

June and Isaac Feinsilver Interview

November 11, 1999

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I'll just say a few words just to check if this is working. My name is Miriam Glick, and this is the recorded interview of Mr. and Mrs. Feinsilver, Isaac and June Feinsilver, on November the 11th, 1999.

JUNE: I think it sound very good.

ISAAC: So?

INTERVIEWER: All right, well, let's start out, and remember we're going to start out talking about the years before the war. June, you've already told me this before, but will you say again what was your name at birth.

JUNE: I am, I was born by name, in, in Hebrew, or, or...?

INTERVIEWER: In Polish. Let's hear your Polish name.

JUNE: Junia Rubenstein.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JUNE: And my father's name was Jakob Rubenstein, and my mother's name was Eva Rubenstein. I had two brothers. One was three years younger- that's my - his name was Leon Rubenstein, and my older brother was three years older than I was and his name was Olek Rubenstein.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you born?

JUNE: I was born in Lodz. You want the date?

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What's the date?

JUNE: October 5th, 1922.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and let me ask you, Isaac, where were you born?

ISAAC: I was born Tomaszow Mazowiecki, Poland.

INTERVIEWER: Tomaszow...?

ISSAC: Tomaszow Mazowiecki.

INTERVIEWER: That's the name of the town?

ISAAC: That's the city, yes.

INTERVIEWER: That's a long name.

ISAAC: Yeah. Six [June] the 12th, 1913.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

ISAAC: My father's name is Moshe Feinsilver, and I had a family from seven kids – seven –

JUNE: You had siblings -- siblings.

ISAAC: I had, I had....

JUNE: (Laughing) You had not seven.

ISSAC: I have three brothers, I mean with me, and three -- three sisters.

INTERVIEWER: And where were you among the seven? Oldest? Youngest?

ISAAC: I was the youngest.

JUNE: He's the youngest. That's him. [Pointing to a photograph.] There was nine years old.

ISAAC: I was the youngest.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JUNE: (Laughing) Look at what they did with the picture.

INTERVIEWER: Beautiful picture.

JUNE: That's his father and his sisters.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about your -- what were your parent's names?

ISAAC: Moshe Feinsilver. Moses.

JUNE: **Moses.**

ISAAC: **Moses.**

JUNE: **Moses Feinsilver.**

INTERVIEWER: And your mother?

ISAAC: **Etta Ulman. Oh, my mother passed away. I didn't know my mother.**

JUNE: **That was his stepmother.**

ISAAC: **I don't remember my mother. I had a stepmother.**

INTERVIEWER: Your mother died, when?

ISAAC: **My mother died in birth -- of a child.**

INTERVIEWER: Oh, of a, not at your birth?

JUNE: **Not his birth, that's --**

ISAAC: **No, other child --**

INTERVIEWER: The sibling. So, how old were you when she died?

ISAAC: **I was maybe, four years old.**

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you were just a little boy?

ISAAC: **I don't remember her.**

INTERVIEWER: You don't remember her at all?

ISAAC: **Uh uh.**

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and what did you father do?

ISAAC: **My father had a business from coal -- coals -- to burn.**

INTERVIEWER: To -- finding coals, like some sort of a coal mining business?

JUNE: **No, no, no, no. Selling coal.**

ISAAC: **Selling, selling coal.**

JUNE: Because in Poland that's what we were using --

ISAAC: Using as --

JUNE: -- for stoves, you know -- with coals.

INTERVIEWER: I see. Right. And --

ISAAC: Yes we -- we give it. People come to buy it for wintertime. So that -- heat.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Where did he get the coals?

ISAAC: We got it from the coal mine, they send it to us.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

ISAAC: So and so many -- you know -- cubic meter and so on --

INTERVIEWER: So did he -- did people come to your house to buy the coal?

ISAAC: Yes, well, he had a big lot, and people come to buy, and we have some horses. And people -- we -- we send it. People, they come and order some for wintertime.

INTERVIEWER: So was your -- was your family -- were you considered pretty well-off?

ISAAC: Yeah, reasonable, not -- middle -- middle class.

INTERVIEWER: And how old were you when your father remarried?

ISAAC: I was around that age, about nine, nine, ten.

INTERVIEWER: About nine -- about years old?

ISAAC: Yeah. And my stepmother-- as a matter of fact, my stepmother ordered a Torah in my name, so I should say *Kaddish* [the mourner's prayer] for her.

INTERVIEWER: She ordered a Torah?

JUNE: No, she wrote, she wrote, evidently that was the --

ISAAC: Not she -- or she paid for it.

INTERVIEWER: For a Torah?

ISAAC: To write a Torah, and she made a -- a *Chinuch* -- you know what a *Chinuch* is -- ?

JUNE: -- in his name.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

ISAAC: You know what a Torah *Chinuch* is? You know what it is -- a party.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ISAAC: -- to enjoy it, and people come and wrote in -- in the Torah --

JUNE: In your name.

ISAAC: -- alphabet, you know, fill it out.

INTERVIEWER: I see. So was this a common thing to do at that time?

ISAAC: No, it was not that common. She has money, so she didn't have what to do with it, when she married my father.

JUNE: He was her -- his -- her favorite.

ISAAC: Yeah, I was the only one, the youngest, so she raised me.

INTERVIEWER: So you were the youngest of the boys or -- ?

ISAAC: The youngest of all of 'em.

INTERVIEWER: You were the youngest of all?

ISAAC: Yeah, three sisters.

JUNE: He was the baby.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: He was the baby, you know the sisters, adore him, and, and like the, the youngest so, I don't know but I, I imagine --

ISAAC: They took me --

INTERVIEWER: I can see after this much time it's like you were there, right?

ISAAC: They took me --

JUNE: Yeah, well, I've heard so much about it, you know...

ISAAC: They took me every place they go, you know, parties or something.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

ISAAC: One of my sister was teaching dancing, so she teach me how to dance and I went with her and so I was like, like a baby, you know, really. And all my sisters -- two sisters were married already -- and the brothers were married.

INTERVIEWER: So they were --

ISAAC: I was a uncle when I was about eleven -- twelve years old.

INTERVIEWER: So they were much older than -- I bet -- you were?

ISAAC: Oh, yeah, yeah, much older.

JUNE: Everybody adores a baby, you know how it is. I image, I don't know (laughing).

INTERVIEWER: So what was your town like that you lived in?

ISAAC: Well, I was a teenager when I go --

JUNE: Your town.

ISAAC: Oh, my town?

INTERVIEWER: Your town where you lived...

ISAAC: My town was about, around eight thousand families, Jewish families. It was most of them factories, make material. And I was, when I was a teenager I was even working in a place, 'til I, make carpets, a factory for carpets. And later on I changed, I was making material.

INTERVIEWER: And you said there were about eight thousand Jewish families?

ISAAC: Eight thousand Jewish families. It was about --

INTERVIEWER: Were there -- ?

ISAAC: The city was about forty thousand altogether.

INTERVIEWER: So it was – wasn't --

ISAAC: A little town.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but it was about forty thousand families or forty thousand people?

ISAAC: No, families, about eight thousand Jewish families...

JUNE: You mean, in general -- ?

ISAAC: In general, forty thou -- the city was a small town, about forty thousand.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and so there were a fair number of Jewish – but what -- about half Jewish, or -- ?

ISAAC: No, it was about eight thousand Jewish.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

ISAAC: Something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Eight thousand Jews, okay.

ISAAC: Yeah, eight thousand Jews, I don't know families, probably, maybe eight thousand families, probably.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JUNE: It was considered a small town.

ISAAC: A Jewish, a Jewish, yeah, Jewish city, it was considered a small town. It was good business town.

INTERVIEWER: All right, and did the, did the Jewish people mainly live together?

ISAAC: Together, yes always keep together, Jewish, like Italian here, keep together.

JUNE: But you, you, you didn't live --

ISAAC: I didn't live, no --

JUNE: Yeah, you live on outskirts because probably of you father's business, I imagine.

ISAAC: Lot of people were living outskirts, we were living because of my, my father's business, yes.

JUNE: See?

ISAAC: Yeah, that's all right.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay. Were you born at home?

ISAAC: Yes, everybody was born in Poland....

JUNE: Not me.

INTERVIEWER: How about you?

JUNE: None of our children were, not my brothers were not. I was born in, in clinic, yeah, in a hospital.

ISAAC: *Hebamme?* What they call it, a *hebamme*?

JUNE: A what?

ISAAC: Haven? *Hebamme?* What they come and -- ?

JUNE: Oh, this is the *hebamme* ["midwife" in German] that's -- I'm talking German now (laughing). This is the one who --

ISAAC: Helps deliver --

JUNE: -- delivers

INTERVIEWER: Like a midwife?

ISAAC: Midwife, yeah it was called a midwife.

JUNE: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: But you were born in a, more, like a hospital?

JUNE: Not I, I was not delivered by midwife -- he -- he was.

ISAAC: Yeah, all of our, all our kids.

INTERVIEWER: Were delivered by midwives?

JUNE: Yeah, they, they, they -- usually a midwife did the whole thing. I know because one my of aunts, my mother's sister, was this. What she was doing, she was assisting the doctor. But most of people, especially in small towns, they were just using the midwife.

INTERVIEWER: Right -- but you were born in Lodz...

JUNE: But I was born hospital. I think on Wednesday, two o'clock, in a -- in a hospital.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, in a hospital.

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was Lodz like? It was a much bigger city.

JUNE: Oh, Lodz was very industrial city you know and very, very big. Usually it's the small towns came because we also -- there was a lot of factories. And we always on, on, in summertime we used to go for summer home, rent a villa in some summer, smaller, some place on the outskirts of the big city because Lodz was very, very hot and, and the air was polluted because of the factories and so on. So we used to for every summer --

ISAAC: Go away --

JUNE: My father stayed in Lodz because he had to run the business, but mother and my brothers went to summer home.

INTERVIEWER: What did your father do?

JUNE: We had factory, hose factory, you know --

INTERVIEWER: Stockings?

JUNE: Stockings, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So your father had a whole factory?

JUNE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did he have lots of people working for him?

JUNE: Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER: About how many people did he have?

JUNE: Oh, I don't know. I was not there. I said -- I don't know. I know that he -- shortly before the war broke out -- he went to Berlin and bought a new machinery to make those silk --

INTERVIEWER: Stockings, right.

JUNE: Hose, yeah, because the, you know before it was like here would be the --

ISAAC: This comes out it in probably in the 1930.

JUNE: In the '30's.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Well probably middle '30's, yeah.

ISAAC: They started making those socks for women.

JUNE: The hose.

ISAAC: The hose.

JUNE: Don't say socks.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Socks, they were making socks for men, too. But I remember he used to every Friday before he came home, which my mother resented very much, he had to stop at his mother's house and bring her always some hose, and, and, and candies and, and, and maybe gloves, you know. She was a very religious woman.

INTERVIEWER: His mother or your mother?

JUNE: No, not my mother. My father's mother. She was a widow and then she remarried probably three times, or maybe four times. And very, very demanding.

ISAAC: A quick operator!

JUNE: Yeah, I remember we used to, when -- oh we had to be -- when we go to that grandmother we had to be seen, not heard. And we came and we kiss her hand, I remember, and I didn't like her very much.

ISAAC: You didn't?

JUNE: No. Then her last husband passed away, she came and lived with us for a while. My mother didn't like her. I know.

INTERVIEWER: They didn't get along?

JUNE: I know, because her name was Brenna Royza, and, and when I did something wrong she says, "Brenna Royza!" (laughing).

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: So I knew I did something wrong.

ISAAC: You holler too much there'll be this commotion also.

JUNE: Oh, that will be on that tape?

ISAAC: You bet you.

JUNE: Oh my God. (laughing)

INTERVIEWER: That's okay. We're trying to, that's good.

ISAAC: Okay, that's fine.

JUNE: Anyway, anyway, but...

INTERVIEWER: Does it mean something, Brenna Royza? Something -- ?

JUNE: No, that...

INTERVIEWER: It was just her name?

JUNE: Her name, yeah. Her name. But she was very demanding and I guess I'm putting the to-, together. I know my mother didn't like her because when my father came Friday night instead going home he went there, so. I wouldn't like it either (laughing). But I didn't know my, my mother-in-law. I didn't know her. She was already dead, well, even, his stepmother. I didn't know his family, although I was, I was short time in Tomaszow, that's why. See, I was, I was skipping from town to town and --

INTERVIEWER: Why did you skip from town to town?

JUNE: Oh, because there were ghettos. And first was a small ghetto. Then -- see when the war broke out -- when the German came to Lodz -- that was in 19 -- September 1939. And I don't know, there was -- must be something that my mother

fear because she went through the World War – first [World War I] -- because I know she was telling us the stories of that war and – See, now, when I think about it I, I, I know the reason why she -- because she packed me and packed some things and -- the German came to Lodz, my father was caught on the street and taken to work -- and he couldn't work physically, he never did in his life. And, and we were so afraid, she was so afraid, and we all were afraid. We were looking through the window how the German looks, and, and so on. But she knew because -- and probably my father, too -- because they lived through the First -- World War First.

INTERVIEWER: First World War?

JUNE: Yeah. Anyway, and she took me to my grand -- packed some of the things in bags and put jewelry in a little pillow so I can have it and I went to my -- on my father's side -- to the grandmother and she gave me – See, our name was Rubenstein. The family, it was rubies and, and diamond in -- inside you know and she gave it to me...

INTERVIEWER: Is that what Rubenstein -- it refers as a ruby?

JUNE: Yeah, a ruby, yeah. A ruby stone.

INTERVIEWER: Ruby stone, right.

JUNE: That's, that's, that's what it mean. Anyway, she, she pack me and she took me to my grandmother, her mother, who lived in a small town. And she, and she was a widow, but she remarried and her husband was like a mayor of this city and you know –

INTERVIEWER: Your grandmother on your mother's side?

JUNE: My -- yeah. And everybody was seeking advice from him. The *Polacks* [Polish non-Jews] and the Jews and everybody. And he was rich. So my mother sent me to -- and I *loved* my grandmother on my mother's side. Every year, at least, even when we went to summer homes we, we had -- I had to go at least for two weeks to visit my grandmother because I loved her. And my father didn't like it very much because he says, "Oh you're going to such a small town you will become just like them all," and so on.

INTERVIEWER: So your family was pretty wealthy, too. Were they considered pretty well off?

JUNE: My family, well I don't know --

INTERVIEWER: Your parents, in your own mind?

JUNE: My parents, I don't know, money didn't mean that much to me. I

know we, we all had the little bank books you know to save money, ten cents, and, and...

ISAAC: Middle class.

JUNE: Middle class I would say. I don't know, and I know that we had problems. But I didn't know when because once a month men came and brought us money and I imagine that was -- See, now when that all that I'm thinking, at home it didn't mean nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Did you live in a big house?

JUNE: We lived in Lodz, nobody had a house, private house --

ISAAC: Apartment.

JUNE: Apartment, yes. And, and, well --

ISAAC: Was a house.

JUNE: ...living rooms, how long and, and, and bedroom, you know, and, and so. I was comfortable, I don't know, didn't bother me. The only -- I still have girlfriend who went to school with me and we were spending a lot time in each other's houses, you know. She lives in Los Angeles, so she, she's the only one who knew my parents. My parents were intelligent. They spoke several languages. My father spoke German fluently, my mother, you know, they went through if, you know, if there was, there was always a war in Poland. Once the German were occupying it, and then the Russian. German left, the Russian occupy. Polish language was not allowed in school. So they had to -- so they -- my -- I mean, they both -- my mother fluently spoke German and, and, and, Jewish, of course, and Yiddish and, and, and Polish and, and, and French. Because I say growing up they had Mademoiselle, you know, to come and, and teach them good manners and, and, and, and play piano. So, they had a very good -- they believed in education.

INTERVIEWER: And what about you, did you get a, did you get to go to school and get a good education?

JUNE: Well, I, I, I started but I didn't finish. I had like maybe two more years to go.

INTERVIEWER: You mean of which level, high school?

JUNE: High school. Well, I finished high school. Our *gymnasium* was like high school here. Above.

INTERVIEWER: Right, I've heard that many times.

JUNE: Yeah, and, and I've chosen to be, to, to learn, and my major would be, being a bookkeeper.

INTERVIEWER: Like accounting?

JUNE: Accounting, yes.

INTERVIEWER: So you like mathematics?

JUNE: Oh, everything, you know. I still do bookkeeping and, and so on and, and pretty good. Everything, you know, and it was -- I liked that school, because it was educa -- it was boys and girls.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JUNE: And I like it. It was my teenage year already, you know and I just start living (laughing)

ISAAC: You didn't tell the ghetto, how you, you mess, mess it up.

