki made fish with sauce. She made fish, and she made fish balls. And she made the Swedish fish balls. She made some kind of a fish ball, from a fish caught in the sea, that she made the sauce for that fish, it was made out of fresh horseradish. It was out of this world. I'll never forget it. She took fish, she cut it up, she bought small fish. I forgot the name of the fish. Cut it up in small slices. Breaded it, fried it, dried it off, and after the frying, took off the oil and marinated it in a big, big jar, a glass jar, like you marinate herring. And that fish was out of this world. She knew 100

ways to cook fish, and we never went hungry. Even though everything was rationed. She was a fantastic cook.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 23rd.

You had moved in with your Aunt Gitchi temporarily, until they moved to Canada. They were planning on leaving for Canada. And you were going to tell me the story about how you met your husband.

EVA: Well, I went there for vacation, actually. I didn't want to go before, because he always bothered me, they want to adopt me and this and that, and I wrote him, "I'm too old for adoption. I have family, and I'm going to try to get to the family." And then he sent those guys to me, and he was afraid that I'll marry a Polish guy, a Christian guy. He was afraid; a lot of girls did it.

INT: Who was afraid? Your Uncle Dovid?

EVA: He was very, very...he was attached to Judaism more than Abe. And beside that, he was educated. He could open up any book and tell you what that book says, and the, from any book of the religious Jewish books. He was an educated man. But I told him, and he never bothered me. But when they wrote that they're leaving, I figured, look, they're leaving. They write to me, they're nice. What he did, I thought for about five years that he tricked me. He wrote me that my uncle from New York sent $300 to his family in Winnipeg, and the family told Uncle, wrote Uncle David a letter, that he should give me. So I have to come. "If you don't come and don't take those $300 from me, I'm going to go to Canada, and the money will be in Winnipeg. Your uncle will have to get it back." So I figured: $300 is $300. It wasn't the first time my uncle sent me money. I went. And I figured they're leaving. They won't bother me.

I had no, I was in love with the only man. And I knew that nothing will happen out of it. But I wasn't, I went out to movies here, there, with boys I knew. But I wasn't serious about anyone. I just wanted to get out of Europe.

Well, I came to them and I was at my auntie's for about a week. And of course, there were, I don't know how many Jews there were. But I know that girls, marriageable age, between 18, let's say, and 25, there were about five or six. And for those five or six girls there were about 20 marriageable age guys. A Jewish girl, if she wanted a Jewish boy, could have her pick. She could have been a cobbler's daughter and picked a doctor. If the man wanted to marry a Jewish girl. Because there was some. Even in Germany, when I was married already, we had a friend, Abe's friend, Jacob. He married a German girl. I said to him, "You lived through in Auschwitz. How the heck could you **do** it?" He said, "She's 18 years old! She was a **kid**! She didn't do. She didn't work for Hitler. What does she..." I said, "But how **could** you? You have a number on your arm." And he said, "Well, I'm not just going to take any yechna because she's Jewish. I want

somebody I love. I didn't see anything that I like. It seems the girls, the Jewish ones that come from Europe, from Poland or from Russia already, the guys got them. They come here with husbands."

INT: But you felt strongly about that, but yet you were willing to marry a Polish person. And the Poles had also persecuted the Jews. Not like the Germans.

EVA: I mean, before the war there was no such thing as concentration camps in Poland. I don't know. I told you, I think at the beginning of the tape. Nana lived in the village. Me and my parents, we lived in a suburb of Wlodzimierz, which, every village was 75% or 80% Ukrainian, and just a few Polacks. And there was always one or two families Jewish. And I, whether I was, well, when I lived with my parents I went to that Catholic school, which was next to us, like next door. And I never had any. I didn't **felt** different. I earned the marks, that's true.

INT: But you were upset at another Jew who had married a non-Jew.

EVA: And I got the best marks in the class from grade 2 to 5. And she gave it to me, so she wasn't an anti-Semite.

INT: But my question is, you were upset that another Jew would marry a German.

EVA: I know. I'm trying to explain to you. And then when I went to live with Nana in the village, I told you, nobody ever, my grandpa had a beard, and he wore that Jewish little cap always on his head. And nobody every touched him until the Germans came. And still in our village, nobody ever called anybody "dirty Jew." Nobody discriminated against us. We were treated just like, maybe because the family, even though Grandma was rich, but they all worked like horses. They were not sitting just there and having someone clean their house, and they were just walking around in satin dresses and lending money and making a big profit out of that, no.

INT: So you saw the Poles as different than the Germans, as far as, before the Germans came, that you didn't experience anti-Semitism from them, so you wouldn't feel badly about marrying a Pole. But what about a Ukrainian? The Ukrainians...

EVA: But you see, the Ukrainians saved my life. I wouldn't give a Ukrainian one inch. But there were even, I told you, the German brought my grandma medication to help her. The other Germans came and killed her, but there was one who I'm sure he should not have done it. If someone would have known, he would be in big trouble. Where do you go helping a Jew? Especially an older woman. Who needs her?

INT: So some Germans and some Poles and some Ukrainians, were good people, but still you're upset about this.

EVA: A very, very small minority of Ukrainians. Well, I mean, that neighbor. Peter's family saved me. They would have saved Grandma if that son-in-law wouldn't have been

a bastard. Peter saved my life. All right, he didn't keep me there from the beginning to end, but if he wouldn't have taken me out of there, I would have gone to the ghetto with Grandma. I wouldn't have left her there.

INT: Did you know at this point that six million Jews were killed?

EVA: No.

INT: When did you find that out?

EVA: No, no, no. I didn't know till we got to Germany. Yeah, you see, when I was with people in Gdansk, with the Piasecki family, the papers wrote, but one paper wrote this much, and one paper wrote that much, and the Polacks, it depends who was the editor of the paper. Everybody had his view. And it wasn't a press that was free. It was communism in Poland. They got their news from the Russian Pravda in Moscow, and then they printed it over. When I was by Piasecki, I heard, at 9:00 we saw to it that the two smaller kids, Julie and Richard, went to bed. And the girl, the 15-year-old and me, at 9:00 there had to be absolutely quiet. The window shades let down. The lights out, and he would listen to BBC. That's when I realized that that voice I heard when I worked in (?) and Edek was listening to the boom, boom, boom, I realized what it was. I thought it was a Polish underground station, but then I realized this is BBC from London.

INT: So then you got news from the BBC about the camps?

EVA: Yes. It's what they were actually giving, he was listening to the Polish news, not English. After all, he didn't speak English. They were very educated people, but he spoke perfect Russian, she spoke French. But they didn't speak English, neither of them. And the news was in Polish. And what they gave them mostly is that, the truth is, Anders army was fighting, and the war is over, but still our fight for our real freedom, for a free Poland, is still going on, and we are still in England. So it's...it was more geared towards Poland, towards Polacks. Of course, if you listened maybe to some Jew, I didn't listen to any Jewish stations. There were no Jewish stations. And there was a Jewish family living upstairs to whom I actually went, when I would get from my aunt in a picture. She sent me a dress, she would make a dress, wear it a couple of years. You were not allowed to send from Argentina new. She had a dry good store, but she couldn't send me the new piece of material. She would stitch together a skirt, just stitch it together, and sew a belt on it. And she would make a dress, a nice one. She was the same size that I was. And she would make pads, and in the pads she would put in $50, or whatever she could buy. She went among hospitals to get some Americans who are in Buenos Aires and have dollars. And she would exchange the pesos for dollars. So she would send me. So I knew that if I go to a bank I have to tell them where I got the money. But I didn't get it in a check. I didn't get it the right way. I got it that nobody knows. First of all. And second, even if somebody exchanges it for me in a bank, it will be peanuts. To compare to what I get privately.

Upstairs was living a Jewish family. A young fellow lived through the concentration camps. Two friends, actually. One got married with a Jewish girl, and they had a boy already, a little one. And his friend couldn't get married. He was very handsome. He wanted to go out to the movies with me, but Mrs. Piasecki told me, "Don't go with him. He's very handsome. It's very easy to fall in love with him. But he was castrated by Hitler. They did a lot of it, because he was so handsome, and very intelligent, that they did a lot of experiments on him. First of all, they castrated him. So I don't want you. Do me a favor. I don't care with who, but don't go out with him."

So...but that fellow who married worked in the Polish police. The U.B. in Poland was like the KGB in Russia. And I went to him and I changed dollars. She said to me, "Are you sure?" I said, "Don't worry. He is in bigger trouble than me if he buys them."

INT: So did you find out from them about the amount of Jews that had been killed?

EVA: They didn't know that I had...

INT: No, I'm just trying to find out how you knew.

EVA: They knew that I'm Jewish. That fellow knew that I'm Jewish. And they were only, he told me, "I'm in U.B. so I get a good pension."

INT: But I'm trying to find out how you learned that so many Jews had been killed.

EVA: When I went to Uncle David. He read Jewish papers. They got papers, I forgot from where. In Lublin there was no printing. I think the Jewish paper came from Warsaw or something, and it was like one got a paper, so fifteen people waited for it. It went from one to the other. And that's when I...

(END TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: It was kind of towards the end of the summer, and there was a big celebration. Not celebration, a memorial thing for the Warsaw Ghetto Jews, and that's when I first realized, that really, what kind of a big amount of people lost their lives. I knew that it's millions. But I didn't know exactly. It's not that the Piaseckis were not, I told you, Poland was the first that made a picture called "Auschwitz," Oswiecim in Polish. And she made that older daughter and me, she says, "Before we get to go with Father, you two are going as soon as the picture opens up." And she sent us. I was there for about ten, fifteen minutes, and I left. And I said to her, "You want to sit?" She said, "I'd better sit. If I don't sit, my mother's going to make me watch it. If she said I should watch it, I'll watch it." I came home and I told her I can't watch it. So she says, "I understand." But she wanted her kids to see what goes on.

INT: How do you feel about humanity after what you went through, and how many Jews were killed?

EVA: Well, now after all these years of living, and gathering experience from life alone, from long living, I feel there is good and bad in every nation. I have, I told you, I think. I don't know if it's on the tapes or not. That I nearly, in Montreal, I nearly put a rabbi into jail. I don't care. If you're good, you're good. But, I have to say "but." There is that underlying hatred of Jews, even though the Popes already announce it, the one before him. There was, I think, John Paul I. He was very short, a very nice, liberal fellow, about twenty years ago. And he was Pope only for about a year or two, and died suddenly. And then there is this quiet, underground talk that he was poisoned or something, because he was so liberal. And he said that they should stop hating the Jews. The Jews didn't kill him, the Romans killed him. And then somebody else became Pope, and then came this Pope, and he already declared. Maybe because he's...from what I read in papers, from what I hear sometimes, I get up, I'm up nearly every night at 4:00. And I listen, there is an FM station that has a talk show the whole night. They are located in Bala Cynwyd. It's not far from you. And once I heard somebody discussing something about Jews and Christians and stuff like this. It was around Easter, Passover time. And they said that some Jewish people blame this Pope that he doesn't do enough. That he should have gone to Israel a long time ago, and this and that. And I agree with them, but then one guy said, he said, "Do you know that I..." One of the correspondents, a few correspondents were discussing. And one correspondent said, "I was in Rome. I made it my business to get an assignment into Italy. And I was in Rome around the Vatican," for I don't remember how many weeks or months he was there. But he said, "I can tell you for sure that there is a guy from Poland, that the Pope has lunch with him, if he comes from Poland and visits. The guy still lives, used to live in Poland. Now he moved to Italy. But he's not a priest. And the Pope, whenever the guy can, he comes and they have lunch together. They talk constantly on the phone. And it's supposedly his best friend. And that guy's Jewish." So...I don't know. Because it's so deep-rooted in some of those Polacks that don't like Jews. Usually it's the ignorant ones that don't read and cannot read, and just know what the...priest says. And if the priest is anti-Jewish maybe, or his mother taught him, or maybe he got something out of the catechism, I don't know. So if the priest, no matter that the priest has actually very little education there in a little church somewhere there. He just finishes the seminary and became a priest, because there was no one in his village that wanted to go there. He's happy there and satisfied with that life there.

So that little parish, whatever the priest says is the word of the Lord. But those that are more educated, and read, like Jeanie's father. He always read the Bible. He would try to explain to Grandpa during the war. I mean, they both didn't have big holdings. A lot was taken away by the Russians. And Grandpa and Grandma got old, and Grandpa didn't have already all those cows, and the dairy, and the kosher dairy, and stuff like that. So there was time on their hands. In the winter, the evenings were long, Jeanie's father would come in. I can't tell you how many times I heard it. He always liked to listen to my grandfather's stories about New York, because Grandpa was in New York for five years, and was always regretting that he came and didn't take right away the wife, no

matter whether they were ready or not. Because he didn't know the war will break out. And the other one always said, "Mark my words," to my grandfather. "I'm telling you that communism will take over nearly the whole world. And then they will die. Then it will disappear." And as many times as I talk to Jeanie, I say, "I can't believe how..." and Grandpa used to say to him, "I don't believe that communism will take over the whole world. They'll never get America. And her father used to say, "But it's in the Bible. You just have to know how to interpret the Bible."

But you asked me a question something right in the beginning, and I don't remember. I went off on a...

INT: Well, I wanted you to tell me about how you met your husband.

EVA: No, there was something else, about, oh, I think how I found about how many Jews. I learned most of it, I knew that it's millions, but the number, and how exactly the fight in the Warsaw Ghetto exactly happened, and I learned in Danzig yet about the pogrom. You know there was a small pogrom in that little town where I lived with Irene? The Akowce, the Polish underground, that had their head in England still, they were underground when communism was reigning in Poland. They came and they opened up the jails. There were two jails in that small town. And freed all the prisoners, never mind who they were. And they robbed all the Jews that lived there. Well, I didn't live with Jews, I lived with Irene. Nobody knew, actually, that I'm from a Jewish background. And there was the Kielce pogrom after the war, that Jews started to really flee from Poland.

So I personally was never pushed away, or given the **slightest** understanding by look. Never mind by saying, but even by look that "I wish you weren't here with us," or something. Or "go somewhere else," after the war. No. Whether I was in Gdansk, or whether...like I went to Gdansk and I was there, and then Irene said to me, "You know," she had a little girl. "Theresa will be already two years old, and Terry is growing. Come for Christmas." And I said to that teacher, I said, "You know what, I have this letter from Irene, and I think I'm going to go there for Christmas." She said, "All right." So I went a week earlier, and there were already passenger trains. And for some reason, the underground was laying mines. Ahead of us in some town somebody put a mine on a bridge, and we couldn't cross, so we were stuck on that train. Neither go back, because we were half-way back to the east. I had to go southeast. We were neither here or there, and we were stuck there for about three days. And I came to Irene instead of for Christmas, I came on New Year's Day. And nobody asked me, "What happened? Why weren't you here for Christmas?" That's when I realized that I could have gotten killed on that mine, and nobody would ask, "What happened to Eva? Where is Eva?" Because I had no family. Nobody cares. They are all good to me when I'm there, and they like me. I was never one of those, when I came somewhere, I came to Irene, the one room needed painting, I painted it. The floor needed waxing, I waxed it. And the same thing in Danzig. But I realized that really, I could have gotten killed on that train and nobody would bother to ask, "What happened? She's not here." Nobody asked me, "How come you didn't come for Christmas? You came for New Year's."

Well, anyway, I came to town to Gitchi. I was there for about two weeks. And she introduced me. They all lived together. There was one street in Lublin called Lubartovska. In about five, six blocks, the Jews from all...Lublin was a state capital. And that was a state capital. There must have been about, I would say in Lublin, 100,000, 150,000 people. I don't know how many Jews there were. There must have been maybe 500, maybe 1,000 Jews. Because they had already a little Jewish committee, and they had their own head of the committee, and all kinds of things. They organized so that if you had to go to the hospital, they took him in. He didn't have to pay. He didn't have to pay for medicine, all those things. It had nothing to do with [me]...I mean, when you're young, you don't go to hospitals.

Anyways, she introduced me. Close to her lived about three families from my hometown, from Wlodzimierz. She introduced me. And then I don't know how, there was a guy. He was as tall as Abe. His name was Chaim. He was a good-looking little guy, but he looked so Jewish that if you looked from a kilometer you could tell he's Jewish. He didn't wear no labsedettel, he didn't wear no tzis-tzis, he didn't wear no Jewish hat. But his manners, his face, his nose, everything was Jewish. And he supposedly had a lot of money. Because they were from Lublin and he sold some houses left after his parents. He was living, an aunt of his lived through, the mother's sister, or father's. And Auntie and Uncle, well, of course Uncle David, he was leaving in two months for Canada already, but he still wanted to marry me off. I said, "I'm not going to get married. You will lose your battle, because don't make any bets. I'm not getting married. I want to get to either Argentina or somewhere." "Well, you should have come earlier. You would have gone with us." I said, "I don't want to go to Canada. I want to go to New York." I didn't know that it's a hop and a scotch. I mean, you give a big hop and you're in New York.

But, "Oh, have I got a guy for you." The girls usually picked the best-looking guys, and the guys who bought them right away fur coats. Guys, either, you see, if there was left a girl like me, some of them didn't even bother. There was property, they maybe sold it, maybe not, but guys, you know, Jewish guys like business. So they were buying and selling that property. And then they said, if they knew it's their neighbor's property, nobody's alive, they said, "This was my mother's brother's property." They sold somebody else's property. I didn't like that from the beginning on. And they made money. And some of them started to buy gold, and Abe was one of those that was buying rings, somebody sold, some Polacks or some Ukrainian came to the city, sold rings, they needed the money. So they would buy it, and I don't know where he would sell it.

But anyway, he introduced me, that Chaim came. And that Chaim was my age, and to me, since ever I remember, maybe it had to do with my father. I adored my father. He was like Ray. He did everything. Before the war men didn't do things like my father. But my father was like Ray. He comes home, the toilet floor's dirty? "Yeah, yeah, I'll be right in for supper." Meanwhile he washes the toilet floor. He doesn't say, "This is a woman's work." Ray doesn't know that. But now it's kind of accepted. Why should a woman do everything? But in my time? A man had his work. The woman could have

had twelve kids. She took care of the kids. But my father, no. He was the one that smoked, and we had a beautiful dining room table and breakfront. And the table was always covered with a beautiful white tablecloth. So Father was smoking, and there were always little holes. For some reason Father knew how to weave. He would weave that hole, you couldn't find it. All the neighbors came to my father with weaving. There wasn't, he could take apart the clock and fix it. Everything. And he didn't care. He would sew on the white collar on my uniform, every day clean cuffs, white cuffs, white collar. My mother didn't care whether I wore the yesterday's. Father saw that my shoes -- maybe it was the military in him. Maybe because he became an orphan. Grandma died, I was named after her. Grandma died, he was two years old. And maybe the fact that he was an orphan, or maybe because he was in the military for five years.

INT: I don't think I ever asked you your family name.

EVA: It's a real Russian name, Piejka.

INT: Could you spell it?

EVA: Yeah, I have to write it down. I'm not that good. P-i-e-j-k-a.

INT: So you think you were attracted to men that were capable like that?

EVA: No. And what, I didn't know about attraction when I was with my parents. My father died, I was twelve. What did I understand about that?

INT: No, I mean...

EVA: But what I knew is when Leah used to complain sometimes, so my mother always said, "You shouldn't have married that stinker. He's your age, or two years older. You should have gotten yourself a guy like me. I was eighteen or nineteen. He was thirty. He was happy that he married me." My father was better looking than the other one, and more educated. So I always liked men older. When a guy was my age, I wouldn't go out with him. That Chaim begged me for a month, just to the movies. Gitchi said, "Is he going to rape you in that movie?" I said, "I don't like it, because every time he comes he brings me a present." He went to another city, I don't know what they did, some kind of a business, him and his uncle. They went to Lodz, they came back. He told Auntie, "If she says yes, she will marry me, she gets right away a diamond ring and a Persian lamb fur coat." I said, "Auntie, and if he gives me a whole jewelry store with a whole herd of lambs, he can **have** it!" If I didn't get married in 1945 when I was liberated, and I was barefoot and naked, I'm not getting married now that I get help from my family overseas. I said, "There's no such thing. I'll marry if I like him."

Well, anyway, so he came from Lodz with his uncle. He brings me a bottle of perfume about this size. And I didn't want to take it. And Auntie said, "You hurt his feelings." I said, "I told him, "Don't buy me presents." I don't want to be beholden to nobody. What did I do? I told him I have a guy in Gdansk. Finally I got rid of Chaim. Chaim took an

answer. Chaim lived together with a Polish woman. There was a Polish widow, she had a little house. She had two bedrooms, so she, I don't know where she slept, but she rented out the two bedrooms to Jewish guys. She washed their wash, she just didn't cook for the, but she washed their wash, she cleaned the apartment, the two rooms. And Chaim lived in one room with Abram. The way Abe told me, Chaim never had sex until Abe took him to a girl.

But Chaim kept bothering Abe. Gitchi's last name is Gervic. Well, in Polish it's Gervic, so you read it like a t and a z. "Come to Gervic. There is a girl came from Gdansk. I want you to give me your opinion. I like her very much. Please come." He didn't know that I'm not going to say ever yes to him. He kept bothering Abe, because whatever, Abe taught Chaim how to dance, Abe taught Chaim how to sleep with a girl. Abe told everything. (laughs) Well, Abe was 30 years old and had girls all the ways from Siberia to Crimea. So...

INT: Pretty active guy, huh?

EVA: And Abe said, "Don't bother me. You like her, go. I don't want to." But he bothered him and bothered him. Finally Abe said, "I'm not going to go to Gervic. I don't like Gervic. I just don't like the man. What do I have in common with a 45 year old, 50 years old guy?" Finally he said, "You know what?" So Chaim, I don't know how, he must have talked to my aunt. And he must have said, "Where do you go?" And Sundays if it was a day like today, a nice one, everybody got dressed, and they had lunch. Between lunch and supper you went for a little walk. The river was very far. There was a river and a beach, but you went to walk on Lubatavska. You walked back and forth like, oh, I don't know. In the European towns, I don't know if it's still that, in the evening the older people, in the afternoon the younger people would take walks. I suppose it was the same way in America fifty, sixty years ago. You went for a walk with a fellow. You didn't go with him to a hotel. You went for a walk.

So Chaim said, "Abe, do me a favor. Gittel told me that Sunday afternoon they walk on Lubartovska for about, they take a walk, a Sunday walk." So here I'm going with my aunt, and I'm holding my hands behind on my tush, and I'm holding my purse. And I don't know. We stop every half a block, she meets someone, she introduces me. And she got mad at me. She was so mad that day at me, because the first woman she introduced was a woman from, she wasn't from Wlodzimierz, but her husband was. So she married a guy from Wlodzimierz, and he had a daughter. She became a very good friend. She passed away a half a year ago, five years younger than me. She lived in Toronto. So she said, "How old are you, honey?" I said, "I'm 23." And then we talked to the woman for two minutes. "You have to tell her you're twenty?" I said, "What was I supposed to say, Auntie? How much do you want me to say? 25, or 18?" "Yes, because her stepdaughter Tzela, Tzelina, I am here two years, and Tzela's always eighteen. She didn't grow a year older even in the two years. So you are now the oldest girl in Lublin." I said, "So, look, in every family there is an old maid. So I'm the old maid in Lublin." She was **so mad** at me! "Why did you tell her you're 23? You still had to add that you're going to be this fall 24." I said, "So, I'm an old maid." (laughs) "I didn't come here to get married."

And there I walk, and we were kind of half through that parade stretch of the street, there was a stretch that people walk back and forth. And towards me goes Chaim, comes Chaim, and a guy with him in a gray suit, nicely cut. A nice figure. He didn't look nowhere near what he looks now. He was straight always. He had a tush you could die for. He was the only guy that I met after the war, I'm not talking about the one I was in love with. I hated suspenders. My father never wore them, because he was a military man. He still had his military belt with a silver buckle with his monogram on it. And Abe was the only guy who didn't wear suspenders, only a belt. He had a good figure. They stayed on him, those pants. And he had a suit made to measure, I could see, and he looked older. And I was right. When I got to know him, he was 30 years old.

And they said hello, and I said, "Aunt, you can stand here and talk to them." Chaim most probably stopped. "I'm not stopping. I'm leaving you." (laughter) So she didn't stop either. We passed him, and I said, "When we go back home, I want to go into the house, Aunt. I'm tired." What am I? I felt like somebody's parading a cow at an auction. Back and forth. Every mother, with daughters, with whoever, they were parading. And I don't know why. There were very few girls for all those boys.

INT: There was a lot of pressure on you, but you were putting it off.

EVA: They wanted to get me married. They were afraid that if I go back to Danzig I'll marry a Polack. They didn't understand it that, they didn't know that I'm in love with somebody and I will not marry anybody unless I absolutely want to or have to, or fall in love or something.

We walked about three or four blocks. It was like downhill. And then we went back uphill, and again against us comes Chaim with that guy. (interviewer laughs) Later, when I got married...well, to make the story short, that was Sunday afternoon. Monday morning at 8:00 (laughs) Auntie and Uncle had a bedroom and a kitchen, two rooms. And I slept in the kitchen. It was a cot like this standing in the corner. Somebody's knocking on the door. And I'm sleepy at 8:00. Even Uncle was still asleep. He didn't go to work until about 10:00. He worked in the Jewish Committee. And I said, "Auntie, somebody's knocking." She said, "Well, whoever it is, tell them that most probably somebody with business to Uncle, tell them that Uncle doesn't do business yet. He's still in bed."

So I went to the door. You weren't afraid to open a door. I open up, there is the guy who walked yesterday with Chaim. (laughs) And I said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "Can I speak to Mr. Gervic?" I said, "I'm sorry, but Mr. Gervic still in bed. It's still early, it's only 8:00." "Oh, but I badly need a few American dollars. Is it possible I can see him just for two minutes?"

Well, I said, "Please come in. I'll ask him." So he came in. And I had my housecoat on top of whatever I wore. And he (laughs) sat down at the table, and to make the story short, he didn't leave that chair till after supper! (laughs hard)

Auntie of course, when I came into their bedroom, I said, "Auntie, that's the guy that walked yesterday with Chaim, and he needs a few American dollars, and he said that Uncle might have some. And I don't know whether Uncle will..." Auntie said, "Oh, I know. It's Mr. Roitman. Okay, I'll go down." So Uncle went down, and Auntie of course right away ran to the kitchen, put on coffee and tea. She always had a cake baked, and "Mr. Roitman, why don't you have breakfast with us?" Here's a Jewish guy. (interviewer laughs)

EVA: Well, anyway, that was Monday. Tuesday he came again, and stays there from about lunch till late at night, and Tuesday I saw already his brother with the family, his niece that was born, and I knew the niece's name was Sarah, she was born in Siberia, she's beautiful, and he wants to go to Israel. He brought me all the pictures that he had. And he was there every day. And my Uncle Gervic said to me, "If you marry this guy, you're not in my family. I want you to marry a Jew, but of about 20, 25 guys..." I said, "I'm not marrying him."

INT: Why didn't he like him?

EVA: But he said, "I don't know if you'll marry him. But I'm leaving," he said. "And if he's after you, like I see, he's here every day. He lives here, practically. So if you would tell him maybe, I think you never told him that no you shouldn't come." Well, of course, Abe is not (?), he took me to dances. And he was a perfect dancer. And whenever we went there was a party. Whatever he says, he was the life of the party. And...

INT: Why didn't your uncle like him?

EVA: Because he says, "I know that guy for two years. And I have never seen him pass my window with a Jewish girl. Always with shiksas." And to Uncle Gervic this was something. First of all, when he came that first Monday the whole day he sat there. But I didn't notice his hands till about Tuesday. I noticed that he has a wedding ring on his right hand. I couldn't ask my uncle if he's married. I didn't ask my aunt, because he didn't interest me. He was there. Sometimes I would leave him, I had to go make my hair once, and I would leave him. Auntie would entertain him, "It's not nice," she said to me. "Well, Auntie, you can tell him to go home. I didn't invite him. He comes every day, but I don't invite him." And I said, "Besides, what the hell is this guy doing? He's not working?" She says, "No. You know, all those youngsters, they deal. One buys dollars and sells, one buys wedding rings."

