

1-14-1975

Israel Schochet, transcript only

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Recommended Citation

Schochet, Israel, "Israel Schochet, transcript only" (1975). *Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews*. 24.
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Israel Schochet
Interviewed by Lucille Brown

Tape 1 - Page 1

Tape 1 - Side 1

Q. Now, Mr. Schochet, if you would be good enough for the tape recorder and for me to give your name.

A. My name is Israel Schochet.

Q. Very good, and ~~that~~ you could tell me what year you were born.

A. 1898.

Q. 1898. And where you were born?

A. In a small town called Strijavka.

Q. Strijavka. Could you spell that?

A. S-t-r-i-j-a-v-k-a.

Q. Or z-h.

A. Or z-h.

Q. It could be, yea. That is in what country?

A. In the Ukraine.

Q. In Ukraine, Well, it was not the Soviet Union at that time.

A. Right.

Q. Ok. 1898 you said. Right? The year you were born was 1898?

A. 1898.

Q. Now what was the nearest big city? Do you remember?

A. Vinnitsa.

Q. So you were near...Oh, I see. Now were you...The nearest big city was Vinnitsa which was also the nearest big city to that shtetel, Priluki. Now, did you know the Priluki

people?

A. A few.

Q. Did you...How did you get to meet them?

A. Your father and I met in Bessarabia. Later on.

Q. Oh, it wasn't until later on. I see. Then, through him...

A. Some people from *Priluki* were inter-married to people from Strijavka.

Q. I see. Now was yours a shtetel?

A. Yes, a small town.

Q. A small town. How many people were in it?

A. Not exceeding...say 300.

Q. 300 people or families?

A. People.

Q. People.

A. I don't think there were 300 families. I don't think so. It was a small town. We had two rows of houses... homes. Every Jew had a home. There wasn't such a thing as renting. Even the poorest had a home of their own.

Q. Yes.

A. So I would imagine we had two rows of homes.

Q. Now you're making a circle with your hands. They were in a circle?

A. They were.

Q. So there was an inner circle and an outer circle?

A. That's right...two circles...and in the middle of *the* circle was an empty space, a large empty space, and in the middle of it there were two rows of stores.

Q. Is that right? So it was built on a circle?

A. In a circle.

Q. Is that true of *all shtetlach*?

A. Not necessarily, but this is how my hometown was... two circles of homes, a large empty space, in the middle of it two rows of stores.

Q. Now about how many stores in the rows?

A. It should be not more than about 30.

Q. 30. So that was quite a large empty space.

A. Large.

Q. About how large...

A. And that space served as a marketplace. Every...I don't remember the days, Thursday or so, all the peasants that surrounded Strijavka would gather on that day. They would bring their products, sell them to the Jews of the town. *But* Instead of paying with cash they exchanged their products for the products that the Jews were selling in the stores; for kerosene, matches, herring...all kinds of merchandises, groceries, manufactured goods. They exchanged...It was a trading place...every week the same day.

Q. Now were these stores...Did they have a roof and

were they regular buildings or were they just...like the stalls?

A. Regular stores.

Q. They were regular stores.

A. Buildings like, ²Because every store was a building by itself.

Q. By itself.

A. It had no connections like a supermarket or something like...Every store was an individual store.

Q. I wish I could find somebody who could draw me a picture. You know like did it have...Was it wooden, first of all? Were they wooden?

A. Most likely, yes. It wasn't made out of bricks, no. We had only one brick building in ^{the whole} ~~all~~ town.

Q. What was that?

A. A home.

Q. It was a home.

A. It was a home, but he was one of the richest men in town and he...Actually he inherited that because I don't remember him building it. So he must have inherited from his parents. That was the only brick building. All the rest were wood.

Q. You know...Actually it's very funny because when you...First thing you picture when you picture a shtetel is rows running like vertically and then some parallel and ^{here's a circle -}

reminds me of these old wagon train movies, you know, where the settlers...It's almost like a fortification.

A. It looked like it.

Q. You know what I mean?

A. Yes.

Q. To protect themselves.

A. And all these homes...all that town...was surrounded by peasants...Christian(~~the~~) peasants. They were in the thousands. *They were in the thousands*

Q. And they lived in the little villages.

A. In the villages.

Q. How big was a village? You know, it's so hard for an American to get the concept of the difference between... let's say...a town, a *shtetel* and a *dorf*. Can you explain what...

A. Our homes were *modern*. In the village they were built out of mud and even the *wood* — and the roof was straw and one little window, perhaps. They weren't as modern as the Jewish homes *of the Town*.

Q. Even the poor Jews.

A. Even the poor Jews.

Q. Is that right?

A. That's right.

Q. That's very clear. I think that's the clearest I've heard. So...I see...So you were almost urban compared to

the village.

A. *Correct...* Correct...in every way, as far as bringing up, as far as education, as far as literacy...no comparison *whatever*. They were illiterate. 2%, the czar allowed 2% literacy among the peasants and I suppose you want to know why. The czar did not want the peasants to become educated, literate, so they would protest their ~~operation~~ ^{oppression}. If you don't know any better, you go along, but the Jews, practically everyone, with very few exceptions, everyone had some education...one more and *one less*, as far as ~~he was~~ ^{Hebrew was} concerned or as far as the...

Q. Secular.

A. Secular.

Q. Tell me, if you would, you know how your town was... Let's say sociologically, you know...Let's take an economic point of view.

A. 90% were middle class.

Q. That means traders. Then they owned the stores.

A. Right, stores and even commerce between the big city ^{Vinnitsa} and Strijavka.

Q. How big was *Vinnitsa* at that time? Allow me to interrupt you so I have *some idea*.

A. *Vinnitsa* was a large town with perhaps 100,000 Jews.

Q. And it had non-Jews, too?

A. Oh, a lot of non-Jews, too, but it was practically a

Jewish town.

Q. Oh, it was.

A. Practically. I assume ^{that there} were more Jews than Gentiles.

Q. In Vinnitsa ?

A. I assume so.

Q. Because it's an old city. It goes back to the *Chmielnitzky* Rebellion. They went through Vinnitsa then, too.

A. That's it, but I assume there were more Jews than Gentiles because it was a large city and there were a lot of Jews.

Q. So that was 100,000 already, Vinnitsa.

A. Right.

Q. Oh, I see. Alright. So there was commerce...

A. The Jews in town, about 90%, were homeowners and traders.

Q. So it was really rather a well-to-do town...*shtetel* .

A. I wouldn't call them well-to-do, but they managed to live nicely. They weren't rich.

Q. No?

A. They weren't rich, but they lived nicely.

Q. Alright now...Will you explain what that means in your terms.

A. That means...Take my parents. They had a very, nice home right in the center of that circle. We had about seven or eight rooms.

Q. You did.

A. My father had a store.

Q. What kind of a store?

A. Sell groceries.

Q. A grocery.

A. On the top of that, he was a wholesaler, selling flour. He would go with a big wagon. He hired ^a Russian peasant with his wagon, horses or bulls or whatever it was, they would go to the big town, to *Vinnitsa*, buy ^{say} 10 sacks of flour. Every sack had about five pounds. That's 200 pounds. ^{Every sack,} When he brought it to Strijavka he would distribute these 10 sacks between those stores. They would sell them already every day. He was half wholesaler and half *retailer*.

Q. How about your mother? Did she have help in the house?

A. My mother had a maid for the children... Since I know myself from my early youth... from babyhood... until I left.

Q. Was the maid a Jew?

A. No.

Q. A peasant.

A. The maids were all Gentiles; maybe one very, poor girl that became a maid, very poor. That was maybe one in 100, but most of the maids and the servants were Gentile.

Q. Ok. So your mother always had help in the house.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Alright. Now we're describing your family as a well... a comfortable...

A. Comfortable. I wouldn't say wealthy...comfortable.

Q. Comfortable family.

A. He could ~~have~~ *afford* to give me education. It was expensive. First of all, I had a Hebrew teacher, a specialist in Hebrew and I had to pay for it.

Q. He came to the house then?

A. No. He had a class.

Q. He had a class.

A. He had a class. ~~My~~ We used to go to class and my father paid \$5 a month for my Hebrew education. He had...I had another teacher who taught me all the rest of the -like- Russian language, mathematics, languages. He paid him separately.

Q. This was in preparation for the *gymnazium*.

A. In preparation, but since I lived in Russia and there was 15% numerus ^{*clausus*}. I didn't even think of going ... (?) because I would have to go to *Vinnitsa*. I would have to live in there which would have been expensive. So I had my education like....Oh, you don't know Professor *Waksman*. He had the same thing in *Priluki*.

Q. You mean ~~Zellman~~ *Zalman*,
Zalman.

A. ~~Zellman~~. They call it *externa*. So I...And we paid...My father paid that teacher, too. Perhaps it would

have been...until my...until the time that I would get married or something, but it happened so that the first world war came and I was ^{afraid I would be drafted,} ~~of age~~. So ~~I would be drafted~~. In order not to get drafted I would have to be in a school. School extended the right to...not to be drafted.

Q. Exemptions...draft exemption.

A. So my father sent me to...not to *Vinnitsa*. In *Vinnitsa* they got very strict. You can imagine...I went to take a test...

Q. In the *gymnazium* ^{now}.

A. In the *gymnazium* and I passed with the best marks. They will give me a certificate, but they wouldn't accept *me there*.

Q. Now what year did you want to enter in there? Did that matter? No, I don't mean what...like what...1900. I mean what form...