INTERVIEWER: No, we're going to come to that.

JUNE: No, I am going slowly.

ISAAC: Oh, okay.

INTERVIEWER: I'm still trying to catch a little more, a little more. And what about you, did you to school?

ISAAC: Yes, I finish high school.

INTERVIEWER: You finished high school?

ISAAC: Yeah, later you went to work, trade, that, all kind of --

INTERVIEWER: Did you go into your father's business?

ISAAC: Yeah, I was with my father, quite a while. They took me to the army. I was in Polish army.

INTERVIEWER: And when was --

ISAAC: And later on -- this was -- you mean the years?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, when you were about eighteen or so, something like that?

ISAAC: No, I was twenty-one. They took you in the army, it was, you twenty-one.

JUNE: You were not very long in the army.

ISAAC: No, I was in the army –

JUNE: Because I know --

ISAAC: -- because I was the youngest. In, in Poland was a law, then, if I was the only one left in the house --

JUNE: In support.

ISAAC: Support, you know, my father getting older.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ISAAC: So I was in the army about six, seven weeks.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's all.

ISAAC: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: But --

ISAAC: I had to come home because I was [inaudible] --

INTERVIEWER: You were responsible for your family?

ISAAC: Responsible, yeah, because the, the youngest, yes. Later on I came home and I was, help my father. Later, I, my father could take care of himself with the business so I went to work. I was working in a magazine, it was in a big warehouse –

INTERVIEWER: In a --

ISAAC: In Poland, yeah. About, the factory was about -- work about four thousand people. It was a big outfit.

JUNE: Almost the whole the Tomaszow.

ISAAC: -- international.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of factory was it?

ISAAC: They were making [unclear Polish word] -- **nylons, some kind.**

JUNE: Not nylon, nylon was not...

INTERVIEWER: Textiles, fabrics?

ISAAC: Fabrics, yeah.

JUNE: Fabric, yeah.

ISAAC: One from the biggest – was an international factory.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

ISAAC: They call it [unclear but is the name of the Polish factory] -- **in Polish -- you know [again unclear] factory.**

INTERVIEWER: Yes, a factory.

ISAAC: So I was working there and later on I was working there a few years 'til the war come out. And we run away later from, from the factory. We start to go to Russia, that's on the way, we come back later, back to Poland. I was missing my parents.

INTERVIEWER: So you left the factory, you mean, before the war?

ISAAC: I left the factory because they were bombed, the factory.

INTERVIEWER: This was already at the start of the war?

ISAAC: Beg pardon?

INTERVIEWER: This was already at the start of the war?

ISAAC: Yeah, the war started, the war started...

INTERVIEWER: So they were bombing the factory?

ISAAC: Yeah, they bombed the factory so we all run away, I went home and took my parents about a few miles. And the parents couldn't walk too long, so I had a bicycle and I went to Russia with the bicycle, me and a friend.

JUNE: You left the parents?

ISAAC: I left the parents, yeah, because the parents couldn't -- I took the parents back home and then, that, I went to Russia and later I come back.

INTERVIEWER: You came back -- so during the war -- you came back?

ISAAC: Yeah, back during the war. I got beaten up and I, yeah by Hitler. I had, by Hitler, from the Russian, I went back to German, to Germans. 'Cause I was missing the parents.

INTERVIEWER: So even though the Germans had already occupied Poland, but you were able to get back in anyway?

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I couldn't have, well, I was missing the parents, I went back to get them, being with the parents. I was the youngest at home, so I say, "I am the only one there, I have to take care of the parents."

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so you went back there?

ISAAC: So, I went back to Poland. I got beaten so much, and the Germans, and I went back to them, on the border. So later on I was together with my parents. I went to the ghetto together, I went out and happen buy, get some food so they can have something to live. That's my life to go out, outside the ghetto and smuggle in some --

JUNE: He look like a goy [non-Jew].

ISAAC: Yeah, I was, I was born and raised with Gentiles, together, I was.

INTERVIEWER: You were born and raised -- .?

ISAAC: Born and raised in a Gentile neighborhood. With only *Polacks* -- I mean Polish people. Was about ten families Jewish, so it was a little outside the, not in middle of the town.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, because you were on the outskirts, so you were more surrounded by Polish people.

ISAAC: By Polish people, most of them, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And did they -- who did --

ISAAC: They Polish people were together school, I was considered like -- My father was very religious, so.

INTERVIEWER: What was -- I wanted to ask both of you -- what were your homes like in terms of being religious?

ISAAC: Very religious. I was born -- I was to the Talmud Torah, you know, I was Jewish --

INTERVIEWER: And did you -- but you didn't go to a *cheyder* [Jewish religious school]? You went to --

ISAAC: Yeah, *cheyder*, sure.

INTERVIEWER: You went to *cheyder*, too?

ISAAC: That's the Talmud Torah -- was like a *cheyder*.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

JUNE: (laughing)

ISAAC: Yeah, then the kindergarten was like here they, they, they, what you call it in the Center...?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, the Hyman - Hebrew Academy?

ISAAC: Hebrew Academy. Was the same kind, that over there they call the Talmud Torah.

INTERVIEWER: But you also went to a public school, too?

ISAAC: That was public school, too.

JUNE: Your public school, you have to go.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JUNE: That was a must. When you were seven years old --

ISAAC: [Unclear -- but is clearly speaking to June] That's -- Talmud Torah, was considered like a, like a [unclear, but is a Polish word] like --

JUNE: Oh, like a, like a, you mean...

ISAAC: [unintelligible -- talking over each other]

JUNE: -- but, see, you had, had to [unintelligible -- talking over each other]

ISAAC: Okay, I finish, finish the Talmud Torah, that was seventh grade and, like before, like I told you.

INTERVIEWER: And then you went to a school with Polish kids?

ISAAC: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: You always went to school just with Jewish kids?

ISAAC: Yeah --

JUNE: Always, yeah, always.

ISAAC: With the Jewish kids, most of them Polish – Jewish -- .

INTERVIEWER: Mainly Jewish kids, and was that also true for you?

JUNE: Uh-huh. [affirmative response]

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Except that you know now my brothers, none of them went to *cheyder*. They, we, we had a rabbi come, a, a rabbi?

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh. [affirmative response]

JUNE: Come and teach, you know before my older brother was *bar mitzvah*, and, and, and then the younger. And so they hire, my parents hire a rabbi and he came to the house and he taught them –

ISAAC: Yeah, teach you Jewish.

JUNE: Yeah. And we had the one *gymnasium* that was strictly like here would be the, the Hebrew Academy. And a lot, some of the, not too, I wouldn't say, the majority were going. And, and, and those schools that, like the Hebrew, like the *Cheyder*, he went and, and was --

ISAAC: Talmud Torah, that's not a *Cheyder*.

JUNE: ...supported by, by the, the *Gemeinde*, that's a Jewish – Jewish -- What was it, Jewish, a *Gemeinde*?

ISAAC: *Gemeinde*.

JUNE: How, how, how you call it? How would you say?

ISAAC: Well, was like the Federation here.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay, a Jewish, like an umbrella organization, right?

ISAAC: Jewish organization, yeah, like Federation.

JUNE: Right, right, right, right.

INTERVIEWER: So --

ISAAC: The Jew always has to pay the same way over here, it's a difference, you have to, you pay whatever you can. Over there, you had to pay -- they told you how much you had to pay. They call it, I don't know, a "tart" or something --

JUNE: Well, whatever it was you know --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I know what you're, a, I can't think of the word but I know what you mean.

ISAAC: Yeah, you had to pay in so much --

INTERVIEWER: Tithe.

ISAAC: You know, according to your income --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

ISAAC: You have to pay, so you don't pay for the synagogue, it's all -- everything free.

INTERVIEWER: But you had to pay --

ISAAC: Of course, yeah, you have to belong and pay so, so much to go and to be a -- to be, like see, like a citizen like here, you know.

INTERVIEWER: So were you also, were you religiously educated, as a religious school?

JUNE: I was not. My parents were, my father was. Both -- both my parents came from very religious homes but they -- their father died early in their childhood probably and so on -- because I never knew the male grandfathers, you know, except the one that, who was my, was like step -- yeah. And I -- they were very religious. Of course, my grandmother was religious and so on -- but if they, they, they -- she didn't pay much attention. If the daughters wanted -- she had five daughters and one son -- the last one was a son. And if they wanted something like Polish, what, Jews didn't want to eat you know -- didn't -- weren't allowed --

ISAAC: Kosher.

JUNE: Not Kosher. Yeah, they -- my grandmother had kosher house, she even had the Jewish maid, because was her -- But, see they would have to eat it like on paper plates or on the attic, not to go, bring it to the house. But my parents -- My father said "My -- my duty is to show them what's the -- "And he was raised like

that because, he used to go synagogue -- my parents belonged to synagogue, but the children didn't go.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't go to synagogue?

JUNE: No. Like I know on Yom Kippur we used to go because we felt sorry for the parents. They didn't eat you know. They must be -- they might be weak. And we went and we didn't go in to the synagogue. I learned more here of the prayers, you know, than there. I didn't know. I knew you know, like the --

ISAAC: Well the teenagers --

JUNE: In the, in the public school they taught us we had a religion class -- religion -- that you had to take. And I never could learn the *Moydeh Ani* [the short prayer traditionally recited when first arising in the morning]. Oh, and I start crying before I went to school, "I am not going!" (Laughter) Because I couldn't remember. But I had a very happy childhood. See I was the only girl in the whole family.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, six boys, you said.

JUNE: 'Til maybe the boys was born. And, and I mean my grandmother, my aunts, they were all loving me terrible (laughs).

INTERVIEWER: You were the only girl, so...

JUNE: I was the only girl for long, long time, probably --

INTERVIEWER: There were other girls later?

JUNE: Yeah. I had two little cousins.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. But you didn't have sisters, you only had brothers, right?

JUNE: Yeah, yeah, I had the two brothers, that's all, was a family of five. In our family. And my mother was very school-minded, she was, went to PTA meetings, and my older brother got a lot of beating from my father because if he, instead going to school he was running play soccer. He was very good soccer player.

ISAAC: Play hooky.

INTERVIEWER: Play hooky.

JUNE: And, and yeah, and my mother was very embarrass and, and when she complain to my father my father used to give him a big beating. And many times my mother was having blue and black marks because she was -- she wouldn't

let him spank him that much. Well anyway, that was my childhood. We fought. I fought with -- I was jealous of my younger brother.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

JUNE: Because he was the baby. I was no longer a baby. And like I said I was spoiled a lot. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have friends, did you have friends that were not Jewish or were you mainly, your friends were, you know, like I said, -- a teenager --

JUNE: Maybe, maybe some that live in, in -- As a smaller child we lived in neighborhood that there were not just Jews, but when we got older we live right across the, the Jewish *Gemeinde*. You know we had, we, and, and there was a lot of Jewish kids.

INTERVIEWER: So your friends were mainly Jewish?

JUNE: Yeah, and I went to school with Jewish kids, because Polish girls went to Polish school. See, for a while I, I was going to go to a state university and, and I had to make -- do a test. And they were not taking very eagerly the Jews. You had to have very, very much protection, you know. Somebody had to --

INTERVIEWER: You had to know somebody?

JUNE: Yeah. Some -- that's right -- like every place else. And I went -- we were living already, when I had to make the test, we were already in the summer home and I remember Mother took me back to Lodz. We had to ride a train --

INTERVIEWER: Yes --

JUNE: to go back to Lodz. And first we started, we started to walk because was such a beautiful -- and then all of a sudden was a storm and we got wet (laughing), and we got on a train and came to Lodz because I had to make that test. Well, I came there and I did the test all right but, I -- I was thinking, "I am going to school all with the *goyim*," you know, and, and be with them and, and so on. My mother didn't mind. That was a good school and that was for her. But then I, I, I said, "No, I am not going to go." So she enroll me in that other *gymnasium*. I had a lot of friends and it was nice.

INTERVIEWER: Did you, did you experience, you know, as a child or a teenager, did you experience much antisemitism?

ISAAC: Uh-huh. (affirmative response)

JUNE: Oh yeah. When I was a little one, oh they, they used to say, I can still

recite those -- they, they used to beat me, and I used to say, "If --wait 'til my father or brother will get you. You will get a beating." But –

ISAAC: Antisemitism was always there, always.

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: I was born, born raised with *polacks* together, Polish people. I went on dates, you know, with Polish women, girls, like, like a teenager. Oh, I was considered like, they say, "our *zsidek*." You know, our, that's, I was --

JUNE: That's "our Jew."

ISAAC: "Our Jew," you know. They call -- the father's was name -- was Moszek – Moyshe -- though. Everyone -- every kid was, "Oh, there's Moszka -- there's Moszek."

JUNE: For him, you know, that, his father's name was Moses...

ISAAC: Moses, so the whole family was names, you know. Then you walk on the street, "Oh it's Moyses, their son goes. Moyishe's son goes there."

INTERVIEWER: So you were more accepted among the Polish people?

ISAAC: Yes, yes I was accepted, when the parties, and dancing, you know. Although the antisemitism was always, you know, always.

INTERVIEWER: In what way did you see it?

ISAAC: Beg your pardon?

INTERVIEWER: What did you see?

ISAAC: Oh, they call you, if you were nice dressed or something, they call you. See, that's, that's --

JUNE: They used to say, "Excuse me, the streets are ours, but the buildings are yours."

ISAAC: "are yours."

JUNE: Jews.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: There's nobody -- no Jew living there. If maybe some older, older people who didn't go no place -- right now. You know my grandfather, the mayor of the city, that his marble bust was in, in the, in the -- how --

INTERVIEWER: City Hall?

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: In the City Hall

INTERVIEWER: There was a statue of him in the City Hall, yes?

JUNE: Right -- and who you think kill him before the, the German yet come?

ISAAC: This organization the *Endeka*. [This refers to the National Democratic Party -- the extreme right-wing Polish nationalist party.]

JUNE: *Endeks, Endeks* [another name for the *Endeka*] -- they -- and that, yeah there was organization like...

ISAAC: Like here the "Shave heads" -- they call it -- what they call it? The --

JUNE: Skinheads.

ISAAC: Skinheads.

INTERVIEWER: The Skinheads.

ISAAC: Was this organization before the war --

INTERVIEWER: Of -- ?

JUNE: And they kill him on the street.

INTERVIEWER: Of Polish people?

ISAAC: Yeah, Polish people.

JUNE: And he was very rich. Yeah, he owned movie houses, you know, and stuff like that. And so my grandmother was alone again, you know. And then when like my, like, my mother brought me there to -- because she thought it would be easy for me because my grandmother knew so many people -- *polacks* and, and, and would be smaller town were always was easier. See, in Lodz -- Lodz was very industrial city. Right away the German connected to the, to the Third Reich. The Third, that was like, like...

ISAAC: **Belong to the Germans.**

JUNE: **Belonged to the German already. And I, after my father was caught, you know, and then they put a, a, a manager to my father's factory and he had to work there and so on.**

INTERVIEWER: In his own factory?

JUNE: **Yeah. And they couldn't, and they couldn't get me back. Or my -- my mother's intention was to leave me there at my grandmother's and go back and liquidate the whole household, take the brothers and my father, and come back to my grandmother.**

INTERVIEWER: And where was your grandmother living?

JUNE: **Small towns, Skierniewice and, and I knew it very much because I -- and I had a lot of friends there. There was a lot of Jews came when the ghetto was formed, you know, there was a lot of Jews coming from different cities like, like that would be a shelter you know, but, the smaller ghetto was not bad. Then became bigger ghetto. They took all the Jews into the bigger ghetto and we were surrounded by -- You know what ghetto is?**

INTERVIEWER: Sure, yes. So this is when the Germans already occupied Poland?

JUNE: **Right, right, right.**

INTERVIEWER: In what, 1939?

JUNE: **But, but you know, in, in Lodz you had to wear a, a yellow --**

ISAAC: **Star.**

INTERVIEWER: Star.

JUNE: **Yeah --**

ISAAC: **Star.**

JUNE: **No it was a --**

ISAAC: **"Jude."**

JUNE: **"Jude" was written, but it was a -- Star of David.**

INTERVIEWER: Star of David.

JUNE: In yellow. And, and right away you were recognized. Over there they used to wear just white bands and, and like I said everybody knew my grandmother, you know. And, and she had liquor store, you know, which was a big - - my grandfather earned it because he was big whatever. I never knew him so you know. But she knew a lot of people and, and also was -- you could go -- walk -- behind the ghetto, you know. You didn't have to -- you *had* to -- but nobody bothered you.