Then that girl, that stepdaughter of that woman that Auntie said she was always eighteen, Tzelina, her mother told her that, "You know, there's a nice girl, she speaks nice Polish, and Gittel told me she's a little educated, so you might want to get to know her. She's with Gittel, and she's going to stay here till Gittel leaves in September or October." So Tzelina came. And then I don't know, a few days went by, and one day Tzelina comes and says, "Well, guess what? We're going to see..." I forgot what movie we saw. It was one of the very famous movies made with Rita Hayworth or with somebody in the late

forties. A very good movie. And I wanted to see that movie. And I said, "What do you mean, 'we'?" And she said, "Well, Roitman came to me, and Chaim and you and Roitman and I, we're going to the movies. Roitman bought tickets." I said, "Nobody asked me. I don't like it." But she says, "Oh, the heck. It's only a movie. Let's go. We will eat an ice cream or something. What are we going to do in the house?" Well, I didn't consider Tzele close to me, because she was eighteen years old, she said eighteen, I believed her. What do I care? I have nothing in common with an eighteen-year-old. She lived through in Russia, she didn't see Hitler, she lived through with a father. I went through, I became, when the war finished I was 21, and I felt like I'm 101. Because I lived through a mess. So I didn't belittle anybody, but I had nothing in common with a girl like that.

Sure enough we went to that movie theater. We saw the movie. While we were walking, I said, "Tzela, could you stay behind me? I want to ask you something. Why is this married guy coming in every day to Gitchi for the last two, three days? Why is he coming in?" She said, "Which married guy?" I said, "This one. That Mr. Roitman." She said, "He's not married." I said, "He's wearing a wedding ring." She said, "Most probably he bought it from a farmer or something. He's not married."

To make the story short, he came in every day, he came in after that, and to make the story even shorter...

(END TAPE THIRTEEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FOURTEEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: I think about, between six and eight weeks after that we were married.

INT: So how did that happen? So fast, and you didn't want to get married.

EVA: (sighs) I didn't want to get married. Of all the guys I knew, he was the age that I liked, and every girl, that woman Tzelina's stepmother came. Auntie told her, "You know, they're going to get married." And she said, "Gittel, do you see hair growing?" (laughs)

INT: In the palm of her hand.

EVA: "If ever hair grows here and I can braid it, that's when he will marry someone. He went with every girl around here, and he's mostly with shiksas. He's not going to get married. He's already 30 years old. He's not the marrying kind. And Gittel, I'm surprised at you, she's an orphan, that you let her go out with a fellow that...there are no prospects." Gittel said, "It's up to her. She's not a youngster. She knows what she's doing. And she wants to go out with him."

Anyway, there's something here, I don't know if I want Elizabeth to know about it.

INT: Do you want me to turn the tape off?

EVA: Yeah. Let me go back a little bit, and I'll explain why I hesitated. When I was in Danzig, they started to give, mostly they were interested in lung disease those days. That was the big thing, TB. X-rays and check-ups, complete check-ups if someone went really through something. And that Mrs. Piasecki sent me and her daughter, she made us an appointment. There was a medical school in Gdansk, and we went there. And talking to the doctor, when I had that general check-up, he said to me, "Were you intimate with anyone since you were liberated?" I said, "No. I have no desire." He said, "Well, you are otherwise a healthy young woman, and if you have no desire, didn't you meet someone you liked?" I said, "Yeah, I like a lot of them. Someone to marry me, but I don't feel like I want to do anything with them." And he says, "I don't know," he says. "There might be a chance that you might never have a child in your life. It happened to some of the women who went through traumas in the concentration camps and stuff like that," he says. "I wouldn't say 100%, but it does happen very often, especially with Jewish girls." Because he says, "Let's face it, it takes two to make a baby." I didn't pursue it. I mean, I had a one-track mind: just to get out of Europe, get out of Poland.

But then I met Abe, and he started to pursue me like nobody ever. He just lived at Auntie's house. Finally they went away, and we spent one night together, and I was supposed to get my menstruation in about a week and didn't get it. And I told him, and he said, "Well, that's what I wanted, that happened." I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "If I wouldn't be sure, I wouldn't have done it. I knew I couldn't have gotten you any other way. If you want to marry me, that's it. Now you have to." And I decided right then and there.

We got married about six weeks after that.

INT: How did you feel about all this? How did you feel about becoming pregnant?

EVA: I wanted a family. I thought to myself, I loved children always. Little babies. I loved babies. And I wanted a child of my own. And then, remember I told you I was on a train, a week late, and nobody asked me, "How come you're late?" If I will have a child, he'll ask me. "Mom, what happened? We thought you are dead."

INT: Somebody will care about you.

EVA: Somebody will be, I don't have anybody close. Nobody cares whether I live or die. I could get killed tomorrow and nobody would even know I'm **missing**! And then it happened. And I told him right away, "You don't have to marry me." "Will you have an abortion?" I said, "I will never have an abortion. No. Whatever happens, happens. I will not have an abortion. I will go back to Gdansk." Oh, she would have taken me with open arms, because she loved children. She was born to be a teacher.

INT: Did you want to marry him?

EVA: I would have never married him if I wouldn't have become pregnant. Never, ever, ever, ever, because I realized from the first time we went to the movies. He bought tickets to the theater. Everywhere there was a dance, on the other end of town, he bought tickets and we went. And he looked of ways to get me out of the house and be with him, because in the house Uncle was there. And I would have never married him. Never under no...I realized that he is, as much as he pursues **me**, his eyes wander **all** around, the hall can have 100 people, his eyes walk, and always nudging Chaim, "Chaim, look at that one over there. Look at that one over there. Who did he bring today? Where did he get her?" I realized that this is not my father. Maybe because I adored my father. And my father was like Ray. One family, one wife, one G-d, one child, one family, that's it.

And another thing happened. Uncle changed his mind about him not marrying me. Because you know what happened? I knew him already for about two weeks. One afternoon Uncle comes home from work, and "Mr. Roitman," and my aunt of course, "Mr. Roitman, Mr. Roitman, stay with us already. I made a goose today. We will eat supper together." She told me later. She figured if she has to go back to Gdansk, let her marry him. Even Eva doesn't like him, he's a Jewish fellow. I mean, she knew there were other people from his town. And Auntie already asked him, "What do you say about this Roitman fellow? He wants to marry the girl that came to me." "Oh, he's from a very nice family. He might be a little wild, but he's from a very nice family." So she said, "So never mind, a Jew better than a shaygetz."

And I'm sitting here, my uncle is sitting here, Abe is sitting here, Aunt is sitting there. And I pick up his hand and I said, "Do you know, I thought you were married, Mr. Roitman?" I still called him Mr. Roitman. There was no such thing in Poland after you knew somebody. My friend Jeanie lives in Rutherford. She has neighbors, she knows them for 35 years. I said to them, "When will you call her Jeanie, when will you call her Maria? You still call each other Pany! You're in America 35 years!" But that's the way the language goes.

I said, "Mr. Roitman, I thought you were married." And he started to laugh. I said, "Yes, I asked Tzelina, what's this married man going with us for?" And he takes it off and laughs and laughs, takes off this thing, and takes my right hand, and puts it on my finger and says, he knew it by heart, says the Hariat. And my Uncle Gervic sits there, and I saw right away, and my aunt went like this (patting his arm), "David, David, it's all right. It's all right. It's only a joke." And he was a Cohen, too and he says, "No, it's not a joke. Mr. Roitman, did you have a religious father?" "Oh, yeah, my father was very religious. He went to shul every day. He wore a labsedettel and he was praying every day." "Do you know what you just did?" He said, "Yes, I said the Hariat." "Do you know that she is your wife now? I'm a witness. If you want to marry somebody else, you have to give her a get. She's your wife." And he says, "That's all right with me." And I, of course, listened to all of this. I waited till the end of the discussion. Uncle said to him, "I am not joking," he said. "You could be my son. I'm 50 years old. You have no right to marry any other girl until you free her." Of course, he didn't know that I'm not Jewish and I don't give a hoot. Even if I was Jewish those things didn't mean anything. I lost religion

when I heard that people tear a child apart, that they kill two little innocent twins in front of a mother. What G-d lets things like this happen? What did those children do?

So, and Uncle said to him, "I'm not joking, and I mean it, Mr. Roitman. Before I leave for Canada you either marry her, or you give her a Jewish divorce (pounding table) and you'll go with me to a rabbi. Because this is not the way things are done in my life."

And he said, "I'm willing to marry her." And from that day on, they started to press me, Auntie and Uncle. And I said to him, "Why did you do it?" He said, "I wanted to do it." I said, "Where the hell did you know the Hariat by heart?" He said, "I know how to pray. I could pray by heart, too. I don't do it, but I know. My father sends me. He wouldn't let me go to a Polish school, I had to go to cheder." So then the tables turned, and Auntie and Uncle were after me. But I never would have married him if I wouldn't have gotten pregnant. No way, Hariat or not, they wouldn't have even known when I would leave the city. Who cared?

INT: Were you in love with him?

EVA: No. I loved the way he danced, and every, then when I decided already, I mean, when I realized I'm pregnant, I told Auntie, "I decided to marry Abram." So she was very happy. She says, "We have one more week. So today is Thursday. Next Saturday we are leaving. So next Thursday we make a wedding." And Abe was happy, and he went with Auntie, and they bought a goose, and they bought this and they bought that, and she baked cakes and invited the few Jews that were there. There was a guy, he said he's a rabbi, I don't think he was a rabbi. It didn't bother me. I told him, "I don't have to have a rabbi. We can go and marry in city hall." But he said, "No, I would never marry a Jewish girl. I'm not religious. I don't pray, I don't believe, but I would never, for the memory of my parents, I wouldn't do it, to live with a Jewish girl without a chuppah." I said, "Okay, do what you want to do. It doesn't bother me." So next Thursday we got married.

We got married Thursday, Saturday they left for Canada, so we were left in the apartment. So it's like it was meant to be. I liked every girl, when it was got known that Abram is marrying Eva, Tzelina said, his cousin wanted to marry Tzelina. I said, "Tzelina, you know, Chil has money. And he's a good-looking guy." "You're talking about good-looking. There was the best-looking guy. You took him. Now you want me to take this one? How come Roitman didn't come to me marry him?" There was another girl, "Oh, you took the best dancing, the best singing. And you want me to marry Chaim?" Couldn't marry off neither of those two guys, and they went with us to Germany. We were crossing the border illegally, and they went with us. Chaim and Chil went with us to Germany, both unmarried. Because the girls didn't want to marry them. So I figured, if it's good enough for them, it's good enough. But there was no question. I would never have an abortion. I would have had an illegitimate child, because no matter what, this is another thing I'll never forgive Abe for in my life.

Rita was five months old and I got pregnant. I don't know. I come from a family like that, I suppose. I wouldn't let him near me, because I was in the hospital and he was running with other women, with German. He was running, his friends were not married fellows, always unmarried fellows. Wherever they went, he went with them. They went to German girls, Abe went with them. Came home, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 in the morning, and me with the baby at home. I was in the hospital, I come home, I find pictures under his underwear. I'm shoving away in the drawer a place for the baby's diapers. There are pictures on a lake, on a boat on a lake with a German girl.

INT: How many years had you been married?

EVA: I came home from the hospital. I was in the hospital, and she's named after his mother. (Sighs, pause) What's the difference? If I had to marry Abe ten times again, and if I had to go through ten times more problems that I had in my marriage, I would do it if I would know that I would have Rita again. I would do it without hesitation. There's no such thing. I never regretted it, because I have Rita. I regret that I didn't divorce him when I was young and healthy. It didn't help Rita. (phone interruption)

I was resigned not to have any children, because what they told me. And when I spoke to those doctors in Gdansk. And I was sometimes even resigned not marrying ever, because I was in love with someone whom I knew that it's finished. I hurt him, and...and it's like, the things were against us. If he would have married me, I would have stayed in Poland. He was very hurt, and he said he needs time to heal, and I understood it. I still understand it. And I wanted to leave Poland. And he said, "How am I going to leave? My two sisters are not married yet. Leon is not a healthy man," -- and he died young, that Leon, his older brother. So things were against me, and I...thought that I wouldn't even maybe will marry nobody. Oh, I fantasized that, my aunt in Argentina wrote me, "If you come to Argentina, a Jewish girl here is on the weight not with gold, but with diamonds, there are so few Jewish girls." She said, "I had an ugly cousin in the city, and she came here before the war, before me, and she would have never got married in Wlodzimierz, she would have been an old maid. Here she got a millionaire. So you can imagine who you can get." So I figured, the heck with it. I'll marry a doctor or a lawyer, and I'll be rich, and I'll have a good life at least. But I never imagined myself marrying somebody, falling in love. And it came true. I never did fall in love with nobody else. I loved Abe after we got married because he was my child's father. It's a different love. It's not...as the man of my life, no. He's a husband, he's my child's father. I never cheated on him. I abhor those things. It doesn't mean that I didn't joke around with other people. I'm a joker when I'm at a party. But he stood for everything that I didn't like. I could never compare **one nail of Abe's** with my father. I had nobody else to take an example from. I didn't have older sisters that should say, "Oh, she had a lousy husband. He's still better than the other." My only example was my father. And he was, according to me, he was another Ray. Which to me is the perfect husband, the perfect father. (Siren interruption)

So I will repeat it for the last time: I would have never, ever in my life married Abe. My goal was to leave Europe without being married and getting married either in America or

in Argentina. But first of all, I wrote my aunt that I'm not looking for a rich husband. I want to go to school. She says, "You got it. I have two businesses, I can support you. You can go to university. You can go to school." My dream was still to go to school and become educated. Then we will see further.

And, but it happened, and that part of the marriage, without question, without hesitation, I would do it ten times over, to have Rita. Because she brought meaning into my life. She brought me stability. She brought me unconditional love, only as a child and a mother can have. She's grown up now, we have an awful lot of different views on things. We have more different views than similar ones. But still she's my safe anchor. She's my safe harbor.

INT: How so?

EVA: Because she's mine. I didn't have to go and look for an adoption. I didn't have to, she came to me, and I...I don't know. I consider a child a gift, as it is. I got pregnant, I started to tell you, Rita was five months old. I went and I had an abortion, which I will regret till the last dying breath. I would have had a boy.

INT: Why did you?

EVA: Because he was crying, "What if something goes wrong with the abortion and you die?" Women died. I said, "Well, I certainly am going to see that I find a real doctor, not a butcher in an alley." And I went to a real gynecologist. And I said "But with this wife, you're not going." I realized how much he loved Rita. He would take her two, three months old, and change the diaper in the middle of the street, and his friends would look, and he didn't care. He wasn't ashamed. And he wanted children. And I said, "With the second wife, not with this one." I didn't hurt him. I hurt me, and I hurt Rita, because now she's grown up she understands it, and she accepts it, I suppose. But when she was small I **always** heard, "I have no grandparents. I don't even have one grandma. And no brother and no sister. I have **nobody**!" And it hurt me. And I did it to her. And who knows what would have happened to that boy?

INT: Why did you decide to do that?

EVA: Because I didn't want to give him another pleasure. First of all, there was never money for anything. We were dirt poor. We were poorer than a church mouse in Germany. If my uncle would have sent me a few dollars, the first year we came to Germany, till I got in touch with my uncle, till he managed to find someone who goes from New York to Munich, till he sent the money through somebody, the first winter in Munich, when Rita was born, I walked around the whole winter in rubber overshoes. I had no money. I needed coal to heat the...we lived in a one furnished room. But I had to heat it. The German fellow put in a little belly stove, a tiny one. So I looked on that belly stove. At 5:00 in the morning I would get up. That pipe was going out the window, had to be cleaned every day, otherwise the wind would blow the soot into the room. Abe slept. I dragged water from downstairs myself. I chopped wood myself. I dragged the

coal. I did all of those things. I needed money for the baby, first of all. So I didn't have money to buy myself a pair of shoes. But I didn't see it in my house, by my father's house. That I was stupid. Of course, now I know I was stupid. I was very naive where men were concerned. In spite of being raped and having so many men, they were not men that I had anything in common with. That put me off men. I was very naive. If I wouldn't have been that naive I would have never married Abe or let him close to me. I was naive. And...I had no experience with going out with men, maybe breaking a date with men. When I was in Danzig, I went to the movies. I had to tell her which movie I'm going to see, and at 9:00 I had to be at home.

The...(pause) It's simple to me. Now that I look back, it's simple. I was never in love with Abe. I loved him because he was Rita's father. I kept a good house for him. The house was always spotless. Never mind that he gave away the shirts to a German woman to wash. He didn't like [how] she ironed, I did it over. Because I didn't want my husband to look bad, and say, "What kind of a wife does he have? Look at how that collar is pressed." I prided myself on having things done the right way. And when I got money, a fellow would come to the house. The first time I got, a fellow came to the house, "Is there a Eva Roitman?" I said, "I'm Eva Roitman." Okay. He named his name. He said, "I have a package for you. 300 American dollars your uncle gave me in Brooklyn, and I'm delivering it to you." I didn't take a penny of that. I gave it to my husband, because in my father's house, whatever my father made in the business, it was a business, it was a grain business, Mother had nothing to do with it. There were three partners managing a grain business, buying from the farmers, selling into the people that make flour. Mother had absolutely, she never stepped into that place there. No wives came into this. There was, we had a dining room set, and the table in the dining room, every table in Poland, every good table had a drawer. Nothing was ever closed. Father came home at night, he put the money in, it was there. Mother wanted to go tomorrow, make her hair, buy meat, buy a chicken, whatever, buy material for a skirt, she took the drawer, opened it up, took the money out and went.

INT: So you saw money being handled by men, so you decided that...

EVA: No, my mother took it when she needed it. She didn't go in and say, "Wait a minute, I forgot. I have to ask Father to take money." No.

INT: But he took care of the major money matters in the house.

EVA: Yeah. Father came home, he counted, he counted the money, what they took in, if everything goes together. If there were other workers working there, that there were three partners, and there were some workers who were taking for the, carrying the stuff and emptying the sacks and giving the sacks back to the farmer. There were some Polish or Ukrainian guys working, a couple of them. So he, I suppose, counted if nothing was stolen, because he knew what came in. My father was by profession a bookkeeper. Then he went into business. But he kept the bookkeeping books. So he always counted at the end of the day, and whatever was his share, I suppose, was always in the drawer. Money was always in the drawer.

INT: Let me ask you something. I've listened to your story of how you got through the war, and you always made the decisions yourself. You always came up with an answer of where to go and how to get through, and how to survive. And now you're married. So did you give over your, this strong sense of, as I see it, strong sense of responsibility for your life...

EVA: To Abe?

INT: Yeah, did you give it over to him?

EVA: I did. Because that's what I saw in my father's house. But it took me a year to be married. And it's the second year, and we have already, we cannot go to America, we were refused, because the people that were there from '45, and '46, there was like a line waiting. We came there in '48, so we had to wait till the '46 Jews go away.

INT: You came to Germany in '48?

EVA: Yeah. Winter '48, '49. So we couldn't go to America, so I wrote to Uncle David. He send me papers. Canada had a small quota, and within a year we were going to Canada. And I realized I don't even have a decent dress to wear to Canada, because every time money comes, the men handles the money. But there was, Rita was a year old, she started to eat already, like chicken soup or whatever. I would buy a piece of meat, a small one, with a bone. Every piece of meat that I bought had to have a bone in it. And I asked the butcher, "Could you give me an extra bone?" They always gave you. And the extra bone had a little bit of meat on it. That was my meat that I ate. The meat was for Abe with the baby. He never said, "How come you're always eating the bone?" Never. I was still pregnant, we came, when we went through the Polish border at night, we had to run 40 kilometers in eight hours, and the man that took us through the border was paid with the $300. Uncle David gave me $300, I wasn't even married to Abe. I said, "Here is $300." Because he was saying that we will have to go to Stettin, and there are people who will take you across the border. The guy charges. He's a German guy, he comes from Berlin and takes a group. If there is at least ten, fourteen people in a group, he takes you over, $100 a person. So I said, "Here. I got $300 from my uncle in New York." Maybe that's why he married me, because I had a rich uncle in America. And I gave it to him. I don't know what he did with the other $100. I gave him, he paid the $100 for me, and the $100 for him, that guy.

INT: So after you got married you decided....

EVA: I gave him over. I gave him over the managing. By then I decided that Abe, I heard, it came to this, that his friend, he made some friends in Munich when we came. No, I started to tell you, when we came through the border, first thing we came is to Berlin. Berlin had a blockade. You couldn't get out of Berlin. We had to wait for a way to get out of Berlin. And if you were sick they tried to get you out. How did we get out

being three months in Berlin to Munich? Because I was pregnant. So I came into this category that they had to get me out of Berlin. Everything was rationed in Berlin.

And we lived in a house for old people. People that are retired. And every day for breakfast I got two, three lumps of sugar, because I was pregnant. Abe couldn't drink the tea without sugar, or the coffee. I gave Abe the sugar. Abe took it without no compunction at all. He didn't say, "Okay, one for you, one for me." I drank the sugar. He was one of nine kids, and he couldn't drink without it. I was a single kid, one of five only living, the rest died, and I was spoiled rotten by the whole family. I got paid to eat an egg and I didn't want it.

INT: So why do you think you were so giving towards him and so...

EVA: He can't, I got used by Hitler to drink with tea, without tea, with water, without water, with sugar, without sugar. Hitler taught me. He most probably wasn't taught in Siberia nothing. I gave it to him, "Here, drink." He didn't say, what do you mean? My woman, even not his wife, even a woman is pregnant with your child, at least share it. Say, okay, there are two lumps. You take one of them. No, he took, put it in and he drank it.

INT: I just think it's interesting that...

EVA: When I gave him the money he paid for the border. We came to Germany. And after being in Munich already, then his brother wrote him, the minute we came to Germany, through somebody, his brother sent a letter from Israel. His brother was in Israel from '48, and that was already '49, and his brother told him, "Don't you dare come here, because the situation is so bad that I'm going to come back to Germany. I work like a horse the whole week, and we can buy meat only once a week. We have to live with vegetables, and we have a new baby, and Doba cannot be here." That means his wife, my sister-in-law who passed away last year. "Doba cannot take the heat. She suffers so from the heat that I have to leave Israel, so don't come here. Unless you want to come, be by yourself, because I'm coming back to Europe." So we decided to stay. We started to work on America, and it didn't work out. And then I realized, when I lived there in that German fellow's furnished room for two and a half years. Rita was three months, I moved in, I left there, Rita was two and three months. For two years I lived there.

(END TAPE FOURTEEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOURTEEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: ...came to play with me. I would sit outside with Rita on the grass, and she was about twelve years old. She would go home from school, stop by to play with the babies. The Germans loved babies terribly. So she would play with Rita and she says, "Oh, Mrs.," one day, I don't know, out of the blue she says, "Mrs. Roitman," she says to me in German, "My mommy said that Mr. Roitman is the best dancer she ever danced with." We were there about, I was there about five, six months, living. I said, "How does your

mommy know?" She said, "Oh, because Mommy went dancing Sunday, and Mr. Roitman was there dancing. And he found out that we are your neighbors, so they danced the whole evening." And her mommy was one of those floozies. She had two illegitimate kids. In Germany, in the Scandinavian countries, too, I found out. You can have a child or two illegitimately. There was no mark on the girl. It can happen. You were accepted into society. You were not considered beneath the one that never had any kids. It was just like that. To me it was very foreign, because in Ukraina, in Poland, if you had an illegitimate child, nine times out of ten, nobody wanted to marry you. If the guy that you had the baby didn't marry you, nobody wanted to marry you, absolutely.

So I found out, and then a Jewish woman came to me, she said, "You're not doing right," she says. I said, "What?" "With your husband." I said, "You are only three, four years older than me. What are you telling me, what am I doing wrong?" She says, "But my husband doesn't go alone to see operettas, to see the Fledermaus, and this and that, all the Straus operettas, all the Liszt, all the whatever, and operas sometimes, and theater." And she says, "Mr. Roitman always goes alone, and if not alone," -- there were some women, Jewish women, there was one, a Mrs. Vannet. And that Mrs. Vannet, she did on her husband like hell. He was one of those traveling salesmen. And she was **never** at home. And later I found out, the money that my uncle sent me and I gave it to Abe, Mrs. Vannet had use of it more than I did. And I had no money to buy shoes, but he went to see, he saw every German operetta, and I was home with the baby, because I couldn't afford a babysitter. All I knew is, I told him, "Every three months I want a few marks to take pictures of Rita." Because everybody had a camera, Abe never had money to buy a camera. So once in three months, and that's the way Rita has, every three months I have albums of her. Every three months I took her to the photographer, and he made a series of pictures. Spend the day at the photographer's, he took pictures, and I should have a, that's what I have left over from Germany.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's April 28th, 1996. I'd like to go back a little bit. We talked about your marriage, and the reasons for getting married, and we spoke a little bit about the early years of your marriage.

EVA: How far was it? I just got married, or I was getting married?

INT: You got married, and then we went a little further, because you were explaining some things about your married life. But what I'd like to do now is just get a chronological picture of how you got into Germany, how you got across the border from Poland into Germany.

EVA: I think I told you.

INT: We didn't discuss it.

EVA: I told you we were on the border at night, four kilometers in five hours. We had to make...

INT: You had to pay someone to get you across?

EVA: Yeah. A German fellow came.

INT: Okay. All right. And then how did you get to America? You were waiting for your...

EVA: Oh, that's way off. Well, I'll try and capsulize the two and a half years in Germany. When we gathered in Szczecin, and we had to wait there for about a week till he was waiting for a...you had to have a night without stars, without a moon, so he would take us. And he was waiting for the group to assemble. Finally, the night between the fourteenth and the fifteenth, from the fourteenth till the fifteenth of December, in '48, we crossed the border, and we had to make it, it was murder. Even I was so young, but I mean, I was wearing a pair of, something similar to army boots, because you couldn't go barefoot. It was December. The earth was plowed, but the ground wasn't yet frozen solid, so you kind of, on the top was a thin layer of ice as thin as a wafer, and then you just sunk in there. And it was very hard. And...

INT: You didn't have the baby yet?

EVA: No. I was six weeks pregnant. Did I tell you about how I found out in Szczecin that I was, I was looking for a woman doctor. I knew I'm pregnant, but I wanted a confirmation from a doctor, but I wouldn't go to a man. So there was this Jewish family that we stayed with in, she was a grandmother already. So she had a telephone. She phoned and she phoned till she found a woman doctor. So my husband didn't want to go with me to that doctor. He was ashamed. But she started to argue with him, and she just simply told him off, so he went with me. But he stayed outside. He wouldn't come into the waiting room, even. So the doctor told me that you are about six weeks pregnant.

Anyway, we stayed there, I think, a week or two weeks in Szczecin. Then we kind of assembled in a little forest, and at 10:00 at night we started to go. We had to make the 40 was it, or 45 kilometers it was between 10:00 at night and 4:00 in the morning. Because he said if it should be a sunny day tomorrow -- nobody had a radio, nobody bothered whether the forecast will be rain or sun -- then the sun might come up early, or it might get light a little bit. Like pre-dawn. "And I'm going to leave you if we don't make it." So he told us to begin with, "Whoever cannot do it, just stay right here, because I'm not going to wait for nobody." We had to pass the farmers between the lands had like ditches, so the water would run off. So sometimes you would just go and fall into that water and get up and go again. I never had pants. I never wore pants. So I wore pants of old Abe's pants. He wore the new suit, I wore pants. And those pants became so wet, so laden with the water and the dirt that we, the earth, but we made it. We got into a little forest.

INT: Were you with a group of people?