A. 1912.

Q. Yes, but I mean did you want to enter in the first year or the second or the third?

A. No, that was already in the fourth.

Q. In the fourth year. How many years...There were four years to a *gymnazium*

A. Eight.

Q. Eight. And you went into midway.

A. Midway.

Q. Could you enter into anywhere along the line?

A. Yes, if you passed the test. I passed the test and still I wasn't accepted because there was no room anymore. They had their *norm*. They had their 15% and it was... So I went home...back...and I got my education...kept on with it, but when the war came in and I was afraid I would be drafted, I went to...There was a *Kievskaya*. ^{*Guberniya. This was Podolskaya Guberniya.*} There was a big town by the name of *Lipovetz*. That was the name of the town.

Q. Like that would be L-i...

A. L-i-p-o-v-e-t-z. And a new school of commerce...a middle school...

Q. Like a business school?

A. Like a business school, eight classes to eight years with the rights of all governmental schools, but it was a private.

Q. It was a private school.

A. Yes, and it was *new*. So, I ^{*figured*} ~~take it~~, here I had a chance. If I passed the tests...In order to be accepted, even in that school, you had to be one of the best because they accepted only those that passed with the best marks. So, I had an education already in *hand* for about five classes and I could have gone for a test to enter the sixth, but I was afraid. As long as I had to be the best I may as well sacrifice with a class or two and I went and I entered to the fourth. I took a test for three classes only. I don't have to

tell you that I passed...^{with} a five, which means excellent in every subject and I was accepted. That saved me from the war, ^{perhaps} saved my life.

Q. I see...Now...

A. In order to ? . That was to prove how my parents, the parents financially were...to send a child to a strange ^{city} where I had to pay for tuition, for board, room, ^{So, this was an expense.} transportation. My parents did it and they weren't rich. They weren't ^{considered} rich people, but they had enough for their expenses.

Q. Now, for example, if we go back to your home, how many children were there in your home by the way?

A. We were...Let's see...One, two, three, four, five.

Q. Five children and how were they...I mean like were you top or bottom?

A. I was the oldest.

Q. You were the oldest.

A. I was the oldest.

Q. The oldest son or the oldest...

A. The oldest of them...The oldest of all of ^{them}.

Q. So you were the oldest, yea...

A. And, for some reason, ^{love} it must be ; for some reason.

There was nothing that they would refuse me.

Q. They would not refuse you anything.

A. Anything.

Q. First of all, you were a male, and second of all, you were the oldest...two prime reasons.

A. I was the...their...

Q. The star, yes. Now who came after you then?

A. After that came a sister of mine by the name of Rosa and then one died, a brother. Then came a brother and the baby's a sister.

Q. So, essentially, ^{were} ~~so adulthood~~, two boys and two girls. Now did all the children receive the same education?

A. No.

Q. No, now could you tell me about that?

A. I educated them.

Q. Alright. Tell me about that.

A. I educated them.

Q. You mean really, actually, physically, personally?

A. Actually, personally educated them.

Q. But you went away.

A. I went away when I was already 21 years old.

Q. Alright. So when you...The teacher would come...You would go to class. Right? You must have started with cheder.

. Let's go back to that. Right? You started with..

A. Yes, when I was three years old I started with cheder.

Q. Right. Ok. And then in cheder you stayed for how long?

A. For about three...about five years.

Q. Alright. Till you were eight.

A. Right.

Q. Then you started going to the teachers.

A. To the Hebrew...

Q. To Hebrew teacher. Then...

A. From ^{eight} ~~age~~ to...say to 14. Then I left town and I went to that *Liepowitz*, for my school, secular ~~(the)~~ school.

Q. At the age of 14?

A. Right.

Q. This was then in the fourth...At that time you entered the fourth grade of commerce?

A. Maybe I was already 16 then. The war was in 1914...Yes. I was. *between 15 and 16.*

Q. Yea, if you were in 1898.

A. 16, because I was born...The war started in '14.

Q. August 14.

A. In 1915 I was afraid that they might draft me.

Q. Right. Ok. But now you also said that you went to... You had a Russian teacher.

A. Yes.

Q. Was that in...Where was that? That was in your town, in *your shtetel*?

A. *In my shtetel.*
They prepared me for all my tests.

Q. When did that start? What...Was that simultaneous...

A. At the same time...simultaneous with the Hebrew.

Q. Ok. So you were in these classes all day long?

A. All day from 8:00 until 6:00...I got out of there. It was dark already when I came home.

Q. Now when and how did you teach your brother and sisters?

A. I taught them when I was on vacation.

Q. But your parents did not send them to the teachers...

A. To any schools. Later on when I was already out...I don't know how, *one of* my sister that still lives in Russia, how she got her education and she became a druggist, But how she got it, I don't know.

Q. But it was not through your parents?

A. Not...It was through my parents, but I don't know when it started.

Q. But I mean...Not as an...In early childhood.

A. Not while I was here, no. While they were children I used to teach them.

Q. I see. Now can you explain that? Wasn't that...I mean at least one other brother. You would expect at least the boy would go to school.

A. My sister wasn't inclined to get education, the one that was following me. So, as much as I could teach her, it was plenty for her. The others came already when I was 15... 16 years old..and when I came on vacation...

Q. By that time the war had, maybe already interrupted things.

A. Yes.

Q. As far as your *parents....*. Do you think that would have influenced your parents? I'm especially thinking about the other boy, *Because* girls weren't considered so important, but for a boy not to have...Was he sent to *cheder*?

A. He was sent to *cheder* too, but in...You have to remember that we had to leave town when the revolution came in 1917.

Q. That's what I'm saying.

A. Then the whole family moved to a big town and then I had nothing to do already with ~~them~~ ^{*the family.*} I was living separately already. I went to school. Besides...Actually my parents in the big town *Vinnitsa* when they fled from the *pogroms*, they were refugees.

Q. That's what I'm saying. So the war actually was partly responsible for disrupting your brother...the younger two...the education of the younger two.

A. Right because actually...I moved out from there.

Q. Because of the war.

A. Because of the war and in order to find a dwelling place in *Vinnitsa*, we organized a group of amateur actors. It was already under the Russian, *under the Soviets.* And we acted in the theater.

Q. In *Vinnitsa*.

A. In *Vinnitsa*. So we were considered already as state performers. So as state performers we were entitled to food, to

Q. I had a room for myself which they confiscated from a rich man. They told him...We want you to give a room to Mr. Schochet. That's all. He couldn't say no.

Q. What was the name of your group? Did you have...give yourself a name?

A. We were a Jewish ^{group}. I don't remember.

Q. Oh, it was Yiddish theater.

A. A Yiddish theater. We performed *in Yiddish*.

Q. It wasn't the *Habima*?

A. No.

Q. That was Hebrew.

A. We performed in Yiddish. Actually...

Q. And...And at that time, in those early days, they would sponsor...the Bolshevik states sponsored Yiddish, in other words separate ethnic cultural activities.

A. Sure. It was...We were within the rights. Why did we do it? Because when I was in town yet...

Q. By town you mean in your town.

A. In my town, in Strijavka. We were...We'll say five high school students and five *we had* already, *we'll say, college students*. We were called intellectuals *of the town* and there were some poor people, too, in town. On the top of that we organized a library(?) in town and, of course, to have a library you have to have books and *in order to have books,* you have to pay for them. So this group of actors during the vacation month, we performed

and we charged entrance fee and with that money we bought books and we gave charity to the poor.

Q. Now are you telling me that this group was organized then before the war?

A. It was organized...

Q. It was started before the war.

A. Before the war, during the czar, before the war. *Right.*

Q. Do you remember what year it was?

A. Must have been 1912...1913...something like that.

Q. Just before...a couple of years before the war.

A. Before the war.

Q. And what...If you were performing in Yiddish, who were you performing? What plays did you perform? Do you remember?

A. What plays? I can hardly remember the plays, but...

Q. Did you do the *Amiskip's Dybbuk*, for example?

A. *Mirele (?)*. I can hardly remember the names of them, but, you know, one performance *a year and so on*

Q. Oh, it wasn't like a repertory theater where you'd perform every week or every night...Oh, I see.

A. We prepared ourself for weeks and weeks...then ~~we~~ ^{*we gave*} one performance?

Q. I see.

A. Collected a couple hundred rubles ^{*with*} and that money we splurged. We bought books for the library and we gave charity to the very needy people.

Q. Yea. Ok. Oh, that's very interesting.

A. ~~Actually~~ I don't [?] what happened. We came into...

Q. You told...I'm sorry.

A. Not to you. We came to one Jewish family ^{and we saw about}...six or seven children. So one of us says to the man...You're so poor.

We ~~xxx~~ have to ^{feed you child}. Why do you have so many children?
^{The answer was - Do we have another pleasure?}

Q. That's funny. That's true, but you have to pay for your pleasures, too. In this case somebody else paid for them.

Now...Alright, so there's your schooling. While you were going to this Russian teacher, while you were still in externa ...

Now let's see. That would have been three...That would have been 1901 until 1909, approximately.

A. I remember 1907 I had...

Q. The Hebrew teacher and the Russian?

A. And the Russian.

Q. Ok. Alright. So you must have been like 10 years old. Is that correct?

A. Approximately.

Q. About 10. And you say you studied Russian and Russian literature and the Russian languages.

A. And all the rest of the subjects. *Languages...*

Q. Alright. What I'm...I want to get at is...What kind of...You were too young at 10, I would...To do any heavy reading in Russian & i like Tolstoy or...

A. We read children's books.

Q. Children's books.

A. ^{He read} All kinds of books. The books were for the children of the town. Every child in town could go to the library, take a book on Friday and read it during the week. The following Friday ^{he} he'd bring back that book and get another book.

Q. Now this is the library that you're talking about...Now wait a minute. You can't have the two things at one time because when you were going...When you were 10 years old going to the Russian teacher, you could not have all...