INTERVIEWER: You weren't so restricted as you were in Lodz?

JUNE: Yeah, right, right.

INTERVIEWER: And what happened, what was the ghetto like in Lodz?

JUNE: I hadn't, I hadn't been there in Lodz ghetto.

INTERVIEWER: So your mother sent you away?

JUNE: I was there, she took me with a *polack*, with a, with a wagon, and, and, and she and I went to my grandmother and she went back.

INTERVIEWER: To get the rest of the family together?

JUNE: To get the rest of the family. I remember she send me a little warm house slipper because my grandmother lived on first floor (laughing), so was, the floor was cold. You know, such a little things, but you can never forget it. Never. So, and, so it was not so bad. They had a lot of Polish friends, you know, and one time it was wintertime and this neighbor had son -- uh snow -- uh

ISAAC: Snowman?

JUNE: Not a snowman but a snow -- that you ride it.

INTERVIEWER: A sled?

ISAAC: Oh, a sled.

JUNE: Sled, yeah, for the people it was...

ISAAC: With horses.

JUNE: With horses, that's right, you cover yourself. And I and my aunt, he invited us to, to go there. My aunt was divorced, with a small child. Even in that time it's, it's hard to believe, but they were, they were divorced.

INTERVIEWER: I was just thinking, that must have been unusual.

JUNE: She was very modern. See all the daughters was very modern -- my grandmother's --

INTERVIEWER: Your grandmother's daughters?

ISAAC: My father married a --

JUNE: Yeah, my, they were sisters from my -- like I said, there were five sisters. One died, during, I think, maybe in birth, too. And the last one, they all had high education, the last one was a son, with Titian red hair.

INTERVIEWER: Is that right?

JUNE: Yeah. And, and there was two -- two daughters were with that kind of hair and my mother had black hair and this aunt to who was -- who delivered the babies -- she was blonde. I said now nobody even if I would have any family I'm thinking, you know, at night when I don't sleep. Nobody would recognize me with this. I, maybe I should go back to my black hair (laughing), you know.

(End of side 1, tape 1)

(Start of side 2, tape 1)

ISAAC: [Picks up mid-conversation] -- and there was -- she was very religious. And in Jewish Law, if you don't have children -- if you're married, you don't have children -- so you can divorce them [refers to divorcing the wife] --

JUNE: That's a --

ISAAC: -- if it's her fault.

JUNE: That's a case for divorce. That's a --

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Grounds for divorce.

ISAAC: Yeah -- and my father married because she divorced, and she didn't have children. So my father didn't care. He had children.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

ISAAC: That's the reason my father married my --

INTERVIEWER: That's- so because she couldn't have any children, but he had a lot of children already, so he didn't care?

ISAAC: Yes, that's right, that's right, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting, so it's not such a new thing?

ISAAC: Exactly (laugh). That's right.

JUNE: You should write a book after that (laughing).

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe I will.

JUNE: I promised myself, too, that I will write a book. Twice I promised myself --

ISAAC: Oh, yeah, you started, you started --

JUNE: I started, yes, that's true --

ISAAC: In the ghetto.

JUNE: But it was such a -- in the ghetto?

ISAAC: I thought --

JUNE: I started, no, when I was already in camp.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you talk about the ghetto, are you talking about the ghetto in the small town, that -- your grandmother's small town where she lived?

JUNE: Yeah, everybody was -- every city -- even Warsaw, that was the biggest city --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JUNE: -- even Lodz -- everybody had every -- When Hitler come in, when the German came in, that's what they formed. See, they wanted to be sure that all the Jews are congregate together.

INTERVIEWER: So they pushed everybody together in a small area.

JUNE: Right, in the, in the worst part of the city. The slums.

INTERVIEWER: In each city, though?

ISAAC: Yes, yeah.

JUNE: In each city, right.

INTERVIEWER: But you weren't in the ghetto in Lodz, you were in the ghetto in your grandmother's town?

JUNE: Right, that was first ghetto. Then, when they made the second ghetto, the bigger ghetto, they made later on "Jew-free." We all had to go on the, on the horse and buggy, wherever you wanted to go, that's what they told you. Whenever they wanted to go, you can go. Well, we chose Warsaw because one of the – my -- one of the aunts -- my mother's sister, and, and my grandmother -- and, live in Warsaw. She was a teacher. Her husband was principal of this school, but he was also a, had high rank in Polish army, so he was drafted. And then, that's, that aunt who lived in Warsaw, she had a very big, beautiful apartment and she had to give two rooms out of it to other people who came. So really, we didn't know. But -- I am skipping too much. That was, that was when we went to, to Warsaw. Before that, see, I was in -- when my -- was in my grandmother house, and I lived there with my aunt and my uncle and my -- no, my uncle was gone because he was also in the army. He was engineer who -- very seldom a Jew could get to the university to become engineer -- but he did. He was like, maybe -- I was eighteen -- he was maybe thirty-five, or so. He was not very much older than I was, maybe double my age. Anyway, we came to -- when I was in --

ISAAC: Warsaw.

JUNE: Skierniewice. I have to go back. I have to be back...

ISAAC: Uh-oh, okay.

JUNE: -- because that has connection with Warsaw.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JUNE: And I met some people, neighbors there -- that was a girl. I -- I am crazy about books, and I always read a lot. And there was a girl living in the same -- in the same --

ISAAC: -- Area.

JUNE: -- area, where my, where my grandmother lived, except that they were newcomers to Skierniewice and she was an -- also a book bug. So we became friends -- she was about my age -- and she had -- they had a big family. They had a - she had a sister who was married with a husband and a baby and a father and, and, and mother. And I was living with next apartment with my -- the divorced aunt and Tamara, my little cousin, who was that time maybe, maybe nine years old.

INTERVIEWER: And you were then about eighteen, you said?

JUNE: Oh, I was not eighteen yet. No -- I was sixteen, maybe.

INTERVIEWER: Sixteen, yeah?

JUNE: Sixteen, yeah. But anyway I was, I got friendly, friendly with this girl. Her name was Dora, and -- Dorka -- and, and then she has a brother, who was single. And we got acquainted and he was like, maybe, twenty-two at that time and I was very impressed with him that he gives me any attention, you know? Then I was having boys, my -- friends -- my own age, you know, and so on. And I didn't pay very much attention but that was -- and we were dating a lot. And then when came that -- that then they dissolved the ghetto and they had to go to some city that they -- they're come from originally. And their mother was from who -- where -- Tomaszow. That's the same city that, that he [Isaac] live. So, they went there -- when -- and -- and I was -- we were going to go to Warsaw.

INTERVIEWER: Your family?

JUNE: To my family.

INTERVIEWER: But not your -- your father had already been taken to work?

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: Oh, my, my father, I didn't, he couldn't, he tried to get me back to Lodz and he couldn't accomplish it.

INTERVIEWER: Where was -- he was working then, your father, they made him work in a factory?

JUNE: He was still in Lodz, yeah, and they live in, in, in ghetto --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah --

JUNE: -- because they had everybody -- like I said -- everybody had a ghetto - live in ghettos. Anyway, when this, my, my boyfriend start crying all of a sudden. He is not going to go without me going with them, and, and I said, "I am not going to leave my family," and my family wouldn't let me go and, and so on. And -- well the mother and the sister said, "You should have thought about it before," and so on. So -- and I didn't know what to do (laughing). But anyway, I knew I am not going to go with them. But he whispered to me: "Don't you worry," he says. "Fourteen days from now, I'll be in Warsaw." I said, "Yeah, sure." He will come to ghetto. Nobody could get, you can go get in but not get out or, or, no way. And, you know, and I said my golly, maybe I did, when we were on the, on the horse and

buggy, I said my golly, it really maybe I shouldn't, I should have -- I like him. That was my first life --

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

JUNE: My first *love*, you know. And, and especially he's older, you know. But see, they had another brother who was engineer. And they lived -- they -- he was, they were from Lodz originally. And the brother, was the German came in, the brother was shot on the street. So, the sisters and the mother and the (laughing) mother-in-law, the *machetunim* [Yiddish word; means "in-laws"], you know, said, "Oh, they are not going to get rid of him, no, no, no." But you know, fourteen day to the date we left, somebody ring the bell and my aunt, the one from Warsaw who didn't know him --

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

JUNE: -- opened the door and she says, "June there is a -- Junia -- there is a, a boy, a young man, to see you." And I said, "Oh, yeah?" And I come in. I, I met there some of my Lodz from Lodz, my friends, you know, and some that I went to school with in Warsaw. But I said, oh well nobody knew where I live even. And it was this boy -- my boyfriend!

INTERVIEWER: So he made it to --

JUNE: My fiancée already -- because, you know, because that, that, that's what they wanted us to get at least engaged, you know. Or, or "give words" to each other [an expression that refers to a formal Jewish engagement], you know, that we were -- Well, and we had wonderful time together regardless that we were in ghetto. And I was very impressed that he came and how he come in to the ghetto and so on. Because was surrounded by Polish police, by German police, and, and, and was very and people were --

INTERVIEWER: This is Warsaw now, the Warsaw ghetto?

JUNE: Warsaw, yeah. They, things were terrible. People were dying there on the, on, on the streets, you know and, all you see was men coming, you know, with boards to pick up the dead bodies. And, and take them to a, I guess --

ISAAC: -- cemetery.

JUNE: -- cemetery you know to bury them. Anyway, my husband sitting and listening because -- but he knows this story because everybody in Tomaszow knew this story.

ISAAC: Okay...

JUNE: Anyway he came, we had wonderful time and so on, and my older brother was already in camp, too and she wrote me to send him some *schmaltz* [rendered chicken fat].

INTERVIEWER: Fat?

JUNE: Fat, because he, he can't tolerate the food there and whatever. And I didn't have any money so he gave me like five dollars -- five zlotys -- you know and he said, "Take it and buy it and send it to him."

INTERVIEWER: Your brother, you said he was in a camp, your brother?

JUNE: In a camp.

INTERVIEWER: In a concentration camp?

JUNE: Concentration camp, big camp. Of course, at that time I -- we didn't know nothing about concentration camps yet or nothing, you know, because nothing was -- nobody talk, nobody knew. Anyway, the, the, prints didn't come, you know, the papers was not distributed, you know, to the ghettos. Anyway, my boyfriend look like a *shaygetz* [Yiddish, refers to a "non-Jewish boy"], too. He had blonde hair, blonde mustache, you know, and, and blue eyes. Anyway, so he gave me the five dollars and I was going to, I bought the *schmaltz* and I was going to send it. But then, I knew my grandmother is there, my two aunts, they don't have nothing to eat, and those two little cousins. Crisis. What should I do? I didn't know. I said he is a boy, he, he went through so much you know and, and, and already. Here they are. I can see them, you know, and I, you know, 'til today I feel guilty that I didn't send --

ISAAC: -- the *schmaltz*?

JUNE: -- the *schmaltz* -- that I didn't send to my brother.

ISAAC: Oh.

JUNE: Maybe he would survive because he was a tough guy. He was a tough guy.

ISAAC: Okay.

JUNE: But also my aunts deserve it, too. So, my son-in-law says, "I wouldn't be worry about it now." (laughing)

ISAAC: So what --

JUNE: But he's American, he's American, he doesn't know. Oh, he knows, he, he's, he feels -- But anyway, all of a sudden, comes a telegram from his mother,

and says, "There are changes here, please come as soon as you can," and not – "as, as fast as you can, home."

INTERVIEWER: *Not* as fast as you can? As soon as you can?

JUNE: **Fast as you can.**

ISAAC: **No, fast as you can.**

INTERVIEWER: As fast as you can come home?

JUNE: **Yeah, yeah. Come home. And it -- my feelings were hurt that she didn't say you both come home because he, he's trying to convince me, you know, that here, if I were go home with him they have the parents, and he has the sister, at least some -- we can get married and have somebody. If we get married here, there is no my parents. So I said there are my aunts here and my grandmother, which I adored, each one of them.**

INTERVIEWER: Now your parents couldn't get out of Lodz, right, Lodz ghetto?

JUNE: **Oh no. It's impossible. Nobody could get out of the ghettos already. And my father believe me, he, he, he's, German was his second, second language. He wrote beautiful. And he, he could -- if he couldn't get it nobody could. Anyway, going back to this situation, so my aunt sent, wrote to my mother and my parents and they said, we don't know what to do. June has a chance to get married with a very nice young man and we hope it is all right with you. Can we trust her? So my mother was offended, wrote quickly a letter and said if, if I trust June, if she thinks this is all right, it's all right with me, too. And he went by himself and I stayed because I, like I said, I was offended by his mother that she didn't included me, said come together, and I said, "I am not going." So, he said, "Well, I am not giving up," he said. And he left because still he said he had his parents to, that --**

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JUNE: **But anyway,...**

INTERVIEWER: But how could he leave? How did they let him out?

JUNE: **He could leave, he, I'm telling you, he look like a, a *polack*, like a *polack*.**

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, so they'd let him out.

JUNE: **They let him out. Sometime, not long after that, so he wrote me that what was the, the changes that he had so rapidly come home. He said that they had to, that the father is getting sick, or I don't remember exactly. And, and the sister**

with the baby, he has to take care of it. But he says I'll have my way and you will come here. So few days later a smuggler comes, a Jewish man, but that was his profession, he was smuggling people from city to city. And he, with a letter from him, that he supposed to take, to take me to go home there to Tomaszow. And the only way, we will take a bus to Tomaszow. At the square, the main square there are busses, and he will meet me there. I said, and I am going, here is my papers. My name is Irene Nowak, and I am Aryan.

INTERVIEWER: So he had fake papers for you?

JUNE: Fake papers, yeah.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: And I said how can I get out of the ghetto - dark hair, dark eyes, a Jew? How can I do it? How can I --? He says, don't worry, all the Jewish police is bought out. All the Polish police is bought out for you to get out. But when we come to the main square to, to catch the bus, you don't know me, ever.

ISAAC: You're on your own.

JUNE: You don't talk, you are on your own. You don't talk to me, ever, even if I am next, sitting next to you on the bus, you don't talk to me. And that's how it was. And came, I came to that main square and I saw the, the Germans on the horses with those big (laugh) hats on, you know.

INTERVIEWER: The helmets?

JUNE: I tell you my heart was right here.

INTERVIEWER: But you decided to do it anyway?

JUNE: I decide to do it. And we came to the bus. I got on and I looking if he's going on, but he sits on separate, he got on but he's sat like three seats in front of me and I am sitting in the back. And he came - nothing -- everything went smooth. In the evening, comes a German with a flashlight, lighting, he steps right in front of me, lighting straight in my face, "*Sind eine Juden.*" You understand?

INTERVIEWER: I understand. He said, "You're a Jew."

JUNE: Okay. Right. I look at him and I look behind me, there is a Polish woman sitting, and I start talking Polish to her. I said, "What he saying, I don't understand. I don't know German." So she translated to me and I said, "Say it to him that I don't understand and I am Polish. There are my papers. I have my papers." He checked the papers and he shook his head and he let go. Oh!

INTERVIEWER: That was something for a teenager to pull off. That's quick thinking.

JUNE: That's right, that's right, that's right. I'll tell you and I was sick. I was sick after that. I was, I was not very brave.

ISAAC: She make it to the other city.

JUNE: I came to Tomaszow and they got me, they greeted me and, and so on. I had a whole bunch of books. All the Dostoyevsky and all the, the newest bunch that my aunts had taken with you. She knew how I like it, to, to read. And I said -- and I supposed to stay with, with this older sister who has the baby and her husband, because they had apartment separately. So we, I says, "Let's do something that we can make some money." So I say, "Let's open a --" So she says, "What we can do?" I says, "Let's open a library. Look all the books I brought." And I said, "We will lend them out for fifty *groszy* or whatever it is, and we will make a little, whatever it will be." And she said, "Good idea." Of all the three sisters, I like her the best, really. And, and I stayed there. And, of course, the baby -- I was so enticed with the baby, you know. And I, and then we, we had -- then his father passed away. And this is -- there -- they, they form another small ghetto. And the sister, the married sister, moved with the baby. And with the husband and all the three, four sisters and the mother, we lived in one house.

INTERVIEWER: And your boyfriend?

JUNE: And the boyfriend, yeah of course, all, all together.

INTERVIEWER: In one house, yeah. Because they made the ghetto smaller?