EVA: Yeah. There were about, somewhere between ten and fourteen. I don't remember. I think there were fourteen people. Our own group, there were people, we met people that we didn't know. But our own group consisted of two, four, six people. We, another married pair, and another two young men. I forgot who they were. But there was a girl and a boy who married on Saturday night was it, or Sunday. We got married on Thursday. And she loaned me her wedding dress. She was a 16 and I was an 8, or a six. So I just gathered it up with a, it was a very nice blue, some kind of a crepe or whatever dress, and she had it made for herself. And I got married.

So we came to that small forest, and he got us all together, and he told us, "You have to sit here, the whole day until it gets dark again. I am going to go, and I'll bring back, the farmer knows that I'm bringing a group, but I have to tell him that we are here. When nightfall comes, I'll come, we will come with cars and get you, and you will sleep over at the farmer's the second night, and then I'll take you to Berlin." He got paid half of the money in Szczecin, the other half we were supposed to give him when we reached Berlin.

Anyway, he left us. It wasn't light yet, it was dark. And then we sat in that forest, and he told us, "You better keep quiet," he said. "I'm not here, and even if I would be, I would leave you. If you make noises, or talk loud or laugh, you might just find yourself surrounded by Russian soldiers." So we had to lie there. I felt lousy, and Abe had a headache. And the whole group, we were tired. And the only thing good that happened, it was a sunny day, and the pants got dry and the other stuff dried out. We took off our shoes. One guy, through the whole night when we were walking, he was always about fifteen paces behind us. And when we were in that little forest waiting for the nightfall, for the day to go through, he disappeared somewhere. And we thought that he went on his own to Berlin. Nobody knew him, nobody knew where he came from.

Anyway, it got dark. And the German fellow with the farmer came with two machines, or one truck, I don't remember. But they took us away. They brought us to the farm, and there he said, "Now," he said, "You can make yourself decent. There is one water for everybody. Not for baths, but each gets, you get a sinkful of water, you wash yourself, you will get supper, whatever," I don't even remember what. But we had a decent supper. And a place to sleep. "The women will get some beds, and the men you can bunk any place you want." So who cared where, as long as it wasn't cold and it was in a house? So we slept the next day, in the morning, whoever had, all right. Whoever didn't have, the farmer's wife provided, was with kerchiefs. And they had the, I think it was two cars they picked us up. And we got into the cars, and she said, "We have to pile into two cars." And he said, "When we will come within a mile of the border, the men have to leave the cars, we cannot have six, eight people in a car. Because that alone will stop us at the border." So the border was between East and West Germany. We were already in Germany. And he got the men out, and he said, "You just keep on walking. You just keep on walking. I'll be ahead of you about fifteen paces. You just keep on walking. You're farmers." And he told us not to get dressed fancy. He said, "You're just farmers

going to the city to buy stuff." Well, you have to pray that nobody stops you and asks you for whatever. And we got through the border.

INT: How did you feel that time?

EVA: I can't, it's undescribable. We, I didn't walk. I was in the car. The women were in the cars. And he said, "I'll stop about half a mile after the," he said half a kilometer after the border, "and I'll wait for you." Of course, we were very nervous if they will let the fellows through. I was just married a month. The other girl was just married a month. And when they came through the border I was thirsty. There was not a drop of water in that forest. I didn't drink for 24 hours, and we came through the original Polish-German border, in that forest the whole morning, there was no water. Nobody told us to take water. People took some hard-boiled eggs with them, but they even felt worse. They ate and they couldn't drink nothing. And I figured that I am pregnant already. I mean, I knew it myself. And I didn't have a drink of water. And it was terrible. But when we came to the farmer, I drank, and then again for about half a day I didn't have a drink of anything and we couldn't stop, traveled to Berlin, and we had, the checkpoint was East Berlin and West Berlin. In the middle of Berlin we crossed into West Germany. And when we stopped, I didn't know. You go, you know, you just drive by and there is like a gate, and soldiers, and he would stop and talk -- one of the farmers and him were driving the cars. And he would, I don't know what they would ask him. He would tell them, and we women, we would pretend talking among ourselves and stuff like this. And he waved us go, and we went, and when we stopped I said, "So where are we?" He said, "You are in the American Zone."

INT: How did you feel?

EVA: I couldn't believe it. And then we waited for about over half an hour till the fellows came through. And then he said, "Well, now," he said, "I'm going to get you, like I promised you. I'm going to deliver you to a place where all the Jews gather." They had like a little Handelplatz. They were doing, there was, you could call it a luncheonette. You could get a drink, a wine, a water, I don't know. You could have a sandwich. But he said, "I'm going to deliver you there. You talk to the Jewish people, they'll tell you where you are if you don't believe me, and you pay me and I say good-bye." And I don't remember, one of the men asked him, "Where was that fellow that was with us, a single fellow, and he always stayed away from everybody? Where is he?" He says, "He's gone. When you went to sleep with the farmer he was gone already. He went on his own." And somebody asked him, "Who is he?" Do you believe it that he was from the, it was the Polish police, the (?) like the KGB he ran away from. And he told him, "I am going to be walking separate from the group. And I have my revolver with me. If we're surrounded by the Russians, I'm shooting myself, so you better be prepared."

INT: So he was running away from the secret police.

EVA: And he said, "They are not catching me alive, because if I shoot myself it will be a merciful death," he said. "because if I get into their hands I'll be suffering who knows how long till they kill me?" So then we found out who he was.

We got to that point, and I was, I didn't feel good. I felt nauseous and this and that, and all I wanted is a drink. And someone came out with a glass. My husband spoke, Abe spoke to some Jewish fellow there and said, "My wife doesn't feel good. Do you maybe have a drink?" And they hand me a tall glass like this with a brown liquid in it. And I said, "What is it, wine?" "No, no, no, it's not wine, you can drink it." I tasted it. Since I was born and after that and before that, and I live in America already, it took me to be in Germany in Munich for about six months I couldn't decide what it was, more than six months, a year. We didn't have money to buy anything for myself. I didn't know what I drank, but this was the taste of nectar.

INT: What was it?

EVA: Coca Cola! (laughs) I never drank it in my life. Honey, we didn't see Coke. Where, in Poland? Who saw Coke?

INT: That's what he gave you? (laughs)

EVA: My G-d, it was, I have never in my life, you couldn't compare it to anything in this world, whatever. I mean, I'm crazy about coffee ice cream, pizza and all that stuff. Never, ever, has anything tasted like that drink. I drank the whole glass. It was one of those tall Coca Cola glasses. Except now I remember that something was written. It said in white letters, it said, "Coca Cola." But I didn't **know** what it is. I never saw it, never tasted it.

INT: Tell me a little bit about what it was like in the DP camp. I know you were there for two years.

EVA: Oh, no, no, no. We were not in a camp. When we came there, first of all those fellows, the Jewish guys who were there already for a number of years, they told us that you go. They gave us an address. "Now get yourself a taxi all together and go to the Jewish," there is a Jewish Committee, they called it. A Comitat. "And they will settle you somewhere," he said, "because we have a blockade. You cannot go to Munich." I told him, "We want to go to Munich." He said, "You can't go. You have to go by plane. There is no way," he said, "and it's very hard." But he said, "Every once in awhile a group comes, and they settle them somewhere. Don't worry, you're okay now. You're nearly in America." And they were so, they took us, we went to that committee. They wouldn't talk to us. We had to go and take showers, all of us. Which I was blissfully thankful for. And while we took the showers, a woman stuck her hand through the curtain and said, "You take this stuff." No, before we went to the showers, she powdered our heads. I said, "What is that?" She said, "This is for lice." I said, "I never had lice." "Never mind, just do it." And I did it. And then she gave us some kind of a...it was like a brown soap, the color of that thing there. And she said, "You have to wash yourself."

That soap smelled to high heaven, but we washed ourself. They are afraid that we are contaminated, who knows with what.

And then she said, "You cannot use those," I don't remember. I think they gave us some clothing. And they took us, they interviewed us, names, this, that, where from, where born, stuff like this. They were all Jewish women. But they spoke German, or Jewish or Polish or whatever. And she said, "The American Zone is filled up to here. The English Zone has their own Jews who come from England here because they want to go somewhere." But she says, "The only place I can..." And she says, "I'm not going to take all of you. I am just going to take the two married couples. And you will go and live in an old people's home in the French Zone." That was the poorest zone of all. They were, I mean, if you wanted to buy something, you went either to the English Zone, not the zone, the English quarter of Berlin, or the American quarter. If you had enough money, you could buy anything you wanted in the American quarter. But being that we didn't have money, so they gave us a room.

There were four bunk beds. Two on one side and two on the other. I chose to be on the top. I don't like when somebody's up above me. So once I nearly fell off that bed. I was standing, I mean, I was young. What did I know? What am I allowed to do? This is the board. I was standing here, gripping with my toes the board and making the bed, and I nearly tipped over. I would have been gone with Rita together. But you're young. You know, you hold onto air.

So we stayed there for three months. That was the place, I told you, they gave me every day a couple of cubes sugar to drink the tea, so Abe said he cannot. He didn't say he wants it. I said, "Why aren't you drinking your coffee?" or whatever. He said, "I cannot drink without sugar." So I drank without sugar. I gave him, he drank it.

INT: Was he working during these three months?

EVA: No, no, no. Nobody worked. Nobody worked. We told them that we want to get to Bavaria. Bavaria was the American Zone in Germany mostly. So they said we have to wait. We have no passenger planes. It was kind of a half a war situation. I mean, the Americans and the Russians and the French didn't fight among themselves, but the Russians surrounded Berlin. They said, "We took it; it's ours. You want to stay in Berlin, we surround you, you'll have to get out, go by plane." So he said, "We cannot run. It's not completely free situation here yet. Berlin is surrounded by Russians, and everywhere you go you have to cross a Russian border. It doesn't matter which way, because we're surrounded by Russians." So what we do, they had nothing, the Americans. But they could afford it. The American Zone was rich. They brought even coal from Munich. From a vegetable to slate to Coca Cola to coal to you name it, everything was brought in by planes. He said, "Now in the winter we get mostly, the most open planes come with coal. When we get, so whoever is willing to sit in a plane that we had coal can go to Munich." And I picked up my hand, I said, "I don't care what you transport."

Well, we were there for, I would say a month. Because there were people before us waiting to get out. And finally we got on a plane and we went to Munich. In Munich I had a very far relative of mine. His grandfather and my grandmother or the other way around, were sisters and brothers. I saw him before the war once or twice. He was two years younger, he was four years older than me. His brother was my age. We went to school together. Him I saw sometimes once in a blue moon at a wedding. And I knew that he lived in Munich. And when we came to Munich, we started asking around. I wrote to him I think, I asked around, and I was, I don't remember. Maybe Uncle Gervic, Uncle David has his address he gave me, I don't remember how it was. But I came to him and I was three weeks in his, he had an apartment three rooms. He had a wife and a girl, and his wife was pregnant with the second child, a boy, who was born the same time Rita was born, so we were there with him for a few weeks, and then I realized that my husband is not going to, he's not one of those, he takes matters into his own hands and sees that this, whatever he can do, he does, that the wife should be somehow...he knew that he wanted to go to Israel, his brother's there. But you don't go like from here to there. It's not America. You want to go to New Jersey, all right. No, I'm going to go to Delaware. So you get on a bus and you go. You cannot go to Israel, you got to register, you got to wait, you got to be somewhere. It might take months. So he thought he'd stay with my cousin. But there was the same kind of relations. There were two boys. The one we were staying with, my cousin, there was another one. There were two boys from two different sisters. They were both named Simon. The other Simon, I remembered more, because he lived closer to us. And when I met him, he didn't have a wife. He was alone, and still single. I kind of felt that he would not be hindered by a wife and by children. I said, "How do we find living quarters? We don't have any money. We can't afford to get an apartment. Besides, if I could get to Israel, stay here only a month or two, I'm willing to go tomorrow if they take me." He said, "It doesn't go like this. There is a special...camp outside of Munich where the people who want, it used to be a camp for people who lived through Auschwitz or whatever. Those people are gone already, whatever they wanted to go. '45, '46," he said, "They've gone already to America. Those people had privileges to go right away, wherever they want. They were given. Now who comes is not connected to Auschwitz, to nothing, so it's just a matter of waiting till your time comes and you are..."

INT: Did you want to go to Israel?

EVA: I didn't particularly want to go, but look, I got married, and I'm pregnant, and he has a brother there. I didn't have no brother, no sister. And one thing I knew, I'm in the free world, and if I don't like Israel, I'll go to America. But meanwhile the child has to be born somewhere, and I didn't want her to be born in Poland or Germany.

So I said, "Shimon, can you help me?" And he says, "All right. How about tomorrow we'll get into a taxi." I said, "I don't need a taxi." The three months went by and I stopped throwing up and stuff like this. I said, "I'm all right." So we took, I don't remember, a streetcar or something. We went like...let's say from you to King of Prussia. We went and there was this, they simply, what the Americans did, they took like they

came, it was close to the, first of all, all the barracks were full of American soldiers. So if there were a few villages close to the army barracks, they did the same thing that the Russians did with the Polacks there in Poland. They settled the people close to the barracks. They took the Germans and they told them: pack whatever you want. Just leave the four walls. But get out. We need the houses, we need the whole village or two." Eisenhower did it. He started it. "We need five villages. For the people that your Fuhrer killed half or maimed half or whatever." And he took over, and the Germans, I don't know, they went to live with families, whatever, but they just simply displaced them, told them to go. Most probably a lot of them were innocent people, but they had to go.

So one of those villages was made into a camp. They had doctors there. They had, like you didn't get a house for yourself. You just, it was a temporary thing. Who goes to Israel? Israel was only a matter of about six months waiting. America could have been two, three years, four years. Who knows? But we told them we want to go to Israel, so they gave us, there was, you went into that camp. When we came it was already kind of the end. It was '48, '49 already. We came to Germany, to Munich, it was already we came in March, I think, to Munich, or February, something like this. So it was already late. This was the only village left. All the other villages were given back to the Germans already. But this was the only one. It was a transit village. As a matter of fact, first it was only for Israel, then they made it like not far from there was the American consul, and on this side was the Israeli, and there was the Argentinian or whatever, or Australian. Whatever you want, you...They had a bakery, you could get breads. You registered, you came into that village. We got a room. We got a room, and first of all we had to go through doctors and the doctor told me that you cannot go. By that time I was already finished four months, I think. I started to feel the baby. And he told me, "You cannot go to Israel at this point because we have no housing. You would have to live in a, what do you call it?

INT: Caravan like.

(END TAPE FOURTEEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FIFTEEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: What they did is they took, between Tel Aviv and Haifa, or Tel Aviv and Yafo there is a highway. So along the highway they build little camps like, or villages or whatever. And when he wrote to his brother, it says, "Derech Yafo." That means the road to Yafo. And families with children, they just made cement walls, a flat roof, and a cement floor. They didn't have enough lumber. So they call it a shikkun, whatever it's made of. I don't know what the word means, I have no idea. But my sister-in-law used to say, she was very happy in that shikkun because it was cool. Every day you took a, from time to time you took a pail of water and you just kind of swooshed it on that floor, and it was cool. The cement was cool.

INT: It means a housing project.

EVA: Yeah. Well, that was the best they could do those days. And we were there in that camp for about two months. You got certain provisions. There used to be kitchens and everything, and you would go get a ready meal. When we came, all of that was finished. Like people were coming from, there were camps in Freiman, camps in cities, in other cities all over western Germany. There were camps with Jews. And they were already, they go through the whole thing there, they would just come here to wait. In this camp it would be like a transit camp to go to either Israel or America, that would be the camp. Because all the consuls, all the consulates were in those barracks. The soldiers were in barracks, but there were some buildings there, so in the buildings, the consulates were. And that's where they didn't even want to locate the Americans or the other consulates in the middle of Munich, because they were still, you know, leery of the Germans.

So there were a lot of Jews who came, stayed a week, and they went. They went here, there, they went away from that camp. So the camp pretty much, we were there for about two months, and the camp was half empty. They gave us an empty room, they gave me, I said, "I have nothing. We came across the border." So they gave us some white big sheets, army sheets. I don't remember how many sheets they gave me. I asked for a table, they said, "There are so many empty houses, you can take whatever is in that house. We don't care if you take a table." But they gave us two army cots -- for me one, for him one. Then I made a curtain, there was a window in the room. And it was on the second floor, but it didn't bother me the stairway. And I had to go for water downstairs. There was no water. It used to be just most probably a bedroom where the German kids slept. And I made it as nice as I could. I got a couple of orange crates and covered it with a piece of that cloth, and it was a table, we ate on it. But little by little, I found, he would go out and stand there and wait, like he tried to get the...to make a few pennies there, I don't know how much he made, because I never ask him, and he never told me. Later on I found out that he had money to go to dances and stuff like that. So there would be a little square, a little tiny square, and there was a luncheonette, they would drink a beer. And if an American soldier or an English soldier came to sell, mostly the American soldiers. They were the richest soldiers, too. They had the PX cards. They would sell, they would get, those that knew them already. Like there was one Jewish fellow named Jacob. He was there already two years when we came. So he knew, so he would tell that soldier. The soldier, the American, would come, a Black guy, and he would say, "Could you get me a radio, and could you get me this and this?" and he'd say, "Okay, I'll be back in about a day or two." So he would get it at the PX store there and bring him, and he would sell it. He would buy it for pennies from the American soldier. American soldiers would get, they had rations, they had all kinds. They were never short of money, of anything.

INT: Did you have the baby in that place?

EVA: Yeah. No, no, not in that place. And I found a bed with a mattress. So I helped, even though I was pregnant, I helped him lug this bed, we took it apart, so we had a bed. And then I found, the German woman gave us a dresser. But I found a dresser that was about three streets away, and it had a marble top. So I myself lugged that marble top for

streets and streets and up, and after that I started to bleed and I was afraid I'll lose the baby, and I stopped it.

INT: How did you feel being in Germany, around German people?

EVA: I was scared to death. Well, in that little camp I didn't see no Germans. But yeah. I got special privileges. I had got from the German government cards to get, everything was on... rationed. In West Germany the Germans were still on rations. I got, I was allowed a half a liter milk a day. And I don't remember what else. White flour. Some...what do you call those things? They're like flakes, you cook them. Oats. Certain things I had it, I got it. So I remember it was already June and I stood once in line for that milk and fainted dead away. And they all, the German women [said], "But she's pregnant. She's pregnant. Why don't you go to the head of the line?" I said, I didn't know. And I didn't even want them to know that I'm not German. So, but anyway.

We were there for about two months in that camp, and he received a letter from his brother that he shouldn't come to Israel, because the brother is getting ready to leave Israel because it's impossible. Impossible, I cannot even, his brother was a good worker, a strong guy. And he said, "I cannot make enough money." Israel had rations. Except that vegetables was plentiful and very cheap, and he says, "The whole week I have to go to work eating only vegetables, and the children grow without, we have meat once a week. And most of all," he said, that his wife, my sister-in-law suffers from headaches from the heat. "She walks around," he said, "Debbie walks around the whole day with a wet towel around her forehead." So when he wrote us that, that was it. We went and we registered for...we didn't. My husband, he did things. He went and he registered, and it was, I told him that I, he told me what he's going to do, and I said, "Don't do it." He registered that we came a year before we came, because the earlier you came, the earlier you could go. So of course, what they do, they paid money, my husband, and he found a cousin of his there, a very far cousin. His sister-in-law's cousin. And they both paid somebody money. What they do is they scratch your name and they put my name. When it came to that, the American, we had to go through the CIA. I didn't. I said, "You can come whenever you want. I come in the year that I came, okay? And we got married here by a rabbi. The rabbi went away to Israel. That I'm going to lie. But I'm not going to lie." And I told him the truth. "I came, I met my husband here, we got married. The rabbi went away. We were never married." So how did it come about? When we went already to American consul, we waited for about a year. We were called to the consulate. And so they called in Abe first, the CIA doesn't call in together husband and wife, separately.

INT: What's the CAA?

EVA: Central Intelligence.

INT: Oh, CIA, okay.

EVA: And then they called me in. And he asked me, "When did you come?" And I told him. "I came the winter of '48." And he said, "Do you know when your husband came?" I said, "He told me that he came shortly before me. I don't know how long shortly before me." He said, "Your husband was lying to you." I said, "I don't know that." But anyway, I told him the truth, when I came and stuff like that. And he said, "I'm sorry Mrs. Roitman, but we can put **you** on the list if you want to. You check out. But your husband doesn't check out. If you're willing to leave your husband, you can divorce him or separate and go by yourself." I said, "I'm not going anywhere." So they took us off the list.

INT: This is because your husband had lied?

EVA: Yeah. Because...anyway. And when we went already for the visa I already had. We were in that camp for about four months. No, we were, when we, two months an we got the letter from Israel. After that I told my husband, "I don't want my child to be born here. Let's get a room." I already realized that Abe is never home before 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 in the morning. And he never makes any money. I have always to write letters to my uncle and beg for money, and beg for money, and I thought to myself: all right. We're going to get a room. I'm not asking for much, just a furnished room. And I started to go around to, they told me, I asked people. They told me, "This village not, but the village after that, there are German families who were not displaced, and they have rooms for rent. Some guys, single guys used to live there." And then I went there, and the first German house I went in, she said yes. I said, "But as you see, I'm going to have a baby." And she said, "That's all right. We love children." And I thought to myself, she looked very nice. She had a little girl about six years old, and I thought to myself, if they have children... I was scared to death, but I had no choice. Because I didn't know. That camp, they told us that the camp might exist for another half a year, that's it. And it will be closed up. When the immigration to Israel is finished, that's it. That was still a big immigration. But they said it's only trickling now, and when the trickle stops, that's it. The embassies will go to the city, they started to, you know, everything started to go back to normal, to civilian life.

So I said to him, "We have to get." So we got a room. And I remember we had some money, my uncle sent, and I paid the German fellow for a month's rent ahead. And we took the bed with us.

INT: Explain how you feel about the German people at this point.

EVA: I was scared.

INT: What were you afraid of?

EVA: I was scared to death. My husband, of course, came to the hospital. He took me to the hospital. I was ashamed to go to the hospital, because this was one door, and this was the other. I was in here, here was another pregnant woman, and Saturday night she went to the hospital and she had a baby. Yeah? Her husband came back Sunday

morning, and said, "I have a daughter." And I have already stomach aches from 2:00 at night. And there was a woman who was going to Israel downstairs. She waited for a plane for two, three days. She came from somewhere else. And she said to my husband, she said, "Why don't you take her to the hospital? She's having the baby." And I said to her, "Just because she had a baby, I'm having it?" The truth is Rita was born. She was supposed to come the end of July, she came the eleventh of July. Usually with boys you go the whole nine months, they say. But anyway. I was resisting. I still went to a dentist, and the dentist, she was a woman, she said, "Oh, no, you're making a face at me every half hour. I'm not drilling in your tooth, forget it." I had to fill a tooth. And she sent me home, she said, "I think you're having the baby." So anyway, I waited, and he already, that woman started to scream at him. She said, "What are you going to do? The woman has swollen ankles. She's having a baby!" And she said to him, "At night you're not in the city. You are a half an hour drive from the hospital. You're not even going to get a taxi at night." So he said to me, "Let's go to the hospital." So I said, "I'm going to go to the hospital when it gets dark." And I waited till 9:00, 9:30 at night, that the neighbors shouldn't see me that I go to a taxi to the hospital because, I said, "Most probably you'll bring me back, they'll check me, and I will be the laughing stock. Just because she went, I have to go." Sure enough, he took me to the hospital at 9:30, they never let me go home. At 2:45 in the morning Rita was born. I had pains the whole day already. I still cleaned the house. I baked cookies for Abe, and he was still bemoaning, "What am I going to eat here, I will be alone." When I think of it, how stupid I was.

INT: So it sounds like he wasn't coping very well.

EVA: He was spoiled rotten by his mother, because like his brother used to tell me, "I was named Itchie. He wasn't named Abram. He was called "Avramele." And I always got a piece of black bread. The older brother got a piece of black bread. But Mother always found money to buy either an onion roll or a crescent roll or just a little roll. Avramele always got a little white roll. And that's the way he is now. He cannot pick up a tire." He used to say, his brother that. He was the youngest. He was the youngest one.

INT: Could you take a minute now, or a few minutes, and tell me what you know of your husband's background, where he comes from, what he went through in the war, stories that he would tell you?

EVA: Let me finish with that, you asked me about the Germans. When I moved into that German house Rita was two months old, I think. Six weeks or eight weeks old. I was so scared, that if it rained, I would leave her upstairs alone, better crying than to ask the German woman, "Bring her downstairs." They were such nice people, those Germans, when I got to know them. I was scared to leave her with Germans. I was scared to death to leave the child.

INT: What were you afraid of?

EVA: I was just scared of Germans! Didn't I live enough through having them over my head? I was scared.

INT: Did they know you were Jewish?

EVA: Yeah, sure. They knew from the beginning. What was the question? Oh, about my husband? I know what he told me and other people told me, then his brother, his sister-in-law came from Israel to us to Canada. Yeah, and even though his brother wrote to us that we shouldn't come because they're getting ready, it took, I realized that nothing will happen with America, and I right away wrote a letter to Uncle David to send me, can he send me papers to Canada, and he did. And within a year we were on the way to Canada. And when we were in Canada, we right away wrote to his brother, and Abe sent him papers.

INT: So that he could come over.

EVA: Yeah. And we were in Canada a year, and his brother came. So what they told me. He was born in Poland, and he went to Russia, and then from Russia he went back to Poland, to Germany, and...we got married. Just whatever.

INT: What kind of family does he come from? Was it a poor family, a middle-class family?

EVA: Very poor. According to my standards, very poor. His father, seems wasn't training to do anything. He had no, never mind profession, he had no skill. He would just, I don't know what they did, because I remember Jewish guys, if you lived in a village, for example like my granny. So there was a head of the village. People drove through the village. Whether you were Jewish or Christian, you went to the head of the village, in every village, when nightfall came and you reached a village, and that village usually, he had a list, or you had somebody sleeping with you, now it's my turn. So he would bring a family, whether it's a family or a person, or whatever, and say now, "Your turn to take these people in. Give them supper. Let them sleep over night. Give the animals a place, to rest the animals. And of course, you weren't obliged to give them your bed, but you had to take them in, and people usually were glad to do it. But when a Jewish family came, he always brought it to us. Even if you had one yesterday and one today, because he knew the Jewish people will not eat if they come to a Christian house. So every Jew that came through the village, usually came to a, the head of the village brought it to a Jewish family.

(NOTHING ON REST OF SIDE ONE. GO ON TO SIDE TWO)

EVA: Chaim got married. If he would have married me, Chaim, if I would have married him, he would have been the same as I am. Because I told Abe, I am not going to keep a kosher house. I don't do all those things. You better know beforehand. Yom Kippur, I might go shopping, or I might go wash. What Abe didn't know, and doesn't know to this day is that I converted.

INT: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that.

EVA: No, he didn't.

INT: Does your daughter know?

EVA: No. Rita doesn't know. Quite a few times I started. But with Rita, it's like, every time I say, "Honey, can we sit down somewhere, I would like to talk to you about something." "Mom, you're not going to tell me something about yourself again, eh? Because I really don't want to know."

INT: She doesn't want to know about your past?

EVA: Whatever. I mean, I'm not going to tell her about my future, I didn't live it yet. Whatever goes on now, she knows. So it has to be something about my past. Certain things I told her, which I shouldn't have, about my lousy life with her father. I shouldn't have, because she developed a dislike to him, and sometimes, when I say something, she says, "Mom, I don't want to hear about my father. He made his bed, let him lie in it. I don't want to know that something is this way or that way. Daddy wanted it that way, he has it that way."

He simply wanted to have his cake and eat it. He didn't understand. The truth is that Izzy got married and he was 21 or 22. Abe got married when he was 30. One thing that I thought to myself, whatever wild oats he had to sow, he sowed them already.

INT: Apparently not, huh?