A. The Russian teacher used to come to my house.

Q. Oh, he came to your house.

A. He gave me a lecture every day.

Q. Every day.

A. Yes. I didn't go to him. To the Hebrew teacher I went.

Q. Was that...And that was a class.

A. That was a class.

Q. So there's more than one person.

A. This was not a class.

Q. This was a private lesson.

A. This was a private lesson. Then he was paid by the month. My father paid him ^{by the month}.

Q. I see. Was he somebody...Where did he come from?

A. He come from Vinnitsa. He was a student, a university student.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. In order to make a few dollars.

Q. Right.

A. He would come to town and give lessons and...

Q. Did he have other private pupils besides yourself?

A. Not too many because we were...all of us...^{those} was called intellectuals that had high school and university education. We were about 10 altogether.

Q. Yea, but at 10 years old, you know, you still didn't know what was going to happen...when you were 10 years...when he first came.

A. He didn't have too many. Not everybody could afford to pay.

Q. No, I understand. Now what did...Let's say...You said... If I remember, you said about 90% of the people in the town were ~~are~~ comfortable.

A. Yea, middle class.

Q. Middle class and the other 10%?

A. Were working people...tailor or a shoemaker, man that took care on the ^{bath house}. They were...And they weren't too much comfortable because all they could do is sew for the town people and in a small town you didn't make...You didn't buy two or three suits like we buy in Miami. Bought a suit for the weekdays and you had a suit for the Sabbath and the holidays. So, they weren't too comfortable. We supported them ^{with our monies}

Q. Ok. Now in your house itself was your father an orthodox man?

A. No.

Q. He was not.

A. My mother was.

Q. So your father was not a *Hasid*.

A. He wasn't a *Hasid* at all. He was a highly educated man in Hebrew, highly educated, but he was...My mother didn't like it, but there was nothing that you could do. Mother was religious and he wasn't so...but still he went to synagogue every Saturday. Didn't go weekdays, but Saturday he never failed or holidays, but if he was home, we'll say, on weekdays, and he would come and ~~will~~ ^{we'll} say...I'll never forget it...

6:00 in the afternoon he would...My mother's name was ~~Belle~~ ^{Perl}.

He would say...~~Belle~~ ^{Perl}....You understand Jewish?

Q. Yes.

A. *Hast shvinn eppes was tau giben essen?* (Do you have something for me to eat?) *Hast shvinn g'das cut?* (Have you already prayed?)
He was going to skip it. She wouldn't let him, but all in all he wasn't orthodox.

Q. Now how did that go over in a small *shtetel* like that?

A. As I told you, my mother was, *had a Kasher home* and he wouldn't dare, we'll say, do something to offend our religion. Deep in his heart, if he could skip prayer at the house, nobody would know, but you wouldn't offend the orthodox in...

Q. In the village.

A. In the village...the town.

Q. I shouldn't call it a village. I must remember that. It's not a village.

A. It's a town. Every Saturday or every holiday he would go to shul, observe all the yahrtsaits, if you know what a yahrtsait is, observe it. So, he behaved himself as a regular Jew, but deep in his heart he was not.

Q. Now how did you know that he wasn't? Did he tell? Did you talk to him about these things?

A. I saw it.

Q. Oh, you felt it?

A. I felt it and I saw it. I saw that he wasn't too ~~was~~ strict. Here I'll give you an example.

Q. Wait. I have to watch this...Alright. It's ok.

A. When I was 13 I had a big Bar Mitzva in the synagogue and I used to read the Torah and psalm and so forth. That was 13. A whole year I used to put on the ~~fillin~~ and ~~haren~~ everyday, but when I became 14 years old I decided that it I don't want to bother. To me it was ridiculous and I...

Tape 1 - Side 2

Q. Ok. So continue.

A. So when I was 14 I decided to put the cards on the table.

I said...Mother, Father...That's it...no *fillin* for me.

Father didn't say *a word*. Mother objected. She said...

Why? ~~How~~ ~~me~~ How come? Why *do you do that*? I said...This is

final and I'm not going to...So here I knew that it was between mother and father.

Q. I see. So that's...I'm trying to figure out the years. That was about 1912.

A. 1912.

Q. Yea. I'm trying to keep your ages and the year...because I have to keep the war in mind, you know, things happened. So...Did your father wear a beard?

A. But he used to trim it. If he was orthodox he wouldn't touch a hair on it.

Q. Right.

A. He trimmed it.

Q. Ok.

A. Actually the barber trimmed it.

Q. Oh, there was a barber in your *shtetel*?

A. There was a barber, one barber in *town*.

Q. So there must have been other people there that trimmed their beards, too.

A. First of *all* ^{no.}, The barber he was busy with the haircuts.

Q. Oh, that was permitted.

A. Yea, oh yea.

Q. Haircuts were permitted.

A. Haircuts were permitted. It's only you should not touch the...

Q. Facial hair.

A. Facial hair.

Q. I see.

A. The beard and the whiskers.

Q. I see, but he did.

A. But he did.

Q. He must have been, then, a dapper man. He was the... Took care of his appearance.

A. Sure.

Q. I see.

A. So I...^{saw} In every respect that he wasn't 100% religious orthodox Jew.

Q. But you say he was well-educated ~~and~~ ~~he~~ in Hebrew.

A. Oh, he was well-educated in Hebrew, not in the Hebrew language, but he was a scholar in the Hebrew scriptures.

Q. I see. I was going to say he was a little early for the...

A. Like the Bible and the Talmud(~~of~~). You know what the Talmud is?

Q. Yes.

A. In that he was highly educated.

Q. And...Did you get any modern Hebrew education at all?

A. That was my Hebrew teacher.

Q. That was modern Hebrew.

A. That was a modern Hebrew...the language, and that played a big role in my life.

Q. It did.

A. Because when I came to *Bessarabia* to Rumania...I came practically the same time as your father. So your father couldn't find employment for the Hebrew language, for some reason *in that big city*. Perhaps that would have happened to me, too, but your father, on the last year of him living in Rumania, he found a little village where there were about 10 Jewish families and he became the teacher of their children and they paid him well.

Q. Yes.

A. After teaching for about four month, he got a visa from the United States and he had to leave. He felt very bad to leave the children in the middle of the season. So he came to *Belzy*, but there was nothing that ~~he~~ you could do. He had to leave. He ~~would~~ ^{it} wouldn't sacrifice ~~it~~. ^{and} I met your father in that *Belzy*. We had one family that both of us knew and we met and he told me *the story*. So I told him. I know Hebrew and I could teach. Oh, he was so happy. The next day he took me over to that village, introduced me as a Hebrew teacher and I was teaching there for over two years. I

had the life of Riley...good pay, ~~and~~ good food. You can imagine. When I came to *Bessarabia* I was as skinny as a rooster. I weighed about 120 pounds. You can imagine that in school we used to wear uniforms and the tailor had that bad job and my mother used to feed me and nothing happened. In Rumania, within two years, I gained to weigh 175 pounds...180...

Q. Oh, my Lord. You put on 50 pounds...something like... more.

A. I couldn't bend down to tie my shoes.

Q. Oh, that's funny. Rumanian cooking is better than Ukrainian cooking or Jewish cooking.

A. So the Hebrew language came in very handy.

Q. I see. That's very interesting.

A. Your father suffered in *belz* before he got the job.

Q. Before he found this job, yea. He didn't...I know when we interviewed him, he didn't even want to talk about it and I know I said to him...What could you have done, you know. He sounded as if he had committed a crime.

A. Hard labor.

Q. And that's what he said. He was carrying water buckets and so on and he didn't want to tell us.

A. He didn't want to tell it to you.

Q. Right. He did tell me. No, he did...because I said... Did you kill somebody? You know, I don't care what he did.

A. Hard labor.

Q. I could have excused anything at that point and he said...Finally he says... *ah vasur* *ireger* I said...So, what's so bad about that? But in that time it was considered...

A. For a student, for a Hebrew scholar to do that kind of work is humiliating.

Q. At that time it was considered humiliating.

A. I can't visualize me doing that and I *gave all the credit in the world to your* father for doing that.

Q. Yea, so do I.

A. But necessity breaks ~~(t)~~ everything.

Q. Now the students do anything. If they need to go to school, they'll work at anything. I understand. It's a question of time and your upbringing, *the* time when you were raised and what you were...what the expectations were.

A. You see I was raised in luxury, you see. There wasn't a thing that my parents would refuse me and everybody was catering to me and even in town, the people...I was a snob. I wouldn't socialize with everybody. So now I think if I had to do the same things as your father, I don't *know, would I?*

Q. You probably would have done it. It might have been good for you.

A. When you're starved and you have nothing to eat...

Q. That's what he told. He was starving.

A. So you do it.

Q. That's right. Well, anyway, I'm glad that that portion

of the reading had a happy ending and, if your mother had only seen you, she would have been very happy at that point, to see that you had put weight on...so much weight.

A. Well, she saw me *already* when she was...when I brought them over to Canada.

Q. Oh, she did. Ok.

A. I brought them over to Canada. I saved their life.

Q. Well, that's getting...You will tell me, I hope, about that. Now let me see. So...Actually then as far...If you can think back to your relationship within the family, did your brothers and sisters...Let's see. I mean...If you were the star performer in the family, now how did you get along with your father? Was this something that was...As far as they were concerned you could do no wrong...both parents.

A. They treated me nice and I treated them nice.

Q. Both parents.

A. Both.

Q. Ok. Now was there any feeling on the part of the ^{of} children, the other children, with respect...

A. They looked up...also ~~xxx~~ looked up to me. I was the oldest.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. The most educated and I had to educate them.