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: They crowded the people together more --

JUNE: That's right. And there is ghetto, and there is typhus, and both sisters are sick with typhus. I am the one that is all right. I slept with them, I warmed them with my body so, so they would get in a hurry better. I went already for two typhus in, in camp -- no that was later, that was later.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Anyway, and, and it's cold winter, snow on the walls. You melted the snow to have some water, cold water to wash. I'll tell you, I said that was the biggest mistake I ever did.

INTERVIEWER: Would Warsaw have been any better?

JUNE: And, and the mother I, I didn't like her. She want me to call her Mother and I said, "I am sorry I have my mother, it's that I can't call you mother." And I didn't like her. She had long hair, she looked like a witch.

INTERVIEWER: "Fata Pedulah" [refers to an East European folklore figure] ?

JUNE: I really didn't like her and I, it was no secret. And one time, one day, comes a man and he takes a little box and takes out a ring and I said, "This is my mother's ring. How it gets to him?" See, my mother pack it in a small pillow that we used to use it for -- In the feathers she put all the jewelry I had. Well, the, the jewelry, what I had that was not important to me, even the my mother, grandmother's ring, you know, my family rings, but -- I didn't care, I, I gave it, I sold it, I gave it away for just to have something to eat. But, I said, "What, how, who is the man? How he has my mother's engagement ring?" And he gives it to the, the mother of my boyfriend and he said, and I heard him saying in Yiddish, you know, that was not very much I could understand either, but I got the two and two together, and he gives her the ring he says, "I, I can't sell it for that much money." And he gives her the ring.

INTERVIEWER: So she took it? She took it away from you?

JUNE: And I said, I said, after he left, I said, "Give me this ring. This is my mother's ring. This is my talisman." And I left in the dress I was in, and I didn't know where to go but I knew some friends of the, one of the sisters, and she came and she got me and I stayed with them. They used to bake bread -- bread at night. And in the morning I and her the, the, this girl, Tessa and we distribute, you know, we were selling that. If we were caught we were -- but look, this is the chances I had to take. So that was my story.

INTERVIEWER: Did you two meet in that ghetto? Were you in that same ghetto? This is in Tomaszow?

JUNE: I, I didn't know him then.

INTERVIEWER: You were in the same ghetto, too?

ISAAC: Was the same way, was a big ghetto, later they make it smaller.

JUNE: But I didn't know him, I didn't know him, no.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't know him yet?

JUNE: Later, I start working in a place and he was working there.

INTERVIEWER: In the same town?

JUNE: In the same town.

ISAAC: Yes.

JUNE: In the same town.

ISAAC: Was, was a --

JUNE: I, I -- this, this girl that I was, another girl I was, I met her at the where, how would I say it? A place that you apply for jobs, you know there was, they, they --

INTERVIEWER: An employment agency?

JUNE: Employment agency, yeah.

ISAAC: Employment agency, yeah.

JUNE: She had a brother, this one girl had a brother. I met her at the, when I went --

ISAAC: -- apply for job.

JUNE: -- applying for a job. I met her because she was there, too. That was another family.

INTERVIEWER: That was already after you were selling bread?

JUNE: Yeah, after I, that was after I sell bread. I met this girl because we were working together. We were, we met in the employment office and she took me to her home, because her brother was working in the employment office, so I went there. She had old father. A man, a Jewish man with such a beard, and that was the brother and the father and this girl. Her name was Fredya. We live together and we went together and we, one time we had a job to clean the -- a school. And who was in the school, the *Hitler Jugend*. Those --

INTERVIEWER: Hitler Youth?

JUNE: ...young, yeah. And next to it was a factory that -- I don't know -- It was essential and it was life for you to have a job, to work. Otherwise --

ISAAC: You couldn't exist.

INTERVIEWER: You'd starve ?

ISAAC: Yeah --

JUNE: You couldn't exist, and beside it, you, you were taken to wherever it was -- when they were sending you out, you know. Because they were taking more and more people and sending you out.

INTERVIEWER: To the concentration camps?

JUNE: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you had a job --

JUNE: I had, I had one roommate before who, you know that's was their trick. They made trip to Isra – to Palestine. Anybody who has relatives --

ISAAC: Well, they register people who wants to go to Israel --

JUNE: -- who has family there.

ISAAC: They have family there. So --

JUNE: That was – so -- we didn't know nothing, we took it for that's true. So this, my roommate, that was previously what I lived with her, she had said, "I have a brother. I am going to register. Why don't you register, too? We'll go to Palestine." I said, "Sala, I don't have any brothers, that I can go and lie, you know." "Yes you can! Just you can say this is we are cousins and your, my brother will be, is your cousin too." You know, she -- her name was Tayten -- and I sign in and there was the selection -- that's what I was trying to -- the selection, for all the people. They call all the people who were going to go to --

ISAAC: -- register to Israel.

JUNE: -- to Israel, to Palestine. They should come to this and this place. My name was not called. See it was *bashert* [Yiddish, means "fated" or "predestined"] and that's how I was going for the rest of my life.

INTERVIEWER: You slipped by somehow.

JUNE: They went out, maybe a mile --

ISAAC: They killed them.

JUNE: -- out of the city --

ISAAC: -- shot them all.

JUNE:- - and they were all shot.

INTERVIEWER: So they used this as a way to trick people?

ISAAC: Yes, that's right, yeah.

JUNE: That's right, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: And somehow they didn't -- your name was on the register but they didn't call you?

JUNE: It was registered but they didn't call me.

ISAAC: Somehow --

JUNE: Somehow I don't know --

ISAAC: I think the policeman.

JUNE: God, the police, the Jewish police, I don't know. Anyway, so I am going back now. So I am homeless again (laughing) and Fredya, that's, her father, that old man was a shoe maker and he got a job in a big outfit.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know that -- that your friend -- that they had been shot? Did you know about that?

JUNE: Yeah, that sure.

ISAAC: Yeah, sure.

JUNE: Sure, we all, you know that was a small town. Everybody knew, the Jewish police knew, you know, and, because they supposed to assist yet and --

ISAAC: They're gone about eight miles from the city and killed them, shot them.

INTERVIEWER: So everybody knew?

JUNE: So anyway, I lived with Fredya. We didn't have much to eat, so we got together maybe few pennies from me and few pennies, few *groszen*, from her, and we bought a few deca [short for "decagrams," refers to a small metric measure] flour and we cook it with salt and with water and that was the best meal we had.

INTERVIEWER: Something to eat.

JUNE: Well anyway, we worked together and we went to clean that school and there were the, the *Hitler Jugend* and we were scared to death. You know it was

a *Rassenshände* [German, refers to “racial crime”] to, to, to sleep with a, for German to sleep with a, with a Jewish girl or talk him or, or, or *cheppen* [Yiddish, means “to touch” in a bothersome, teasing and possibly flirtatious way], you know. But, I didn’t trust them, and we went on my way, you know went and cleaned and cleaned. Then we went, I think, I went to smoke a cigarette – out. And there is a factory next door and there was a man outside, and I said, “Do you have a match?” Polish.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

JUNE: And he said, “Oh, sure.” And he, I walk over there, and this is right in front of that factory, and, and he gave me the match and I lit the cigarette and I go back to the place where I belong because I didn’t want, you know, nobody to come after me or nothing. He said, I said, “Where you live?” And he said, “Oh, here, here,” he said, some Tomaszow, some street that I didn’t know. And I said, “What are you doing? You working in this factory?” See, I knew, I knew I had a message to do, you know. I had to something to do because maybe I’ll get a job there. So I said to, “You work in this factory?” He said, “Yes, I am a former.”

INTERVIEWER: Foreman?

JUNE: Foreman, yeah. And he said, “What, what kind of factory is it?” He said, “Well, we do wood, things from wood.” I said, “You have a, do you hire women, too?” He said, “No women, all --” I said, “Who, who works there?” “Oh, I, I have a lot of Jewish people working there.” So I said, “Oh, who, who is working, I don’t, maybe I know somebody there?” He -- stop [sound of footsteps] -- I said, “You don’t know where I could get a job?” Even so, because I said, “I heard that they are going to make, bring here, *Tuchschuh* that, those warm house slippers, you know, factory here and I thought maybe I will get a job there because I am very, very -- I live with another girl and we haven’t hardly anything to eat. I said -- that’s what I wanted -- bread. So I said, “And I live with another girl and none of us, we are so hungry.” And I told him the story with the flour, and he says, “Now where you live?” And I told him the street and he said, and I, I said, “Can you do something about the factory? Maybe you will open, you might be there a former, too.” “Oh, I don’t know about that because this, this is working pretty good.” And he said, “I know I have a one worker who lives on the same street you do and I see what I can, if I have any information for you, I’ll send it with him.” In the evening that a Jewish man come who works in this factory, brings us a loaf of bread, a cheese, and two jugs of jam. I tell you, we had a ball. We didn’t eat it all at once but I said, “I have a friend -- Oh, before that I ask him, I, he ask me, “Where you, where you from?” And I says, “Lodz, Poland.” He said, “Oh, I am from Lodz.” I said, “So you are my *landsman*” [Yiddish, means “compatriot,” refers to a person from one’s own town or country] you know, something like that, I forgot. “Well,” he said, “yeah.” And that’s where I said, “Look, Fredya, what we got, this, I have a *landsman* here and he is going to look for us for a job and he maybe --” The next day again the same Jew and I knew where he was working. I look, see he was down the basement, where he was. And he was –

ISAAC: I was missing something here? [Isaac left the room and returned.]

JUNE: That, that, factory -- I don't know exactly what it was, but that Jewish man --

INTERVIEWER: The foreman was a Jewish man? That you were talking to that day?

JUNE: No -- he was ---

ISAAC: [talking directly to June] Was it the *Lassen Fabrik* or what? Or was it the...?

JUNE: No, that was not the *Lassen*, I know where *Lassen Fabrik* was on [particular street].

ISAAC: [Unclear]

JUNE: That was, that was someplace else --

ISAAC: [Unclear]

JUNE: -- not next to that school! I don't know even where this school was located.

ISAAC: Okay, I know, okay.

JUNE: But anyway, that Jew was working by that window and I, he told me where to go and this man told me again, the, the same man, who that then, from Lodz. He said that when I mentioned the *Tuchschuh Fabrik*, he said to me, "Oh, I will find out and I let you know through this, this guy who bring you bread and, and --." So I said, "Good." And the Jew came and he said, again brought us something to eat, not as much big portion, but he said, "There is a, a, a note from this guy that bring you the, send the, the food." Meanwhile, I was afraid he is going to tell everybody and I'll be that, that Jewish man and I, I guess he was not very hungry because he didn't, he gave us the whole portion. But he said, "This man told me, to deliver this note to you." And there was written in Polish, that "that will come a man, a German man, to such-a-such-a corner on the street and he will, he will know about the *Tuchschuh* factory. He will, he will come on a bicycle." That's all I know. What he looks like and I, I had no idea. But I go there and there is a man in, not in uniform, but those, those, khaki lightweight --

ISAAC: Green, it was green.

JUNE: No, no. It was, it was kind khaki so, this --

INTERVIEWER: Greenish color, right?

JUNE: Yeah. And, and on a bicycle comes a man. So I, and he, I knew he wrote me the name, so I just walk, I was brave enough, I walk up to him, I said, "Are you Mr. Richter?" And I, mind you, I didn't talk very well German. So he said, "Yes." I said, "What about this *Tuchschuh* factory?" "It's going to open." He says, "Maybe we have kind of --." And he start talking broken Polish to me. And who it was? Who it was?

ISAAC: Richter?

JUNE: Yeah. That was the man who was –

ISAAC: He was my boss, too.

JUNE: -- in charge. His boss, my boss later, and many Jews' boss.

ISAAC: Yeah, he was --

JUNE: And he save us, he save our lives, and some of the families were --

ISAAC: Some of us --

JUNE: How about some cake and, and, and coffee? [June is asking this of the interviewer and Isaac – a coffee break.]

ISAAC: [Unclear, but agreeing to June's idea.]

JUNE: So he became everybod – [recording cuts off]

(end of tape 1)

(begin tape 2)

INTERVIEWER: Testing, one, two, three. Okay, go ahead.

ISAAC: He was like a manager, from --

JUNE: That was –

ISAAC: -- the guy, Richter.

JUNE: That, that was a, a place that was storage and distribute food for all the German army.

INTERVIEWER: That's what that factory was?

ISAAC: Was like a warehouse.

JUNE: Warehouse.

ISAAC: A warehouse.

JUNE: That was not a factory. It was --

ISAAC: No, it was a warehouse.

JUNE: But it was a lot of factories involved.

ISAAC: Was big.

INTERVIEWER: To supply the warehouse.

JUNE: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JUNE: So anyway we, so I said, "Is it possible that, to get a job in that *Tuchschuh* factory?" He said, "I'll see what I can do. To be sure, if I can get you there, I can maybe get you to work here in the factory, I, in the place I am now. There is other, ten Jewish women working there sewing burlaps, sacks."

INTERVIEWER: And this man, was he a German or was he -- ?

ISAAC: German, a *Volksdeutsche* [German word, refers to ethnic Germans living in Poland] -- not a real German. He was a --

JUNE: He was a German who live on the bottom almost Galicia, you know, Poland, that...

ISAAC: *Volksdeutsche* – it's called.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JUNE: He talk a little Polish, some Polish – broken --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- but like he never could say my name. He called me, "Zonia." "Zonia." I said, "Junia," you know. "Zonia." Anyway, it, "I'll see if I could get you there, a job, if, in case that *Tuchschuh* factory won't, won't go through." Okay. So I said, "Oh, fine. See if you can get, get a picture and, and your, your --"

ISAAC: -- birth.

JUNE: No no no no no. The, the, oh, the, the, the, the – [laughter]

ISAAC: What's it? The name?

JUNE: No, the, the, the --

INTERVIEWER: [Unclear]

ISAAC: -- the card, working card.

JUNE: I need a card, the working card, working card.

ISAAC: Working card. Working card.

INTERVIEWER: Working card, okay.

JUNE: There is a name for it, but it --

ISAAC: No, it was social security, like a social --

JUNE: Yeah, because I had to --

ISAAC: -- fill out.

JUNE: -- fill it out and, and you have to be registered by Gestapo. So I said, "Sure." I, and I gave him the picture and I, the, to the Jew, and he gave it to him, you know, and, and my card, and okay. And the Jew supposed to come and let me know. So, that night, after, the day, night after that, my, this guy that my other friend who, with the bread, he send the Jew, he said, "And it's written there might be selection tonight and to let you know. Please come to the --" see, they, they were, the German couldn't get into the ghetto, they were not allowed -- "to come to the gate of the ghetto and I'll give you the information." I go to the ghetto, and I almost, to the gate, and I almost fainted. This, my friend with the bread, and everything, wears a German uniform and a --

ISAAC: *Hackenkreuze* [German, means "swastika."]

JUNE: -- and a red band --

INTERVIEWER: Swastika.

JUNE: Swastika.

ISAAC: Swastika.

INTERVIEWER: The one who, the Jewish woman who brought you --

ISAAC: Well, that was a guy.

JUNE: Not he, not the Jewish, the, the, the --

INTERVIEWER: Oh, your other friend from the factory?

JUNE: Factory, no, yeah, from the other who gave me the, the information --

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes.

ISAAC: Richter, Richter.

JUNE: No, no, that was not Richter, the other one.

INTERVIEWER: Not Richter, it was the other one.

ISAAC: Oh, that one.

INTERVIEWER: The one who lit your cigarettes.

JUNE: I don't know his, his name, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yes.

JUNE: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so he was there, he was a soldier, he was a, or an officer?

JUNE: He was a German. He was a German. He was a *polack* of German descent and that's why he had that, that foreman job. Because he, he was a German.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

ISAAC: Okay.

JUNE: I didn't know that, that, Richter told me later on. Well, he says, "So, there going to be selection." Meanwhile --

ISAAC: The same night, I think.

JUNE: The same night that the Jewish fellow comes and he said that he brought me a note from Richter and he said that there's going to be a selection and they are going to --

ISAAC: *Aussiedlung*, meaning, liquidate the --

JUNE: -- liquidate the ghetto and take --

ISAAC: The *Tuchshuh* factory.

JUNE: Huh?

ISAAC: The *Tuchshuh* factory.

JUNE: No, no no no no. He told the people who work there, see, my husband or -- I didn't know him -- he work there, his brother-in-law work there, for that Richter, and, and the whole [unclear, obviously a surname] family, the wife, the, the, the who else? The sons?

ISAAC: They had four sons, or three sons.