EVA: Abe had his change of life the **whole** of his life. They say some men get wild when they're in their fifties? Abe had it all through his life. All through.

INT: Was his brother like that?

EVA: No. You see, so she told me, Debbie, and that started such a quarrel, that she stopped telling him, "Come eat, I cooked, or stuff like this." So he moved out, and Izzy cried. Izzy every day would meet him, they would work together. They worked in a refinery where they made sugar out of, they refined the brown sugar into white sugar.

INT: This was in Russia.

EVA: Yeah. In Uzbekistan already, down in Georgia, but in Russia. And when they would meet at work, "Why don't you come to work? She doesn't mean that you shouldn't eat," and stuff like this. But Abe those days, they were all stealing sugar and selling it, and he was dressed, he has pictures of Russia with a beautiful jacket, a Persian lamb hat and a Persian lamb collar on the jacket. They all stole sugar, and they sold the sugar. There was no way you could exist in communist Russia, especially by Stalin, without stealing.

INT: How do you understand their relationship through the years?

EVA: With his brother? It didn't bother me. It didn't bother me, because...

INT: It seems like they're very close.

EVA: They're very close. Very close. I told you that my aunt said she never saw anything like this. Men meet every day, and they kiss each other good-bye and good night and stuff like this? And everybody who knew them didn't wonder, because they knew that they were exceptionally close. When they went to buy a jacket, they both bought the same overcoat, the same raincoat, whatever. They all, they always were together. And when I was with Abe in the store, a Saturday afternoon, and the phone rang. And Abe answered the phone, and all of a sudden he drops the phone. And I see that he's white, he's going to faint. I said, "Abe, what happened? "Oh, my G-d. Itchie died. Why, dear G-d? Why didn't You ask me, I would have given him, if I have two years to live, I would have given him one year. Why did You take him?" And he couldn't even drive the car to his brother's house. They were...I have never seen. Everybody who knows them says that they don't know two brothers who are as close as Abe and his brother were. Maybe because they lived the war together, maybe because they were so close in years, one to the other. The other brothers, the oldest brother who got married in Russia, and whose granddaughter now came here, Ira, he was, Abe was six when the older one was married. And there were kids in between. And then there was a brother born, who was born in 1910, or 1912, and then nobody was there till Izzy and Abe. Abe was born in '18. So the other one was married already, and Abe didn't go out even with the...they were just. She had nine children, only four lived. So there was a big difference in ages, between kids died or were born dead, I don't know what happened.

INT: So he never really knew his older brother, yet after the war he went back, the way I understand it, he went back to find his family.

EVA: Even they went at the beginning of the war. Their whole business was to go deep into Russia, maybe they'll find their brother there. And they came and they didn't find him. He was arrested. I think Izzy was a while in jail, too, in Russia. I don't know if Abe was a while. They arrested a lot of Polish Jews, only some of them they let go. It depended on whoever, whatever city. Whatever that nachalnik, the Russian wanted to do with you, he did with you.

INT: It's interesting to me that it seems that your husband has these very, very close ties to his family of origin, like to his brother, and going out of his way to help his family in Russia, those sorts of things. And yet for his own family, he wasn't around too much, he was out a lot.

EVA: Ha! Tell me about it. I remember once...every vacation since the first day we bought -- no, the first year not, because we had to buy the machinery for the store. But as soon as we bought the machinery, we were in the store for four months without machines. Every garment we took we had to send it to clean. We had leftover nothing

after we paid the cleaner and stuff. So we put in machinery in April, we bought the store Christmas, we put in the machinery in April. We were taking in, we just had about like $100, $150. We had wages. Like I work for somebody and had wages. But when we put in the machinery for Easter we took in $400 a week, and I called my friend Annie, and I said, "Annie, we took in $400." She said, "My G-d, I don't believe it. $400?" I said, "Yes." That's the difference. We put out advertisement, leaflets, we put out signs, cleaned on the premises, tailor on the premises. Work started to come in. Then when we were there for a number of years, it came a time when we made $700 Saturday alone.

INT: So you were doing very well.

EVA: We were raking in money. So every vacation, and then we were in the store. We bought the machinery in April, in August Abe had his first heart attack. And I called our machinist. He was a...former navy man. A seaman. He was of Scottish ancestry, but a **wonderful** human being. And I said, "Chris, now it's either swim or sink." "What happened?" I told him Abe had a heart attack. "I know you taught Abe how to run the machinery. If you cannot do it for me, then I'm putting up the store for sale, and I don't know what Abe's going to do when he comes out of the hospital. It's a long process. The doctor says he's not going to be back before six months." That's not done these days. He had a light, light heart attack. These days after a light, light heart attack, six, eight weeks after that you can go back, start getting into the work force little by little. Then the doctor said, he told me, the doctor. He said, "You're not going to see him in the store for Christmas. And when he comes in, now is August, he will just be sitting there and maybe take the money from the people."

So Chris came. And he said, "I think you will learn, because you're one of those that when I say something, you remember it, once only." Chris stayed with me a week and ran the machine. Chris would come 5:00 after his work, and didn't want to take money. He said, "I know you. You just have a mortgage, $20,000 to pay. You don't have money. So it's all right." He stayed with me for an hour or two every day. And the second week he said, "Now I'm going to sit here, you run the machine." I ran the machinery. He says, he would laugh at me. Because something would go wrong sometimes with the machine. Who the hell knows what? "Chris?" "What's the matter? Which thingamajig went wrong today?" Because I didn't know the name. (laughs) I said, "Well, on the right side there is that pump and by the pump there is a little thingamajig on the right side of it." So when I would call up, he would say, "So which thingamajig went wrong today?"

INT: But you were saying that your husband...

EVA: I'm getting to what you want to ask me. So every year we closed for a month the store. Abe would go either to Israel or to Russia. Israel or Russia. The first year I sent him to Argentina, because I told him I have an aunt and an uncle there. I can't go. Because I didn't want to tell him that. I opened up the store. I was closed only for two and a half weeks and I opened up the store. Because I have a mortgage to pay. I have a sixteen-year-old girl. I have to make her a sweet sixteen party. I have to, college,

whatever. So I opened up the store. And his sister-in-law, the second year they went to Russia together, the two of them. I said to her, "Are you opening? I'm opening up after three weeks. Are you going to open the luncheonette?" She said, "I'm going to open the luncheonette? He goes and travels and sees the world and I'm going to stay in the store? What do you think, I left my brains in Russia?" she says. (interviewer laughs)

INT: So they would just go off and vacation together.

EVA: No, to them it wasn't a vacation. They went to help the family. Well, I can't help it. Maybe because Izzy's wife, no matter how bad in Siberia, her husband worked, she didn't go to work, she had a baby. But he brought bread for her and the child. Whatever, it was a herring, or whatever they got there, but he was a very good worker, his brother. And he got always double paid. Whatever somebody made, if somebody earned one bread, he got two breads. So they always had enough bread and flour and whatever, I don't know, whatever they ate there. They would hunt for some animals in the forest, were all around, and they would hunt. There were those gigantic turtles they would catch. And they would put them on a fire, Abe told me, and then the turtle had to crawl out from under the shell that you had to, you could put it under a tank it wouldn't crack. Those gigantic turtles. But he said that when Debbie would cook a soup it would taste absolutely like a chicken soup. But they had to eat, mostly they hunted the turtles for their livers, because lack of vitamins made some people, they were simply blind. They were losing their vision because of lack of some vitamins, and when they started to eat, Abe said that he would walk out. At night he saw a little better. But in the daytime, the snow with the sun, it would be, everything would be so white that he would step on you and didn't see you. So when he started to eat those turtle livers, he started to get his sight back.

INT: Did the two of you talk about the war a lot?

EVA: No.

INT: To each other?

EAV: No! Because what can he tell me? He didn't live through a **peanut's** worth of what I lived through.

INT: But did he ever feel the need to talk about his experiences, or did you ever feel the need to talk to him?

EVA: He never asked me, "How did you live through? Where did you live through? What have you lived through?"

INT: He never asked you?

EVA: The only time he knew is when I was getting married to him, before I got married to him I told him. "Don't expect a virgin, because the Germans took care of that."

INT: But you didn't explain...

EVA: He said, "It doesn't bother me." And he said it doesn't bother him. But when we started a good quarrel, he called me by a good name, the one that stands there on the corner. He called his own wife that, just because I had men, that I...and I, since that happened, that still happened, the first time he called me by that name, Izzy was sitting by the table. They came from Israel, we lived together for a year. I had a beautiful, big apartment in Canada, the first one. And he called me that name, and Izzy said, "Are you crazy?" And I said, "You (?), you." I said. I should tell Rita that. Rita should hear it. Maybe I shouldn't have said it even here, because she will read it. But if...G-d willing, she will not read it, I suppose, before I die, and I hope he's dead by then.

INT: But you never discussed it with him, or he never asked?

EVA: No, what can he, what am I going? He talked, he would meet a lot of the people that he had a very good friend, they were in Siberia together, Mr. Bloom. There was a family Beitel. They would get together, they would talk constantly about, "Do you remember this is Siberia? Do you remember this in Uzbekistan?" And I heard all those stories a million times, and I could tell you every minute what they did. I didn't talk about my...

INT: Did you feel the need? Did you feel the need to talk to anyone about it, all that you'd lived through?

EVA: No. Because from the moment Rita was born, I had somebody to live for. The rest didn't matter.

INT: Did you try to forget it, or put it out of your...

EVA: No. No. I could never forget it, even if I want to. It comes back at me when I sleep, or whatever. But since Rita came to me, the day Rita was born, it's like heaven would open up to me. I don't have to tell you, you're a mother. It's like, I never expected that I might have a child. I was told that I might not have any children. And then when I got pregnant, I thought to myself, "What am I going to do if it's a boy? I cannot talk to a boy. And I don't know what to do." I suppose I would have loved him if it would be a son, the same as I love her. And as a matter of fact, I could have had a son if her father would have been different, in Germany. But when I had Rita, I cannot describe the feeling. Only a woman who gave birth to a child. Rita now could describe the feeling, because when Elizabeth was born, she was maybe, I don't think she was half an hour old, and the doctor says to me, "You can go in." We went in. And she says, "Mommy, isn't she beautiful?" And what is there beautiful? She still had blood on her! She still wasn't even washed! (laughs) And I looked at her.

INT: They aren't too cute when they come out.

EVA: And of course she was beautiful to me. I said, "Honey, she's as beautiful as you were." And it's a feeling that I never had before. I never had any children. And my life started to revolve around Rita. Maybe she felt stifled by it, but according to me she shouldn't have. Because in spite of my big love for Rita, nothing was too expensive for her. If every kid in Montreal wore a shoe for $5, Rita got one for $12, the best. If that's good for the baby's feet, that's what she's getting. I worked at home. I took home from a factory, I knitted hats. I went babysitting, whatever. But everything that's the best was always there for Rita. But I was strict, too. I didn't let her. She knew that you sit by a table. You don't sit on a bed. You sit on a chair. She, certain things. She could watch when she came home from school she could watch only Howdy Doody. There was a show that kids were, it's like now Sesame Street. Not that quality, but I mean, a child was dreaming about Howdy Doody Time. And the only show I let her watch was Mary Martin made Peter Pan. It was on from 8:00 to 10:00, I think. So she went to bed, it was a Saturday night, she went to bed in the daytime and rested. She couldn't sleep, so she rested, and then she watched it, because I wanted her to see it. Then when she got older, and whatever played, like I don't remember which of the Disney, they made the first one, was it Snow White and the Seven Dwarves or something, so I took her to the movies already. I would take her on a Sunday afternoon, or whenever I had the time.

INT: But do you think by having her it helped you cope with your marriage, or...the war, or...

EVA: Oh, yeah, well, if I wouldn't have Rita, Abe wouldn't have seen my tail, even, when we came to Canada.

INT: You would have left him then?

EVA: A **long** time ago. I just didn't want the child to grow up without a father, because I lost my father and I was never the same since the day my father died. I lost my father, and my world crumbled around me, even though I had a mother. But she was sick. And I didn't want her to grow up without a father. When she got older, Rita told me, "Mom, what did you accomplish? I only heard you always quarrel, and quarrel, and quarrel among yourselves. You would get dressed up." So I remember once she gave me that argument. She was already married and got separated. And the same time I learned about my best friend being with my husband in Israel in a hotel together, in Netanya for a week or two weeks. And it all happened together, and it gave me a nervous breakdown, and put me in the hospital, because I didn't even know what I have. All I know is I stopped eating, and within six weeks, I lost about thirty pounds, and I was never overweight. I went down from about 105, 110, to 87, 85 pounds. You could put two apples here. And my hands started to shake in the store. And I would even sit and the hands would shake like that. And finally he himself said, oh, he's a (?). He wouldn't say, he called up the doctor and wouldn't say, didn't even say, "Why don't you go to the doctor?" I said, "I went to the doctor. He gave me something, and I'm taking it and it isn't helping me. So what the hell do you want me to do?" "So go home, because it's not even nice for people, you look like that. People come in and they look at you, the customers don't know what's happening." He didn't care that I'm getting sick, but it

doesn't look nice for him. And then he called up the doctor and he says, "Dr. (?), please, will you take Eva to the hospital? I'll put her in a taxi, or I'll close the store and bring her to you. Because she is just sitting there and shaking." The doctor took one look at me, and he said, "Are you taking?" I said, "Yeah, I'm taking it, but it doesn't help me, because I have to look at that face every day, so how can it help me?" And so he took me to the hospital, because I developed arrhythmia. And he said to me, in the hospital he sat by my bed the doctor, and he said, "You don't belong here. You belong upstairs in the psychiatric ward. But I am your friend and your neighbor." He was in Vietnam, and his wife was our customer and a neighbor. He said to me, "You knew me before I even got a shingle on the door, so I'm not going to even put you upstairs. I'm going to keep you down here." So I said, "You want me to go to a psychiatrist? I have money, I'll go." He said, "Talk to me." Not in the hospital, but after that he said, "Don't go back to the store. Let him cope alone, and nothing will happen to him." And I don't know why I cried. I cried constantly. I couldn't stop crying. But I went, twice a week I went to that doctor. And he said to the girl, "Don't make her an appointment before 5:00." She said, "I'm going home." He said, "That's fine. Eva will come, you can go home." So he would sit, do his paperwork, dictate, and I would talk. He said, "Imagine that I'm the psychiatrist. Talk to me. Because the psychiatrist doesn't know your life, and I know your life, your marriage and everything."

INT: Did that help?

EVA: Most probably it did. Not completely, but it took three years. Three years of me. I started to, and I was very hurt. Even though I didn't want Rita to marry her first husband. As much as I was in seventh heaven when she was marrying Ray, I was so opposed because I didn't see anything good. I saw a repetition of Abe. How I saw it, don't ask me.

INT: Oh, with her first husband.

EVA: Yeah, he had that, he was born in France. He had that continental manner about him. He never came in. You would see, I opened the door, we would just see flowers. So I knew Bernie's there, behind those flowers. And she was going steady with a guy for two years, in high school, and then beginning college, and then dropped Mickey and started with Bernie. And he just mesmerized her. Bernie was, I suppose, the love of her life, because **nothing** that I said helped, and nothing that I talked got to the point where once, I smacked her, because I said something. "When, where did you lose your brains," I said. "Where is that nice girl that everybody, you go to Canada and people call me, 'Do you have a daughter! Do you have a daughter!'" I said, "Where is that nice girl?" "Well, too bad. She turned into a bitch." And it got me so mad that I slapped her. The only time that she got slapped across the face, she was already 21 years old. And I said, "How dare you call my daughter a bitch."

I was just crying constantly. I couldn't stop crying, but that's another story. And she never told me. But...what I pieced together from her friends after she told him to move out, is that that I know already when I called her 10:00 at night. "Bernie isn't home." I

said, "How come?" "Well, you bet your bootie tomorrow when he comes home, I won't be here." I said, "Good, honey. Do the same thing. Maybe it will get through to him." So I knew that he would go out. And later I heard that he started to go out with a girl that he went before he married Rita. He was going with a girl steady.

What Rita doesn't know, is that this past summer I was in New York. And I met a couple of people, I'm not going to name, even say whether it was women or men. I met a couple of people. And they told me that Bernie -- it was nothing new to me, but I didn't know he did it after he was married -- that Bernie was using dope and was dealing in dope. I learned that last summer. Rita doesn't know it till now that I know. And because it doesn't matter to me anymore. But what I learned is that he went once to France. Every summer he would travel. He had family in France. And he wrote her a letter. Rita was between fifteen and eighteen or nineteen, or sixteen and twenty. The dresser was completely covered with lipsticks in every rainbow color and with nail polish. And I mean, even he once said to me, "Mrs. Roitman, why don't you leave the whole mess and don't wipe it?" I would leave it so that she wouldn't know where the dust finishes and the lipstick begins. Then she would clean it.

Well, anyway, one day I was cleaning, and there was an open letter lying on top of everything. And I looked at it. Just one page, two pages, three pages, I don't remember, but it was lying open like anything, and I just looked at it. And he writes to her from France, "I took a downer and it **really** put me down, and I had to take an upper, because I couldn't make myself even get out of bed." And then I cried and I cried. I locked myself in my, we had a separate bedroom, me and Abe. It was like a bathroom connected with our bedroom. So I was in that bathroom. She was away, Rita, with her friend Kay, till she came home, and I told her, and we had our first quarrel. "How dare you read my private letters!" And I said, "I didn't look for it, it was just lying there, and I glanced at it." "So what will it help you?" I said, "I don't know what it will help, but I'm scared to death that he's taking dope and he will get **you** to do the same. I have you, you're my whole life. I don't have any more children. And I will lose you, too." "Mom, I never took and I wouldn't do it, and you know I wouldn't do it." The truth is, she was telling the truth. She says, "You know, I can't even take a vitamin. Dr. Cohen gives me a vitamin shot, you have to go with me because I faint after the needle. How could I give myself a needle or something?" But she says, "Bernie's not taking dope. An upper and a downer's not dope." I said, "Tell it to the Marines. Don't tell it to me. It's some junk he's taking," I said. And it didn't help. So we had one big quarrel. It went on for about a couple of weeks, when we had that big quarrel when she told me, "Your daughter's a bitch." And I stopped talking to her. We didn't talk for two months. She was crying, and "Mommy, please, please. Get over it. You know that I love him. We love each other, we'll get married. He's from a nice family."

Lucky for her, that started before Christmas that business, or around Thanksgiving. For Passover Gitchi came from Canada to us, and Tanta Gitchi said to me, "You will do the same thing that Fela did. Fela didn't want the wedding, so they eloped. You want to have the same? She will elope. Fela at least has three more kids to marry. Maybe one she will go to the chuppah with. But you have an only one." So I made peace with it,

and we started to talk again with Rita, and I told her, "Okay, we'll make a wedding. Anything you want." And then they invited us. I met his parents and all of that. But it took her two and a half years. It hurt me terrible. She was all of a size seven, she went down to a size five. He gave her such a bad time, I suppose, that...

INT: Do you remember any other times in your life where you...

EVA: But I don't blame her. He had that manner about him. He was tall, and handsome and very good-looking, and that French manner, it's...

INT: Charming.

EVA: Charming, could charm the bees out of the trees.

INT: Yeah. She was charmed.

EVA: What did you want to ask me?

INT: I wanted to ask you if you'd ever had that feeling, or have any kind of a nervous breakdown before that.

EVA: Never. No. And never since then. And never since then.

INT: That was the lowest point.

EVA: So what I did, the year I became sick, Rita was alone in the apartment. That happened in the spring, I think. The end of the winter, the beginning of spring. She called me up and she said, "Mom, before you hear it from somebody, me and Bernie are getting separated." And of course, I said to her, "Here, talk to your father." I just went to the back of the store. The telephone was like in the middle of the store. And I just, I didn't know what to do. Cry, or, I couldn't even cry. I couldn't believe it. Because once they got married, I was ready to do anything. She told me that Bernie's dropping out of school. They gathered $5,000 or $6,000 in cash from that wedding. Gitchi alone put down a $1,000 on the table. Everyone who came from Montreal, $100, $200. And our side of the family. On his side, mostly gifts, and she left those gifts. Because Rita has a...

(END TAPE FIFTEEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE SIXTEEN, SIDE ONE)

INT: You were talking about her wedding.

EVA: And I told her, "Honey, okay. You will have the wedding, anything. You can pick a shul." So she said, "Oh, Mom, if you could afford it, I would love to get married where Paul got married." That's a cousin of ours. He's a professor at Columbia

University in New York. And I said, "Okay, let's go and look, and let's call his mother." And she was surprised. I said, "Why shouldn't? Once I decided that I'm making you the wedding, you get the whole shebang. Whatever you want, wherever you want." We looked at the wedding, and then I asked, she was sitting, and she said, "You even want his parents?" I said, "Of course. They will bring their guests too, there. They have to see the place. Maybe they don't like it. I don't know."

So we went and we looked at the place. His parents came, and her mother said, it was a brand new shul. Round like a glass, when the windows, beautiful stained glass windows, and when the sun shined, it was something to see. Round. Completely round. The shul was only about five, six years old when Rita got married.

And I asked the caterer how much would it be, the food, let's say. The other business, I said, doesn't matter. Flowers, whatever I want, I'll buy if I can afford it. He said, "Well, the way you told me." I said, "I want a choice menu." A choice menu was, you have beef, chicken, fish, you can have your choice of whatever you want. And two kinds of soups, and a big sweet table. The sweet table was fantastic. And he said a choice menu would cost you -- don't forget that was in 1970, 26 years ago. He said, "$60 a person." So I said, "Fine." We went out and Rita says, "Mom, could you stay with me?" I stayed behind with her. She said, "The food alone will be $6,000. Where are the pictures, where are the flowers?" I said, "Honey, I only have one of you to **marry**." Abe had one song his whole life: "But I don't have any money, honey. I would do this." "Daddy, why don't you buy a house? Daddy, why don't you do with your money something, lying in the bank?" "Honey, we don't have money in the bank. What do we have, a few thousand dollars?" She said, "The way Daddy talked, I always thought..." I said, "Honey, hold those things. When we get home, Bernie with his parents will go away. We will talk with your father in the kitchen." We got home, and I said, "Your daughter wants to talk to you." She said, "Daddy, do you know how much this wedding's going to cost you?" And I said, "Well, roughly, about $12,000 roughly. At least $10,000, because with the flowers, and with this and with that, and you want gardenias, and you want this and you want that. I would think with the good photographer I have in mind, about $12,000." And she said, "Daddy, Mommy wants to do this wedding in this shul. How are you going to pay?" And Abe said, "Honey, I want all my friends to see. I only have one child, one daughter. When I walk you down the aisle, that my friends should see that everything is like it should be -- the best. They should see it." She says, "Because me and Bernie, we can..." his parents had a house in Queens with a big yard. She says, "We could make a wedding, a very nice one, for about 25, 30 people in the backyard." And I said, "So why shouldn't we make a wedding?" "Why would you want to spend? One will say the soup was hot, and one will say the soup," and she said it right. That's what people said. "And one will say the beef was too rare, and one will say the chicken was too hard, and one will say the sweet table didn't have this or that."

INT: But you wanted a big wedding.

EVA: I said, "So what did we save for?" She said, "Take a trip around the world. Why the hell do you want to invite?" And she said, "How many people?" I said, "Well, he

said we can put 200 people, and there will be 200 people. 100 couples -- 50 couples for us, 50 couples for Bernie's parents." I thought Abe would jump out of that chair, but by my look he knew that he better doesn't say anything. Later he said to me, "Are you crazy? Every bride, when they give the groom 30% of the hall, 40%. You give them a half?" I said, "Yes, because she has to live with them. They're going to be her parents, too, if they're decent people." And I said, "You and I don't have to ever meet them, but this will be her family, and I don't want them to look down on her, and I don't want them to blame them." They didn't have people to fill out that half of the hall, but I gave them 50/50.

INT: Were they survivors, her first husband's parents?

EVA: Yeah. They survived in the French. He was Viennese, she was French. She survived with the French Resistance.

(PAUSE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman. It's May 1, 1996. I wonder if you could continue by telling me how you got to Canada. You had been waiting, you talked about that. And first trying to get to Israel, and then changing your mind about that because...

EVA: Then America, and the United States refused us entry. They said we have to wait.

INT: So then you got your papers to Canada. And could you tell me what it was like, the crossing?

EVA: Very rough. We were crossing in October. It was very rough. I was so sick with, the whole ship was sick. First of all, it wasn't a ship equipped to take people. It was a ship that America used to, the ship used to go to Australia and bring cattle during the war. Australia donated cows, brought the cattle here, killed them, and made rations for the soldiers, meat, meat. The whole world was helping. Australia was sending out cattle. And they converted that for a human ship. So it wasn't a decent ship. But they did, for refugees, listen. We didn't pay for the passage.

And it was a very rough, the sea was very rough in October. The whole ship was sick. Nobody ate. The first two days when we were on the Baltic, till we reached the Atlantic, it was smooth sailing. Some women didn't feel good already. I felt good. I ate, and to me it was, I mean, they served me with dessert and everything, and I don't have to cook. And Rita, and I...

INT: How old was Rita? Rita was two?

EVA: Two and three months when we got on the ship. And then when we got on the Atlantic, first of all, I remember we stopped in Le Havre. That was the last stop in France. It was kind of where the Atlantic starts and the Baltic Sea finishes. And we

stopped in Le Havre for just about half a day. I think some passengers came up, or they took something off. And then we left. And I said, "Well, thank G-d Europe is behind me." And Abe said, "Well, do you believe already that you're leaving Poland and Germany and Europe?" I said, "No. I can still see it. When I'm far in the middle of the ocean and I won't see Europe, then I'll believe that I left Europe behind me, and I **never** want to see it." And I never saw it again.

INT: You never went back.

EVA: No. What am I going to go back?

INT: Some people do go back.

EVA: If I would be Polish, and now I couldn't. Poland is now free. You can exhume bodies, people go. And they make cemeteries back, and this and that. I can't. I have no money, I'm old and sick. But where I am is Ukraina, and I'm not going to go back to Ukraina. They still hate Jews, as they hated them 50 years ago in Ukraina. I don't say Poland is in love with Jews, but the Polish, they realized, some of them, that they are being against, since Walesa came, and Poland came into being now, without communism, Walesa's trying. I'm sure he doesn't mean it, but every speech he has, and people visit there. And when he visited America, and somebody went to visit there, I think Mrs. Clinton went, Hillary once to Poland. And he always talks that he wants some of the Jews that lived there, they will get back their possessions there. It doesn't matter **who's** in that house, they will get back their houses. They have no commerce. They need people to make business. They don't know how to do the business stuff. And that they should get back, and it will be the same as before the war. But before the war we had Pilsudski. Pilsudski was a big friend of Jews. He married a Jewish girl. He was a decent human being.

INT: So you didn't look back when you were on the ocean. You were happy to leave.

EVA: But we were, the whole, there were, I think, over 300 people on the ship, and everybody was sick. The dining rooms, there were two or three, were completely empty. The only two people, there was a Ukrainian fellow, and Abe the second, who ate whatever they wanted. (interviewer laughs) Abe wasn't sick. He can fly on a broom. I told him, "Are you a witch?" It didn't bother him.

So in the morning he would come, they didn't let, the women slept separate with the kids, and the husbands were separate. So he would come in the morning, I was so sick. I didn't want to live anymore. I said, "I'm not going to reach, no, forget it. North America is not for me. I'm never going to reach it." And poor baby, she kept on throwing up. And people told us, "Buy yourself sickness pills," and I didn't buy them. I don't know whether I forgot, or I didn't believe in them. And then they should have given us, they said, someone told them who crossed already before, and they said, "They should give us a piece of herring every day to eat, or a half a lemon or something." It wasn't a ship. You see, on a regular ship, there is a place you can go and buy something. A lemon or

something. That ship didn't have any conveniences at all. Just to sleep and to eat and to get through. Those fourteen days, I think we were on the ship, or twelve -- murder. I would tell him, I would try to wash the baby a little bit in the cabin, and dress her, and I said, "Take her out." Because the minute you got out on deck, you felt better, because the fresh air.