Q. So it worked out alright.

A. They catered to me, too.

Q. I see.

A. Until this day I'm *the top of the ...*

Q. So there wasn't the...any friction occasioned by this.
no friction.

A. No. They wouldn't dare.

Q. Ok. That's very interesting.

A. Then...So I was in *Vinnitsa*. I had my education performed and...

Q. Now that's already...Now wait a minute. I don't want to get mixed up. Now you went...Until...Let's see.

A. In 1915 I went to *Lipowitz* and I entered that school.

Q. That's the commerce school, but wait a minute. The war broke out in 1914. Alright. Now tell me about the outbreak of war...At that time you were still home. Right?

A. Right.

Q. Did it affect your life in any way?

A. No, in no way because I was small yet.

Q. In 1914...Wait a minute now. You had to be about...going on 16...about that time.

A. Yea, but still I wasn't...They drafted at the age of 18.

Q. I see.

A. So I was out of the army, out of...I was afraid that if I let it go, then they wouldn't accept me. They didn't want to accept me as is. It was just happened that that school opened, otherwise I would have been...

Q. You mean *Vinnitsa* turned you down and you were afraid that you wouldn't get into any school. It would be too late.

A. It would be too late.

Q. I see. So when this *Kievskaya* school...No, the *Liepowitz* school opened...

A. I went there.

Q. You went there.

A. Took a test and entered that school.

Q. And that was in...That would be...1916. The war had already been on for two years.

A. Yes.

Q. Now how were things going in your...

A. I was a year in there...

Q. No, I want to know how the war...Did you...Were you paying attention to the war?

A. Absolutely not. I was busy in school with my studies.

Q. Did you go home ever? I mean from *Liepowitz*

A. Vacation time.

Q. When was vacation time...during the summer?

A. Vacation time was in the...like here...Christmas and New Year's and then during the summer.

Q. Now did your parents ever discuss the war with you?

A. No, we had no discussions.

Q. You were not even...It didn't...It doesn't sound as if there was any concern over the war at all. Didn't touch you.

A. No, as long as I was in school, I wasn't afraid.

Q. But I mean the ^{re} mere fact that Russia was at war didn't interest anybody at all?

A. First of all, they hated the Russians. They wanted to see Russia to be defeated. In those days ^{they} ~~there~~ were pro-German and anti-Russian. So I was a whole year in Liepowitz² and when...vacation time and I had my diploma that I got ^{for the year} certificate...I went to Vinnitsa and I applied for a transfer.

Q. Now was this at the end of the first year?

A. The end of the first year.

Q. So the second year you were in Vinnitsa² then.

A. In Vinnitsa until graduation. Graduation was in 1919.

Q. Now...So that gymnasium That was a gymna² ^{zium}. Right?

A. It's called a school of commerce.

Q. ^{where, Vinnitsa?} Oh, I thought that was in Liepowitz

A. In Liepowitz² the same name.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. That's the reason why they accepted me ^{without examination} without examination. It was the same scale. This was a school of commerce and this was a school of commerce with the rights of...

Q. But one was a government school, you said, and one was a private?

A. Both of them were private.

Q. Private.

A. But with the rights of government schools.

Q. Ok.

A. They had the same rights...the students had the same rights.

Q. So then after 16, you were back in Vinnitsa ...

A. In Vinnitsa^a and where I graduated from .

Q. Now again...I mean the whole world was falling apart all around you and you still...You went to school.

A. School...had nothing to do with...

Q. No problems with heating...I mean...The buildings could be heated. There was water. There was coal. There was x food.

A. My parents had everything because they were...They opened a little store in Vinnitsa.

Q. They had moved to Vinnitsa in the meantime. When did they move? What year did they move to Vinnitsa. Well, the war started in 1914.

A. They must have moved in '15 or '16...1915 or 1916.

Q. Ok. And what was the reason for their moving?

A. The pogroms.

Q. Alright. Now...So you did know something about...that it was going on.

A. Yes, of course.

Q. But the pogroms didn't start until about 1918. Did they? The pogroms started after the revolution.

A. Well, during...In the Ukraine it started before.

Q. Oh, they did.

A. Because after the revolution the pogroms started. The Ukrainians started to fight with the Russians...the communists.

Q. Yea, but see...If we follow...Ok? The war breaks out in 1914. Then in 1917 the Russian government falls and the Korenskiy government takes over. Alright? That's in February-March, depending on which calendar you use. Then, October-November you have the Bolshevik take over. They took over from the Korenskiy government. Alright? And that's in Moscow and Leningrad and then after that, then you really have the fighting breaking out in about 1918.

A. In the Ukraine it was different. In the Ukraine they were fighting already before anything. They used to fight one another.

Q. So are you saying that all during the war this stuff was going on?

A. Going on all the time.

Q. I see.

A. They were...Groups of Ukrainians...

Q. You mean like hooligans?

A. Terrorists...terrorists and they would attack a small town, kill Jews, rob their possessions. That was the time that they had to leave.

Q. I see.

A. So they made their living, of course, they couldn't live as nice as they lived in town, but they made their living and I

sustained myself being an actor, a performer, and as a student. They provided me with food and room and what else ^{did} ~~that~~ I need.

Q. Oh, you mean the state then...

A. The state. Sure.

Q. But now you...If this...I'm still confused about the times because...Is this the Bolshevik state or the Russian state?

A. The Bolsheviks.

Q. Because the Bolshevik...There was no Bolshevik state till after...I mean it wasn't established till after the...

A. But the revolution...I graduated in 1919. In 1917 there was a revolution already.

Q. Now what I've heard from other people is that during the time of the pogroms and the Civil War, they...Actually they...First of all, no matter how rich they were, they were starving because there wasn't bread.

A. Yes, but for some reason my father never starved, my parents never starved.

Q. So there was no...You never had this.

A. Because we never had...Actually we never had a pogrom. Only six men were killed in one day and that was it.

Q. Where?

A. In Strijavka.

Q. How about Vinnitsa?

A. The families ^{were attached} ...~~that~~ and they fled.

Q. How about *Vinnitsa*?

A. *Vinnitsa* ...I don't know what happened. In *Vinnitsa* there were never pogroms.

Q. There were never pogroms

A. No. In the big towns, they never...

Q. It was not like *Priluki*, for example.

A. No. *Priluki* was a small town and *Vinnitsa* was a big town. They would never dare attack a big city, but the time that my parents left town, there was a rumor that the terrorists...are in the vicinity some place and they were afraid not to be killed. So they left the house and everything. Actually that day, I was with them yet, and we fled. We walked. Actually we walked seven miles to that *Vinnitsa*. My father reminded himself that he left all his money under the mattress. Who goes back? Israel. I went back...walked back again seven miles which means 10 miles.

Q. You mean , You went seven *versts*.

A. Came back, came into the house, took out the money and walked again...three times. So we weren't...Financially we weren't bad even in *Vinnitsa*.

Q. And you were taking care of...Then, what happened to the other three children in *Vinnitsa*? What did they do there?

A. I don't think they did...They helped my father the store. They had some education, too. I can't remember actually because I didn't live with them already.

Q. I see. You were living in your rooming house and you would have been with your *Gymnazium* friends. Is that correct?

A. Sure.

Q. Now I want to ask you one more question about your *shtetel* before I talk about your *Gymnazium* friends and so on. Was there a synagogue in your *shtetel* ?

A. Two.

Q. ~~Why were there two?~~ There were two. Why were there two?

A. Two. Because the laborers did not agree with the middle town people. It's a matter of who ^{was} to be called *to the Torah*.

Q. Yes, I understand.

A. So, naturally, who would they call...one of the middle class and they were offended and they had no say in the matter. They were a minority. So they decided to go for themselves and they had a *besmedrash*. That was a *shul* and that was a *besmedresh*.

Q. Oh, so the middle class was a *shul* and the other was a *Bes medresh*.

A. Yes.

Q. Ok. Now was the *besmedrash* *Hasidic*? Were there *Hasidim* in your *shtetel* ?

A. I can say very few because a rabbi would come...a rabbi, a *Hasidic* rabbi would come to my town maybe once a year.

Q. So that meant there was no great interest.

A. No great interest and didn't have any supporters or

members or followers. There was *no Hasidim*.

Q. How about in *Vinnitsa*? Do you know?

A. *Oh, in Vinnitsa* there were, not that I know them, but I imagine there were...rabbis in there, in *Vinnitsa*.

Q. Those ~~was~~ were *rebbe*s actually and the rabbis would be in your...Now yours was then just a plain, straight, orthodox synagogue. Did you have a rabbi?

A. We had a *ruv*, not a rabbi.

Q. What's the difference between a *ruv* and a rabbi?

A. A *ruv* is the one...

Q: Does he have a *smicha*?

A. Oh, yea, *without a question*. A *ruv* was a highly educated man and he would perform marriages and *brisin* and whatnot. He was the representative of the Jews. A rabbi...You're not talking about the reformed rabbi because there were no reformed Jews, but there was...A rabbi...He was a *Hasidic* man. He had nothing to do with laws or performing anything.

Q. Oh, you're calling that a rabbi.

A. Yes.

Q. No, I don't do that. I would call...What you call a *ruv*, I would call a rabbi. What you call a rabbi, I would call a *rebbe*. A *rebbe* is a *Hasidic* ... He does not have to have *smicha*.

A. Yea, that was a *rebbe*. We had no *rebbe*s.

Q. Ok, but you did have a *ruv* or rabbi. So he had to

go to the Yeshiva and all the...Is that correct?