JUNE: Yeah. They all work there and, and Richter told them all to bring more of the people, the, the families, you know, so because we are all going to, they are all going to spend the night there in the --

INTERVIEWER: Factory.

ISAAC: In the factory.

JUNE: Factory. In that, in that warehouse.

ISAAC: And they'll send away the people.

INTERVIEWER: Because if you weren't inside the factory you would be sent away to a concentration camp?

JUNE: That's right. And you would be shot or who knows.

ISAAC: In the space of an hour. Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah. So I, I was there, I came there and it's, he's there, and other people -- they were not my friends, believe me -- because they, see, they, some of their people, their people were, the women, especially, they liquidate for them to work there. And, and here I am taking, so I was, I was scared. And Sala Rosenblitt and, and Fredya's sister, was working there, there, those, those they kept. But the one from the burlap sack, they all went. And he said, so I came there for interview, you know, next day, and says to me, that Richter, "What can you do?" "Oh," I said, "I am a good house cleaner. Can you use --?"

ISAAC: Mop floors?

JUNE: He said, “Can you wash floors?” I said, “Oh, yes. I can wash floors. I can do anything.” So he watches me, he gave me a *shmatte* [Yiddish, means “rag”] and a bucket with water and he stays there and watches when I wash the floor in the kitchen. And, and I said I better do a good job. But when he show me, saw me, taking that *shmatte* and wring it, you know, and trying to -- he said, “You’re not a house maid. You cannot do that.” So he took some *polacks* to work. “What else can I do-can you do?” I said, “Well, I went to school and I learn how to keep books.”

INTERVIEWER: Yeah?

JUNE: He said, “You do?” “Oh,” I said, “sure.” I didn’t want tell him because I thought maybe that would be too sophisticated job for him, you know.

INTERVIEWER: He won’t need you, right?

JUNE: Yeah. So he said, “Okay, you are my secretary.” And, and, you know, I never luck, so, I, I try to get from Fredya the card yet --

ISAAC: For the girlfriend.

JUNE: -- to the girlfriend, you know that, and, and so she would be accepted because he liked her. He didn’t like my, my roommate. She, she worked there --

INTERVIEWER: Sala?

JUNE: Sala, yeah [laughter]. He -- very good -- and, and, so, but by the time we got back to the ghetto after that, that selection, Fredya was already gone. So, so much, much of my sorrow really, because I like her and she was such a sweetie. Well --

INTERVIEWER: You didn’t see her again?

JUNE: I didn’t see her again.

ISAAC: No, so many people.

JUNE: Yeah, and, and see, her father worked there. And her sister worked there. But he was a shoemaker and, and, and the sister was a seamstress. So, I got the job. And such a job. I make a call in the morning because other from other factories people come, you know, and kept the books. And he was the best person I ever -- older man. You know, I brought clothes from the ghetto and because we, every day we were coming to the ghetto --

ISAAC: With S.S.

JUNE: -- and, and, we with S.S. with the guns that --

ISAAC: -- And Jewish, and Jewish police.

JUNE: -- and, and these, and these dogs and they were taking us to work, back and forth. That's where I met him because right away he was at my side. And didn't let me, leave me. The *polacks* says, "Oh that [laughing] that--

ISAAC: *Bleches* [German - means "sheet metal worker"].

JUNE: *Bleches* -- yeah, the, the, the, the trade. He didn't leave the, the..."

ISAAC: *Bleches* means sheet metal worker.

INTERVIEWER: A what worker? A sheet metal worker. You were a sheet metal worker?

ISAAC: I was --

INTERVIEWER: *Bleches* -- okay.

ISAAC: I was there with my brother-in-law.

JUNE: Anyway, said the *polacks* says, "they, they, that *Bleches* doesn't leave that, the -- " They don't, you know, I am such a -- they call me -- "aristocratic," [laugh] "Queen Sheba," the *polacks*, you know. So I, okay, I brought clothes from ghetto, whatever *schmattes*, you know.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: And my boss went to sell it to the *polacks* and bring me the money. I gave him, I wanted to give him my mother's ring, the one that I gave up the whole family there for --

INTERVIEWER: [Unclear]

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother's engagement ring.

JUNE: Right. And I said, "This is just a small token" and I told him, "This is my mother's and this is my talisman but you are so good to me that I, I am willing to give it to you." He says, "Keep it because you have worse time--"

ISAAC: "-- coming."

JUNE: “-- coming for you.” I’ll tell you something, he, everybody was crazy about him. Everybody there. And then he said, “Hitler anyway lost the war.”

INTERVIEWER: He said, “Hitler anyway lost the war.”?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah. He was anti-Hitler.

ISAAC: They send him away later.

JUNE: Then, then he says, “Look, they gave me another star,” he was already high rank, “and sending me to the Russian front to fight.”

ISAAC: This was not the army, this was the, considered, like they call a special uniform, green uniforms with the *Hackenkreuz*. They were working for the army. That’s --

INTERVIEWER: Right, so they, because they had to – the supply units, they had to -

ISAAC: Exactly, supply everything. They did all the dirty work --

JUNE: I got so fat. I got so fat, if I wouldn’t know that I am a virgin, I would think that I am pregnant. I mean it, was I fat?

INTERVIEWER: Because you finally got some food?

ISAAC: Oh, there was so much food --

JUNE: We were rolling the, the, the barrels of wine...

ISAAC: [Unclear] -- .I mean really. You know, if you figure out, they have from, from France, they have organized some wine barrels, I mean the barrels, and the, hundreds of barrels. We were working there, unloading them and loading. So how to get some wine out? So we considered to put a nail in. Two holes make in one side, put a [unclear] in --

JUNE: And we all can get drunk.

ISAAC: Even, even the German, the German people, the, the, the S.S. come and drink, too.

INTERVIEWER: They drank wine, too?

ISAAC: Yeah, with us.

INTERVIEWER: How did you end up in this factory?

ISAAC: How I wound up?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. How did you --?

ISAAC: I was working there, my brother-in-law was a metal worker, so he took me in during the war. I was with him, working together. So I learned a trade. So I was considered -- in the daytime I went on the roof, fixing the roof, you know. Went over there. I have a, a measurer with a trowel, you know, a little bucket. I went over there and take off the shirt and take a suntan. And I hear ringing the bell, it was lunch. I come down, you know, eat lunch, and after noon I went again up there. You know, we were, I had a good living there --

JUNE: Oh, everything, everything, you know, he used to send, he didn't, he made me quit living with Sala. And that's when I became, you know -- and when Sala was sent to Palestine, in, in, I, she had a boyfriend. And the boyfriend wanted to live in the same house, housing, our room, it was mine and Sala's --

ISAAC: She ran off.

JUNE: -- and, and, yeah, Isaac came in and he said, "Get dressed. We are getting married." I said, "Oh, well, what should I do? But I can't live with this guy. Okay, I can maybe get another apartment." We all lived, the people who worked there lived in the same building, and maybe I can get another apartment. But before I know, he said, "Get packed and I'll come and I'll get somebody to marry us if I can find --." And he comes back and he says, "I found a cantor and he's coming this evening so --"

ISAAC: Yeah, we had *chuppa kedusha* [Hebrew, means "sacred canopy," and refers to traditional Jewish bridal canopy] there and a few witnesses --

JUNE: -- we got married that night.

INTERVIEWER: In the ghetto?

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah.

JUNE: In the ghetto. And the, and the, the, S.S. was shooting because was so noisy. Anyway --

ISAAC: Making this short -- we were living -- I was living in mine sister's apartment. They send away mine sister, with the husband, with the little girl. The girl was about eleven years old. In, in that apartment, they make the little ghetto. In this, and I went, went in, I was, you know, it was my sister's apartment, so I went and lived there.

JUNE: That was not your, your...

ISAAC: [specific street name - sounds similar to the street name mentioned on page 42]

JUNE: Yeah, I know.

ISAAC: -- passes --

JUNE: But, well, you can say “passes,” I don’t know. I don’t, that was apartment also that your brother-in-law was married to this, this sister --

ISAAC: No, no, no, no. This, no, no, this was my sister’s apartment.

INTERVIEWER: Your sister was sent away?

ISAAC: Yeah, see, you could buy furniture so light blonde --

JUNE: I know that the furniture was, was your sister’s --

ISAAC: -- beautiful, beautiful apartment --

JUNE: -- but I didn’t know that, that --

ISAAC: My sister all this --

JUNE: I thought all the time that your, your brother-in-law that was the, the sister’s husband.

ISAAC: No, no. This was -- uh-uh --

JUNE: See that’s how, just show you how --

ISAAC: So we took, we took over this apartment and later on other day June come in there --

JUNE: No, before, when I live in Sala, with Sala, we live one story over that. And every morning when we were going to go to work, we knock at everybody’s door, “Time to go to work,” you know.

ISAAC: See what they did, they make from one apartment, mine sister had about three or four rooms, I think, so everybody had to take a room. So everybody, so on, take the kitchen, the other take the other bedroom, you know, people single, yeah, they shared with others.

JUNE: And it was a small world because in the kitchen there was living two other men there. And one of the men was a, a, a boy who went to school with me.

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And this is in Tomaszow, right? This is in Tomaszow?

ISAAC: It was in little ghetto.

JUNE: Yeah, because people were going, they didn't know where to go when, when German came. Everybody was running on, to Warsaw, to, to, to Russia, wherever somebody was born, you know. It was such a mish-mash.

ISAAC: See they make that little ghetto, they completely seal down the last, that was the last left of us, in all the ghettos. So they took all the people around in all the little towns and put them in there, and we lived there all together. Later on, when it comes ours to send it away, we got sent to, they pick me because I was a metal worker, they pick me so she went free with me. She said, "I am going with my husband." So we went to –

JUNE: Oh that was when we -- they were –

ISAAC: -- to Blizyn.

JUNE: -- to go to --

ISAAC: So they liquidate that ghetto. They took --

JUNE: They liquidate that ghetto and send us to a labor camp.

ISAAC: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but you got married and you lived in this small ghetto?

ISAAC: Yes.

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: Later on they liquidate the ghetto, they send us...

JUNE: With the outhouse. With the outhouse. He had to go with me
[laughing]

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- because it was, in the evening I was scared to go like that, you know, I, I never...

INTERVIEWER: You didn't know about an outhouse?

ISAAC: When they liquidate the ghetto, they took us, they took me, they pick me, pick some, my brother-in-law, you know, people with, with, oh, with the trade --

JUNE: They needed workers, so that's what they did.

ISAAC: -- professional, professional workers. So she went with me --

JUNE: I volunteer.

ISAAC: -- volunteer, so went our little -- that was not a concentration camp, was a labor camp in Poland. They call it "Blizyny".

JUNE: Blizyn.

ISAAC: Blizyn.

JUNE: Well it was start as a labor camp but later on it turned to be --

ISAAC: -- turned to be a concentration camp.

JUNE: -- concentration camp. S.S. with, and what do you think I did there? Went for the S.S., work, clean their houses.

INTERVIEWER: That's what you did? You cleaned their houses?

JUNE: That's what I did there, yeah, when first. Later on I, I was working kitchen, and anyplace, just, you had to work, otherwise you --

ISAAC: Yes.

JUNE: I, I was sitting on the, on the step stool, outside, was a beautiful day, and I start crying. And came and, and. That what, see, it was, before, it was S.S., taken over by S.S. It was --

ISAAC: You better hold it a little bit. Let's go have a bite or something.

JUNE: You hungry?

ISAAC: Well, you said --

JUNE: I am not hungry. I, I am eating now. I already eat.

INTERVIEWER: This is really food for you.

JUNE: **Yeah, right.**

ISAAC: **Oh.**

JUNE: **What would you like to have? Tea? Coffee?**

INTERVIEWER: [Unclear] [Laughing]

ISAAC: **Yeah.**

TAPE BREAKS FOR SNACK BREAK.

INTERVIEWER: We were talking about the – the --

JUNE: **The job.**

INTERVIEWER: Your working in the –

JUNE: **That was a lifesaver.**

INTERVIEWER: Yes, that that saved your life. Now, one thing I didn't ask you about, what was your wedding like?

JUNE: **I borrow somebody's dress that didn't fit me, even, and really I didn't, we had few --**

ISAAC: **Didn't have much of a wedding.**

INTERVIEWER: Not much of a wedding?

JUNE: **No, it was a cantor, there was no rabbi.**

ISAAC: *Chuppa kedusha* -- I remember I think what we had. Vodka there, I think. Have a glass of milk-wine.

JUNE: **You, you, we brought I think from, from the place we work some dates or something --**

ISAAC: **Brandy. Brandy.**

JUNE: **Brandy, yeah, maybe, yeah, I don't remember.**

ISAAC: **Yeah.**

JUNE: **It didn't matter. Look, I just, I said, "Oh, to be alone again," you know when he --**

ISAAC: Later, excuse me. Later when we went, after the war, we went live in, in Bergen-Belsen, so they didn't recognize that we got married. We have to go again.

JUNE: We had to go to, to Rabbi [unclear] --

ISAAC: -- to a rabbi --

JUNE: -- judge, yeah.

ISAAC: -- judge --

JUNE: A German judge.

ISAAC: Yes.

JUNE: And, and, Rabbi Helfgott, who was English --

ISAAC: Yeah, and give us again the papers, the witness --

JUNE: And we had to provide, provide witnesses that -- that --

ISAAC: -- that we are married --

JUNE: Married, yeah. Otherwise we couldn't live, live together.

ISAAC: No, we couldn't live together. Even after the war—

INTERVIEWER: So they didn't recognize --

JUNE: There was a lot, a lot of politics, too, I mean, on the Jewish --

ISAAC: They want to send us to Israel -- fight.

JUNE: To fight.

ISAAC: Yeah, they come with the, with the car. Remember the police? They come -- Jewish Police? And threw out our, our belongings?

JUNE: Furniture?

ISAAC: Belonging?

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: And we should go to Israel. I say, "I have uncle there he told me not to come. If I have a chance to go to United States, better." I want to go to Israel. I would go there, too.

JUNE: Yeah. He wanted to, he wanted to go –

ISAAC: I would have – I would have --

JUNE: -- and I said, "Let's, let's, let's just write to your uncle and see what he thinks about." And we wrote him that, I didn't know him. We bought a dishwasher, dishwasher.

ISAAC: I bought a lot, lot of things. I bought a car, station wagon. I had machine, I had bicycles, everything to go to Israel.

JUNE: Yeah. So anyway I said, "Please what you think that we have a chance to go to Israel or we have a chance to go to United States. We -- Isaac would like very much to come and

ISAAC: -- live --

JUNE: "-- live to Israel, live in Israel, but, what do you think?" And I said, "We don't need nothing from you -- "

ISAAC: We're young, we can work --

JUNE: "-- on contrary, maybe we are, we are younger, maybe we could help you out," you know.

ISAAC: He didn't need our help.

JUNE: So he says, "My *teyere kind* [Yiddish, means "my dear child"]," he says, "if you have a chance go to America, go to America." I says, "See?"

ISAAC: He had a lot of --

JUNE: I really, I frankly, I don't have nothing against Israel, and on contrary I do everything I can for Israel but, I was so tired of fighting and fighting and, and, and --

ISAAC: -- we were glad to settle --

JUNE: I wanted to settle, to have a family and, so.

INTERVIEWER: You chose to go to America. Let's go back for a minute. So, how long did you stay and were you able to work in the factory, or the warehouse...

JUNE: That, that place.

INTERVIEWER: ...where you were both working, where you met?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: "Til, 'til --

ISAAC: 'Til it was liquidated.

JUNE: 'Til this was liquidated, yeah. And then we had --

ISAAC: December, they liquidate the little ghetto. We have to go back to the ghetto, they liquidate whole thing.

JUNE: They liquidate, not little ghetto, no, no, no, no. We went, they, we went to Blizyn that time.

ISAAC: Yeah, to Blizyn.

JUNE: We went to the camp, to the --

ISAAC: -- in Poland.

JUNE: -- in Poland, yeah, that's supposed to be, started to be, just, a labor camp but later on turned --

ISAAC: -- to a concentration camp.

JUNE: Concentration camp.

INTERVIEWER: Because they were closing down -- ?

JUNE: And there, that was horrible.

ISAAC: Yeah, and later on we were there, we were there.

JUNE: That was horrible, you know, because people escape and they --

ISAAC: They shot them.

JUNE: -- they shot them. They shot us, you know --

ISAAC: Accomplice.