INT: Where did you land?

EVA: We landed in Quebec. We landed in Quebec. And the last day before we landed, one family had an old grandma, a Jewish family. The grandma must have been already about 65. We were all youngsters, in our thirties, in our twenties. So she was the oldest woman. And that woman was so sick that I said to Abe, "She's not going to reach." She was so sick, she couldn't get out to the bathroom. Couldn't. But the last day, before you reach land, you start, you get on smooth water. You still have a day to go, but the water is smooth. And she, all of a sudden, I must have fallen asleep. I didn't sleep nights. Throwing up, day and night. And I watched Rita. And that night, when it became quiet already and we slept, after twelve nights not sleeping, I fell asleep, and Rita fell asleep. I'm holding her. And somebody's banging on the door. And I got scared. I thought to myself, something's happening with the ship. And I ran down and all of a sudden I realized that I could walk. And I said to myself, "I bet we're in port already." And that grandma standing. I open up, and I said, "Yes," -- I forgot her name. And she says, "Why are you people all sleeping? You see the whole world already!"

INT: (laughs) So she perked up, huh?

EVA: Oh! And she ran and banged on every cabin where the women were and woke everybody up. So I washed myself. I washed Rita. I put my hair up in curlers. And I realized that we are on the quiet water before we reached. I had hoped that we, I mean, you don't buy a ticket, you don't know where you're going. You just reach North America. I hoped we would land in New York, and maybe somebody would be waiting for the ship, but we didn't. We passed by New York. We landed in Quebec. And we saw the Statue of Liberty, and people were standing and looking at the Statue of Liberty. And for me it was very bad, because when I gave Abe, those sick days, I said, "Here, take the baby. Take her out." She didn't want to eat nothing. We both just fasted the whole time with Rita. And I was afraid that he doesn't watch a child like it should be watched. And G-d knows, the water would come on top of the deck and sweep whatever is on there. So I would hurry up and get dressed fast, and then I would throw up and start getting again. And then run upstairs to watch Rita.

So it was a very rough [crossing], but we came to Quebec. And people had people waiting there already. First of all, there was a...man from HIAS. Whoever came from HIAS, the HIAS was at the ship already, and they went through right, and in a few hours they took away all the people, put them on a train and took them away to Montreal. The rest of us, we were private. We got papers. There were a few families that were private. So we waited. We had to wait, the next train that would take us would be at night. So we waited. And I don't know, on the station or somewhere.

INT: You were going to your Uncle Eli? He was in Montreal?

EVA: No, Eli was in New York. To Uncle Davey.

INT: Oh, you were going to, right, Gitchi.

EVA: Gitchi and David. And then at night they put us on a train, and we slept through the night on that train. It was already a passenger train. And I remember for the first time seeing, I don't know, you never saw Canada, you don't see that here. The French Canada, there could be three, four stories houses, and from one apartment to the other, inside you go in, and it's closed. There's no closed stairway. All the stairs are outside, on the street. The stairs go up. Usually, they used to be iron stairs.

INT: Yeah, like a fire escape.

EVA: No. You could use it as a fire escape, but it was like going down. I've never seen anything. In Europe you don't see that. Europe, houses are very thick. The walls, everything is built inside. But I said to Abe, the houses look like chicken coops. You can walk up on them. Stairs on the street, from the sidewalk. Stairs go up to the first floor, then third, second.

So we came to Montreal. And those few people, like Sophie, Celia's mother, I showed you, the Shechters, came with the same ship with us. They came from the HIAS, and there were about ten more families from the HIAS. We landed at Windsor station in Montreal, the HIAS was there and picked them up. We were the only ones left. And while we were still in Germany, in Bremen, I wrote, I knew we will be in Bremen for about a month, because they told us you have to be in that camp. They gave us to sleep, to eat everything. And English lessons. I didn't go. I thought to myself, I hear that language. I heard the American soldiers talking. I'm going to go hear, I'm a month, I have a baby, I'm going to go learn English? I'll never learn that language. Why am I going to bother with it? So, I...

INT: What language did you speak to your husband in? Yiddish or Polish?

EVA: Polish, Yiddish. It was like I spoke Polish and he spoke Yiddish. Because his Polish is worse than his English. Forget it.

And...so we were a month in Bremen. And I don't know what I wanted to tell you. Something was significant about it.

INT: You were talking about the English lessons, you didn't want to take them.

EVA: No, something...

INT: You were the last ones, no one took you.

EVA: Oh. I wrote from Bremen. The minute we landed in Bremen, and we told that we have to wait a month, the ship is coming back from Australia, I wrote a letter to my Uncle Eli that we are leaving today. I wrote him from Germany that we're going to Canada. And he wrote that he's very happy that we're going to Canada. It's like Poland to Czechoslovakia. It's right across the border. And he will come and see me in Canada. And then I wrote him that I'm going to Canada, and I'm going to Winnipeg. That's where Dovid and Geitel are. And my uncle wrote one letter in twenty years in his life. But an answer to that letter he fired up within most probably the same day, because within a week I had a letter in Bremen back. "Don't go to Winnipeg, because I will not be able to come and see you. Winnipeg is very far from New York. Stay in Montreal." I would have been a **lot** better off. He would have had to behave, and I would have had another child. With Aunt Gitchi there, I would have had another child.

INT: Why do you say that?

EVA: Because, I wouldn't be alone. That friend Fela, that married the, the one that was two children married, after the war I saw them in Luck. And they were there, and Fela had four children. Aunt Gitchi brought them up. Fela said, "I had to be lucky to get the kids in the house, away from Gitchi."

INT: So she would have helped you. You would have had support.

EVA: She couldn't say nothing. The father couldn't. "Mom, Gitchi said so, Gitchi says so, it is so." She was...

INT: So you felt that you didn't want another baby because you couldn't handle it, or...

EVA: I didn't want to give him the pleasure, because he wanted children. And I didn't want. I didn't hurt him, I hurt me and Rita, but I hung onto that. And besides, what do...I was alone with that child. Night and day I was alone. Nights, too. He would come at 3:00, 4:00 in the morning, sleep three, four hours, get up, shave, eat, change the shirt, dress up, go away, and I would see him again... I wouldn't see him. He would come in, I wouldn't let him sleep in the room with me, on the bed. So he spoke to the German woman. Upstairs they had two rooms. Those rooms that go under kind of like, the ceiling is not straight, it goes like...

INT: Right. Attic, in the attic, yeah.

EVA: She had two rooms there. So one girl had a bedroom and the other. So she gave me one room, the two girls slept in the other room there. So he went downstairs and talked to the...I wouldn't let him sleep in my bed.

INT: This is in Germany?

EVA: Yeah. And he talked to her, and he said, "I have a cot." We still had the army cot. So he put up a cot and he slept in that room with the girls there.

INT: Why wouldn't you let him?

EVA: I didn't want him in bed. I couldn't stand him.

INT: You were angry.

EVA: I couldn't stand him. I should have gone away to Canada without him knowing. I could have done that. He was in Berlin, I didn't have to write him, the papers are here if you want to go to Canada, come here. And I could have gone away without him, it would have been the best. Let him stay. We were living so poorly.

INT: In Montreal?

EVA: In Germany. He was in Berlin, and people that used to, there were some people that did business bigger than him, and they traveled between Munich and Berlin. And...they would tell me. Once he sent me with a man some money, and once a friend of ours came, Chaim came and his wife, came to visit me. And she said, "You know, Chaim was in Berlin, too," Miriam said. Chaim, the one that wanted to marry me. Gave me all the furs and money. And she said, "But he went away for a week or two, and I wrote him that he has to come back home right away." I said, "Why?" "Because I heard this, the things they do in Berlin there. Do you think they sit and wait for their wives? I won't have it," she said. And she said, "You're **crazy**," she says. I said, "What is he doing there? So he'll go to bed with a German, so what? He's not going to marry her." "What are you talking about? They have balls, they have Purim balls, Chanukah balls, the men have the life of Riley, and we sit here with the kids in camps?" And it's true. I asked him, and he said, yeah, he went to Purim ball, with Germans. The Germans killed off all the people, and he took German girls and gave them a good time. I couldn't, it was...I abhorred it. It was...

Well, anyway, we got to Canada. And we were sitting in that station. I said, "What are we going to do there?" He said, "I have one," they are on the pictures that I showed you. They came for Rita's wedding from Canada. There were two brothers. The older one was with him in Siberia, and the whole time, six years in Russia. And he said, "He lives here. I'm going to call him up." The younger one came a year or two before us to Canada, the younger brother. He was not married, and he lived with the older brother. And when Abe was in Berlin, that, his name was...Sol Eisenberg. That guy would come in every day before he went to work, and [say], "Mrs. Roitman, do you need anything?" So I said, "If you could be so good, tomorrow morning, could you pick me up there a pail of coal and bring up, because I need to heat the house." Whatever I needed. He and his friend, another one, Shloime, would come in. And he came in so often, that Sol, and he played with Rita. He taught her how to crawl on the floor. She started to call him "Daddy." She started to call him "Daddy." And...then she started to walk, and the guys had a car, they took us for a ride in the car, and she started to call him Daddy. He would

come, even during lunch time. "Do you need something?" I said, "You stay with Rita and play. I'll go down and get a pint of milk and something to cook for supper." I had to go three times a day to the store. I had no refrigeration, and it was hot under that roof there like hell in that little room. So he would help me an awful lot, more than the others.

So he said, "I'm going to call Sol and see." He called up, and his sister-in-law recognized Abe. She knew him from, his oldest brother married in Russia. She was a Romanian, so he married her. And she recognized Abe. "Where are you?" He said, "I'm at the station. I want to talk to Sol." She says, "Sol is at work." "Well, could you reach him at work?" Abe told her. We didn't even know how to dial a phone. You don't speak the language. So he walked around the station till he found somebody who spoke Jewish, and they dialed the phone for him. So she called Sol at work, and Sol came from work. It was good, he was downtown, we were downtown at the station. He came to the station and took us with him. We took a taxi, and I said, "Where are you taking us?" He said, "I am going to sleep with a friend of mine, and you are going to have my room." And I said, "But I cannot stay. Your brother has three kids, you are there, I can't stay." He said, "There are rooms to be rented, furnished rooms. Tomorrow we will go, or the day after."

Sure enough, that was a Friday. We came in a Friday. We came in, she, it was already late afternoon, but she was still cooking. I saw that she's putting meat. I said, "Why are you cooking so late? What happened?" She said, "Because I cooked a smaller soup. Now that you're here, I called the butcher, he delivered some meat." I said, "They bring meat to the **house**?" You didn't hear of things, especially during the war, and after the war. And she said, "Yes." And she cooked a soup and we ate it and we fell into bed. I don't know where Abe slept, but on Sol's bed, me and Rita, we slept, and Sol went away.

The next morning Sol came for breakfast, and he brought a Jewish paper, and there were rooms for rent. And that afternoon we had a furnished room. We slept only one night. The woman rented us a room. They were there already two years, with two kids in Canada. She had an apartment, seven rooms. So she rented us the front room. It was like a double parlor. The old houses in Canada all have double parlors. Half is the...the first half with windows is the living room, and the one on the side, it's kind of like an arch made, and there is the bedroom, without a window. That's the Canadian style. And she rented a desk, and I should help her clean. And I said to her, "I wonder how long we will be able to get along." I said, "You and me will get along, but those three kids." Hers was one, five, and the younger one was Rita's age. And I tried to keep Rita out of everything, but you know, kids are kids.

INT: What were you doing for money?

EVA: He started to work right away.

INT: What kind of job did he get?

EVA: Oh, he went to the HIAS. People, you see, the Shechters went to HIAS, and there were other people that didn't come from HIAS, but they went to HIAS and they asked, so

they got money. The Canadian government, I don't know what the American government. The Canadian, there was no such thing getting welfare. There was no such thing getting help from the government. The HIAS brought the Jews, the HIAS gave every family $14 a week, and they found you a room for $25 a month, or $35 if you were with a child and needed a double room, so you got $35. The HIAS paid for the room, the HIAS gave you $14 to live. Believe me, you didn't die from the $14. If a hot dog was five cents, less than five cents, and a sandwich with smoked meat was a quarter...

INT: You could make it last.

EVA: $14 was...I went to work, I was already five years in Canada. I went to work. Rita was... five when I went to work, yeah. And I made fifty cents an hour. So you know, a quarter was a lot of money. For a quarter you bought five tickets to go on the bus. And Abe was making $35 a week.

INT: So he was able to get a job right away.

EVA: So the HIAS gave him a job. They said, we don't have jobs. The government said Montreal was very small, because he said, "I could sew on a machine. My father was a tailor." He wasn't a tailor, but he told them. They said, "We don't have a job, but we have a job in a tannery." So him and Shechter went to work in a tannery. They dyed the leather. The cow came like it is, whatever color the cow was. They had to bleach the leather, and then they dyed it brown, red, blue, green, whatever shoes they needed, or purses.

(END TAPE SIXTEEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE SIXTEEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: He said, "I'll tell you what to do. You go to the drugstore and tell them to give you," soap in a box. It came in a tin. It was like, you picked up that soap, it was like something made out of sand. He said, "This is a special soap." It nearly ate up Abe's skin from the hands. But that soap took off the colors.

INT: Tell me about the community in Montreal and your friends there. And support.

EVA: We had, in Montreal we had a very nice community. We had, well, first of all, I got to live in a, I lived with that woman for three months, and I realized it's no good. She told me, they have beautiful floors, parquet, in Montreal. And they were nicely done by her. And she said that, she had an older girl five years, the other one used to run around. Rita was three, only. Not even three -- two and a half. So she said that me or Rita, we made scuffs on the floor. So I said, "So what do you want me to run, fly across there? I have to get from my room to the kitchen to cook something."

INT: How were you communicating with her?

EVA: She was Jewish from Poland, and they were Polish Jews. And I said to her, "You know what, Mrs. Singer? It will be better if I look for another [place]." She said, "I think so." And then I looked once or twice. The Shechters were living two streets near us, further down from the main street. And I went there, and the Shechters said, there is an old woman wants to rent a house. I went in. But nobody wanted to take. She was an old Canadian. Came when the Czar was still there. And she was...she said, "I have a beautiful double parlor, but I don't want children." And then I don't know, it was Rita's day. Rita wanted to say something. The woman stays there in the door and talks with us. And she says, "I cannot rent you, because you're with a child." That was on a Saturday we came. And she was one of those, diamonds here, and diamonds here, and diamonds here, and diamonds here. She was there already about fifty years. And Rita started to talk to me, she wanted something. I don't know whether she said she wants to eat something, or whether she has to go to the bathroom. And that woman heard Rita speak Yiddish. "Such a little kid, she speaks Yiddish! Oy, vey! Mrs., you know what? I will rent you my double parlor." (interviewer laughs) "You will give me $35 a month. But your husband," -- Abe was standing on the side. She didn't have a heated [house]. The flats were cold flats. You had a burner and like you see those, in some places they have those big, big, it's like, four or five gallons of water, and you drink the water. You turn it over, you drink the water, in doctors' offices somewhere, you drink those. Paper cups, you drink it. So the same gallon was turned over on a burner, and that was filled with...fuel. With heating fuel. And every day, or every second day, you had to bring that gallon, turn it over, fit it there. And she said, "Your husband has to take out the garbage three times a week." I said, "From the house, I'll take out every day. " She says, "Yes, but you have to put it on the street three times." So he said he'll do it. "And he has to bring in the fuel," and from the kitchen, she had seven rooms, too. So all through, through all the seven rooms ran a pipe out in the front on top of the door was a place where the pipe went out, and that was the heating. So Abe had to take care of that.

INT: How long did you stay there?

EVA: "And you have to clean all my rooms," she said to me. I said, "Can I see it?" I looked, there were a lot of rooms, seven rooms, not to count mine, six rooms. I said, and right away, I looked at that woman. She was hung up with jewelry, but her hair wasn't neat, and she wasn't neat, and I said to myself: I need the room badly, but I will go and rent a room from a Frenchman. But I'm not going to clean her bedroom and her bed. I said, "Mrs., I will take the room, and I think you will be happy. But I will not, one place I will not touch is your bedroom. You do the bedroom. I'll do the bathroom, but I won't do the bedroom." "Okay, Mrs., okay. I like your little girl."

We brought over Rita's crib. We just had the crib. There was a bed, and furniture there, and we lived there. Within a week, those six rooms were sparkling. I took off the curtains in the kitchen, I washed them. I starched them, I cleaned all the windows. There was a neighbor, the houses just had an alley, the next house to her. She had a three-story house. She was on the floor downstairs. The houses just had an alley, the next house to her. She had a three-story house. She was on the floor downstairs, and she had tenants living two stories above her, that woman where I lived. And there were houses like that,

three-story house. The neighbor. One day I opened up the window, and that was close to Passover. To me, a dirty window for Passover? I mean. So it was downstairs. I cleaned it inside, outside, hung the curtains, were white, snow white. And the neighbor opens up the [window], "Is your lady home?" She spoke to me in Jewish, kind of half-Jewish, half English. I said, "No, she went away." She said, "Good. I want to tell you. She is my neighbor for 27 years, and those curtains in the windows were never so clean and the curtains so white till you came."

INT: So how long did you stay there?

EVA: A year. No, not a year. Through the winter, till May. My uncle came visiting me in April. We had those pictures where he is with his wife and family. And his girl and when Rita stayed, I'm holding Rita by the hand. He came to visit us, he gave us $500. How we saved up through that winter. Abe made $35 a week. I told Abe, "If the world should end tomorrow, I am going to buy food decent. I will not go shop like Sophie and Dina and Mintchie and whoever. They look for damaged. Because in any food store, damaged apples, damaged this, damaged eggs. I will not eat junk, because I had it by Hitler, all right? Food is the best."

So I spent $20 on food. I bought what I needed for Rita. The feet grow, a child. Feet, a winter coat with long warm pants, a suit, like it was a coat with long pants, and warm ones, they go like in one material. And I bought her booties, warm ones. And I didn't have the money to buy myself, I walked in those cold winters in Montreal, snow till here, I wore rubber overshoes the whole winter. Stuffed, put on two pair of socks, mine and his, and took a shmatta, wrapped my feet, stuffed it in this. I didn't have money to buy this.

INT: How were you coping with the change of the...

EVA: And we still saved up, we saved up $150. And my uncle left me $500.

INT: How were you coping with the changes?

EVA: So we took an apartment.

INT: Not having support from your husband, particularly. What were you doing?

EVA: Oh, that first winter in Montreal, that first year, he didn't go nowhere, he didn't do nothing. He was dead tired every day, come from that factory. It was very hard work. After they dumped, today they dump skins in the dye. They left them overnight. But when they came in the morning to dump new skins, yesterday's they took out that was in the dye overnight, they had to spread them very tightly over frames and nail them to the frames to stretch the leather. So it was very hard work. He was tired. And besides, I started to take courses at night. The HIAS was giving courses twice a week. So one day I went, the next day I couldn't go because...

INT: What kind of courses? English?

EVA: English. And because I...Rita didn't feel good, so I wouldn't leave the baby. He would fall asleep right away, so I didn't go. And then when the course went already a little and I progressed and knew a few words, and I would do homework at night, because the whole day I was busy with Rita cleaning the house. I cleaned the whole damn...and she was such a bitch. She would go for one night to sleep at her daughter, come back and she would go like this (run her finger along the furniture) and look if there is dirt. "Mrs., you didn't clean the dining room." I said, "Yes I did." "But my hairpin fell down on Saturday and I still see it there." And I said to her -- well, she got under my skin -- I said, "Mrs. Shapiro, you don't want to believe me, it's okay with me. I cleaned the dining room. I don't know where the pin was, maybe you dropped it now." And I went out of the room.

I was healthy, it didn't bother me. I could take that house and carry it over to another place.

INT: You had a lot of energy then?

EVA: Yeah! I mean, I was 26 years old. My G-d.

INT: Were you depressed at all at this time?

EVA: No, I didn't have time to be depressed. I was saving penny to a penny. We saved up $150, and I kept calling Eli in New York and begging him to come, I want to see him, "I didn't see you since '39." And he said, "After Passover I will come. For Passover I can't. After Passover I'll come." Or for Passover he said, "I'll come," because he closes the bakery for Passover. I think he closed the bakery for Passover. Anyway, he came and left me, had to give me the $500 in the toilet, his wife shouldn't know that he's giving it to me. And I told him, "Eli, that's it." He said, "You find yourself a little grocery or something, should have a room or two next to it, because I see there is a grocery and people live behind it, and I ask them how much, they said, you can buy a grocery like this for $2,000. You find it and you write to me or call me, and I'll give you the money, you'll buy it." And I said, "Eli, if you have to give me $500 your wife shouldn't know, and she was in Europe and she met the whole family, and everybody was well off, and she was like a queen." I said, "We entertained her, everybody had a house and a business and everything. And she shouldn't, you shouldn't be able to give me $500, I don't want any more money from you." And I never did call him.

But...in May Sophie went to look for an apartment. So the HIAS gave courses. I just want to tell you the difference. Ira goes now for courses, and they have a lot of trouble, they're both highly educated, but they have a lot of trouble with the English, because they taught English in a college, and they taught with full grammar. Grammar alone can make you dizzy if you don't know even the language. How the hell do you learn the grammar? You don't know what the word means. It takes you a week to learn what that word means. I mean, there are sections, every section grammar has a name. When I heard this,

I mean, I don't know, even in Polish the sections of grammar have names. (Polish word) you have to learn what the word means before you learn what it does for you.

So the HIAS did it differently. You came in to sign up for the course. And they said, "We have two classes. There are two classes, not because there are two. If we need we can make three classes, but we have two different classes. One is to learn just straight talk English. The second one is grammar with English. So you have a choice to learn." I went right away. I have a little baby. I need to talk to, to go shop, buy something.

INT: Right, practical [English].

EVA: I need to talk. And that was one of the good decisions in my life. We had a woman teacher, and she...so through that winter, I would come home with homework, and I would sit, do homework. So the old woman would get up. "Mrs., the light costs me money. Close the light. Go to sleep. Your husband is there waiting for you." She would go out, I would go to the bathroom, she would go into her bedroom, I would put on the light again.

INT: So you taught yourself English.

EVA: When I finished that course, I got a diploma, and I went from Christmas till May. And I got a diploma, and I knew that this is a window, and this is a chair, but how the hell do you move this chair to the window? How do you say, "I want to take this chair and take it there." I didn't know. (interviewer laughs) And I couldn't speak. But I had a little... We bought from a German, a soldier, it was a combination record player, radio, everything together, and a little box. You could carry it like a little valise. We brought it from Germany. And the Hit Parade. These songs were so beautiful. Patti Page, Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, Frankie Lane. You could understand every single word. And the Hit Parade was going day and night. And the twenty dollars, whatever I couldn't afford, but I skimp it on anything else, but from the $20 I stole a dollar a week, and for a dollar a week I bought four movie magazines. Because I knew the actors from Europe, and here I saw the actors, I saw the face, I knew, oh, this is his name. That's how it's written. This is her name. And I bought a newspaper, an English [newspaper] for five cents. Abe bought the "Forward." He always took the "Forward" to work. I bought them, and I started, and then from the magazine, and aware from the Hit Parade. And I was like this, learning a word a week, or two words a week.

And Rita, within three months, the neighbor had a girl who was two years older, Sherrie, and we had balconies in the back that were connected. There was a fire escape in the back. That was one building. I liked it. We had a beautiful apartment, five rooms. Gorgeous. A big kitchen, a beautiful modern kitchen. Because the landlord lived in that apartment. This is the only beautiful apartment. Nobody wanted to take that apartment, because you had to walk two floors. And I said, "I need that apartment, because Abe's brother's coming next." There are two big bedrooms. So we took the apartment. $60 a month, and heated. I don't have the pipe anymore. $60 or $65 a month, it was a lot of money. Two weeks what Abe made. Two weeks of work went to pay for that apartment.

But I said, "Abe, Itchie will come, he will go to work, we will live together, we will pay together," and that's the way it was.

And Rita. I made a mistake again. I wanted Rita to forget the German. She spoke such a beautiful German.

INT: She knew German and Yiddish?

EVA: Yiddish she didn't know. Abe spoke to her Yiddish, but she answered him in German. But she was born, she spoke a Bavarian German, which is a very beautiful German. She spoke so perfect. She was two years old leaving their house in Germany. She had the command of the whole German language.

INT: How did you feel that your child was speaking in German?

EVA: Well, what was I supposed to do? She was more downstairs with them than upstairs with me. I had a room upstairs under the eaves, and she was downstairs with them.

INT: Chattering away in German.

EVA: And they loved her. And I wanted her to forget German. She started to play with the next door girl. Within three months Rita forgot the German and spoke English. In three months flat. It became warm, summer, three months Rita forgot the German. And she jabbered English to me, so I thought to myself: this is my chance. And I remembered the words that I learned in that course I took. I don't know if I had over the winter fifteen lessons. Because if it was, I was wearing rubber galoshes, it was cold, freezing, and snow till here. It was sleeting, I couldn't go. And then Rita didn't feel good. She had a cold after a cold, after a cold.

INT: So you missed a lot of lessons.

EVA: Missed half of it. It was three months or four, from January till May. Four months, but I missed a half of them. So I maybe had ten, twelve, at the most. I did miss a few lessons. But I started to talk to Rita, listened to the Hit Parade.

In the middle of the summer, my cousin Simon came to visit me from New York. And he used to write Polish to me, and I wrote Polish to him. And I said, "Simon, you are here. You speak English." He spoke English. He was in America already three years. And I said, "I want to buy something for Elizabeth [Rita], I want to buy this, I want to buy that." So we went, and he spoke to the people. And he didn't say nothing. He was a very, they were, I told you, there were two cousins from two sisters. Two sisters had two boys. It was a difference from day to night. One was plain, and one was educated, and was fine and was good-looking. He was just perfect. And he didn't say nothing, but he was two weeks with us, and he was going away, and he said to Abe one evening, "Can I steal your wife for half an hour?" There was a little park. "I want to sit in the park a little, talk to

her and you'll be here?" And Abe said, yes. I went down. And he said to me...the other Shimon -- there were two Shimons named after one grandfather -- wanted him to wait in Germany. Because he heard from Dovid Gervic that I'm getting married. Had letters. The other one, the one that I didn't like. He heard that I'm getting married, and he said, "Shimon, I have a wife. Why don't you go and marry her? She's a beautiful girl." And he said, "You got married? Worry for yourself. I'll find a wife. I don't need to go and look for my cousin to marry her. A cousin is a cousin. I don't want to marry a cousin."

And they went away to Germany. And we had to run the border. When they went, it was still, somehow they still crossed it in the daytime. And that evening, when he took me down, there was a little park. We sat in that park by the house on a bench, and he said, "First of all, I want to tell you something, and that's the only time I will tell you that, and forget about it. If I would have known the way you look, and that you're intelligent and educated, I wouldn't have gone to Germany, and Abe wouldn't have you for a wife." I said, "Well, I'm sorry, Simon. I like you very much. You're handsome, you're intelligent, you're much better than my husband. But it's too late. I have a husband and a child." He said, "Okay, finish with the old business. Now," he said, "How are you going to learn, you're never going to learn English. Because when I go into a store with you, first thing you do is, 'You speak Yiddish? You speak German? You speak Polish?' You go into that store, I know you know a few words in English. You talk, you want to buy this cup, you talk English. And if you tell two words in English, he will break his head if he wants to sell you that cup."

INT: (Laughs) Right.