A. He had to have a high education.

Q. Alright. And you did have such a one.

A. One!

Q. You did. Now who led the bes midrash?

A. The same ruv.

Q. The same ruv.

A. The didn't have an extra one.

Q. So what did he do? Split his time between the two?

A. No, because actually the presence of the ruv wasn't necessary in order to conduct services. They had a chazan.

Q. Oh, he was only necessary for marriages, weddings...

A. Performed the religious duties. So he was the rabbi for all the Jews.

Q. Did you have a chazan, too? Or was the ruv the chazan?

A. The ruv ^{was the chazan} and one or two of the members.

Q. Yea, who could sing.

A. Could sing or could daven.

Q. Actually it was a small community.

A. They weren't paid, you see. It was a small community. Everyone who has yahrzeit his duty is to perform before the people. So... (?), but we had coming in chazanim from Vinitsa.

Q. Oh, you did.

A. ^{they} Would come, we'll say, for a Saturday to perform...

Friday nights, Saturday night and Saturday all day and Saturday night they would go from store to store or home to home and solicit for their ... (?) . Miserable, but this is how...

Q. It was a miserable existence, you mean, or...

A. I mean it was miserable. For me it looked miserable to go and solicit.

Q. You mean like to ask for a handout. They should ~~be~~ have been just paid.

A. They were paid by the community, but ^{to go} ~~the~~ and solicit. One gives him so much money, gives them less, give them more and they had already to express ~~an~~ their opinion to like him, and if they liked him, they gave him more. If they didn't like him, they gave him less.

Q. I see. He was individually judged then each time.

A. By his performance.

Q. I see. Tell me...I get a feeling, and I want you to... How did you feel about life in the shtetel ? Did you feel it was a good life?

A. It was a quiet life, no excitement.

Q. ^{I don't ~~mean~~} Even mean that...I mean, you know, with respect to its norms and its expectations or its mores and so ~~more~~ on.

A. They didn't expect...they didn't look for...Didn't look for luxuries. They didn't look to beat each other. Everybody lived accordingly, according to his means and *what is the desire?* food for the family, education and that's all. There were no

luxuries, no theaters, no buses, no cars.

Q. Well, I'm asking...Did you find that it was a good life or did you find it restrictive?

A. It was good because it didn't cause anxiety, rivalry.

Q. It did not.

A. It did not. Everybody lived in peace with each other.

You can imagine. There were 25 stores....nobody argued with another. Whoever peasant wanted to patronize, he would come in and buy. He didn't like him, he went into his neighbor. You can imagine, my father distributed flour to everybody. So it was a quiet life with no anxieties, no aggravations. If they could only meet their obligations and their requirements.

Q. Would you have expected, ^{then} though...See because when you described how the chazanum came and he had to go to each house, you know, you said it was rather distasteful and I was wondering if that was an expression of your feeling for the whole atmosphere.

A. No, no.

Q. Just for that particular thing.

A. Otherwise nothing to do with *each other*. Everybody lived for himself and all they met was in the synagogue on Saturday. A whole week they didn't even meet with each other.

Q. Oh, there was not...

A. No social life.

Q. No social life.

A. Absolutely not. All they met was in the synagogue and when they had to elect *a starosta, as we say.*, otherwise they didn't *co-operate*.

Q. Did you have...Oh, they didn't.

A. Everybody lived for himself and they acted accordingly.

Q. Wasn't there a Jewish...Weren't there different societies, you know?

A. No, absolutely not. There was no societies at all.

Q. There had to be a burial society for one thing.

A. So there was a *Hevra Kadishim.*

Q. Right.

A. Three or four Jews...that was their business. All the rest of the Jews didn't have anything to do with them. That was their business. Somebody died...You would call them up. They would come, get paid for it, bury them and that was it.

Q. That's a most interesting point of view. I have never heard this.

A. You never heard of it. *So that's new.*

Q. Never. It really is...It's almost detached.

A. It's just like in here. *Just like here.*

Q. That's what I'm saying. I have never heard this.

A. Somebody dies in the family, then you call up Riverside. Riverside comes, takes the body, buries it. You pay him for it and that's all. Do I have to socialize with the Riverside?

Q. Did you have family there other than your parents?

A. Yes, sure. My father had a big family...sisters and brothers.

Q. Did you socialize with them?

A. Oh, yea. That was different *altogether, oh yes!*

Q. So what kind of family did you have there?

A. Well, my father had several sisters...^{and}brothers.

Q. And what about your mother?

A. And they were married.

Q. Did your mother have relatives there, too?

A. My mother had...My mother came from *Vinnitsa*. Her family was in *Vinnitsa*.

Q. So did you socialize then with your uncles and aunts?

A. Yes.

Q. And did they have children?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you associate and make connections with them?

A. As I told you I was a snob. Even with them, ^aBecause I had already higher education than they, we'll say. So *we loved each other. We respected each other*, but not to socialize. I socialized already with all the students, the high school students and the university students. We were active, as I told you, with the library and with the performances. So I socialized with them, more with them than with my relatives, ^{but} came Saturday or Sunday or holidays...We met and we gathered and...

Q. Now tell me...Now...Let's go...Unless I...If there's

anything that you care to bring out about life in the shtetel, other than, you know, some particular thing that I've asked you, if there's anything in particular that you would care to emphasize...

A. Nothing exciting. *Never happened.*

Q. Now did you find life in *Vinnitsa* more exciting?

A. Oh, *no comparison. No comparison.*

Q. Maybe you would tell me about that.

A. Well, it was a big city and life was completely different.

Q. Tell me. For one thing, when the Korenskiy...When the czarist government fell and Korenskiy came in, you said something about how the Jews felt in your shtetel and it was fairly common feeling. I don't know if everybody wanted the Germans to win, necessarily, but they certainly were glad to see the czar fall. How did you and your...at this point... Your fellow students were more important to you than your family's opinion...I would imagine. How did you and your fellow students feel about the Korenskiy government?

A. Oh, sympathetic.

Q. Very sympathetic *A.* everyone...They were relieved from the czar's oppression...no more percentage, no more restrictions where to go and where to live. Oh, practically every ~~Jew~~ Jew was a *revolutionary* and that's the reason why the czar oppressed the Jews. He knew that all the Jews and all the

educated, especially the educated people, were against him.

Q. Oh, you feel that he oppressed them because they were revolutionaries.

A. Right.

Q. You don't feel it was the other way around that they were revolutionaries because they were oppressed.

A. It worked hand in hand. It was right this way and it was right the other way. They were oppressed because they were... The czar was afraid of them being revolutionaries. They were revolutionary because they didn't want the czar.

Q. I see, ~~and~~ that's very interesting. I want to make a note of that because it was raised in connection with the... another...^(Pause)Ok. It was raised in connection with some...with the Nazi...But we'll talk about that later because that's not what we're discussing now. So you and your friends were revolutionaries, but I mean there were all *colors* of revolutionaries, you know. ~~If~~ They ran the whole scale. Now where did you fit into the revolutionary...What do you call it? Scale. Were you a social democrat? Were you a social revolutionary?

A. We called ourselves socialists.

Q. You called yourself a socialist, but there were all kinds of socialists.

A. Socialist revolutionary.

Q. Alright. Now when...

A. Against the czar.

Q. Against the czar. Alright. Now when the split came, did you follow what was happening in the socialist party?

A. Of course, we did.

Q. Alright. And at the Second Congress did you follow what happened there, too?

A. Of course, we did.

Q. Alright. Now which side were you and your friends on? Were you with the Bolsheviks or the *Mensheviks*? Do you remember that? At the Second International Socialist Congress...I think it was in *Basle*. No, that was before your *time*, maybe. You were too young. Alright. So let's say in 1917 then in the second...after the *Kerenski* government fell...and the Bolsheviks took over and Lenin and Trotsky made their appearance, then, how did you feel then?

A. We were sympathetic.

Q. Ok.

A. Because we look at that as our saviour. They gave us freedom. So we looked up to them.

Q. Now how did you feel about the fact that they took the power away from *Kerenski*? Would you have preferred...

A. Eventually we started hating them.

Q. No, I'm...That's later. I mean at the time, if you can remember, and it's very hard because we always look back and when we look back we color the past with what we think,

you know. It's very hard, but if you can try to remember how you were thinking at the time...You know when Kerenskiy was in power...First of all, the problem was...

A. There were only six months or so.

Q. Yea, but they were pretty bad six months because the problem was, should the war continue or not. Right? And the peasants were rebelling because they wanted...First of all, the army was disintegrating and the soldiers were coming back. Right?

A. We sympathized more with the Bolsheviks then, because they put an end to the war...which Kerenskiy didn't do.

Q. That's right.

A. So that pleased us.

Q. You're talking about your group now, your student's group...

A. Yes, our student groups. Of course, we'll say they came into my wife's parents and they told them they...

Q. Who they?

A. The Bolsheviks. And they saw *beautiful* two beds and they told them...You slept until today in these beds...from now we'll be sleeping. They took away the bed. They took away the linen. You can't sympathize with people when they do that, but real...real youth...

Q. You were pretty young then, too.

A. Young. It didn't bother me that they take away the

money from the rich people. It didn't bother me. As long
as they freed. us. the gar...

(End of side 2)

Tape 2 - Side 1

Q. Now you were...finished saying on the previous tape that when the Bolsheviks took over, because they promised... They...

A. Freedom.

Q. Freedom. And they stopped the war...

A. And they stopped the war, so all in all, they were very...

Q. As far as your young group was concerned, you were willing to work with them.

A. Absolutely.

Q. Right. Now...And your school remained opened. You were permitted to graduate. You graduated in 1919.

A. Sure. 1919.

Q. There were no pogroms in Vinnitsa.

A. No.

Q. Where you were living.

A. Absolutely not.

Q. There were no food shortages as far as you could see.

A. As far as I could see because...Just by my parents... *they were living.*

Q. Alright. How about the rest of the city?

A. No shortage of food.

Q. There was no shortage of food.

A. *At least in my family.* I didn't hear of starving...starvation. *I didn't hear.*

Q. So you got through the revolution and the Civil War pretty...You managed to get through pretty well.

A. Yes.

Q. And what happened then in 1919 because the Civil War was still on?

A. Then, as I told you...

Q. You graduated.

A. Graduated and we were a group, as I told you, a group of amateur actors. So we were performing for about a year's time or so.