JUNE: -- they, they, and he was young [referring to someone who tried to escape from that camp], nineteen years old, boy you know, and he --

ISAAC: Kissed the boots from the fellow [unclear] --

JUNE: -- from that, from the officer, the S.S.

ISAAC: It was a “Ukrainer” – no ?– a “Ukrainer”?

JUNE: No, no, no, no. It was an [unclear] or one of those others --

ISAAC: Shot them with the --

JUNE: And, and he kissed the boots, he says, “Please let me live. I am only nineteen years old.” And just took him out of the --

ISAAC: Out the line.

JUNE: -- count, you know and, and --

ISAAC: You know what kind of bullet -- ?

JUNE: -- because somebody escape --

ISAAC: You know what kind of bullet -- ?

JUNE : And they, they made, they made underground to get a tunnel, you know, to get out, and somebody sneak out and, and, and they told them, them, you know. Somebody told them --

ISAAC: And they count every ten --

JUNE: -- and they count every -- and we didn’t know. Maybe it will be I --

ISAAC: You know what kind of bullet they use? Dum-dum bullets. They’re, they’re --

JUNE: -- silent.

ISAAC: -- They’re shot you and the whole head went skap[possibly intended to mean “scattered”]. They go into your body, it’s a hole. They’re call it, German, I remember, they call it, “dum-dum bullets,” bullets.

INTERVIEWER: So it – it like --

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- exploded and --?

ISAAC: They spray it all on us, you know, how long, about, fifteen, fifteen meters from us, meters. So they shot him right close by the [unclear]. And when they shot him there sprayed on us, the, the, the blood. They kill, I think, two --

JUNE: Wasn't it, well, let's put it this way, it was not a picnic [laughter].

INTERVIEWER: And this was, so this was like a punishment?

ISAAC: You're not, you're not sleep too good tonight, telling these kind of stories.

JUNE: [Laughing]

INTERVIEWER: I know. Well...

ISAAC: Well I tell you, if we would like to tell you stories, it would be twenty-four hours, not enough --

INTERVIEWER: I know.

ISAAC: -- believe me. Everybody separate but she, because later on they took us out, took me to Auschwitz and, she was in Auschwitz, and, and when we come to Auschwitz, I, half an hour later I didn't recognize her.

JUNE: I came to the, to the --

ISAAC: -- electric wires. I saw her across, she --

JUNE: And I said, "Guess what?" He said, "What?" I said, "I have no underpants." And he says, "No underpants?" So then he traded his personal bread, you know, and, for a pair of men's underwear and throw it over--

ISAAC: The wire, electric wire. Somebody catch you, they kill you, too.

JUNE: Oh, yeah. The once I was caught. Once I was caught and the, the *lager* [German, means "camp"] [unclear], she says, "If I catch you again -- " She was a Czeska -- a Czeshka --

ISAAC: Czechoslovak --

JUNE: "If I catch you again, I'll shave your-- " the head of hair was gone, already, they already cut it --

ISAAC: -- Eyebrows --

JUNE: "I shave your eyebrows and eyelashes."

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: I says, "Oh, my God, I won't have any lashes!" I play innocent. But then he had, he had a, a man there who was a, a *schreyber* [Yiddish, means "writer"] -

INTERVIEWER: A writer?

JUNE: He was in charge of a barrack, a *polack* --

ISAAC: -- *polack* --

JUNE: And he saw us talking and he threw me over some cigarettes because I, he asked me if I smoke and I said, "Yes." And I, I didn't smoke then. And I said, I threw it over to him again so he will have a cigarette. There were, you know, things. There was one of those Jewish men who was working with the, with the people who were going to --

ISAAC: -- crematorium.

JUNE: -- crematorium. He was the one who [unclear] -- so he said -- we saw by the wires, and he says, "Any of you want me to do --?" Because they had everything, they gave them everything for jobs like that, you know. And he, I said, "Well, can I ask you a small favor?" I said, "I don't want nothing to wear or soap or, or anything but can you promise me that if when comes my turn to go in, you will make it as fast as you can?" And then I was sorry, you know, because it was, it was a job that he didn't volunteer for it, you know, but probably to save his life, who knows?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah. People did all kinds of things to stay alive then.

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: That's your first job, what you've done today? You got somebody --

INTERVIEWER: You were my first interview, yes.

ISAAC: Oh, really?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes.

ISAAC: Oh. I wish you luck, if you'll have some more business [laughing].

JUNE: [Laughing]

ISAAC: So busy like you are. That's what you need.

JUNE: Well, it's nice, she does something.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Makes you feel good.

ISAAC: Yeah, talk to Zeldin, what's her name?

INTERVIEWER: Jean. Jean Zeldin. [Director of Midwest Center for Holocaust Education]

JUNE: Jean.

ISAAC: Jean. Jean. Yeah...

CONVERSATION ENDS AND TAPE TURNS OFF

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about how you were liberated from the camps.

JUNE: Well I was liberated with, by English army.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you, which camp?

JUNE: I was in Bergen-Belsen.

INTERVIEWER: Were you together, were you both in the same camp?

ISAAC: No, I was in Buchenwald.

JUNE: No, no, no, no, no. I didn't know where he was.

ISAAC: I was in Buchenwald, liberated by the --

JUNE: By army.

ISAAC: -- American army.

INTERVIEWER: And did you know that, how did you know? Did you know ahead of time that you were going to be liberated?

ISAAC: I rented a bicycle --

JUNE: No we were, we didn't trust nobody. We were afraid to get out of the barrack. We knew that, everybody says, "We are, we are liberated. There is army, English army. We are free to go." Nobody wanted to go out, everybody was afraid that they are tricking us again.

ISAAC: You find, you find me on the list.

JUNE: Wait a minute, I'll come to that.

ISAAC: Oh.

JUNE: There was mountains of dead people lying there. And we, they gave us twenty-four hours to get there --

ISAAC: Advantage.

JUNE: -- and take advantage of the S.S., that they kept it in there, in there cage, like. The German --

INTERVIEWER: The Germans were kept in a cage and they gave you twenty-four hours? Who gave you --?

ISAAC: Take advantage --

JUNE: The English --

ISAAC: American -- American the same --

JUNE: -- English troops, you know, that came to --

ISAAC: You can do whatever you want to do.

JUNE: -- but they -- you know -- well -- when they saw the, the mountains of dead people, what you think, you know, your heart breaks. But later on they said, "Oh, Bloody Jew," you know. But that, that was in the first, you know, first of the object they saw, the, the mountains of dead people. Dead bodies lying there. So, finally we got our heads out, we, slowly went out, and then there were those Germans who were in charge, you know, the *kapos* and the, the S.S. and -- I couldn't as much as pick up a, a stone and throw it at them. Isn't that awful?

ISAAC: Yeah, Dr. Kurzke

JUNE: That was before Dr. Kurzke that the German --

ISAAC: Yeah, the German doctor.

JUNE: -- who was warning everybody not to eat the bread because the bread was poisoned.

ISAAC: -- was poisoned. That was the last --

JUNE: It was not as, you know, thrilling as, as you think, you know, because... I don't know, we didn't know where to go. It was, it was thrilling but it was disappointment, too. And then, you know, when we were in D.P. camp, you were for-- so long, a girlfriend of mine who worked in the kitchen, she saw on the, they had a list, they hung up a list there and who is survive from Red Cross. Survived and who is alive. She came, came running to me and she said, "Your husband is on the list. He survive." And I was washing the floor [laughing] always washing the floor. And I run with my -- like that, you know, holding -- and I run to the, to the kitchen and there I found him that he is in Buchenwald. So how I am going to go to Buchenwald? Nothing going, no trains, no nothing. They --

INTERVIEWER: How did you get -- I don't mean to interrupt you -- but how did you get out of the camp? The British, you said, they --

JUNE: -- British.

ISAAC: Yeah, the British.

INTERVIEWER: The British, so what did they do? Where did they take you?

JUNE: What did they do? They didn't take us no place. They left us being there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah -- ?

ISAAC: They gave you food there.

JUNE: Oh yeah, they gave us food, we, they form a --

ISAAC: They liberated her.

JUNE: -- liberated. They form a committee, you know, with --

ISAAC: They give you food, too much food. Some of them died because they had...

JUNE: No. Some, yeah, the English start feeding who was sick, you know, a lot of people were sick and start--

ISAAC: Took you to hospital.

JUNE: Eating too, too rich food, you know, for somebody who --

INTERVIEWER: Too much.

JUNE: -- didn't -- yeah, too much at one time.

ISAAC: Some people die.

JUNE: Not *some* people, a *lot* of people.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Anne Frank died there.

ISAAC: Uh-huh [affirmative response].

INTERVIEWER: Were you sick then?

JUNE: No.

INTERVIEWER: You were all right?

JUNE: I was not sick.

INTERVIEWER: How long were you there? Were you there a long time?

JUNE: I came from Auschwitz, I, they took us. There is again, I was in a row with, was five of us, everyone had a number, and we were all of us starting the letters "F." "Feinsilver," one was --

ISAAC: "Freiman."

JUNE: "Friedman" and "Freiman," and was five of us standing like that in, in a row. And I, comes to me a couple, a German woman says, she takes me out and I said, "Where you taking me?" She says, "Well, be glad I took you out here because nobody knows where that transport is going." And that, think, I didn't know where I'm going. It was, they took me to a, to a pulley that they take out the, oh what? The toilets, the outhouses the, the *drek* [Yiddish, means "excrement"] you know, and everything. And we were, the pulleys, you know, pulling the --

ISAAC: -- wagon.

JUNE: -- like horses -- you know --

ISAAC: [Unclear] so big like half the house [laughing] --

JUNE: And I start crying. I said, "You know, all this time didn't cry." I said, "I didn't have tears and I didn't cry," but I said, I talked to my mother, I said - - my mother up there -- and I said, "I don't know where you are but wherever you are, you and Daddy, please help me." I couldn't take it. The smell of it was so -- nobody wanted to lay on, *next* to me and they, they all brought me clothes and so I burned this one, the clothes what I had on. And, and that's, that's how it was. And I was so glad I said, you know, and then my girlfriend, I came back to the, to the, the camp and they start crying, "Please come with us. Please come. We were all this time together." I said, "No," you know, "I am going with [unclear]." She took me out of, who knows where I would wind up? But could be that if I would be with them, they claim that they were -- one of them claim -- that they, my little brother. They didn't know him, but they, there was a nurse from his town there and she told my girlfriend that she thinks this is my brother, my younger brother. And he is sick with dysentery. And it was already after the, after the war. But --

ISAAC: You hadn't tell me how I come to you.

JUNE: Then I, I'll go to it. I'll come to it.

ISAAC: Oh, you'll come to it?

JUNE: Yeah. And, so, see, he didn't, he didn't survive. Maybe if I would go with them, see, maybe he would be alive. Who knows?

ISAAC: Maybe.

JUNE: But, you know when I saw with that, he [Isaac] was on the list, I said, "How can I get it? I can't take a train because the trains are not going." And, just my luck, two men come from that camp looking for survivors for their family and I asked them, "How far is Buchenwald and how can I go?" He said, "Come on with us." I said, "How can I go with them?" you know. I don't know the men. I don't know if I can take, even, trip like that. I can't walk, I can't, I don't know what to do. So I, I said, "I can't go with you, but would you take a letter to my husband? He is there." And they said, "Certainly." And I wrote a letter and I told him I am in Bergen-Belsen, and by the time he came, he came on a bicycle so many miles. He, one bicycle didn't withstand him, so he ask American soldier and, soldier took away the, a bicycle from some German and gave him. And he came. He came and I was --

ISAAC: You weren't in Bergen-Belsen.

JUNE: I wasn't in Bergen, I was no longer in Bergen-Belsen.

ISAAC: No. You were on the Holland border.

JUNE: I was on the border Holland, Holland and Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, you were far, you were already far away then?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you rode all across Germany?

ISAAC: Yeah, well I was --

JUNE: Yeah, and he found -- ..

INTERVIEWER: And you got the letter, you got the letter? You must have gotten the letter?

ISAAC: Yeah, sure, got the letter, the address, and I come there she was gone.

INTERVIEWER: So you rode all across Germany in a bicycle.

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah. These two guys --

JUNE: Yeah. Guess what he brought. Guess, guess what he brought.

ISAAC: Bar soap --

JUNE: Bar of soap. That's it. That's it.

ISAAC: -- and cologne.

JUNE: No, I don't know the cologne.

ISAAC: Yes, men's cologne.

JUNE: Anyway [laughing] --

INTERVIEWER: Of all things --

ISAAC: Yeah, so I rode about --

JUNE: Listen to that.

ISAAC: -- about two and a half thousand miles.

INTERVIEWER: You rode two and a half thousand miles on a bicycle?

ISAAC: Yeah, there was, there calls kilometers, I think --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah.

ISAAC: Well, I was a bicycle racer in Poland, before the war.

INTERVIEWER: You were a bicycle racer?

ISAAC: I was race bicycle, Poland. I was in sport.

INTERVIEWER: And you still had the strength to ride a bicycle?

ISAAC: Yeah, I still have a bike here.

INTERVIEWER: No I mean after the concentration camp you were still able to do it?

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

JUNE: But listen to that. I was --

ISAAC: You go off in daytime and at night you sleep in the, by the German. You could knock on the door someplace, either let us in the house or let us in the farm, someplace.

JUNE: But when he comes I, I live with six girls -- --

ISAAC: Shave head, shaved head.

JUNE: -- six girls we live, we had three beds. Each one, two of us --

ISAAC: Double bed, no?

JUNE: Huh?

ISAAC: Double bed, you had?

JUNE: No, no, little bed that looks to me like a children's bed.

ISAAC: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JUNE: So the guy, this who slept with me, she says, "Look, you didn't see each other, let me go and on the floor, I'll sleep on the floor. Let him come in." Well, we didn't sleep all night because --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- they made so much fun of it that, you know how kids are, kids are. They were all young and happy and, and that we are together and, and so on.

End of side 1, tape 2 – Begin side 2, tape 2

JUNE: They sent the, the --

ISAAC: The way the send us, I went there...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, why did they send you, or why did you leave Bergen-Belsen?

JUNE: Not on my own because --.

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: -- they were liquidating it, this, and I said we better go there and, and have some jobs you know, right away, get some jobs, we did. I work in a office and Mania was working in a office. And one was cooking and one was breaking -- she was doing the dishes of, every time she, she had to cook it, break it, she broke a dish so she would have less to wash [laughing]. This girl who slept with me, you know, we, she got married in Bergen-Belsen before we went there. And we, she chosen us to be the --

INTERVIEWER: Witnesses?

JUNE: *Unterfierers* [Yiddish word, refers to the two individuals who traditionally accompany the bride and the groom as each walks to the wedding canopy].

INTERVIEWER: Oh --

JUNE: Yeah, the, yeah, you know already --

INTERVIEWER: Witnesses, right?

JUNE: Yeah, to, she had, I had to go with her to check that she was a, a --

ISAAC: -- virgin.

JUNE: -- virgin and, and check the bed next day and go with her to the *mikva* [the ritual bath].

ISAAC: Yeah, very religious, yeah. I remember you went to the *mikva* with her.

JUNE: I, I saw...

INTERVIEWER: In the concentration camps?

ISAAC: No, that was after.

JUNE: No, this was after.

INTERVIEWER: *After, okay, afterwards.*

JUNE: Yeah, we, they gave us a little better places to work, to live in, you know, it was the --

ISAAC: In the army --

JUNE: -- officers', officers', officers' quarters.

ISAAC: Officers' quarters -- that was after, after the war.

INTERVIEWER: So how did you get from --

ISAAC: Holland, from the --?

INTERVIEWER: -- from the, which camp, I'm sorry, I got, which -- ?

JUNE: That was, that was on the Holland border.

INTERVIEWER: You were in Bergen-Belsen?

ISAAC: No, that was the border.

INTERVIEWER: So how did you from Bergen-Belsen to -- ?

ISAAC: Well, I found out where she is, I drove again.

INTERVIEWER: You kept riding on the bicycle?

ISAAC: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you drove, how long did it take you?

ISAAC: Well, took me -- a couple weeks --

JUNE: I had to go, too. I had to go, too.

ISAAC: -- a couple weeks, I think.