EVA: "Don't ask him if he speaks Yiddish. All those people speak Yiddish. Stop speaking Yiddish. And another thing, I'll write you a letter in English. If you answer Polish, you don't get an answer. That's it. You're going to write in English. Don't learn English just to speak. I see you buying magazines, you're reading, I'm glad. But don't just look at the pictures. Read. You don't pronounce it good, forget it. Read every. You walk the street, it says, 'Butcher, bakery.' Read. You don't know how to read butcher? Read it in Polish, which is phonetically in English. Read it, and spell it. You know the alphabet?" By that time I knew the English alphabet. "Spell it, and it will stay in your head. I know you have a good head."

Don't you think I listened to him? I would sit on a bus and read the advertisements, spell it, and the word would stay in my mind. But that was summer. He came to us for vacation. The first letter I wrote him had exactly one page, a small page, five sentences. Until I wrote, it was one word from a book. I'm very particular. I didn't make a single mistake. Because I looked for the word. I had a little dictionary I bought myself. If I didn't find it there, I looked, one word I needed, I found in the dictionary. One word I needed I found in the newspaper somewhere. One word from a Photoplay, and some words I took from Simon's letters, because he wrote, he had a beautiful handwriting.

INT: Why were you so determined? How did you get that determination to just learn it?

EVA: To learn the language? I'll tell you why, when I finish. The first letter was five sentences, the second letter was...by the, in October Itchie came. It was a year I was in Canada. I spoke good English. I wrote English, I read English. The few...

INT: And you did it yourself.

EVA: Why did I do it? When I was living with the old woman, she said to me, "Mrs., you have dishes?" I said, "No, I'll have to use your dishes." "That's okay, you can use my dishes, but I have a kosher house." I said, "Fine, I'll make you," I looked at that stove, it was a coal stove. I wish I had that stove here. A big gigantic stove, you could cook ten pots on it. I was used to that. Granny had a stove like that. And I said, "I'll kosher your stove, too, for Passover." That stove never was washed like I rubbed it, scrubbed it, washed it. And she said, "But you can get dishes without money." I said, "How do you get dishes without money? I'm not going to go to the HIAS." The HIAS gave for Passover dishes. If you said that you're kosher, they'll give you Passover dishes, milchige dishes, fleishige dishes. You got everything. I said, "I'm not going. I don't take nothing for nothing." But she said, "If you go see a movie, it's only 35 cents, you get a plate." And they were giving beautiful English china. She showed me, her daughter was accumulating. So I went. G-d, a classic was playing: Judy Holiday in "Born Yesterday." You don't even maybe know it.

INT: Sure I do. I know that movie, sure. It's a great movie.

EVA: It became a classic. People were rolling in the aisles from laughter.

INT: She was a scream. She was a scream, yeah.

EVA: And I sat and tears were running down my face. I didn't know why they are laughing. I walked out.

INT: Oh. You didn't get it.

EVA: I walked out before the middle of the movie, even. I took my plate. And I went home. And I said, "I'm going to learn that language." I didn't even know that I'm good at languages. Because everybody spoke good Polish in the family and nobody spoke Polish like Abe. Everybody spoke a perfect Polish. Everybody was good at languages.

INT: But you were, too. You know all those...

EVA: But I didn't know that. I was just, everybody speaks good Ukrainian, good Polish, and I didn't know that it's an exception. I thought everybody does it, except those that lived in the cities. They didn't have a chance to learn the Polish.

INT: Was your husband also trying to learn English?

EVA: No! The English that you hear from Abe, he didn't know until we bought a cleaning store in Brooklyn. Because he **had** to speak English to the customers. In the factory they all jabbered, they were all Jews. This one brought a (Yiddish newspaper) and this one brought a "Forward," and the third one brought a communist Jewish paper, and they had only Jewish papers and discussed the... he didn't know English. What you hear today is the store English you learn with the customers. He started to call me, (Yiddish -- calling her to the front of the store because he didn't understand what a customer was saying.) So I went once, twice, and I said, "You're going to listen to his English and try to understand it. You understand some English." So I said, "Don't call me from the back. I can't run." The store was four times like this room, long and narrow. I said, "I can't run back and forth to talk. You want to, so you go do the work, I'll stay by the counter." "No, no." "You want to be by the counter, you learn." And English you hear today from Abe...

INT: He learned it in the store because he had to. He had to. But you were really trying to do it. You just were determined to do it.

EVA: And then when his sister, his brother came, we lived together. And I told her about the dishes. So we would both go twice a week, 35 cents to see the movie. Izzy is a better worker. Izzy had a trade in his hands. Abe still worked, Abe worked for about two years in that tannery. That man sent Izzy papers. Someone had to sign papers, so he signed papers. Izzy was making little change purses before the war, so he knew how to work with leather. So he went into a factory where they make purses and wallets. He got him, that man. Told him where to go.

INT: Same man.

EVA: "I'm sending you, this is a friend of mine, he buys leather from me." Itchie made right away, Abe was making 70 or 75 cents an hour. Itchie got, after a year Abe was making 75 cents. Itchie got from the beginning on, a dollar an hour. That was a lot. In our neighborhood was a born Canadian. It was a foreman, was getting $1.25 an hour. Itchie made one wallet, and the man gave him $1 an hour. So she could afford to, so we went and collected. I collected a service for eight, and I was so stupid, when I bought myself dishes later, china, I still have, Rita has that china set of mine. A beautiful china set, a Japanese china. It was very nice, a good blue. And costs me $53 for twelve people. And I gave away the...I had one...

INT: The one that you collected you gave away?

EVA: Yeah. I had one plate left, which we, Rita says I never gave her. I gave her the plate. It was one of those you see, you can see it in a picture somewhere. Sometimes they do reproductions, you see it advertised, that you can buy this plate, let's say for $25 or $39 dollars. In the middle is like a picture, and a lady in 1800 Edwardian England, dressed, holding a parasol, sitting in a gazebo. That's the word. That's what Granny had, with a round thing to sit on it. And the gentleman holds the horse and stands smoking.

INT: And you only had one plate left.

EVA: And that was, the lady had beautiful hair, made up. And there was a meadow. And beautiful. And flowers all around. A purple edge with gold flowers, and all the gold was 22 carat gold trimming. And the plate that we, I gave Rita and we made Seders. So I used that plate. It was with two little handles. It was like a little tray. But not a regular meat plate, bigger than a meat plate, with two handles. We put the matzas always on it. Rita says I never gave it to her. I don't know where the plate is. I cannot, Rita says, "Mom, you still have boxes." Yesterday I opened all the boxes. There is no plate.

(END TAPE SIXTEEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE SEVENTEEN, SIDE ONE)

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Eva Roitman, it's May 6th, 1996. You had two stories that you wanted to tell, that you'd like to tell now, that you forgot. Important stories, and I wonder if you could do that now.

EVA: One was...from...right after the war finished, when I met Nastas, and when he...we became close, and he wanted to marry me, and I suppose the story there tells it. What I failed to tell you is, that the same man, Korzec, who took my innocence away, shot Nastas. We were in different places. He lived in the same village where Nastas lived. I lived in a different village. He just came to work there in that village where I lived.

INT: How do you see that? Isn't that kind of a strange coincidence, that this same man changed both of your lives so....

EVA: Now, so many years went by, I see it as a coincidence. But when I, when I realized that I'm falling in love with Nastas, and when I realized that he is the one that I love more than I ever loved anybody -- I mean, I know during all those hours I spoke to you I told you that there were quite a few guys, beginning with Peter, and Tony, and some other ones that wanted to marry me. I would never presume that I was a big beauty. I was a pretty girl. For the family that I come from, not only from the family, but from the village that I was brought up by Nana, I was considered very educated, because nobody went to the city, never mind to high school. But they always, I suppose, considered me... very rich. The whole family was killed. My mother's sisters, my Nana, nobody was there, and I could have had all those riches, if they marry me. I don't know what the reason. But anyway, of all those people, the big love of my life was Nastas.

And...one day it dawned on me, and I told it to him. I didn't tell him, we...were already...involved quite a bit, but I didn't tell him about it. And then one day I...I told him after he -- it happened like that. I went away. I went back to Gdansk, and I wrote him letters, and he wrote me letters. And he said, "How could you put me over a stamp on a passport?" And then I don't remember whether it was a holiday, or a vacation I had or something from work. I went back east. (sighs) And I tried to win him over, to my side. To leave Poland with me. Now, in retrospect, I know I asked the impossible of him,

because he wasn't, he was healthy. He could do everything he had to on the farm he had. But it wasn't dependent on him. They had help. He had a brother, an older one. But to go out into the world with a wife and have a family, he wasn't prepared. As many times as I told him I have a family, he said, "It's not you who should be taking of me. It's me who should be taking of my wife and children."

But anyway, when I...then I told him that we have so much more in common than you think, and I told him about Korzec. He wasn't, those days, I suppose it wasn't fashionable for men to cry. He didn't break down, but he turned away, and he couldn't talk for a number of minutes. (pause) And he said, "I am living only for the time when this whole nightmare will be over, when Stalin will go the same way where Hitler went, and I can take my revenge on Korzec. And you ask me to leave and forget. I used to run. I was very good in sports. He made a cripple out of me. For what? For nothing." And he said, "I'm not going, even more now than before, being that you told me what you told me." And that was the last time I saw Nastas.

So now we will give a jump to the other story I remembered. It was 1946 or '47. Summer. It must have been '46, before I went to Gdansk. I was still in the east at Irene's. And I was visiting someone who lived in a village not far from Nastas. That's how I got, I came together with Nastas, actually. I was visiting someone I knew. A lot of the men got killed. I don't know if you remember, I told you about a woman. She was nearly killed in church, and we ran away together from her farm. And she had a brother living not far from her. Well, me and that woman ran away, and the brother's wife. The brother and two of her children got killed, and these two sister-in-laws got themselves two little farms with two houses not far from each other.

And I came, that woman that I was, the sister-in-law that I was living with, the single one, was ill, and she was in a hospital. So the other one asked me, I came to see the other one, actually. She said, "Why don't you stay with me? It's summer. What are you going to do in the city? It's so stuffy. Stay with me," she said. "I'm alone, I have two beds and everything." So I stayed with her. I said, "All right, I'll stay with you." It was nice, you know, in the country out of the city in the summer. And I stayed with her, and I figured I'll stay for about a month, and I'll help her gather up the harvest. And like neighbors.

While I visited her, through someone she knew, I realized, I found out that Nastas and some other families that I know from neighboring villages are in a village in another one. You know, there were villages scattered all over the place. And that's how I found Nastas. And from then on, when I was with her still that month, Nastas came, and this and that, and I went, sometimes he would come and take me to their house for the weekend, and stuff like this. And it got around. And when I was leaving already, after I was there for a month, and I wasn't sure yet. Nastas wanted right away, and I said to him, "Give me time." That was the beginning just. I wasn't sure whether I was in love with him that much. And I was leaving her. Decided to leave after the month is up. I said, "I have to get back to the city. I want to go to Gdansk." And then she told neighbors, and it seems that one of the neighbors had a sister, whose sister was in love with Nastas. But he most probably didn't reciprocate. Whatever, I don't know. But that sister, all of that I

found out about a year later. But that sister, the underground would come to the village every night. They would sleep, they would eat. In the daytime they would go to the forest. That sister most probably entertained the underground people. We all knew that they were called Akowce. Their headquarters were in London. And we all knew that they come, because the woman I was staying with, she had a niece living not far from her, and that niece got married, and I was at the wedding. I was one of the...not the maid of honor, but the other.

INT: Bridesmaid.

EVA: Yeah, a bridesmaid. And everybody knew who I was. It wasn't hidden. I mean, I was free already. Everybody knew that I, those days I was still Jewish. The year after I converted. I didn't hide anything.

Well, it was one evening. I was supposed to stay with that woman, let's say, till Saturday. Friday we still work in the fields and finish up whatever it is, and Saturday she'll drive me to the city and to Irene's, and from there I'll go to Gdansk. And I don't remember which day it was. One of the days of the week before that weekend where I was supposed to go away. We were sitting, me and her, eating at that table supper, and her niece ran in through the door. Her house was the front to the street, had beautiful flowers and bushes with lilacs, and the back was the door to come in. You had to go around to come in. She burst in the door, just grabbed me by the hands, I nearly fell, and just, she said, "What happened?" and she said to me, "Just run!" And she pulled me and she pulled me right through her garden and into the, there was some meadows, and into a meadow, and downhill. We nearly rolled down the hill. When we were down the hill and the grass was high, we were lying in the grass, I said, "What happened?" She said -- I knew her brother belongs to that underground. I forgot what her brother's [name was]. I think her brother's name was Peter, too, I'm not sure. She says, "The guys came in from the forest, and they're sitting around talking with my brother. And I heard them say that we have to take care of that Jewish girl tonight. She has no business being here." So she says, "I don't know what they were going to do, they didn't see me, and I just slipped out of the house and ran." And she says, "Just get up the hill, and there is the highway to the city. Just go to the city and don't come back."

I was barefoot and dirty from work and everything. (sighs) Later, on the weekend, the woman came and brought me my things. I had a small valise with things. She brought me these things and she said that not even five minutes after her niece dragged me out of the house, they came in and they told her, "You have a Jewess here?" They didn't call me the Jewish girl. A woman you called a Jewess, yeah? "You have a Jewess here?" She says, "No." "Where is she?" She said, "She was visiting me. She went away. She went back to the city." And they said to her, "Okay. If you ever have her again, be sure that where your lilac tree grows you will have in front of your window a grave, and she will be in it."

INT: How did you feel? I mean, you got through the war, and now they're still after you.

EVA: That was the same time that there was the pogrom in Kielce. And after that I went away. I wrote to Nastas. And he said, "I understand what you're writing me, but don't you trust me that you would be safe with me?" He said, "I would never put you in danger." "Besides," he says, "if you say today that we can get married and stay in Poland, there is no law that says that I will stay on the farm. We can live in Gdansk. We can live in Warsaw." He wrote me, "I have enough education to find work in a city, so I don't have to do on a farm." And (sighs) by that time I was deeply in love with him. But that's what I wanted to tell you. What happened to me a year after I was...how do you say it?

INT: Liberated.

EVA: Liberated.

INT: All right. Well, let's jump ahead.

EVA: Where did we finish, anyway?

INT: We finished, we spoke a lot last time about your time in Canada, and we talked about how you learned English, how you taught yourself English, we went into that. We talked about what it was like, the early years in Canada. And...

EVA: Fantastic. I couldn't believe. Every morning I got up, I couldn't believe I'm not in Europe anymore. I couldn't believe that this freedom that I have now will not last me a month or a year, but till the end of my days. That I'm free. And my child will be free to pursue whatever she wants.

INT: So you were happy in Canada.

EVA: I love America, too. As a matter of fact, when we came, we applied, I think I told you, for the American visa, but Abe messed up the papers. And they told me I can go, but without him. And the minute we came, so we were there already signed up for three years. When we came to Canada we signed up again, and it took eight years in Canada, and three years in Germany. Eleven years to the day, they called us that we can come. And when we went in Montreal to get the visa, it was something for the books. We didn't have to go to doctors. I brought a certificate from my physician, that I am in good health. No x-rays, no nothing. I could have had TB, and you name it.

INT: They didn't check you.

EVA: And I didn't have to, I just had to bring from the police that I was never arrested. It was so ridiculous. I didn't by that time care already. Abe wanted badly.

INT: I was going to ask you. Was your plan always to go to America eventually? Weren't you settled in Canada at this point?

EVA: Abe. Abe. He had cousins and friends here. They were making for the same work he did in the garment center in Montreal, double the money. The first week he came here, for the first month, I didn't let him work. I said, "Look, if you want to go to work, don't expect supper. I am taking a month off, and Rita has enough in school." She had excellent grades. And in Canada she was nearly a year ahead of them when we came here. So I said, we came about the tenth of October, I think we came here. I said, "She will start school in November. The heck with it. I want to go to Coney Island. I want to go to the Statue of Liberty." We went **all**, whatever I saw in New York was that month. We didn't manage to see the UN, and I never **did** see it. We didn't manage to see the zoo, and because when you start living, forget it. You don't see the city.

INT: Were you excited about going to America?

EVA: Yeah. I wanted it, because it meant he would be making more money.

INT: Didn't you have friends in Canada?

EVA: But the minute I came here, I regretted leaving Canada. Why, I regret it to this day. I applied for papers in '73 when I discovered my husband and my friend in cahoots, and when Rita broke up with Bernie, and all of that put me in the hospital. I had the nervous breakdown. I applied. But they refused me the visa, because I gave up my citizenship, they said. And I was told by a lot of people that we were refused, too, and we applied again, and we were let in. But my aunt, bless her heart, I love her dearly. She said, "If you come to Canada, don't come to me. I am not going to take it if you leave your husband. Your place is with your husband."

INT: This is Aunt Gitchi, she said that?

EVA: My friend in Toronto said, you can come be in Toronto. And actually, I don't know why I settled on Winnipeg. There's nothing to do in Winnipeg. It's a little city. It's a city, but it's a very...it's a... you could say it's a suburban city, not an urban. There's no urbanity. There's just one big street downtown Winnipeg. That's it. The rest is suburbs. The whole city is suburbs.

INT: You said you went there when you had a nervous breakdown?

EVA: Yeah.

INT: To stay with her?

EVA: And I thought that -- I went every year to Canada -- I would stay through the winter in New York, and then I would go in June, stay July, August, September, through the holidays. I would come back.

INT: Did you take Rita with you, or you went by yourself?

EVA: Rita was working already. Rita was already getting divorced. Rita was already getting divorced.

INT: How old was Rita when you came to America?

EVA: Ten. Exactly ten. And...Canada will always have a special place in my heart. I considered myself homeless, and we were being, the category of us was "displaced person." DP's. We were called "DP's," displaced persons. One was from Ukraina, one was from Latvia, one was from Poland. The families that we went on that cattle ship to Canada was unbelievable. Ten families from one country, ten from the other. They embraced us all. For the first time since the war started, not only the war started, since my father died. Because when my father died my life was never mine. I had a sick mother always. And when the war started, I had to watch over her always, because who am I going...? My aunt had her troubles with Siberia. My Granny had troubles with one daughter sick and the other one getting ready to Siberia, and she was old already and sick. And Grandpa was old, too. Grandpa kept on always saying, "I already married all my children. Who has strength for all of that?" And it was my responsibility. I took it upon myself. Who else would take it?

And actually since my father got ill and died, I didn't feel that I belonged to any place until I came to Canada. I realized that I have a stable place. I can stay in this house and on this street forever. If I want to move, if I don't want to move, this is it, and I have all the privileges. I became a citizen after five years. I voted. I loved everything about it. Those days it was very quiet with the French people in Montreal. Very quiet.

INT: So New York was considered a better economic...

EVA: But a lot of Jews were leaving Canada for New York. Because...

INT: Better opportunity.

EVA: And Abe always dreamt about New York. I don't know actually. I think the bottom line is that Abe married me because I had an uncle in America who kept sending money constantly. His money paid our coming over the border from Poland to Germany. My uncle's money kept our heads above the water in Germany. Every once in awhile somebody would knock at the door. "Is your name Roitman?" "Yeah." "What's your first name, where were you born? I have $200 for you, I have $300 for you." Constantly. Three, four times a year he would send money. In those days it was a tremendous amount of money. And he did with the money whatever he wanted. All I have had done for me, all that money that Uncle kept on sending -- we were two and a half years in Germany -- is, the last time that my uncle sent me $200, I said to Abe, "Well, I don't know what will become, but the $200 are mine. Because I haven't got a dress to come in to my uncle, or a coat to wear."

INT: So you bought something for yourself, finally.

EVA: I went, and I had a coat made. Picked out material and had a coat made for me by a good tailor, and I made myself a couple of dresses.

INT: Were you able to settle in well in America? Was that difficult?

EVA: It turned out like Abe wanted it. We came here. We brought with us $6,000 from Canada. I forgot to tell you. When we came into the American consul in Montreal, I was very blasé. Yes is yes, and no is no. And he...actually he didn't ask me nothing. He didn't ask from Abe nothing. He just looked through the papers, and he talked to Rita. "So what are you going to do?" And she said, "Going to school." "What do you plan on doing?" She says, "I don't know yet." And then I see he takes some kind of a stamp and looks in some papers, and then stamps some papers, and then takes all those papers, gives them to me, and says, "Okay, Mrs. Roitman." I said, "You mean, this is all?" to the consul. He said, "Yes." And he saw my, I must have had a very questionable face made at him. And he said, "What's wrong?" I said, "I can't believe I waited eleven years for the American visa. You didn't even ask us whether we're communists or nothing?" He said, "If you would be communists, the Canadian RCMP would have found out," he said. "You were already Canadian citizens, so you were checked out. Their RCMP is as good as our CIA," he said. "You're not coming now to America as a displaced person. You have to have money in the bank. You have even more money than we need." You had to have in those days, I think, $3,000 or $4,000. We had $6,000 in the bank.

We came, we stayed with my uncle for three weeks. And my uncle kept on saying, he had three bakeries. "Over one of my bakeries, in a good neighborhood, there are on the top three rooms in the front, four rooms in the front, three rooms in the back. If you want, I'll knock the wall out and make seven rooms for you. If not, you can settle in the four rooms." I said right away, "Eli, it's too late for me to go live on top of a bakery. I have money. I want to pay down, I want to buy a house. I want to settle down. If I go, don't knock any walls out. Just get a painter, paint it out, and paint it and if there needs to be linoleum, I'll put it in, and I will stay in it for as long as I will find a neighborhood, and to buy a house."

Of course Abe -- my uncle said, okay. Oh, bless your heart, he was very happy. He said, "You know my wife. She doesn't cook. So sometimes when you have something good for supper, call me up, I'll eat supper with you." He used to come to the bakery at 4:00 in the morning and stay till 12:00 at night. "So I'll have a place to run, maybe run up the stairs and lie down for an hour and sleep." And that stretched, like I wanted from one to two years, to **eight** years on top of the bakery. Because Abe didn't want to move. My uncle, of course, didn't want any money. He said, "What are you going to give me? $100 living over a bakery? What do I need your $100 for?" He said, "I have twenty people working for me."

INT: So why didn't he want to move?

EVA: Electricity, everything without money. Abe didn't want to. He said, "You have to be out of your mind." And I don't know what would have happened, if he wouldn't have had the heart attack. He had the heart attack and the doctor told him, you're not allowed to walk the stairs. You have to move into a house with an elevator, or move downstairs.

INT: How old was he when he had the heart attack?

EVA: Living on the bakery. The first one, 48. It was in 1968. '67. '67 or '68, I don't remember. And when the doctor told him that, he let me look around. He didn't want to move. He said, "Anyone you tell will say that you are out of your mind. You're living without paying rent, without paying electricity." I said, "Yes, but look at that apartment." The rats making holes. I plugged them up. Every bakery has rats, mostly mice. I said, "The mice are running around in Rita's room." Lucky she's not scared. She had one little mouse, and she said, "Oh, she visited me at night. She's so cute, Mommy!" (Interviewer laughs) I said, "This is disgusting." I said, "The child is getting older." And then came... (phone interruption)

...her sweet sixteen. We moved in, Rita was ten. Rita's sweet sixteen, we still had on the bakery. I thought I'm going to die of shame. Because there was no place. The garbage cans were outside, and you had to shove away the garbage can to walk in and to walk upstairs. It doesn't matter what I did. I painted every year. I myself painted that whole apartment, because somehow through the cracks in the wall or whatever, the smoke would make the walls black, and I had to paint it. And I said to Abe, "You don't move, I'm going to get another apartment. Me and Rita will move." And then he had his heart attack, and the doctor told him, so he agreed. And I found, three blocks from us was a new building, and it was built when we came eight years before. And we found a nice apartment. That was the nice apartment, the five and a half rooms we had, where Rita lived till she got married. And he didn't want to leave. He said, "This is crazy." And to show you how right I was, the money that we saved up living on my uncle's bakery, went away for doctors, for the time when he couldn't come into the store, in the store. Another woman would have given up, I told you that, I think. I called the mechanic, he told me how to operate. The store ran. I just tried to hang in there. I couldn't do alterations. I just paid the bills, paid the rent, and paid this. Everything got paid, but not a penny to put away. It took us, half a year he didn't come to work, and when he came back to work, it took us another half a year, till we got back to the point where we were when he had the heart attack. And the money that we saved up went away. That we have, I mean, we had money. We paid for the machinery, stuff like that. But it's...he didn't enjoy the money that he said we will save living on the bakery.

INT: Could you talk a little bit about how you raised Rita? What were some of the goals that you had for her? What did you want for her?

EVA: What I wanted for Rita was...

(END TAPE SEVENTEEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE SEVENTEEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: Not everybody, but most of our friends...about half of our friends, sent their kids to, there was a Jewish school in Montreal. It was quite expensive. But we could have paid, because I started to work when she was five. And I said no to him. I said, "You're not going to settle Rita." I said, "My uncle, my aunt here, sent the kids to a Jewish school. And whenever I visited them from Canada for holidays here, the older one, the son, didn't say already. He understood. But the younger one, "What kind of a Jew are you? Everybody's going to shul on Shabbas, and you work. And on Pesach you have the bakery open, and you consider yourself a Jew?" I said, "You're not going to make Rita a mixed-up kid like Charlotte is. I told you when you married me who I am, what I believe in. But let's forget what I believe in. Rita's going to be brought up free as a bird. When she grows up she can fly to any tree she wants to. She can become a religious Jew, she can become a religious Catholic, she can become a Protestant. She can believe in nothing. But she will be brought up with principles: to love people, to be a good person, to share with people, to help people when they are in need, it doesn't matter **who** those people are. These are my principles that I want to bring up Rita." And he quieted down. But when his brother came from Israel, and he said, well, his brother was a little right, because the kids did speak only Hebrew. And they didn't know a word, they couldn't even sign their names in English. They didn't know the alphabet. But he went to that Hebrew school, and they wouldn't let him even off, never mind a half. They wouldn't let him even off a quarter. Pay the whole thing, or no. So the kids went to public schools.

INT: This is Itchik's kids.

EVA: Yeah. The truth is that the boys, the one that is religious, simply because he became religious. He still remembers Hebrew, and he's stuck to that, from his Bar Mitzvah. Till the bar mitzvah he ate pork and everything, like everybody else in the family. Then he became religious. The older one forgot everything. I mean, he has a Shomer Shabbas house, because his first wife brought up the kids, she was a Shomer Shabbas girl. She had a kosher kitchen, so he keeps a kosher kitchen, because the kids want that.

INT: Is this Jacob?

EVA: Yeah. And the niece is the one, the only one that still speaks Hebrew, the oldest one, Sarah. She was twelve when she came from Israel, and she's the only one. Her husband was in Israel, brought up in Israel, too, so they speak Hebrew.

INT: Is she religious?

EVA: No. Not at all.

INT: So the only one is...

EVA: Nathan. Nathan is the only one that cut the bud when he had his bar mitzvah. So that's the way I wanted...

INT: So you wanted her to be raised with these principles that you spoke about.

EVA: Free.

INT: But free.

EVA: Before his brother came from Israel, I had a little... Rita was going to a public school. And she had friends. And of course they had big Christmas trees. "Mommy, they have such beautiful Christmas trees." I said, "Honey, you know what?" I had a gigantic apartment. When you walked in there was a big foyer and four rooms, from each wall had a door going to a different room, completely separate. That foyer was gigantic. You could make a dining room out of it. So I had a table by the wall standing, and on that table I bought a little tiny tree, maybe two feet tall, and she would get a tremendous amount of presents from the people I worked with. From my boss, from the girls at work. I gave them presents, and they gave me presents. So I would pile it up, and of course, I would buy her a lot of, and she would get Chanukah presents; like Elizabeth gets double presents, Rita used to. And she couldn't wait to open them. So she had it. The minute his brother came, Abe forbids having that. That was the first...

INT: But he didn't have a problem with it before?

EVA: No.

INT: It didn't bother him.

EVA: No. It didn't bother him **at all**. Because I didn't hide it from him. I told him, "If you want a religious wife, marry another one, Abe." As a matter of fact, I told you, Jennie, this at the beginning, I think, when I started to talk about my marriage. If I wouldn't have gotten pregnant, I would have never, in any circumstance, married Abe. We come from completely different backgrounds.