Q. In *Vinnitsa*.

A. In *Vinnitsa*. Then, myself and some of my friends had in mind to leave.

Q. To leave what?

A. To leave Russia.

Q. Why?

A. Because we saw that for us, perhaps, it would have been good because we had everything that we needed. But we saw that for the rest of the Jews, it wasn't so good because most of the Jews were against Bolshevism...against...They were...I would consider them capitalists. Everybody was for himself. And the communists would come in as I told you, take away everything. They didn't care. You slept until now, I'll sleep from now on. And there was...For some reason I wasn't a Bolshevik. I wasn't a communist...deep in my heart. I sympathized with them as long as they served...

Q. Your purpose.

My purpose.
A. They freed me from the czar, from the pogroms, but I...
For some reason I could not visualize myself establishing myself with them for the rest of my life and besides that I figured that if I skip the country, maybe I'll have a chance to save the rest of my family.

Q. Save them from what?

A. From Russia.

Q. But you see, you...

A. From the communists.

Q. You have just finished saying, on the previous tape, that everybody greeted them with cries of joy and most of the Jews were revolutionaries.

A. At the beginning.

Q. At the beginning, not by 1919.

A. Not by 1919, no.

Q. What you're saying is there was a change.

A. A change...a change of heart and they weren't liked too much. In 1919 the Jews did not like the communists so much.

Q. I suspect, if I...Now, if I'm incorrect, you tell me, but from what you're saying, especially those who had any means or property or any goods at all.

A. Right. They weren't sure that they wouldn't come in and chase...Like they came into the place where I lived. They told them...Give them away your bedroom or give them away...

Nothing that they can do. *Feed them and they wouldn't pay.* You know what communists can do - *not only in the work...* So all in all it...And the Civil War...After all, even after the war was finished they had the Civil War and wartime...I don't have to tell you...Life is miserable.

Q. But this is what I say, but you tell me that you didn't experience any of this in *Vinnitsa*.

A. Because I was in *Vinnitsa*. In *Vinnitsa* we didn't experience because the war was far away from *Vinnitsa*, but it was in different cities.

Q. But you knew about it.

A. But we knew about it. We read about it. So I had in my mind and so some of my fellows, to skip Russia and go to Rumania, and eventually go to the United States and maybe have a chance to bring our...the family, too.

Q. Did it ever occur to you...This is 1919-1920.

A. 1920.

Q. Yea, 1920...'20-'21...because I think the Civil War ended already and by 1921 the Bolsheviks were in control...period...because that was the beginning of the first five...the NEP. Alright. Did it ever occur to you to consider going to Palestine at that time?

A. *I'll answer that.* When I was in Russia I didn't even think of it, but when I escaped Russia and came to Rumania all of ^a sudden, before I went to that *village* where I taught Hebrew, ~~my~~ I ~~was~~ mingled between Jews and I heard about the *Joint* (JDC). I

heard about Israel and I became involved.

Q. In Bessarabia, this is.

A. In Bessarabia to the extent...I lived in Bessarabia, in that city of Belz with another man who was instrumental on bringing Jews over to the...to Israel.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. How did he do it, I'll explain it to you.

Q. Now wait...Alright. Tell me this and then I'll go back to something I...

A. Yes, I'll tell you how he did it. There were a lot of refugees from Russia, from the Ukraine in Bessarabia...like I was. They had in mind either to go...mostly to go to the United States, but not everybody could go. You had to have affidavits. Those that could not go to the United States had a chance to go to Israel, but to go to Israel it was under the British Mandate. Britain allowed to Israel, issued a visa to...only to the one that could produce a certificate that he owns \$500.

Q. In 1920, this was?

A. Yes. So what happened?

Q. This was already after the White Paper (1939).

A. 1920 and '22 and '23. That was...

Q. Because they clamped down about 1923. Didn't they? Or was it before? Because there was one time there was unrestricted immigration to Palestine.

A. After that the Arabs (~~the~~) protested. After that they put their fingers on it.

Q. Alright. Now when was the unrestricted immigration period? Do you happen to remember.

A. In '21 most likely... '17... '18... '19... '20.

Q. When nobody could get out anyhow.

A. But later on they said only those that could show that they have \$500. So what do you do? We had a rich, very rich Rumanian Jew in Galatz(?) and he was a *real* Jew and a very, rich man. He had a corporation that did business with ~~Israel~~ Israel through Britain. They sold Rumanian goods and Israel sold them... Britain sold them... Palestinian goods and it was a multi-million dollar corporation. So what did he do? Only Jews can do that.

Q. Only Jews can do that, you say?

A. They made those refugees part of... directors, shareholders. Naturally when you belong to a big corporation like this, it was very easy to prove to the consul that...

. He's a partner in that multi-million dollar corporation and he has more than \$500. I would go to the consul to the British consul on the basis of this certificate, ^{I would get} ~~that~~... a visa. I had about 300 Jews in Israel that I brought *them over*.

Q. You personally? Mr. Schochet?

A. Mr. Schochet.

Q. How...Were you involved then in this Jew running?

Essentially it's like gun running.

A. Yea, because I was a friend with that man that I told you and that man himself got married in *Bessarabia* and he left *Bessarabia* to Israel. I took over.

Q. Is that right? Was it a business? Did he...In other words did he make money on this?

A. Wages...wages and so did I get wages.

Q. How did it operate? That would be very interesting.

A. How did it operate?

Q. Yea. I mean what did...You had to supply transportation. Right?

A. We supplied them with everything.

Q. Well, now what kind of transportation...

A. Because they were Jews. They were poor. So we give them tickets to go to Israel...

Q. How?

A. On the boats.

Q. What boats?

A. On the boats that go to Israel.

Q. From where?

A. From Rumania, from *Constanza*.

Q. Rumania has a seacoast?

A. Sure, a big seacoast.

Q. Oh, I ~~learned~~ *im very bad* that in geography.

A. A big seacoast. *Constantinople* a big port.

Q. Is that...That goes onto what? Onto Mediterranean.

A. Sure.

Q. So then they would...Ok...*Not Gibraltar, straight to Israel.* ~~the Dardanelles.~~

A. *Q. Not Gibraltar, the Dardanelles.* The Dardanelles. Now since I had my family in Europe... in Russia...

Q. They were still there.

A. Still in Russia.

Q. That's what...Now I...If you are going to tell me about... Are you going to finish telling me about the Israeli smuggling bit? Ok.

A. So I provided myself with a visa, too.

Q. To Palestine.

A. To Palestine. You never know, if I can't go to the United States, I may as well go to Palestine. So what happened? I met my wife, *and that was it.*

Q. In *Bessarabia?*

A. *In Bessarabia.* And that was *the end of my* Israel.

Q. Oh, 'cause she want...

A. Because she had parents in the United States and I knew that her father...not parents...her parents...The mother and the sisters were living in *Bessarabia* yet. Her father was in the United States. So I knew that eventually they would all go to the United States. Now if I wanted to be a member of their family, I knew for sure that I would have to have an

American visa. So I wrote a letter to my uncle in here and he sent me an affidavit. On the basis of that affidavit I got a visa to the United States. It happened so that I couldn't go. The *quota* came in in 1924 and there was a limited amount of Jews that could emigrate every year. I wouldn't go to Israel because I was attached already to her. So what happened? I waited. They couldn't go...They...Her father couldn't bring them over to the United States either because they had to wait for their visa...for the quota. So what happened? In 1924 the *Joint* got permission from the Canadian government to let 5,000 Jews, refugees, emigrate from Rumania to Canada.

Q. It wasn't really from Rumania. It was from *Bessarabia* where everybody was crowded in.

A. *Bessarabia* was part of Rumania.

Q. I know, but I mean you were not actually Rumanian Jews.

A. We were Rumanian. I was a Rumanian citizen.

Q. By this time?

A. By that time, because I paid 300 lei and they gave me a certificate I was born in Rumania.

Q. *Oh, I see! I know, I know* But, essentially...Let me clarify this, you know, just for the...for students. Essentially, *Bessarabia* was crowded with Russian refugees. Ok.

A. So, as soon as...5,000 people could go to Canada...

My mother-in-law and her three sisters and her brother...They applied for a visa to Canada and so did I. I went with them together.

Q. It's amazing how many men wound up in the United States because their wives or their girlfriends or whatever were going to the United States, Otherwise they might have stayed in Russia or they might have gone to Palestine. It's really very interesting.

A. ^{positively} If it wasn't for her, I would have been in Israel.

Q. That's very interesting. So...When you were running Jews to Palestine and these were the poor Jews that were going in...In other words the Jews who had money preferred to go ~~to~~ to the United States. Is that correct?

A. The Joint helped them financially.

Q. The Joint helped who?

A. Financially, all these Jews that went to Israel.

Q. The poor ones.

A. The poor ones.

Q. Now was the statement that I just made before correct? That if a Jew had some money and could afford it, he went to the United States.

A. If he was within the quota.

Q. Yes. If he had a choice...

A. If he had a choice...All of them would go to United States.

Q. They would.

A. They went to Israel ^{just} because there was a quota and they couldn't go, and some didn't have affidavits. Not everybody had ~~x~~ relatives in here that would ask for them. So the second choice was Israel and here were... This is where I came in. I gave them the ^{Juridical} ^(?) possibilities. The ^(?) gave them the financial ones.