JUNE: There was, there was a lot of English soldiers there, we had a party -- we had

ISAAC: **Yeah.**

JUNE: **-- we danced --**

ISAAC: **When I came I think she was dancing on a party someplace.**

JUNE: **[Laughing]**

ISAAC: **Yeah, married -- about six women. How, how many were you girls together?**

JUNE: **Six -- and that one man, man, two men actually. David and, and Moritzku.**

ISAAC: **Morris, yeah.**

JUNE: **Yeah. That's the couple whose husband that we, married them off, you know. We still occasionally, we talk about each other you know, when, when I went to Europe we stop at Montreal, that's where she lives. She lost her husband, *nebbich* [Yiddish, means "what a pity," or "the poor thing"]. And we, I saw her, we talk to -- at the Gathering [refers to the Gathering of Holocaust Survivors] I run into her, too.**

ISAAC: **Yeah.**

INTERVIEWER: Is that right, when you're stopping there?

JUNE: **Yeah, yeah.**

ISAAC: **That's a friend, a good friend to Germany, too, lives there. He call, we call each other.**

JUNE: **But this, this little woman and the husband passed away you know when he was still very young. He look like little boy, when they got married and she has --**

ISAAC: **She got married.**

JUNE: **-- two, two girls, both are doctors, and a son, I don't know what, the son is a dentist.**

ISAAC: **Yeah. Montreal, Montreal now. Yeah.**

INTERVIEWER: I see, so how long did you stay on the border? I have to ask you, I have to ask you another question, did you ever see your mother and your sister? Did you ever see them again, after your mother sent you to your, to stay with your grandmother?

ISAAC: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: You never saw her again?

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: You know how long it is?

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JUNE: But I'll tell you many nights I wake up crying. Still, still after so many years. And you know I wrote to Red, with Red Cross to England looking for my brother, little one, for the big one --

ISAAC: Yeah, you can write --

JUNE: Red, Red, I went to Red Cross here and I send it to Russia you know, when they united Russia --

ISAAC: Yeah, most information from Russia --

JUNE: -- they got most of the, more information, you know from Russia. Nothing. I have the letters from them. Nothing.

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You never found any of your brothers?

JUNE: Nothing, not and, not the cousins, nothing.

INTERVIEWER: No one stayed alive?

JUNE: Nothing.

INTERVIEWER: How about you?

ISAAC: My father had about ten kids, all married. I don't have nothing, never. Uncles, sisters, kids --

INTERVIEWER: No one survived?

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: You know my girlfriend, the one that I said, my school girlfriend who lives in Los Angeles, she was in Auschwitz the same time as I was. I heard that they came -- she lived in Paris, you know, with her mother and her father and her sister-- and I, when I was in Auschwitz I heard that the transports from Paris come, came. I was running every place looking for-- she was looking for me because we parted way before the war, too. And I didn't know where she is, but she was looking for me and I was looking for --. And when, how it was that we met? Oh. I was in Bergen-Belsen and I had a friend in Hannover, Germany, and her sister came from Paris and I went to -- I didn't know her sister-- but I went to see, to meet her and to see her. And I said, "By any chance, do you know Rosette Fischer?" I, I didn't know her name -- Sigels -- I had maiden name. I didn't know she got married, and she didn't know either. She said, "Oh, sure." See, her sister was from Lodz, too. And, and, "Sure I know her very well." So I went back to Bergen-Belsen, bought a cristen [*sic*] -- crystal vase, and send it with this girl. I said, "If you see Rosette, tell her her friend send it to her." And she knew my name, I told her. And, did you go? [Sound of footsteps, Isaac has left the room and returned. This question is directed at him.]

ISAAC: Okay, there.

JUNE: They are washed it and you can just sit. [Refers to a snack.]

ISAAC: "I washed it." Did ya?

JUNE: [Laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Maybe later --

JUNE: Anyhow, and my girlfriend just couldn't, oh she was so happy. She was sending me, she sent me a purse from Paris. She sent a white purse, because it was summer, then she send me a --

ISAAC: Makeup.

JUNE: Not makeup, it was a --

INTERVIEWER: Cream? Lotions?

JUNE: Lotions, all right, some kind, yeah, that she said, "It will look good on your face, make your face look good," or something. And we see each other. She survive, her mother survive, not her father, and not the younger sister, but the older sister. But I don't know if Cecile was even in, in Auschwitz.

ISAAC: Concentration camp?

JUNE: No. She was in Paris --

ISAAC: Yeah, you still, still see each other there, we go --

JUNE: She was still in Paris. Oh, we see often each other...

ISAAC: -- call twice a week --

JUNE:- - it's like going home.

ISAAC: -- like family.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. She's in Los Angeles?

JUNE: She's in Los Angeles.

INTERVIEWER: She left France, Paris?

JUNE: Oh, she left, yeah, she left France. When she first came here -- I was writing to her in Bergen-Belsen, yeah, and she write to me and she said, "Why don't you come here to France?" she says. "It's such a nice life." I said, "Oh, I don't have any money I'll go to, more or less to France." "Well," she said, "You know what? Take a little head of --

ISAAC: -- sewing machine.

JUNE: -- sewing machine and bring it with you, that will pay for your trip.

ISAAC: Then you'll have money to -- sell it and --.

JUNE: A lot, a lot of people were doing it, believe me, a lot of people made money, especially the, the, the one who were tailors, you know.

ISAAC: They were looking for that, tailors were looking for those machines, yeah, after the war.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

JUNE: Anyway, that didn't, but when Evy [the Feinsilver's daughter] was, I think, thirteen years old, and they came to United States, again I don't know even how we've -- think through Tola ...

ISAAC: Kriskos, I think --

JUNE: Yeah. We took the train to go to, they live at that time New Jersey.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: We took a train to New York and from New York we went to, and Evy went with us. Well, her sister, older sister, she knew me from little one. So my daughter, she says, “She looks just like you look at her age.” And we were so happy, they took us to Catskills Mountains and – it was nice seeing them, it’s like -- and Mama, of course, she, her mother was beautiful lady, wasn’t she?

ISAAC: Uh-huh [affirmative response]. Yeah, she passed away last year?

JUNE: Not last year, it’s more than two years.

ISAAC: Two years. It was -- how old was she?

JUNE: 90, 90. Oh -- !

ISAAC: 90. *More than 90.*

JUNE: She had to have her French roll every day. Rosette had to do the French roll.

ISAAC: She was in good shape.

JUNE: Oh, she was in good shape. Yeah. Elegant, always dressed.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: “*Die bist mayn kind,*” [Yiddish, means “you are my child”] she said to me.

ISAAC: Yeah, she knows, she knows.

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: Well, we had family in Germany, too. Friend, not family.

INTERVIEWER: Friends, so they’re not family?

ISAAC: Yeah, we call each other each, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: See, of both your families you, you two are the only ones, you are the only ones who survived?

ISAAC: We don’t know. I have family in Israel that passed away.

JUNE: The uncle was, who was in Israel, he was a old man already.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: See he, what do you think we had that picture?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: He had --

ISAAC: -- send us.

JUNE: -- family that he barely knew for, in Germany, and they all went through, I don't know how, to China, or, or -- ?

ISAAC: -- to, to China.

JUNE: -- to China. And that's how they survived from Germany, yeah.

ISAAC: Survived, went to...

JUNE: Yeah, then they located in Israel.

ISAAC: They settled in Israel. I still have family there I don't even know them. In Haifa.

INTERVIEWER: How did you end up coming to the United States? I know you, you talked about your uncle.

ISAAC: Well we have, we have a contract. They had make the United -- Institution make some false contracts, you know.

JUNE: They, they, they, the UNRRA, or Federation, whoever it was or, you know, the United Jewish Appeal --

ISAAC: Some people come with us and they left here, they went some place else. Went to Texas.

JUNE: Yeah. They beg us to go with them and I said, "No."

ISAAC: That's the *goyrel* [Yiddish pronunciation of the Hebrew word *gorayl*, meaning "lot" or "destiny"] say we come over here and [unclear] --

JUNE: We, the papers were to Kansas City. What difference it made, you know. I didn't have family any place.

ISAAC: Yeah. Some people left us and they live in Texas, and we forgot even their name, your friend with them.

JUNE: Yeah, they beg us from the, they were with us on the ship and they beg us to go with them. She was a cute girl, too. From Hungary.

ISAAC: Yeah, Austin, Texas, I think.

JUNE: No, they went to San Antonio.

ISAAC: San Antonio.

INTERVIEWER: So you stayed in this, you stayed on the border between Germany and Holland for a while? For how long?

ISAAC: When I come to Bergen -- ?

INTERVIEWER: After you got to her --

ISAAC: No, I was there overnight and just turn around and go back, find her again.

INTERVIEWER: No, no, after you found each other.

JUNE: We went back --

ISAAC: Oh, after we found -- ?

JUNE: We went back to Bergen-Belsen.

ISAAC: We went to Bergen-Belsen.

JUNE: Yeah. And see, why we choosing Bergen-Belsen? Over there, everybody was on the same boat. They had no family like we didn't have, you know. Some have children there and maybe had, but I didn't, I just couldn't. I said, "I am not going to have on this, in this country, on this earth that is splattered with Jewish blood. Uh-uh." I had a lot --

ISAAC: Yeah, a lot of friends of ours, perhaps, babies there.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't want to have a child there?

JUNE: Not there.

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: Not there.

ISAAC: Maybe could have more over here, already -- would have, I think, three. We didn't want it.

JUNE: What you mean “three?”

ISAAC: Over here, already. You had abortion.

JUNE: I had abortion here, too.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: That was after Evy was, maybe, nine months old or, or so, or maybe --

ISAAC: Well, now you, you missed it --

JUNE: I think...

ISAAC: Now would be better to have some family, well, this --

JUNE: I, I just, I couldn't, I couldn't cope.

ISAAC: No, you couldn't, couldn't...

JUNE: I had one nervous breakdown after the other --

ISAAC: Yeah. That's the reason we didn't have any more.

INTERVIEWER: So the -- so you went back to Bergen-Belsen and from there the, how did you come -- .?

JUNE: Well, yeah from there was easy to get a, a, because they had a quota where people wanted to go, you know, or, or were assigned to go...

ISAAC: Yeah, we register to United States.

JUNE: It was more because it was a set committee there. You know, everybody was coming, even from the big cities, they were coming there and --

ISAAC: -- was a few thousand people there in that camp, after the war.

JUNE: Yeah. Rosensaft [refers to Menachem Rosensaft] --

ISAAC: Was a --

JUNE: Was the, the leader.

ISAAC: -- president, president.

JUNE: The president, yeah. You know Rosensaft?

ISAAC: No.

INTERVIEWER: No --

JUNE: He was in Israel, too, a big *macher* [Yiddish, means “big shot”].

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: He had a lot of money.

ISAAC: His son is now, his son is now in Europe.

JUNE: In Switzerland.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: He send a lot of money yet from the, from Bergen-Belsen to, to --

ISAAC: Yeah, they make a little bit for you, a little bit for me, so. Somehow they make money.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So you ended up, how did you come to the United States? You came by the *General Hershey*, you said?

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Admiral, General Hershey?

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: Yes, *General Hershey*, sure. It's a military ship.

INTERVIEWER: So you came to America. Where did you, you landed in Boston first?

ISAAC: Boston, yeah. We came to Boston.

JUNE: It was a terrible trip. It was not, not like those ships on a cruise.

ISAAC: Oh, it was, it was terrible. Oh.

JUNE: They, they, we had to clean up.

ISAAC: Everybody was sick.

JUNE: I was so sick, but I am a neat person, so it's throw up wherever you were sitting --

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So there you were mopping the floors some more?

JUNE: No, I was, I use a swimming cap, you know, rubber cap, and whenever I passed the kitchen, oh my stomach was turning. See, they put the women down below and the men up there.

ISAAC: The men were sick [unclear] too.

JUNE: You and, you and Shimon just going every time to the kitchen. I said, "At least see if they will give me a lemon," you know, because, oh --

ISAAC: It didn't bother me a bit. Didn't bother me nothing. It was okay.

INTERVIEWER: So you were supposed to, your destination was to come to Kansas City?

JUNE: Not nece -- , I really didn't care. I didn't want New York, our luggage went to New York.

INTERVIEWER: Why didn't you want to go to New York? They at least had a bigger --

ISAAC: It's a too big city.

JUNE: Too big city. I, I couldn't, I couldn't take it after all going through, you know.

ISAAC: Well we thought so that we are supposed to come to Kansas City, maybe that's our luck. I don't know, we didn't want to change.

JUNE: Yeah, it's *bashert* [Yiddish, means "fated" or "predestined"]. You know, *bashert*.

ISAAC: *Bashert* -- yeah, that's right. Yeah, that's the reason, really.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So you came to Kansas City. So what did you. -- ?

JUNE: I like Kansas City. I just like it. It's so many trees and --

ISAAC: Kansas City is nice city.

JUNE: -- available, you know, and you don't have to live in a, in a, in a apartment -- you have. The air is good.

ISAAC: When I come over here it was hard, hard to live, too. I, when I come over here I was working for seventy-five cents an hour.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do when you came here?

ISAAC: I was working in a metal shop.

INTERVIEWER: In a metal shop?

ISAAC: Yeah. And I went to the -- it was a Jewish boss -- I went to, to see him to give me a raise. He said, "I can get a nigger for sixty-five cent." Yes. And it was a Jewish guy.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

JUNE: Oh well, look -- It's, it's, I don't know, it, it was hard to get a --

ISAAC: Oh.

JUNE: We had a horrible apartment.

ISAAC: Had to know the language, I don't wish no one --

JUNE: We had a horrible apartment, you know, there was -- my closet is, is bigger than -- my toilet is bigger than, than the, the --

ISAAC: Oh, in Kansas City, Kansas?

INTERVIEWER: Is that where?

JUNE: No, Kansas City...

ISAAC: Oh, on Tenth Street, you mean.

JUNE: On, on 10th street, and to share a bath with, with another couple, another people with three children. I went out to get the mail and that one kid locked the door and I here I was in nightgown and, and, coat, just -- a normal

ISAAC: It, it is not like the people, what they come now from Russia. It's not the, the same when we came. They came from a normal cities, see? We came from concentration camp. They thought we, we are people from jail someplace.

JUNE: [Laughing]

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah, they, our landlady later on, I got a apartment already. My husband was scared to take a new apartment because he said, “We cannot afford it.” I said, “How much you making a week, a month?” He said, “Four -- sixty dollars,” right?

ISAAC: No, it was, yeah it was around something like that.

JUNE: I said, “Fifteen dollars every month, every week, we will put away for the rent.” Because we’re sixty, oh, sixty dollars was the rent and you were making forty dollars. I said, “We will make it. We will put it away for, for—and we did, I did --

ISAAC: We even bought a T.V. for a dollar --

JUNE: Yeah, we, we bought, we went, we save enough money to buy yet a television and turntable.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Because I said, “Television is very essential, very, very. We need it because of the language.”

ISAAC: Because of the language. To teach us the language.

JUNE: And the --

ISAAC: Have a Coke with us. [Inviting the interviewer]

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I don’t want to chew on the tape recorder. Would you like a grape?

JUNE: I will take it, don’t worry. Anyway, we made it, but he landlady was such a horrible, and very, very religious woman.

ISAAC: Oh, the Richie --

JUNE: She paid --

INTERVIEWER: A Jewish religious woman?

ISAAC: Oh sure.

JUNE: Yeah, Jewish.

ISAAC: “You had banana in Paris?” She pushed a button –

JUNE: She said, “Did you ever see banana? Did you ever ate banana?”
There was a toilet to, to pull the water down...

ISAAC: With a, with a, you know.

INTERVIEWER: With a chain?

ISAAC: Chain.

JUNE: She said, “Did you ever see anything like that?” I said, “Where you think we coming from?”

ISAAC: She come here in the 18, in 1800, probably. She was an older Jew.

JUNE: After World War First.

ISAAC: Yeah. Was a Jewish woman, yeah.

JUNE: But I just fought for that, was a black neighborhood, before was Yiddish, you know neighborhood, Jewish. And, and then after the Jews move out, became black.

ISAAC: Black guy.

JUNE: But that apartment was a big living room, big dining room, big bedroom, a beautiful floor, and --

ISAAC: It used to be a Jewish neighborhood.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Where was that?

ISAAC: Benton, Benton, 26th and Benton.

JUNE: On Benton, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, sure, sure.

ISAAC: All that neighborhood over there used to be --

INTERVIEWER: So that, was that your -- ?

ISAAC: How long you live in Kansas City?

INTERVIEWER: Thirteen years, now.

ISAAC: Thirteen years. No, you don't know it.

INTERVIEWER: I know the area.

ISAAC: The Jewish Center used to be on, it was on Boulevard, 26th Street.

JUNE: Benton Boulevard.

ISAAC: On, yeah, on 26th...

INTERVIEWER: Was that your first apartment, or you came someplace else first?