INT: You felt very strongly that she shouldn't go to a Jewish school.

EVA: Yeah.

INT: Because you didn't want her to...

EVA: I didn't want her to observe any religion. I want her to grow up...

INT: Not even Christianity?

EVA: No, nothing. Be a decent human being. There are a lot of people who don't believe in any god, but they observe the Ten Commandments more than some very

religious people **I** know. Rita and Ray are the best example. Ray will not bring a **stamp** from work home. Rita, whatever is left over goes for poor people, wherever they find a place. Her old toys, her old, she had, when was it, last fall she had a sale, a big one. Rita organized a sale in Overbrook, where Rita went, the Presbyterian School in Overbrook, where Elizabeth went for pre-school. She still, Rita, helps them raise money. They were behind, so she organized a big sale, and it was raining cats and dogs the whole Saturday, and the sale wasn't so successful. So whatever was left over, three quarters of the stuff, Rita and Ray, Elizabeth's furniture a lot, and you name it. A little table with four chairs, all kinds of things. Everything went somewhere. I don't know where we went. Some kind of a St. Barnabas church, they told us they have a little orphanage there, or abused women there. So we carted it all away there, to that St. Barnabas church.

INT: But was any of this feeling that you didn't want her to, that you wanted her to be free, did any of that come from the fact that you didn't want her to be Jewish because of what had happened to you, and the persecution? And you wanted her to be safe from that?

EVA: (pause) I suppose that could be said. I suppose. I didn't...consciously think about it. But I know that deep down I always resented the fact, why did my grandmother have to be killed? Why did my mother have to be killed? Why do I have...I was lying there looking at the sun and the church bells were pealing, people were going to church, and I thought, I told you at the beginning. If someone would just come and tell me why I should die. **Why**? Answer the question why. I would go out myself and say: Kill me. But I don't know why am I supposed to die? What did I do? Just because I was born Jewish? I'm sick and tired. I was sick and tired of being persecuted...through the whole war. I never knew persecution before the war, that's the truth. Somehow, even though Grandpa always wore a Jewish hat and...prayed every day, and the neighbors, the Ukrainians, the Polish, were used to see him in his tallis and tefillin every morning, those that got up very early. He prayed at sunrise. And he went to shul every Shabbas. But...nobody ever threw a stone at us. Nobody ever said, "You dirty Jew. You get out of here." I don't know. I never felt any persecution. Never. Never any. But when the war came, I rued the day.

Why did my grandpa come back from America? He was in America. Wouldn't it be better if I would have been born in America? Or wouldn't it have been better if my grandfather was not Jewish, and I had the family? Especially when Rita was born. "Why does everybody have two grandmas, two grandpas, I don't even have one of them? No uncles, no aunts, no nothing. Why is it?" The child couldn't understand. She was three, four years old, five. She couldn't understand it. And lucky I had a neighbor, my downstairs neighbor in Montreal, who had a store downstairs. She was already a grandmother -- a young grandmother. Not young, she was a normal age. She was about 45, I think, Paulie at that time. Between 45 and 50. And she said, "Mamale, you can call me Grandma." And I said, "Paulie, what are you doing?" So she said, "So what is it of your business? You're a young goat. You don't know nothing. The child wants a grandma, so I can stand one more grandchild. I have three, I'll have four." Rita in Canada, it was terrible. It was terrible. Why she doesn't have anybody, why children

have grandparents, they go to them, they get presents. They hug them, they kiss them. I don't have anybody. Until when she was ten years old, I promised her. "Honey, you have a grandma and a grandpa. They are not your **real** grandmas, but they are as good as real, and for your tenth birthday I'll take them," and I took her to Winnipeg.

INT: To Aunt Gitchi and Uncle David.

EVA: We were in Winnipeg, Abe called us that they're calling us to the American consul, and we moved. We came from Winnipeg, we went for the visa in September, and in October we were already in America.

INT: So did Abe go along, your husband, excuse me, did your husband go along with your decision about the schools?

EVA: Yeah. It didn't bother him till his brother came. And he, even then he... yeah, he raised a ruckus once, only, before his brother came. In Canada they are, especially the part we lived in, the Quebec Province, the majority of people are French Canadian, and they are Catholics. The rest, the minority, are the English-speaking, which are Protestants, and English people. Jewish people. So the real school board is a Catholic school board. And the other school board, the public school, was called the Protestant school board. So all those mixed kids beside the Catholics, went, it was called the Protestant school board. That was like a real, regular Protestant school. Rita went to a school like that. And then his brother's kids, too. But Rita was, I think, in second grade. Or third, I don't remember. She comes home one day and she says, "Mommy, the teacher..." it was at supper, I think. "The teacher said that we are going...they're selling Bibles in school, and she said whoever wants a Bible should bring a dollar to school." And I, you know, without anything I said, "Okay, honey, I'll give you a dollar. Buy the Bible." And Abe, "What kind of a Bible? Why does she need a Bible?" And I said, "Right now I'm busy eating. After I eat, I'll talk to you." Then when she went out of the kitchen, I said to him, "Why are you raising hell? I told you. You knew who you're marrying." "Because you don't want her to go to a Jewish school." I said, "If you find me something in the Bible that is no good, I'll tell her to throw the Bible away." "What is it?" In those days people said prayers in school here, and they said there. What did she say? She said, every day, "Our Father which art in Heaven." That's all. That's all. That was the prayer. It's a simple prayer. It's like the Jews saying "Modeh Ani" in the morning. And there was no religious training in the school, just a short prayer in the morning. She had the Bible, she never looked in the Bible.

INT: How did your husband feel about religion? And how to raise Rita?

EVA: He didn't go to a shul till his brother came. Then his brother started to go. His brother married a girl, my sister-in-law was a girl whose father was a shochet. She comes from a religious home. But she came from Israel and we ate pork, and we ate pork chops, and I didn't have a kosher kitchen. And I said to Abe, "If Doba wants a kosher kitchen, she'll have to look for an apartment. I'm not going to throw out my dishes. I just waited a year to buy those dishes that I have now for them when they came." And he said,

"They are not kosher. Itchie is like me, and Doba isn't kosher." Well, sure enough, she ate everything, and we ate bacon, and we ate milk with bacon and everything, and she didn't care. All of that business with a kosher kitchen started when Nathan became Bar Mitzvah. So they didn't care. Abe...it never bothered him. But...I think it happened once. They always went to Kol Nidre. And he wanted Rita to go with him. And Rita, "I wouldn't go without Mommy. I don't want to go without Mommy." So I thought to myself, anyway he didn't buy a ticket. He'll have to stand outside. Because come the High Holidays, the shul is always packed with people who have seats. So why should he go in there? So I figured, all right, I'll go, I'll stand outside. I mean, nothing will happen to me.

The kids running in and out. I saw all those things which I never **liked** about a shul. The talking during the davening, and walking out when there is that intermission, and still wearing the tallis, and here is the, they just walked out the door and they are in the foyer, and they are already doing business, and talking about this, and "I told you I'll give it to you for that much," and they're already doing business. And they still...and the kids during the services, the mothers sitting upstairs, and the kids running up and down and screaming, and the mothers feeding children. And I thought to myself, since I was a little girl, I didn't **like** that. What kind of a house of worship is that? What kind of a house of worship is that? The first shul I saw in my life that had the semblance of a house of worship was, I just simply wanted to see it. And it happened that one of our friends had a daughter who married a doctor, and she herself is a teacher, but she dropped teaching and went into real estate, and bought herself, when her husband started already to work in a hospital on the East Side of Manhattan, they bought themselves a three-story house on 73rd Street and Park Avenue, in the **very** rich neighborhoods, and they started to go to the famous temple on Fifth Avenue, Temple Emanuel. And they made a bar mitzvah, and we were invited, their first bar mitzvah. That's the first time I saw quiet, children behaving.

INT: That's a Reform synagogue.

EVA: Yeah. The...rabbi talks whatever, it's quiet. You can hear what the rabbi is saying. You can hear what he's praying, and he says a little bit in Hebrew, and then he says something in English, and I understand what he says. I mean, it's...that's the first time that I saw the regular Orthodox synagogues I didn't like when even I was three, four years old and I went with my father. He took me every Saturday, because that was Mother's day of rest. Mother stayed home, Father took me, and I played with the kids, and he would daven there by the rabbi.

INT: How about your Christianity? What were you doing about that? Were you going to church?

EVA: I...my Christianity started when I started...when I started public school. When I started that Catholic school.

INT: No, I'm talking about after your conversion.

EVA: And it took root and it grew together with me. (pause) Maybe if I would have, if Father wouldn't have died, and we would have lived in the city, and I would have come into Jewish company more, but Father died. Me and Mother went to live with Nana in the country. We were in a village. There was one Jew and for every one Jew in our family there were 100, 200 Christians, and Jeanie was my friend before, and Jeanie was my friend after. And ...all my friends were non-Jewish. They always invited me. For the holidays, come over see the Christmas tree, this and that. And I started, I was a great reader all my life. When I was in school, as long as the war didn't start, I went to school. I had the school library. I had homework up till here, but I always had a library book to read on the train, to read in the middle, to read here. Wherever I could, I would read a quarter of a chapter, but I would read it. I love reading. I always, my life wasn't so happy. My father died, my father's sick, a sick mother. Since the day I remember, my mother was a sick woman. I always knew I cannot play in the house, because Mommy doesn't feel good. So I had to play at neighbors' houses. I didn't have a regular childhood like another child. I...my happiest times were spent, let's say an evening. My father was always home in the evening. He would play checkers with me, he tried...I wanted to play chess. He said, "When you are a little bit older, when you will be a little bit older I'll teach you chess." I rolled cigarettes for him, I rolled up the money for him. He checked my homework when I started to go to school. And of course, there was never nothing to be corrected, but he always checked it. He sewed on my white collar for every day, a fresh one. He sewed on my, we had white cuffs every day, polished my shoes. He entertained me the whole evening. I never remember...maybe because she was sick, my mother. She would go to a neighbor, or a neighbor would come in to her. They would sit and talk and something. My father always found some kind of entertainment for me, or read a book to me. Or he read two newspapers every day, so he would read me, if it would be, I suppose, something for a kid, he would read me a story from the paper. And that's...when my father died, it's like I told you. My world ended. My war started when my father died, my personal war.

And when we moved to the village, to Nana, I had nothing to read. When '39 came, the war came, you couldn't travel. The regime changed, you had no shoes. If you got a pair of shoes, you saved them, because you cannot get another pair unless it's army shoes. And then when the Soviets even brought some supplies and were selling them, so if you need a size five shoe, you got a size seven. So you had to walk from house to house and see if someone can change.

INT: So books were unavailable.

EVA: Who had books? Libraries. Besides, I didn't read Russian.

INT: Well, we started on this because of the Christian issue. I was interested...

EVA: Whoever had anything to read in Polish, there was this teacher. Until she lived in the village, whatever she had, everybody had a little library. The people that were educated. There was a teacher, there was another teacher who taught in another village,

lived near the station. And the people around the station that worked for the station, the Polish people had, were a little more educated. The station master. So whoever I could lay hands on, religious books, non-religious books, as long as I could read it. I took everything. And Jeanie couldn't go and get those books, but I had, after I finished a book it went to Jeanie. And I would always yell, "Finish it already!" I only told her for three days, and you already have the book three days there. So it's...I supplied Jeanie with books.

INT: So did you learn about Christianity through the books?

EVA: I knew Christianity from the...but I learned more, like once I remember, the very first book I got that really started my interest was about Saint Theresa. And I liked it very much. And then...I got another book. Once there was this one woman, she lived near the station. She had a lot of religious books. She was already also a dressmaker, and she would like take two old dresses. There were no dresses to be had, no good material. So you took like, Mother said, "Oh, take my dresses, the old ones." Everything was before the war in silk or in crepe. "So take my crepe dress and make it over for yourself." So she liked, had religious books. Then I got hold of "The Miracle in Lourdes," and "The Miracle at Fatima," and stuff like that, and my interest grew and grew and grew and grew. But I didn't always read. The two years when the Russians were there, I told you, some of the military was staying in the house. They would play, we would dance. I wanted to learn Russian very badly. And the songs were beautiful. The songs I learned. They would teach us, they gave us little books with songs. With popular Russian songs.

INT: But after the war, and after your conversion, you were married, and you're in America. What role did Christianity play in your life? Did you sneak out to church when your husband wasn't around, or how did it work?

EVA: In Montreal there was a church not far from us. We had a little park, and there was a church. I would sometimes, just wanted to get away from it all. I didn't attend church regularly because... I worked Saturday, Sunday. I had to work. That was, I worked from 9:00 in the morning till 12:00 at night. That's how I made some money. When... for a while his brother lived with us, and he made Abe beg, beg, beg, and I promised him that I'm never going to say anything about my liking the church better than the synagogue when his brother came. And I kept my word. He didn't keep his word in all the times, but I kept my word.

INT: Your husband didn't know about your conversion.

EVA: He did.

INT: He did know?

EVA: But he kind of shoved it in the back of his mind, and he thought that I will forget about it. When we moved to Brooklyn, I didn't have a church near me. But I, like

yesterday I listened to the radio. Sometimes I catch something, and I listen to it. On television, the only time I would watch anything is Easter, Sunday morning, or late night Saturday. And at Christmas of course. As much as I liked Christmas in Europe, it blew me away when I came to Canada, because it seemed to be, I couldn't...that's another thing. You don't know how foreign it is for somebody to come from Europe, especially from a country like Poland. I never felt it, but there was always segregation everywhere. The Jews lived in their quarters, the Ukrainians in their villages, the Polacks in their little colonies. I didn't understand it. After the war I started to understand it. Here in Canada, Perry Como comes out and sings, "Eli, Eli." And Connie Frances sings, "My Yiddishe Mame." (interviewer laughs) And she's Italian. And I got unglued **completely.** And Barbra Streisand sings, "Silent Night!" So I didn't feel that I have to...kind of carry my belief so much on my sleeve. It seemed to me like every second person is the same.

INT: It's more of a melting pot here, and you can sort of melt in.

EVA: This Christmas I watched something on television, and there was this, he's a **very** Jewish boy, Neil Diamond. He's from Brooklyn, too. And he went to make a country music in Nashville, of all places. He, and who was with him? Dolly Parton? Or was it another girl from the big singers. And there they are singing, "Little Jesus lay down on his hay. Lay his head on the hay." And he sings it, and you can see in his face that he sings it and means it. And I look at him (laughs) and I say, "What is he thinking when he's singing that?" There's no way you could get a Polack to sing a Jewish thing, or a Jew sing something about a Christian. Here it's a Christmas song, it's not a religious song.

INT: Can you tell me what it was about Christianity that attracted you and that...

EVA: I told you that already. I don't want to be a minority anymore. And if I could help it, I always prayed that Rita falls in love with somebody who is not Jewish, but of course she fell in love with a Jew, and that didn't work out. And then I didn't really care what, as long as my child is healthy, because he left her bereft. Later she told me that for the first six months after she told him get out, she still was in love with him like crazy. And after six months it started to get a little easier. And I was just afraid that she might do something foolish.

No matter what religion, or what...my first, my only, my last priority since I have her was Rita and her happiness. Her well-being, her peace of mind. When she wanted to marry her first husband, she started to cry one day, and she said, "She remembered, we were, me, my sister-in-law, and two other women neighbors came in, and we were sitting and gabbing, and they always all came to my house. Because I always had gefilte fish, and I always had pickled herring I made myself, and I always baked, and I mean, they didn't do those things. So they always came to my house, and the table was full, and they ate. And I didn't even realize it, but I was a women's libber back way then. Because I remember, Rita reminded me. I made a statement, and I remember. We were talking. The women at the table were like, I was...27, let's say. My sister-in-law was the beginning of her forties. Another woman maybe forty.

(END TAPE SEVENTEEN, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE EIGHTEEN, SIDE ONE)

EVA: His sister-in-law came, his brother came always. So they would start to talk with us, and at the end I would always shoo them out, get out of here. So they would go and talk in the living room, and we women would be alone in the kitchen. And I remember that I always used to have my opinion. Why is it that a man can have before his marriage twelve or twelve times twelve women, and say openly he had that many women he slept with them, and the more experience he had, the more women were crazy about him. And a woman has only **one** maybe, before she married, and she is damaged goods. Why is it? Once I said it, and my husband was in the kitchen still, and he said, "Because, like they say, " A man is like a glass, you wash it out with water and it's clean again, and a woman is not a glass." And I said, "**Baloney**!" to him. (interviewer laughs) And I shooed him out of the kitchen, and I said to those women, I said, "There is my child sleeping there." Rita was, I think, four years old at that time. And I said, "As far as I'm concerned," I started to say it. No, she must have been about four. Or maybe five. Couldn't be five, because by five I didn't have time to sit. It was between four and five. But Rita spoke completely sentences, when she was a year old. She understood everything what you say. She must have been about four and a half that winter. And I started to say to that woman something, and she came out of her room and came into the kitchen. And I said, "What's the matter honey?" "Mommy, can I have a drink of water?" I gave her a drink of water, she was drinking the water, and I kept on saying to those women, "You see that child? If she wants to marry a Gypsy, I will stand behind her. As long as she loves him and he loves her." Because I wouldn't tell them, but I always thought to myself: I married someone I didn't love, that's the life I have. That's it. I made my bed, I have to lie in it.

When I was so against her marrying Bernie, she said, "I knew that my father might find fault with him, lousy jeans, a beard, haircut. All those things can be fixed. But I always thought that you would be in my corner, Mommy." I remember her staying, tears running down her face. "I never thought that you would turn against me." And I said, "Honey, I am in your corner," and I started to cry. She said, "I heard you say to the women in Montreal in the kitchen that you don't care if I marry a Gypsy. Now I am going to marry a Jewish guy, and you are against him." "Honey, I said, and I'm sorry I said. I should have added, 'as long as he's a decent person.' I don't think Bernie's a decent person. He's mixed up with," -- that was open. She knew that I knew that he was smoking marijuana. And I said, "And that might lead to something more," and then last year only I learned that it led to more, but she hid it from us.

So when she broke up with Bernie, I was only concerned. She was very bad off. She was worried about me, I suppose, too, with a nervous breakdown. I mean, I dropped thirty pounds in six weeks. I became skin and bones and my hands were shaking. And I had a quiet nervous breakdown. If I would be rich, I would be somewhere in a clinic, but I couldn't afford it. And...I told Rita. She said, "Mom, what happened?" And I told her, "I found out your brother, your father has an affair with my friend in Israel." And she says, "Mommy, please pack your things and get out." I said, "Honey, it's not so easy.

You're alone now. I have to leave, I have to help you, too, and if I leave Father I can't help you." She says, "Mom, they will drag you down six feet under. Leave everything and go." And of course I didn't do it, because I realized, I meet her, she has no boots. I go in, buy boots. And then every day, "You need something? You need something?" "Okay, Mom, I could use a pair of pants." So we went for one pair of pants, and we went out of the store with three pair of pants, with a vest, with three...and pants, woolen pants with silk lining.

INT: So you wanted to be able to continue to help Rita, and that's why...

EVA: Help. I...

INT: But you left him three years ago. How did you come to that decision? After all those years.

EVA: (sighs) The decision three years ago, the decision was made, leaving Abe when I had my surgery. If my surgery wouldn't have gone, I came home after surgery, after I left here.

INT: Your heart surgery.

EVA: Eight years ago. I was feeling so good, I could fly. I came home, I started to paint the apartment. I painted the kitchen, I painted the bathroom. I threw out things I didn't need. I separated, I had a big kitchen. I separated the dishes that I want to take, the ones I want to leave for him. In the bathroom I started, I painted the bedroom. I only had to paint the windows. And what I did is take out the clothes and paint both closets. We had two closets in the bedroom. And I separated completely our clothes. I told Abe, "I don't want you mixing in this and that. Here is your closet, this is mine." And I started to separate the things. And I decided, I was physically strong, and I managed to paint the apartment, do everything before 10:00 in the morning. I would paint every day one wall. And move the furniture to the wall and clean the furniture if that wall is finished. And I figured, I'm going to leave him a clean apartment, and I'm going to go to Philadelphia if Rita wants to. And if not, in those days I don't know if she would have agreed, but I would have moved to New Jersey to Rutherford, near my friend Jeanie. I asked her. She knew about it all. And I told her, "I can't take it anymore."

INT: But what was the last straw? What was the last straw?

EVA: And then I found, I got sick. I collapsed. Took to the hospital, in the hospital I had a heart attack, and they did an angiogram and found out that all my arteries except one collapsed again, and there I am up till now. I'm schlepping, but I'm sick. And I didn't, I never finished painting the apartment, and I couldn't, I became ill again, and I'm on medicine. I had no medicine. When I had surgery I went home medicine-free, completely. And I became ill again, and I thought to myself: I did sin a lot in my life, and G-d is punishing me, so I'd better take heed of that. And...do whatever I can. I'm not, maybe G-d doesn't want me to leave Abe because he is...those times, Abe already

started to feel that his, he was already ten years after his surgery. After ten years you start to feel that you're going down. I didn't tell him, but I spoke to Rita. I said, "I think your father will, one of these years he will need another surgery." He lasted for two and a half more years, and then he needed a surgery. And...I stayed with him, and I decided. Never mind painting the apartment. He kept on waiting till they call him to get that co-op. And I thought to myself, when he will have his second surgery, I knew already. He came once for the check-up and I came with him, and he told me, before the end of the year he will need surgery. And then he needed, they looked at his arteries and one was completely clogged up so they had to do the other one, because he would have had a stroke and died. And that time I saved his life, too, because he said, "Who needs to do the arteries? Who needs to go to an x-ray?" And I said to Sonia, "Honey, just make an appointment. I don't like the way he sometimes goes around here and touches his..."

So they did it, and it showed that he needs vascular surgery. Then I decided that when he will get on his feet after those two surgeries, I leave him. His second surgery was in the winter, and right after the surgery they called him for the...co-op, and I told him, "I'm not going with you." It took a month of crying. And I said, "Abe, you're not hurting me, you're hurting yourself. I am not going with you into that co-op. I'll help you move, I'll help you paint, I'll get a..." "I don't know what to do." I said, "I'll get a painter, I'll get the paint, I'll paint, I'll get you Venetian blinds." "I don't know anything." "I will do everything, and I'll put, you can take **whatever** you want." At that point, I didn't care. You can take all the dishes, you can take everything." He picked out the pots, he picked out the dishes he wanted. I moved him over, and he said, "You're going to leave me right away?" I said, "No, I'm not going to leave you right away. But I am, when I settle you, I'm going to go to Philadelphia, and start looking for an apartment." I told him, "My lease is good till November. By November, if I don't find an apartment in Philadelphia, I will move to New Jersey to Jeanie." And that's how.

INT: But what made you decide, after all the years?

EVA: Because I had a chance. He was settled. In the meantime, Abe found himself, that time that we, the thing with Israel got quiet, he started an affair with a neighbor where we lived. And people used to tell me, "You don't look stupid. They walk around the boardwalk holding hands like two youngsters. And you sit home and you don't come to the boardwalk?"

INT: You just got tired of it.

EVA: Smart people would say it. Stupid people, there was one couple especially. Every time she would meet me, "Nu? I don't **understand** you." I said, "The same time they walk around here, I go with her husband to the movies." I wanted to get rid of her.

INT: So he was very open with his affairs. He wasn't hiding anything.

EVA: This was an affair? This was an affair? He worked already. His operations and my operations, no matter, even though we had a million dollar major medical, the

operations cost a month, the surgeon asks more than the million dollar covers. Even you have a million dollar policy, my policy only paid $7,000 the surgeon. You have to pay the difference. You don't **have** to, but I had money, and I'm not the begging kind. So... and there are so many little doctors which you never see, even. Little, we were left with about, we had a mountain of money. We were left only with about $25,000, $30,000. And every weekend he would drive her to her daughter in Long Island. He would drive her. She would shop, only she's very religious. Shows you how religious women live. Her husband still worked in the garment center, he's younger than Abe. So her husband would go away to work. I would be home. And she with him. She said, "If I am in the house and prepare supper, 12:00 is my house finished. I don't owe the house and my husband more than 5, 6 hours of work a day. Then I have to have time for myself." He would drive her to Long Island, he would drive her to Boro Park to shop. He would drive her all over. That driving all over the place, she had a friend in Lower Manhattan, he would drive her there. Who the hell knows? I don't know where.

INT: So you just got tired of it all, and that was the time to go, three years ago. You just saw a way out.

EVA: I got sick and tired. Not maybe because I cared what he does with her, because there was nothing between Abe and me since that affair in Montreal, in Israel. I didn't care. I bought, we had a double bed, I threw it out. I bought twin beds. And...I didn't care. But the money. So he went to work. He went to work for somebody, and he worked for years in a cleaning store, as a tailor. He would make some weeks $200, $300. All I would take from him is about $70 for food, and the rest, it was never enough. Every Monday, the car was in the garage, and he would come home. "I paid again $150, $200." But he didn't drive **me** around in that car.

And he got beaten up by her husband. He came home with a, with a big thing on his head. I said, "What happened to you?" "I slipped and I fell." Then people told me. "We saw, she was with your husband Shabbas on the boardwalk." And her husband was religious. He would go Shabbas to daven to shul, and she would with him meet on the boardwalk with Abe and walk around. And it was a day when the snow was falling, so they figured, nobody would see them, the snow falls. But people saw them. "And there is her husband, at 11:00 instead of being in shul, he left the shul, and he came to the boardwalk, and he grabbed your husband by the lapels, and picked him up." He was a tall guy. He could have killed him ten times. And Abe fell, he threw him, he fell, so he had a bump on his head, a big one, for I don't know how long.

And then one day her husband came to my house. The phone rings, he calls up. "This is Abe." His name was Abe, too. "Can I come over?" I said, "Anyone can come over. What do you want?" "I want to talk to you about something." He came over to me. "How long are you going to be sitting with your husband?" I said, "I don't know. Why?" "Because I'm going to leave that whore," he called her. I said, "Abe, from what I hear from people, she always had, when you were living in Lower Manhattan she had somebody called Yanke. Your wife most probably doesn't have enough one husband. So she's that kind of woman." And he said, "One of these days I'm going to go where they

dance, from work. I'm going to leave work early. And I'm going to go and I'm going to break your husband's legs, and he will never dance with nobody anymore." Don't you think he did it? He did it. He didn't break his legs, but he pulled her out in front of the **whole** hall of people, and it was...it was, you know what? She went to dance on Lag B'Omer. Isn't that the holiday when you're supposed to...

INT: That's tomorrow.

EVA: Wait a minute, you're supposed to fast?

INT: No, no, it's a celebration.

EVA: Tisha B'Av. She went dancing. And he said, "A frimme Yiddene, she went to dance on Tisha B'Av?" He pulled her out and he dragged her home.

INT: How do you think...

EVA: So I stopped going. I would go to Brighton shopping, where I would meet those people. So you know when I went? 6:00 in the morning. The Koreans opened the stores early. At 8:00, 8:30, I was back. I didn't see no yachnus. I didn't want to hear it, it didn't bother me. Abe could have twelve women, it didn't bother me. But when he started that big thing with her, I said to him, "Abe, that's it. You want to drive to Long Island, or past Long Island into the Long Island Sound? I don't care. We have $30,000. I'm telling it to you before I do it. I'm taking $15,000 out, and putting it into a book in Philadelphia in my name and Rita's. And you can do with your $15,000 whatever you want." So he didn't say no, he didn't say yes, but I did it. I brought the money here.

INT: How do you feel now that you've moved here? You've been here a few years.

EVA: (sighs) When I moved here I started to feel free for the first time since I got married. I felt free. I had a Catholic church on the corner near me, St. Alice, there where I lived. There was a Catholic church where we lived not far, on the way to Brighton where we lived. Sometimes I would go in. But lately it became mostly Puerto Rican, and the priests would talk Puerto Rican, and I wouldn't understand a darn thing what they say.