Q. Alright. And, for example, how would you go about hiring a transport for them, a ship? I mean what city, for example, were you located in? You were in Belz this whole time. And then you had to get the Jews from these cities to the seaport. Right? So what would that be...by rail?

A. By the train. They went by train to Costanza. ^{Costanza} they took a ship.

Q. Now who would hire you a ship?

A. The Joint .

Q. The Joint would do that! oh!

A. Even I went on the ship. I didn't pay anything. The Joint paid for my transportation...It was a French boat, Madonna ~~(?)~~. I'll never forget it.

Q. It was a French boat that took you to Canada.

A. To Canada, to Halifax.

Q. So...

A. When I came to Canada, we came to Halifax. We stood there one day and the Joint brought us over to Toronto and

they placed all the refugees...ⁱⁿ homes.

Q. *of other* ~~the~~ Jews, you mean?

A. My Hebrew...^{helped.} Immediately I got a job as a Hebrew teacher, and I sent tickets to Russia, and officially they couldn't ~~leave~~ leave Russia then.

Q. This was '25?

A. That was already in '25. I send them for my father and mother...No, first I send for my sister and brother...for two. They came and then ~~they~~ ^{we} jointly sent already for my father and mother and the baby and I brought them up all...I had one sister left, the one that was educated that was a druggist. She could have come to here, but she was engaged to a doctor.

Q. A Russian or a Jew?

A. A Jew and he didn't want to leave Russia.

Q. He wanted to stay.

A. Stay there. So because of him, she loved him, and she wanted...She didn't want to get separated. So she remained, but the rest of my family I brought over to Canada.

Q. Did that sister survive the second world war?

A. Yes. I used to correspond with her.

Q. You were able to correspond with her.

A. Yes. Once, for some reason, correspondence stopped. At that time *Zalman* ^{*Wakomant*} went to Russia to...for lecture and I found out...We belonged to the same society, your father, myself, to the *Priluki* society.

Q. Yes. Oh, you did belong to that one?

A. Yea, I was the financial secretary in that society for 25 years. Soon as I find out that he goes to Russia I went over to Princeton University where he lectured, went into his home and I told him I had a sister in Russia, in *Vinnitsa*. I didn't get any letters for a long time and she didn't get mine. For some reason the government interfered. I don't know the reason. So I asked him. I am writing a letter to my sister. Take this letter to Russia and when you come to Moscow there you drop it in the mail. They don't censor the...internal mail.

Q. Oh, they don't?

A. They used to censor the...

Q. The foreign mail.

A. The foreign mail and I didn't want to involve her in trouble because she maintains she has nobody in Russia.

Q. In the United States, you mean.

A. United States. If she ^{got} had a letter from the United States, where did you get *a brother*. So I ask him to do it. He didn't refuse me which *he involved himself in* trouble. If they checked his...

Q. Luggage.

A. And they found a letter from ^{an} American to a Russian sister, he would have been in trouble, but he didn't refuse me. He came to Moscow, mailed the letter to my sister. She

got it right away. She answered ...

Q. Oh, she did answer.

A. Yes. Isn't that something?

Q. Yes. Alright. Now, for example...You tell me that you went to *Bessarabia*, you know, just so. *Glat azeri*.

A. No, and this is how ridiculous. *If you We* couldn't go...

Q. No, no. I mean...

A. Transportation wasn't allowed.

Q. Wait a minute. No, no. You misunderstood what I was about to say. You say...You tell me what happened once you got...you were in *Bessarabia*. You didn't tell me how you got to *Bessarabia*.

A. This is what I'm going to tell you now. I couldn't travel. Nobody was allowed to travel *for no reason at all*. There's no freedom of transportation in Russia, *but* since we were a group of performers, Yiddish theater, we told the government that *in Mogilev, Podolsk*, they have no performers. They have no Yiddish theater and we would like to go to the province to perform for the Jews that live in *Mogilev*. *It looked to them* normal, and they allowed us, the whole group, to go to *Mogilev* and to perform in Yiddish in there. *What was our idea? Mogilev* also has a river that divides...

Q. Is that...Is *Mogilev on the Dniester?*

A. *On the Dniester.*

Q. Oh, that's where *Pineh* was telling me that. I think he and *Braina* had crossed there.

A. We knew that as soon as we reached *Mogilev* we had a chance to cross *the Dniester* and be in Rumania. We came to *Mogilev*. We made *several* ~~our~~ performances and soon as ~~they~~ *we* found out who was the ~~Jazz~~ Jew that was *the ...*

Q. Transporter...

A. The transporter, we arranged with him for *the price*, but the life was in danger yet because the guards could find out and then we would be in trouble, *But* I was very fortunate. I had a cousin in Russia. He was an educated boy. He was an accountant and when the Bolsheviks came, he saw that his life was in danger because he was anti-communist, but in order to survive he told them that he's a communist. *And* he was a very able man and in *Vinnitsa* he became a chef, a high...

Q. A chef is a cook. You don't mean that. You mean a commissar.

A. No, commissar, but his mind was, to come...also to come to *Mogilev* and also to cross the border. So, how did he do it? He told the government in *Vinnitsa* that he heard that ~~the~~ *in*

Mogilev there are people who are transporters and they... and they crossed the river and they escaped to Rumania. *He wants to investigate.*

Q. *He wants to investigate!*
A. Make a marvelous play. What a story!

A. I walk in *Mogilev* once and I ~~said~~ *see my cousin*. My gosh, what are you doing here? *Ask no questions* I passed on by on the street

where the *Securanza(?)* *Securanza(?)*
was. is the CIA, the FBI...

Q. Oh, like the *cheka*.

A. And he goes in as if *I*. Go into my *house*... I was afraid to pass. I would pass on the other side of the street and he goes in. I was waiting when he come out. I says... So what happened? He told them same story in *Mogilev*, *to the cheka* that he's going to investigate that business, but ~~in order~~ ~~in~~ in order not to provoke anybody, in order not to give out the secret, he doesn't want any guards on the shore.

Q. Sounds like something... Well, who wrote the Inspector General? Is that *Gogol*? Did the Inspector General...

A. Yea, *Gogol*.

Q. That's it, yea. That's what it sounds like.

A. He does not want anybody to be on the shore. He wants to look himself. How does it work? And he knew the night... that that would happen and that night we all crossed the...

Q. Oh, that's a marvelous story. That really is. That's why I say it reminds me... It's like something out of the Inspector General. It's like a farce

A. That was the night. Nobody touched us.

Q. He must have been a brilliant man. I hope he's well and... Is he alright?

A. He's dead *already*.

Q. Oh, that's too bad.

A. A brilliant man. *A brilliant head.*

Q. Oh, that is absolutely fantastic story.

A. To figure out that scheme.

Q. But you can only do that once. Nobody else could pull that. *after that.*

A. Because they found out that they were fooled. They found out that *they were fooled, but he wasn't there any more.*

Q. How many Jews left that night? Do you know?

A. Well, we were about 10 in a boat, in several boats... several boats. *Perhaps one hundred.*

Q. And you were not picked up by the guard or... Oh, he had cleared the place of *guards*... I can't believe it. That's really *chutzpah*. *Emas chutzpah.*

A. You know? That's a marvelous story.

A. Marvelous scheme.

Q. How did he ever come up with an idea... Did you talk to him about that afterwards ever?

A. It came to him. I don't know how, but it came to him... that idea. That was the only way to do it. I mean a sure way..

Because people *are* crossing. That incident happened.

Q. Yes, I know.

A. But he didn't *want* because if they catch him, if they caught him, they would shoot him, *in the split of a second-*

Q. I understand.

A. So he had to make arrangements so that nobody could be on the shore.

Q. Oh, I see. You mean he was in double jeopardy.

A. He was in double jeopardy...as a refugee, as one that wants to escape the country and on the *top of that, that* he was a high commissar.

Q. Do you know *W* in what area he was commissar?

A. In *Vinnitsa*.

Q. No, I mean...Not what geographical area, but what...
Let's see...Department or division or what.

A. The *cheka*.

Q. He was himself in the *cheka*?

A. He was himself the *chief* of the *cheka*. He was a brilliant man. He could talk you into...You would believe that you're a man. He had some mouth~~(44)~~.

Q. *Oh God!* That is very interesting. So he must have been a revolutionary...Oh, no he was not a revolutionary to start with, you say.

A. No, he became.

Q. He became.

A. He became...all of the sudden he became...*a* big shot. He talked them into it and they needed people like that and, perhaps, the first...the first few months, perhaps, he showed that he could do *some work for them*. So they believe him.

Q. So you came to *Bessarabia* and while you were there, how did you survive? Did you have money with you?

A. I had very, little money.

Q. Did your parents know that you were going to leave?

A. Yes.

Q. You told them.

A. Yea, I told them that that was my idea.

Q. And they supported you in going. In other words they agreed...

A. ^{Spiritually} They encouraged me. ^{Yes, Sure,} They couldn't stop me anyhow.

When I came to Bessaraha I didn't have a lot of money, but you have to be lucky wherever you go.

Q. That's right.

A. A man that came from the same town that I did lived in a town in Bessaraha and he became a doctor.

Q. He stayed and studied there to be a doctor?

A. He wasn't a doctor. In Europe they called him Felscher.

It's an assistant of doctor. He was a very able man. He could cure you just as good as doctor, and when he came to that town, he started practicing medicine in there and he was very successful and he was financially successful, too.

So I came and I find out that he's there. Naturally, he accepted me ^{with open hands} and I lived with them for a couple of

month. Then I decided to go and leave them and go to .

Bely. Bely was a big city and I figured... ^{what} ~~where~~ am I going to stay in that little town? What will I do? I came to Bely ...