INT: But do you think you made the right decision, and the right move?

EVA: Yes. I never regretted becoming a Catholic, and I would never change my religion again.

INT: No, I'm talking about here, moving.

EVA: Oh, yeah.

INT: Leaving him and moving.

EVA: I don't see the yachnus. I don't care who he's with. I promised him, because he was crying, and he was crying, and he came here. He cried at Rita's. It was like Yom Kippur every day of the week. And I said, I told him, and I told it to him in front of Rita, and him alone in Brooklyn. "I am not going to abandon you. You have a car, you come. Before you come, you let me know. I'll cook, I'll bake for you. You take it home. You'll give me back what I spend for this thing." And that's what he did with the car. Later on he gave up the car. Now he takes it home by train. But he went home this time, he took stuff. I always make stuff for him.

INT: Are you happier living alone?

EVA: Oh, yeah. For the first time since I don't know when. I wasn't happy after the war, because like I told you, I could come somewhere a week late, and they wouldn't say, "What happened to you?" I was always alone. The day Rita was born, I realized I'm not alone anymore. That was the first time since my father died. Now with that sunny face growing, the world is mine. I have everything. I have...I told Rita when she was marrying Ray. She wrote me to Winnipeg, or she called me, I don't remember. "Mom, I'm going with somebody. I think you will like him. But he's not Jewish." I said, "Honey, since when did that bother me? If he's a decent person." "Oh, Mom, he's too decent," she says. (laughs) And since meeting Ray, meeting the family, she fulfilled all my dreams that I ever had. I wanted a girl, I had a girl. By marrying Ray she fulfilled all my dreams I ever had for her. She wanted a girl, she has a girl. She has a good husband. You couldn't ask for a better one if you go into a factory and draw him, make a drawing and say, "Make it to those specifications," she couldn't have had a better one. And when I met his parents... his mother is one in a million. She's a second mother to Rita. With Bernie she had a mother-in-law, not a mother.

INT: So you're happy with how things have turned out.

EVA: When I was going for my operation I didn't even blink an eye, that I knew that Rita will be left with a mother. She won't be alone. Ruth is there. I didn't have any anymore, but Ruth is there.

INT: That's Ray's mother.

EVA: Yeah. And...she, the way Rita leads her life, (pause) I think is exemplary. They're both not religious, but their house and their hearts are open to **anybody**. They will never say no to help anybody, no matter what denomination, what color skin, what status married, a child without marriage. They will always help. But...she's in good hands. I'm leaving her in very good hands. She will never be alone. (pause)

INT: I just have a few more questions to finish up. Looking back over your life, what would you say, how would you say you've gotten through the difficult times, especially since the war? How do you think you've coped with the difficult marriage, and difficult...

EVA: Since the war? Since the war was very easy. Rita kept me going. My love for Rita. My desire to bring her up...and make her exactly into the person she is. And I don't know how. I'm not very educated. She didn't hear deep philosophical discussions at her parents' table. She didn't...the first encyclopedia came into the house when Rita needed it. But I gave her her freedom...to lead the life the way she wanted it to lead. Of course I put up objections when she was marrying Bernie, because I was afraid, G-d, how far can you be from drugs? If the husband takes, maybe she will start it. I didn't want to lose my child! I lost a cousin, 29 years, they put him into a grave.

And...through the war, my faith. My faith got me through the war.

INT: And afterwards it was Rita.

EVA: Rita.

INT: Got you through the difficult times.

EVA: Rita and my, she gave my living a meaning. Up to Rita I was floundering. I happened to be in this city, then I happened to be in that city, then I happened to live with a teacher, then I happened to live with a friend. I never had a room of my own. I always looked for somebody to be with somebody. Most girls, when I was in Gdansk, so the girls who worked said, "You're crazy living with a teacher! We get home at 1:00 at night. We live in a room, we pay for it. Nobody tells us." I said, "I like to be with a family." I wasn't a promiscuous girl. Maybe my experiences from the war kept away the promiscuity from me. I don't know. But I was always, I was never, even before the war, I was never one to, oh, I would like to experience this and that. I only thought about school. After I finish the school, then I'll do all those other things. As much as I want to. But...I was always, Rita gave stability to my life. I had somebody to live for. I didn't have nobody to live for. She still does. If I ever think, I **never, ever** thought someone would have come over and say, "You will live through the war?" I would say, "Slim chance. Maybe. If Hitler doesn't stay too long, maybe." But if someone would have told me, "And after the war you will be alive, and you will live to seventy," I would say, "You are nuts." I would have never believed it, because I...

INT: You don't consider yourself an optimistic person?

EVA: No. I am a pessimist. That was one of the biggest things with me. Abe sees everything pink, and I see it dark. I can see it pink after I evaluate it. He doesn't evaluate anything. He sees everything through rose-colored glasses. I...am 71 years old, with a bad heart, bad spine. I can barely walk some days. Now I have a new thing: blood pressure trouble. And...I'm still alive. And I would still love to, if I could at least live till Elizabeth is sixteen. That story that I'm telling you, that book. That will be my legacy. I did it for Elizabeth. And I suppose it will be up to Rita and Ray, whenever they will let her read it. But she will have to be a little grown up.

INT: Is there anything you'd like to add to this interview? You want to read what you've written?

EVA: I wrote something which I really don't know if it should go to the front or through the back. In the back. I will read it to you. And then you will maybe be able to decide. Let me get my glasses.

You asked me before if I want to add something. If I want to add something is, there used to be times that I thought to myself, and the police did call me once up. I was home and he was in the store. That I shouldn't worry, my husband will be a little late home, because he had an accident in the store, somebody held him up. And I thought to myself: too bad they didn't take him to a hospital. I wished him dead, there were times. Because he made my life miserable with those women. Spending money on them like water. Like **water**. But now, since I left him, I have lost my hate, my animosity. I wish him well. We became good friends. We could never talk. Now we could sit. He was here last week, he was here for Passover. He was here two weeks, but I was moving. "And please can't you sleep at least one night over? Rita has two beds in that room, and we could talk a little." And I said, "Abe, I have so much to do in the house. Even if I unpack one box, and here the hand is bothering me." So he started to cry, and I said, "Next time." So I promised him, and this time I slept over. So we talked for about two hours. I was sitting on my bed, he was sitting on his. We became best friends.

INT: That's very interesting.

EVA: I cannot wish him bad. He's Rita's father. As much, as many times, I don't know if Rita will admit it to you or to anybody, I have no idea. But she told me, personally, a few times. I made a big mistake with Rita. I told her about some of the bad things her father did. I thought that I'm doing good, making her understand why I want to go away from him. What I should have realized, what I have known for a long time, if you tell a child something bad about the other parents, it starts to hate you, too. And I realized by Rita's actions, the way she talks to me, the way she behaves to me, sometimes, not always, the abruptness of an answer sometimes when I ask her, that she developed a dislike for me, too, that the dislike comes from the fact that I spoiled her image of her father.

(END TAPE EIGHTEEN, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE EIGHTEEN, SIDE TWO)

EVA: When the surgery is over, you will wait a little bit. They have to, you know, wash him, and this and that, and they'll bring him into the recovery room, and you will be able, he's sleeping. He will be sleeping for the next 24 hours, but you can take a look at him. And she couldn't wait. I was waiting in the waiting room, and she wore boots, it was winter. And she was walking. I said, "Honey, you're making so much noise with those boots. It's a hospital here. It's quiet." There was a tremendous big intensive care unit. It was a new hospital in West Chester, in New York. And finally, "Oh, they're taking

Daddy from one room to the other!" And she ran, and I ran after, after her. And I thought to myself: Let her go in first. She came out, and she says, and she started to cry. And I said, "Honey, what's the matter?" (in sad voice) "Daddy looks so vulnerable." I said, "Honey, Daddy just had eight, ten hours of surgery. He'll be all right. The doctor said he's giving him 98% of recovery. How much more do you want?" I said. "Yes, but, I always considered Daddy that strong man, my hero. And here he is so vulnerable. They can do with him whatever they want. They poked so many holes in him." And I spoiled that image for her. She wasn't too much always in love, because she loved her father very much. When she was small and she would hurt herself, we lived on the third floor in Canada, that beautiful apartment. And she would sit with that hurt finger like this (holding finger up) on top of the stairs, for half a day, not say, Mommy couldn't kiss it good. But he would walk up the stairs. The minute he would kiss it, the finger would be fine. (interviewer laughs) For half a day she couldn't eat with that hand. (laughs)

INT: She was just holding her finger up.

EVA: Daddy was kissing that finger. Because he would sit there and tell her this story every night. And he couldn't read English till he learned. And he would make up stories. And he would tell her the story, and she would say, "Tell me again the story about the katchkales." So of course, being that it's not written, he made it up yesterday, he would change it. (interviewer laughs) "No, Daddy. That's not the way. You told it different yesterday." So she remembers those times. And I spoiled for her the image of her father. And she's right in that respect.

INT: Was he a good father, do you think, to her?

EVA: Oh, G-d.

INT: What kind of father do you think he was?

EVA: (sighs, pause) He lost her.

INT: It sounds like he was affectionate.

EVA: He lost her once. I went to work, and there was a Jewish theater. The American troupe of the Jewish actors would come to Montreal to play. And I was working Saturdays, so I said to him, "I'll go see it some other time. You take Rita." And the neighbor goes and this and that, "And you go and your brother." The brother, the sister-in-law. "And you go to the theater." I get tickets. I prepared clothes for Rita and everything, and they got on the bus to go. They just had to take a bus, like Lancaster from here to there. And on Lancaster down there was the theater. And the bus was full of Jewish people going to the Jewish theater. There was a Jewish section, the whole bus, Saturday evening. And it was kind of like about, I would say, 6:00. It wasn't very dark yet. It must have been late spring, because Rita was wearing a spring coat.

He starts to, Abe talks. It doesn't matter who. This one is there, he talks to it. He started to talk. He knew the whole bus of people. He started to talk to somebody. He has a child, five years old. He doesn't hold her by the hand. He just talks to people. So he moves here, he moves there, and Rita stands. He tells her to hold whatever she was holding, on a pole, and hold. His brother was standing near Rita. Rita sees his brother getting off the bus, she gets off the bus, too. His brother starts to go very fast. Later I learned his brother was going from this street, let's say three streets across to get his wife, she was waiting for him at work, and take her to the theater. And Rita stands and waits for father to get off the bus. The bus goes away, she has no father, she has no uncle. She's five years old, and she stands there. And **lucky**, lucky for me, because somebody would have been killed that day; I would have killed Abe and killed myself. A policeman happened. Those days it was different. The policeman asked her, "What's your name?" She told him. "And where do you live?" She told him. "And where's Mommy?" "Mommy's at work." "And where are you going?" "I'm going with Daddy to the Jewish theater." "So how about me taking you to your mommy?" "No! My daddy will be worried. He is, the Jewish theater is down there on St. Lawrence, near St. Catherine." And the policeman said, stands there and can't talk her into it, because he didn't know whether she knows exactly which theater, but she **knew** exactly which, because there was one Jewish theater. And he discusses it with her. And that was about five stops, she got off five stops before the theater. And Abe is running, with his coat open, running. And he sees her. And was thanking the policeman and thanking.

Anyway, they went to the theater. And he made Rita promise that she will never tell me because he knew damn well, and that would have happened, that the minute I would have known about it, I would have left work and said, go hang yourself. You don't make enough money, go work more. Because why did I go to work, Rita was five years old? Not because I felt I have to. I wasn't a spender like other women. But I always heard, "Sure, the Shechters are moving into a nice apartment, but they both work, they can afford it." You know, little things like this, you know...

INT: It gets to you, yeah.

EVA: It's like just a nudge in the ribs. I went to work, what I did with my money, he didn't buy an apartment for my money. I saw to it. I figured to myself: not on my life. I never was dressed. I was dressed till 1939. From '39 till now, I don't know what it means to buy what I like. I buy what I can afford. So now is my chance. I was dressed like a princess, Rita was dressed like a princess, and I bought the food for the house, that's it. The rest, you don't pay rent? We don't live here. Period. He paid everything else, and he saved the money. And why did I do it? Because he wouldn't put me on the, till we came to New York, he had the book on his name. My name wasn't even on the book in the bank.

INT: Who made the decisions between you?

EVA: He made all the decisions. When did he start asking me about decisions? When he wanted to go into business. And I said, "What do you need me to go looking for?

You have a brother. You two go look." "Itchie wants a luncheonette. I don't like a luncheonette. I'm a tailor. I know tailoring a little, I would rather have." I said, "So you know Chemia, you know Moshe. Chemi's looking for a cleaning store." "It would be better if I would be by myself." I said, "Go by yourself." "How about maybe you will? I'll pay you." And he looked for a half a year, and I wouldn't go with him.

And I realized that Rita is sixteen. She will next year finish high school. Rita graduated high school by seventeen. She will go to college. College is without money. But where is books, and the way I dressed Rita is like a princess, always. Whatever she liked. And if the money was there, I didn't give a hoot. And there will come a wedding, and if Rita wants to go for a master's, as it did when we had the money. And I figured, if I don't go with him, there won't be money for that. But how many dollars I took out, not from the store, but from the money that he brought home. He always told me, I said... "You take money, leave a paper that you took money." I said, "Why?" "I just want to know how much money went out, how much I have at the end of the day." So I would take the money. I told him I bought me, I bought for the house. He never knew exactly. But 90% of the money I took went for Rita. Because when Bernie left, even when Bernie was still there, Rita was in school, and Bernie was working as a bookkeeper. And how much could he make? He was working in a drugstore, in a chain drugstore as a bookkeeper. I mean, the rent, and this and that, and the...

So I would buy a filet mignon, a whole one. I would buy, I would go into an Italian butcher, five pounds of first class Italian veal chops. Veal cutlets. Those expensive meats. And beside that I would cook chicken soup and make kreplach and whatever. But a lot of...once a month I would always go loaded up with a filet mignon. I remember like now, filet mignon would be about between $25 and $30. A whole one. I would never buy a few slices. A whole one. And I would bring it there and leave it. I'd tell her. "Tomorrow morning, Saturday morning." "Mom, so early?" I said, "Honey, I'm not coming in. I'll ring the bell, it will be about 8:00, you just come to the door, you can come in your pajamas. Just take it, stuff it in the frigidaire, and I'm going right back to the store." He would go to the store, I would go in the subway and go to Manhattan, bring it to Rita. Because I wanted the kids to eat. I accepted him. He was Rita's husband, and there's nothing I can do about it. And later when she was alone, I wanted her to have shoes, not to have wet feet and stuff like this. And I spent money. I never wore a blouse. For the three years I was sick, I never wore a blouse under $25. That was the beginning of seventies. The most expensive blouse was $25 and I wore it.

So he spent money on women, and I started to spend money on me and on Rita. And...it doesn't matter how poor a marriage is. If both people supply to that little pile, it will grow. But if everyone takes off more than they supply, then there's no pile left. It doesn't matter. You will not accumulate nothing.

INT: But I asked you if you thought he was a good father. He lost her that time.

EVA: In that respect. In that respect, that I had to buy her stuff that, so he knew I was going shopping with Rita. "So what did you bought her?" "I bought her a pair of pants with a blouse with a vest." But I bought five times that much. He didn't know.

INT: Was he affectionate? Did he spend time with her?

EVA: To her affectionate he was always. He couldn't spend too much time, because Rita never came back to live with us, and there was no reason, and I didn't see no sense. She had a room. There she had three rooms.

INT: No, I'm talking about growing up, as a little girl. Was he there for her?

EVA: No. When he had his brother, his free time went to his brother. Every evening. Twice a day, ten times a day when they didn't work, it doesn't matter. His brother. But when she started getting older, when she graduated public school in junior high school, when she went into high school, he had nothing in common with her. She was...superior to him in knowledge. She couldn't ask her father like Elizabeth. "Dad, Mom doesn't know how to help me with this arithmetic," or something. She didn't come even to me. Sometimes with spelling, believe it or not, in high school, she would come to me, because I had a very good head. Now, I lost a lot of my words. I spell them wrong. But then I had a very good memory. And to me she would come more. Like once she came home from, was it junior high school, or high school? I think it was junior high school. She came home and brought with her a girl, and with her together came up the stairs, a girl who was three or four years older, our friends' daughter. And they all came to ask me questions about sex. The girls asked me a question, Rita and her friend, and the friend says, "Mrs. Roitman, I can't ask my mother." And Rita said, "Come to me. My mother will answer you." "Is it true that when a man has an erection and he cannot have sex it hurts him?" I said, "Well, I heard that it hurts him." So they were satisfied. And that Esther came, because she had to write a report on, she was already in college. Esther came, she had to write a report about...abortion. So I helped her with that. And she said, "My mother could tell me, but she couldn't tell me in English. You will tell it to me in English, and I know what to write."

INT: So you were able to be open and talk to Rita about anything?

EVA: Sure. Sure. Yeah, when she was ten years old, or nine years old, no, ten. When we came here, ten. I don't know why, something prodded me. I never knew anybody who gets menstruation by ten. Rita was the first one. Then I don't know, something prodded me, and one day I started to talk something, and I don't remember, she said, "Mom, are you going to tell me about the birds and the bees?" I said, "Honey, I **know** you know about it. I wanted to talk to you about something else." "About menstruation." I said, "Yes. You might get it in a year or two." "Mommy, I know already. Some girls in the class have it." That was the end of my, that was the end of...

INT: Did you ever tell her anything about your war experiences? Did she ever ask you what you had been through during the war?

EVA: No, she didn't. As a matter of fact, like when Tanta Gitchi would come sometimes from Winnipeg, or Sophie in Montreal, she went through a lot like I did, Sophie Shechter, a friend of ours. And she was friends with their daughter, Rita. We would sometimes remember something, and cry or laugh sometimes. So...but whenever I wanted to tell Rita something, maybe because I did it. I brought it on myself. "Mom, are you going to tell me one of your stories again, and I will not like it? I would rather you don't."

INT: She didn't want to hear it.

EVA: Because like I would tell her, "You know, I decided to leave your father. But he's sick now, I cannot do it. So I'll wait till he gets better." And then I would sometimes, it was hard. I had to get her all alone. And when she's alone, she either sits and does her office work, or the telephone rings. So usually when we're in a car going somewhere. And once I started to tell her in the car that...we were in the hospital. It got to the point, I told her a few things about Abe, about me moving here. And I remember the first apartment I went to see was on...City Line, near Bala Avenue. There are big apartment houses, students live a lot in them. And there was an apartment in the paper, and I went. And I came home, and I said to her, she was home. And Linda was there, and Rita was there, and we were drinking tea. Linda brought some cinnamon buns she made.

And I said, "There's an apartment here. I don't want you to," I told her straight. "I will go look for apartments. I don't expect you to drive me, I don't want you to go with me, because it will hurt you maybe, because it's your father that I'm leaving." She didn't answer anything. I think she said once, "If it's too far for you, I'll drive you. But I will not go in and look at it." And Linda said, "Where is it?" I said, "It's right here on City Line." She said, "I'll go in with you." And Rita started to cry. And I said, "Honey, why are you crying?" And she didn't answer anything, and I figured I'll leave it. I drank my tea. She drank the tea and cried, and then Linda said, "What's the matter?" And she said, "You know, it's nothing new to me. My mother told me for a couple of years already that she wants to leave my dad. But somehow you always grow up with the feeling that your parents will be together till the day they die. And you don't expect them to be separate. And still living."

INT: So it was hard for her.

EVA: And I said, "Honey, you're not going with me anywhere." She talked to me a lot about...and I said, "I'm not going to leave your father until I prepare him, until he knows how to cook it, on low heat, on high heat. What to put in, how to cook the things that he likes. And besides that, I'm going to cook food for him, and bake food for him here, and he'll take it home." And I said -- which I shouldn't have. I said, "Besides, that floozy of his," her name was Dora. I said, "Beside, he has Dora beside him. Can't she make something for him sometimes?" And she said to me, Rita, "But I'm sure he will be ashamed to tell Dora that you left him." But I don't know. I said, "Honey," and I realized that she was unhappy from day one when I looked here. And I said, I asked her before I

came looking. "I want you to tell me if it will bother you. I will not look here. I'll go to Jeanie's and look in New Jersey. But if you don't mind..." "Mom, you can do whatever you want." I said, "That's not the point. I do not want to be a bone of contention for you. As far as I'm concerned, maybe I can be of some help. You want to go somewhere, I'll be here." She said, "Yes. I realize that. I'll have a built-in babysitter." I said, "No, I will not live with you. If I cannot afford an apartment alone, I'll go to New Jersey. I still have some money." In those days I was still well. My spine didn't bother me. I expected I could still work, maybe do some part-time work. $50 a week is enough for me. And then who knows what next year will be? And I said, "Never mind that I might be a plus to you. If it doesn't bother you, I'll move here. If it bothers you, I won't." "Mom, you can move wherever you want, whenever you want. It won't bother me. If you decided, it's your life, you do whatever you want." But I realized from those answers, she didn't say, "No, Mom, I don't mind." She didn't. She made it understand that do whatever you want, Mom.

INT: It's your decision.

EVA: It's your decision, it's your life. So she was not happy. But later on when she realized that Abe comes here, and we are friendly, and I cook for him, and I bake for him, and I prepare, and I bring two shopping bags for him to take home, and I pick him up at the station, I take him back at the station, she relaxed a little. She relaxed a little.

INT: Does she see that you're better friends now?

EVA: But she was very, very afraid that, "Mom, how are you going to get around here without a car? I cannot drive you, be at your beck and call." I said, "If that's your worry." "But there's no way to get around here." I said, "There must be some poor people in Philadelphia. How do they get around?" I realized that I have to prove it to her before I start looking.

When he was here for his second surgery, one day it got so, he was here two months after each surgery and I took care of him. But his second surgery, he wasn't so, I mean, it's a small cut. But it was a bad month, it was February, lousy weather, and I was cooped up with him in the house. One day I said to her in the kitchen, "Do you mind if I go away tomorrow for half a day? Because I'm going to go bonkers with your father. He sits at the television." So okay, I said, "Abe, you want to watch that?" He only lives with Channel 34. "So okay, you watch CNN. Don't talk to me, I'm going to read that book."

INT: He's heavily into the news.

EVA: And I said, "Can I have a half a day?" "Mom, sure, where do you want to go?" I said, "You know what? I want to go up to King of Prussia, as far away as..." "But I'll drive you." I said, "No." "Mom, please, I have to go there, too, and I'll give you a list, you'll buy something for me." Fine. I think next day about 10:00, Abe had his already breakfast, and we put him on the couch and made him comfortable, Elizabeth went to school, and he was watching his television. She drove me to King of Prussia, and she lets

me off at Macy's, and she says, "Call me, I'll be home till, I'm not going to work till about 5:00. Call me, and I'll pick you up." And I thought to myself: no, no, no. If I don't get home from here alone, I'll never move to Philadelphia.

Sure enough, I went outside. I mean, no use asking a lady who carries a Marcus Neiman bag how to get to a bus. I found, there were two, "Is there a bus stop around here?" And she said, "Yeah, behind the store by JC Penny's, behind, there is a bus stop," the salesgirl says. I said, "Do you know which buses go where?" She says, "No, but if you go out there, there will be people." I go out, and I found two Black women, they looked poorly dressed, older ones, and I asked them, "Do you ladies know where City Line is?" "Sure, we know." And I said, "How do I go from here to City Line?" "Oh, you just honey, take the 124. We're going there, too." And I said, "Fine. And how much?" Those days, I still paid. And I took a bus, and I got off at Wissahickon, and I took the 65. And at 2:00 I came into the house. She was sitting in the kitchen eating something, and Abe was reading a paper at the kitchen table. He just had his lunch or something. And she said, "Mommy's coming!" And I came into the door. "How did you get here?" I said, "I flew with a helicopter."

INT: So you could figure your way around.

EVA: She said, "How did you get here?" I said, "What do you mean? I took a bus and then change at Wissahickon and came." "You're kidding." So she calls Ray. "You want to know something? My mom got home from King of Prussia without me picking her up." And I said, "What was your worry? I know how to read English, and I know how to speak English. Am I in a foreign country? Do I speak Russian? If I don't know, I ask." And I said, "You would be surprised how loaded the people, I told you there are poor people," I said. "The buses are loaded with retired people."

INT: Right. So you found your way. You can find your way.

EVA: And I found an apartment that I lived by myself, too, without anybody. Found it and moved in, and she didn't...and especially at the 69th Street Terminal. I had about 25 buses and trains. I didn't need anybody to drive me anywhere.

INT: So when you want to relax and enjoy yourself, what do you do? What makes you happy and what helps you to relax?

EVA: My special hobbies? Reading. Since day one.

INT: You're still reading.

EVA: Reading, reading, reading. I gave my books back. I had about thirteen books, and I still read them through here from time to time. I have no patience anymore for something better, and I cannot hold a hardcover book. My hands hurt me. Whether I sit or lie in bed, I cannot hold a hard cover book, so I'm settled on paperbacks. And the only

thing, I cannot read mysteries. I have no more patience for that. I settled on plain, ordinary Harlequin romances. The ending is good, it's a love story, that's it.

INT: Happy endings.

EVA: I read a book through in an evening or two evenings. I had thirteen books. As a matter of fact, it was such a lousy weather, Rita said, "Where are you going to go with it? Leave it in the car, I'll take it to the library in Upper Darby and give it back." So she has it, I don't know what she did with it. I have to make myself a book card here.

INT: Okay, so do you want to add what you...

EVA: Yeah. So like I said, Rita is relaxed more now. Abe found his niche. He goes to the clubs there. There are big buildings. There are tremendous 22 stories buildings, and there is a club in every building, and he entertains the elderly people in his clubs. And he still has his old girlfriend, and he has now a new one. And he's happy. (interviewer laughs) And I'm happy. We are good friends. We never argue when he comes here, and I think to Rita this is a novelty. Whatever he does bad. Sometimes, you know, she might say, "Mom, could you ask Daddy to take a shower?" "Okay." "I cannot do it. You do it." I mean, I help her out now with her problems with her father. And...

INT: You can tolerate him more?

EVA: Yeah. If only my health was better, so that I didn't have to, Rita calls me up and I don't have to tell her, "Oh, I don't feel good today." But what can you do? I never expected to live that long. And after all, the human body is just a machine. A screw gets loose every year. And that's the way.

And then I suppose will be the end. All I have to do is I just wrote something down, and I want to put it down. And I'll leave it to you whether you put it at the end. I figured it would be a dedication at the beginning, but you will see.

(Reading from what she wrote):

To Rita, who when she came brought me more happiness than I ever thought possible, who gave my life a purpose, and most of all made me feel that I'm not alone anymore. Love you, honey.

To Ray, who encouraged me to tell my story. Thanks for coming into the family, and mostly bringing me peace of mind where Rita is concerned. (pause, crying) Bless you for that.

To my darling sunshine, for whom I did this. My hope and prayer is that you never will (crying) have to experience a war like that. It is up to your mom and dad when you will read it. My guess is you will have to be somewhat grown up, and I won't be here

anymore. I suppose some war stories are worse (crying). But that was, and still is, my nightmare. (pause)

My feelings now, I would do it all over again in a second, just to have the three of you. Be happy, my angel face. My love will always be with you. Nana "E."

INT: I want to thank you very much.

EVA: That Nana "E" came from the fact that just about this year, I don't know, around Christmas, we realized both that we have the same initials, Elizabeth and Eva. The other Nana is Nana Ruth. When she was small she called her "Nana Woof." (laughs)

INT: Thank you very much.

EVA: Now being that we have the same initials, I sign, and if you would put the Nana E, put the E in...

INT: Quotations marks. Thank you very much.

EVA: Thank you, honey. Thank you. If it wouldn't be for you, I wouldn't have told it to nobody else. It's thanks to you and to Ray. But mostly to you, because I trusted you. And you bring out the best in a human being.

(END OF INTERVIEW)