Q. Did you have any plan... Oh, your ^{ultimate} ~~alternate~~ goal was to get out.

A. The plans were to get out of Rumania, too, and that was

the time I met your father and as soon as your father gave me his position in that *village*, I was there for two years.

Q. So that's where you saved the money up.

A. And I saved money up and I didn't need any money to be saved because I had transportation from the *Joint*, transportation was paid by the *Joint*.

Q. Now wait a minute. How did these two things go together? While you were teaching in this village...Is that the time during which you were waiting for your quota?

A. That was the time...no.

Q. That was before.

A. That was before.

Q. Right.

A. I was waiting for my *quota* already as soon as I came to *Bely and* I met this young lady.

Q. Yes, your wife, you mean.

A. And when I met my wife I gave up the Israel business and I wrote a letter to my uncle...

Q. No, let's get...I don't have the years straight in my head. So you came...You crossed the border about 1921. Was it? '22?

A. '22.

Q. '22 and you stayed in this...

A. Or perhaps '21 because I stayed in *Bessusha* in that village for about two years. So in '23 I came to *Bely* ...

Q. And that's when you met your wife was in '23. Now wait a minute...But when were you working for this Jewish smuggler?

A. When I came to *Belz* from the village.

Q. And before you met your wife you were engaged in this operation.

A. Yes, before. I was already in...

Q. And then in *Belz* you met your wife.

A. But then...Before I met her my mind was to go to Israel.

Q. Right. Right. I understand.

A. But when I met her, I wrote a letter to my uncle. He sent me an affidavit and that changed the whole business.

Q. Ok. Alright. So then once you made up your mind to go to the United States that was around '23-'24.

A. '24.

Q. By that time the quota system had set in. Now you had to support yourself there.

A. I was giving Hebrew lessons in *Belz*.

Q. But not in the village. You left the village.

A. I left the village completely.

Q. You went to *Belz* and you were giving Hebrew lessons in *Belz* and you continued to do that until...

A. Until I left.

Q. Until you left. I see and that was sufficient to support you.

A. Oh, yea. Actually I used to take out my wife as a

girlfriend...theaters... *I made nice money.*

Q. Now, what was it like amongst the refugees living there and waiting, you know, for this plan and then that plan and then this hope and that hope...

A. Well, some are very miserable, like your father. Until he got a visa and he went to the United States, his life was miserable and so were the rest. Not everybody was successful and prosperous and they...

Q. Was there a feeling of community among these people?

A. They were united. We had...and we had a *Joint* relief that supported them. Gave them some kind of help...financial help.

Q. Were there any cultural *gatherings*.

A. Not that I know...no.

Q. In other words was there any attempt to form a community or was it each man again for...

A. Everyone was for himself.

Q. Did you form any circle of friends other than your wife and her family?

A. I had some friends, yes, but very few and I met her very *early*.

Q. Very soon on.

A. Very soon and that was it.

Q. Now was it your connection with my father that...Did you then pick it up again when you came to the United States? I

mean was it that short meeting...that...After all how long did you know my father there in Rumania?

A. Very, very little because he left right away.

Q. It was just a chance encounter actually. Alright. Then what happened? Did you then meet again here?

A. Then we met...Where did we meet? I don't remember where we met. Was he in New York?

Q. Yes. He was in Manhattan.

A. I think I...See? I can't remember where I met him and how often I met him in New York.

Q. The reason I'm asking is that...

A. Yes, what a question. I ^{even} went to your father's home in... Where was it? *Sure, in New York.*

Q. Where?

A. They ^{were} ~~are~~ friends with the Kaufmans (E).

Q. Yes, they were. They grew up in the same shtetel.

A. Yes, and we were friends with the Kaufmans.

Q. How were you friends?

A. Beatrice Kaufman and Nathan Kaufman and my wife lived one...

Tape 2 - Side 2

Q. Because Nathan Kaufman came from *Priluki*.

A. Yes, and he lived; we'll say, on a street
on a street. My wife's family lived right across from them
on the same street and they met each other and they knew each
other. My wife used to come into Beatrice's and to Nathan and
to his aunt.

Q. You mean in *Priluki*?

A. No, in *Belz*.

Q. Oh, I see. When...

A. When they were refugees in *Belz* they met. I met
them there, too. And when we came to New York and they were
friends with the Kaufmans and we were friends with the Kauf-
mans...

Q. So, again, it was through your wife, essentially.

A. Yes. So then we were friends and we used to go to your
father, Your father *met with* me and then we belonged to the
same society. So we were very close.

Q. I see. I was just wondering how the connection was made
because it was such a quick meeting and such a chancy thing.

A. Actually the meeting was already in New York.

Q. Yes, and it was through the Kaufmans really.

A. Through the Kaufmans.

Q. I see. So the only permanent connections...What I'm
trying to establish is whether during this time...I mean you
spent quite a number of years in *Bessarabia*, if you stop to think

about it...about four years.

A. Almost four.

Q. Yea...whether you made any meaningful connections other than your wife and through her you did make a few.

A. Yes.

Q. Her family and her.

A. And the Kaufmans.

Q. And the Kaufmans and that's it.

A. That's it...because we left. We left *Bessarabia* right away. They left to the United States and we left to Canada.

Q. I see. Well, is there anything...Now let me see if I've covered everything and then meanwhile you think whether there's anything that...anything more. It's been very interesting... I hope...For me...I hope it has been for you, too.

A. Yea, oh yea. *What a question.*

Q. Tell me something, yea. When you were...Let's go back to the *shtetel* for a minute. Did your father dress in a modern, in modern...what was considered at that time modern dress or did he ~~we~~ wear ~~xxxxxx~~ a caftan or...

A. I had the uniform, government uniform.

Q. Yes, but when you were little and how did your father...

A. No, no. When I was in school up to 1919.

Q. I knew, but before...You were still living at home...

A. When I lived at home I wore just exactly the same as all the rest of the...

Q. Well, what did the rest of the pupils wear?

A. Pants, shirt and a jacket.

Q. Alright. In other words you didn't wear a caftan or anything like...

A. No.

Q. You didn't have to wear pais.

A. No, no, no. My father wasn't that orthodox.

Q. Ok. That's what I want to know.

A. That's it.

Q. So even in the way his son was dressed, it was shown.

A. That's right. Practically no one in my town had any pais.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Not one. That's the reason why I told you that none of them was orthodox or Hasidic...religious...none. ^{of them} There were no pais in my town.

Q. How far were you from Priluki? Do you know?

A. 50 miles from Vinnitsa and seven miles from ... (?) . It's about close to 60 miles.

Q. 60 miles...60 miles is not very far nowadays. You know it was a difference of almost a century in the way they dressed.

A. By car, would have been, the most, two hours.

Q. Yea. They were much more orthodox in Priluki.

A. It's possible. I can't tell you.

Q. That's very interesting. Ok. And your father also then wore what would be a modern business suit.

A. Yea, but...

Q. Is that correct?

A. He also had, for *Shabbos*, he had that long...

Q. The *tsitsis* and the...

A. *Tsitsis*, nobody saw him. He wore a *tallis*, *to shul*

Q. He wore a *tallis*.

A. In *shul*.

Q. Ok.

A. But as far as a *tsitsis* is concerned, I don't remember.

Q. No.

A. I don't remember. I *didn't*. After 14 years I gave up everything, but for Saturday he had a *?*, *long after*

Q. Oh, he did.

A. Yea.

Q. Was it of silk? You mean like a black silk *or* ~~one~~ sort of ~~or~~ a gabardine? It would be that gabardine.

A. It would be gabardine or something like that, yea. He wouldn't go to *shul* in a jacket.

Q. No, that's ~~a~~ what I wanted to know, yea.

A. That would be...antagonize...

Q. The community.

A. The community...religion, but deep in his heart...

Q. Again, did you discuss...Were you able to talk to your

father? You know communicate with him about these things or was it just by...that you could observe?

A. I could observe.

Q. I see.

A. We didn't discuss it...because the time to discuss is when you become 17...18...19. In those days I was out of the *town*, out of the house. I was a student. I didn't bother with that, but I observed the way his...point of view, the way he behaved himself. I saw that he was exactly the opposite of my mother.

Q. And you actually preferred your father's way of thinking to your mother's.

A. *Without a question*. I respected mother. I respected her ways. I said...I figured...This is her way of life. I wouldn't antagonize, although I antagonized her with the *+fillin, with the darenig.* But I figured I couldn't take it anymore and I had to *put my foot down,* ~~forget it.~~ ~~I forget it~~ and that's it, but otherwise who was I to tell her how to conduct the heart. The home was kosher. It's out of the question. I would never dare eat meat *after butter, or butter after meat* in my house, my ~~parent's~~ house. I wouldn't antagonize her that far. As far as I'm concerned, I didn't want *daren*. She couldn't talk me into it and that's it. When I took them over to Canada, naturally they came to my house and my wife is not kosher. She's not religious and my mother must have knew it, you know. She told my wife...

Get out of the kitchen. I'll take over. And she took over for about 14 or 16 weeks until they *found*. . . She took over and she managed. My wife didn't have anything against *it*.

Q. It kept peace in the family.

A. That was very clever of her. Some wouldn't. Some wouldn't... *let* the mother-in-law.

Q. That's right. It was clever on both parts.

A. Both parts. Mother saw that she could not live in those conditions. My wife knew...

Q. That your mother could not live that way.

A. So she gave in. She went out and it was peace on earth.

Q. That's right because it was only temporary after all.

A. It was temporary. We knew that as soon as they find... establish a living...home...They

Q. Ok. Well, do you have anything that you would like to add on your own that sticks in your memory?

A. I think I told you everything I knew.

Q. Ok. Then I'll say thank you very much.

A. You're welcome. I'm sure I couldn't do it for a better person.

Q. Thank you.