JUNE: It was second apartment.

INTERVIEWER: The first one was very small, you said?

ISAAC: Yeah, oh.

JUNE: The first one was in Kansas City, Kansas on 7 North Street. I didn't know where they are taking us. From the Union Station there, that's like, I said, "Maybe we are being kidnapped, for ransom." [Laughing]

ISAAC: Yeah. Was the, the shower was, no shower.

JUNE: No shower.

ISAAC: There was -- no toilet --

JUNE: No, there was a bathtub up in the hallway.

ISAAC: In the hallway.

JUNE: They had no hot water.

ISAAC: Yeah. We were there how long? About --

INTERVIEWER: On your shirt.

JUNE: Oh.

ISAAC: No, do you?

JUNE: Anyway...

ISAAC: How long, a few weeks, a few months, I think we were living there.

JUNE: We didn't live, then we find the first "*greeneh*" [Yiddish, means "newly arrived immigrant"] . He said, "*Far voss voynstu dort so long, so vaht? Kim du!*" [Yiddish]

INTERVIEWER: "Why do you live so far away?"

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: "Come close, come closer."

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah, "Come here on 10th Street." That was. When I put my baby out on the balcony, was the first floor, but was a balcony.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: She was so full of sun. Ho-ho-ho! Black. And I cover her face yet with the whole thing, the, the buggy.

ISAAC: We didn't live long there.

JUNE: Huh?

ISAAC: We didn't live long there.

JUNE: No, no. We didn't live long...I couldn't, I couldn't pass, when I got pregnant, I couldn't pass between the refrigerator, no, between the stove and the table.

ISAAC: And the table, yeah.

JUNE: I couldn't pass --

ISAAC: Was not that big. What, the kitchen here, from the wall, maybe smaller.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, because you were so, because you were big?

JUNE: No, I only gained fifteen pounds.

ISAAC: No, it was not because of the baby. It's so little.

INTERVIEWER: So why couldn't you pass?

JUNE: It was so little.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, because it was so little?

JUNE: Was a closet, a closet made of, you know, from those big apartments they make --

ISAAC: They make two --

JUNE: -- two families --

INTERVIEWER: So, and you had to share a bathroom with the other -- .?

ISAAC: Oh, bathroom.

JUNE: Yeah. Oh, I, I never took a bath, I don't think, there.

ISAAC: Uh-uh. The kids make a problem.

JUNE: I don't know, the kids, the people were not. I, I don't know. I am very, very, very terrible about that. Even in the hotels, how many towels I used to put it under my feet? [Laughing]

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you, so you didn't stay in that apartment. Then you moved to a bigger apartment, which was, you said, on 10th Street?

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Yeah there, a lot of *greenh* was living there, too and was...

ISAAC: Not a lot of people were...

JUNE: You had four party line telephone.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, a party line there was, on the telephone?

ISAAC: Oh yeah, used to be there three, three party lines here.

JUNE: Four party.

ISAAC: Four, too.

JUNE: Too, yes.

ISAAC: Not anymore. I don't think so there still there party lines.

JUNE: I don't know how it is now.

ISAAC: No, I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Do you, so you made some friend in that area, also *greeneh*?

JUNE: Well, yeah, *greeneh*, you know, we all --

ISAAC: Yeah, lot of people used to live there. Lot of them, they come. Well, you used to have --

JUNE: They all come, mostly the same time, you know, and they put the --

ISAAC: You know --

JUNE: Also in the, the, the was, what they will give us. Listen --

ISAAC: A lot of people...

JUNE: -- they were very, very -- A family I don't think, a family could, I had people who came to family and they didn't get such a good service as, as the, the, the Benjamin, whatever it was, the family --

ISAAC: Oh, yeah, the --

JUNE: -- family service, you know, the --

INTERVIEWER: The social worker? The woman who became like a mother figure.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Uh-huh, yeah. Oh, well, yeah, she, she lived in a better neighborhood and, and --

ISAAC: They are Gentile people and it was very, very nice.

INTERVIEWER: So they helped you?

ISAAC: They died. They die, I think.

JUNE: Yeah, and then after she died, the, the caseworker died, her husband who was a, a --

ISAAC: Director.

JUNE: -- director at the Hartford.

ISAAC: [Unclear]

JUNE: Hartford

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: And he became our friend. He was calling me, he how lonely he is and so on. And I had to invite him for dinner and cook chicken soup and matzo balls, gave him, whatever I had to --. But he was a very nice man and he drew beautiful picture. He had a picture that he draw --

ISAAC: Oh boy!

JUNE: -- of a rabbi that I was dying to get, but I never got.

ISAAC: -- didn't have a chance. Yeah, he passed away and the family took it and I don't know, yeah.

JUNE: Went to the funeral and that's it.

INTERVIEWER: So did you, what kind of work did you do? I know you said you went to a metal work -- ?

ISAAC: Over here?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

ISAAC: Over here I was working in a cabinet shop.

JUNE: No, before...

ISAAC: Oh, before I was working in metal work, metal work.

INTERVIEWER: Metal work?

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: Later on they didn't want to give me a raise, so I took vacation and I didn't come back to him. I find a job --

JUNE: So he called --

ISAAC: He call, it, it was two partners. A Jewish guy with a American.

JUNE: **Gentile.**

ISAAC: **So when he called when I didn't come back --**

JUNE: **Didn't show up to work, he called me he said --**

ISAAC: **He's going deport me.**

JUNE: **"Where is your husband?" I said, "I don't know where he is, he went to Chicago." Chicago came to my mind. So he says, "Well you tell him to show up to work, if not I will deport him!"**

ISAAC: **"Deport him." I will see if he will deport --**

JUNE: **So I said, "You know what?" Just like I said now. "You are not threaten me, are you?" My good English. I said, "Because I, I was threaten in my life plenty so I am not scared of you."**

INTERVIEWER: And this was a Jew?

JUNE: **And I hung up.**

INTERVIEWER: Good for you.

ISAAC: **So later on, I went, so I quit that job. I went -- a cabinet --**

JUNE: **So he can't, he can't get any farther, there, you know. There is no chance.**

ISAAC: **I went a cabinet shop -- was just Germans. They were speaking German and, you would think that you were in Germany. Really. A big shop. So he took me in for three months, a tryout. So he didn't let me go, put me right in the union. And I was in the cabinet shop there.**

INTERVIEWER: Doing what, building cabinets?

ISAAC: **I make everything, cabinets. I make lot of things here, too, for myself.**

INTERVIEWER: That's good.

ISAAC: **Yeah, I make that, that, that's here.**

INTERVIEWER: That's nice.

JUNE: **And that.**

ISAAC: I make that table here, that formica table there.

INTERVIEWER: That's wonderful.

ISAAC: Yeah. I make lots, lots of things here. I never have been a carpenter.

JUNE: He made that little birdhouse, see?

INTERVIEWER: I saw that right when I first came in.

ISAAC: Yeah, birdhouses, I make that for -- See, look at my babies, look at that little red belly there.

INTERVIEWER: Look at that.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: The red one, yeah, those...

INTERVIEWER: That's beautiful, a cardinal.

JUNE: Uh-huh, cardinal.

ISAAC: Oh, we have a lot of birds here.

JUNE: And you know, it's amazing to see how they pick up the food some and feed the other.

ISAAC: Yeah, I make, I make those for a lot of other. I had a lot of orders for that.

INTERVIEWER: It's beautiful, just beautiful. But anyway --

ISAAC: Later on, I went for myself, with a partner.

INTERVIEWER: As a cabinet maker?

ISAAC: Yes. Well, a wood, wood shop.

INTERVIEWER: A wood shop.

ISAAC: So we make furniture frames, for furniture, hide-a-beds, and for beds, bedspreads, I mean...

JUNE: Mattress.

ISAAC: -- box springs for the wood, only the wood. I was about thirty years in the business. With a partner.

INTERVIEWER: So that's what you did then? That's great.

ISAAC: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you're retired now?

ISAAC: Oh yeah, sure. I hope so, [unclear], yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And you went, and you said you became a beautician?

JUNE: Hairdresser.

INTERVIEWER: Hairdresser.

JUNE: Yeah. Oh, she had a shop about thirty years.

INTERVIEWER: And, were you by yourself, or did you have a partner?

ISAAC: She had some people.

JUNE: I had some people, not too many. It was a small, but it was nice --

ISAAC: She has a manicure, this.

ISAAC: Manicurist.

ISAAC: Manicurist, yeah.

JUNE: Yes, last night. You, can you image I retired since '84, 1984? Yesterday my long-time customer call me up, just to chat. "Let's have lunch." I mean, it was, you know, I loved that gossip, I loved that, that *tumel* [Yiddish, means "noise" or "tumult], you know, that, that -- I loved it, but working with her it was not my -- [laughing]

INTERVIEWER: Was not what you enjoy?

JUNE: Yeah, right, yeah. I very seldom, the only girl I ever, my friends, that did comb her hair, was my girlfriend in Canada, because I knew it was clean, but [laughing].

INTERVIEWER: But you were able to do it for thirty years anyway?

JUNE: And you know the, the one woman who was, she, I knew her from Germany. She talk me into the -- that was her dream, to form a, a, open a, a --

ISAAC: Beauty salon.

JUNE: -- beauty salon. Did, reason, and was not my forte, you know, to do something like this, so I just. I said, okay, it meant first dollar.

ISAAC: You probably want that now. No? Don't want it? [Offering food to interviewer]

JUNE: And, and so I agree with her. She was intelligence - mediocre. The only thing she did good was hair. I let her, I let her practice on my hair. That was my hairdresser for I don't know how long. I even threaten her that if she won't be nice to me I am going to have her do my hair when I die.

INTERVIEWER: That'll be her punishment.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: And you know, she died two weeks ago.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I'm sorry.

JUNE: Yeah.

ISAAC: You didn't do her hair.

JUNE: [Laughing] No, I, she didn't do my hair and I didn't do her hair.

ISAAC: [Unclear] – okay.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to stop – [pause] -- That's right. The, how do your Holocaust memories, how do they affect your life today?

ISAAC: Bad. We still have dreams. She wake up and cries at night.

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you --

ISAAC: Well I think well, well, the older you get, what, more comes to it.

INTERVIEWER: More memories come back? Remember more?

ISAAC: Exactly.

JUNE: Unfortunately --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- that's how it is you, you --

ISAAC: When you're young, you forget, you know --

JUNE: No, you don't, you never forget. You never forget and you... No matter what, I still remember mother said this or my brother did this, and I remember, I and my little brother, we, we play with the, always had feather pillows and, and, and we had a fight, a war --

INTERVIEWER: Pillow fights.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: Pillow fight, you know. And I once, he hit me or something and I pretend I died, that I am dead, and he was pushing me and he almost got scared and, and so on. And I wouldn't open my eyes and he really got scared. But look how, he, he was very, very bright boy and knew more than I did at a, at, at smaller age, and you know what? He spit on me and I had to open my eyes. Now isn't that smart? [Laughing]

INTERVIEWER: That's very smart.

JUNE: Isn't that smart? So see such a things --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- you know, and, and that's what I said and, and -- And my, and the teacher, when sometimes she'd sit down with me and the homework and the, the math and she wanted to learn me with the candies. Little, like M&Ms. And said, "Now how much is this?" And how much if I did the right answer I got a candy. You know, my mother sit down when did the homework. I left a note for my father. I went to draw so-and-so picture on this and I show him the book and went to sleep. He will do it and or she will do it, you know. So, those are memories. You know, I can't forgive my daughter. And I said she missed something like that. Allie, when she, she was, a queen, nominating for being a queen, or something like that --

ISAAC: Granddaughter.

INTERVIEWER: Your granddaughter.

JUNE: My granddaughter. And Evy was not home. She went that day, they both on a cancer, cancer --

ISAAC: -- research something.

JUNE: -- so they bought a trip to Mexico or someplace and she was not home. And (Allie) had a date and I didn't know what to do. And I said, "I don't know, maybe I should call Rosemary," that's aunt "because Allie will show up with the boy. The boy will come there and I'll be there with the accent, you know. He won't have respect for her, maybe." So, I said, and we were debating, both of us, what to do and we can't let her be home by herself, you know, she, she came to us --

ISAAC: She call us.

JUNE: -- or call us and says --

ISAAC: "Papa would you..?"

JUNE: "Papa, Grandma, would you mind to come to me before my date will come -- "

ISAAC: Meet, meet.

JUNE: "-- meet the boyfriend," whoever it was.

ISAAC: Whatever, the date.

JUNE: And "the date," yeah. And --

ISAAC: -- help her get dress.

JUNE: And help us, "help me to come and to get dressed." She got dress, we came and she was already dressed. Beautiful dress, long with high heels.

ISAAC: The boyfriend wasn't there.

JUNE: The boyfriend wasn't there yet and he came, he brought her a corsage, and she gave him a, a, a carnation or whatever it was and he didn't want, knew what to do with it. How to pin it, where to pin it. So she said, when came to pin it on the boy says, "Papa, would you do that for me?" He did. And I said, "How my daughter would never--? I would never do anything like that." To, just to have that moment. My daughter's first date or, or going for--

ISAAC: Well, she did it. She wasn't home.

JUNE: She did it. She, yeah.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: And it told her this, I said, “How can, could you escape something like that? I would have it for the, ‘til I die.”

ISAAC: Well, she didn’t figure out good, she didn’t figure out, she didn’t thought about it.

JUNE: Yeah, they bought a, a trip on the cancer--

ISAAC: Yeah, trip, yeah.

JUNE:- - they go on the cancer, you know --

INTERVIEWER: Fundraiser.

JUNE: Yeah, fundraiser.

ISAAC: They have another trip, too, I think this year, too, they have a trip.

JUNE: Yeah, they have another, she didn’t have --

ISAAC: Puerto Rico, I think, or someplace.

JUNE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well, at least you got to be there for her, for your granddaughter.

ISAAC: Yeah, sure.

JUNE: Oh, yes, I wouldn’t miss it for my daughter--

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: She, I remember her date when she went to, she had a date to go to, what is that school, that private school on Plaza?

INTERVIEWER: Pembroke?

JUNE: Pembroke.

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: With a boy. And she came to the beauty shop, brought here the, a girlfriend from, from St. Louis, and, on Saturday when I was so busy doing hair and so on and I had to do her hair yet [laughing].

ISAAC: So, what else you have to -- ? [asking the interviewer]

INTERVIEWER: Well, the question they ask is: How did the war affect your attitude or your practice of religion? Do you believe in God?

JUNE: Of course I believe in God. And as far as religion, I would never marry a *goy*.

INTERVIEWER: Same for you?

ISAAC: Same, sure.

JUNE: You wouldn't marry a *goy*?

ISAAC: No.

JUNE: An nice *shiksa*?

ISAAC: No, that's when I was young.

INTERVIEWER: Are either of you active in a synagogue? You mentioned that you were in K.I. for a long time.

ISAAC: Yeah, I belong to a Temple.

INTERVIEWER: But not, I know, the Temple B'nai Jehudah.

ISAAC: Yeah, B'nai Jehudah. I like it.

JUNE: Yeah, you should see they made him and *me* go on a, on a, his 80 --

ISAAC: Well, I had an *aliyah* -- .

JUNE: He had *aliyah* -- and he --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- and, and he had read, reading of the Torah --

ISAAC: That was my 80, mine 80 birthday, 80.

JUNE: 80 birthday. And I had to go up there --

ISAAC: Yeah.

JUNE: -- in between the rabbi and the, the president of the Temple.

ISAAC: You ever go to Temple? You ever been to the Temple?

INTERVIEWER: Sure, yeah, I've been there before.

ISAAC: You like, you ever been at Services?

JUNE: Oh, the *Kol Nidrei* you should be there at *Kol Nidrei*.

ISAAC: You should be there at *Kol Nidrei* there.

JUNE: It is like opera. I just close my eyes.

ISAAC: Beautiful.

JUNE: And I, I think, I think it's beautiful.

ISAAC: I cannot get used to it.

JUNE: I didn't understand, I, look, I didn't understand what I was reading at, at --

ISAAC: She reads a different story. That's the reason I --

JUNE: I didn't know how, I don't know how to read Hebrew --

ISAAC: Hebrew, she doesn't know...

JUNE: You know it?

INTERVIEWER: I'm learning. I'm still learning. Well, are there traditions from before the war that you continued with. -- ?

ISAAC: Oh yeah, sure.

JUNE: Oh yeah, sure.

INTERVIEWER: Celebrating Holidays?

ISAAC: Oh sure, sure.

JUNE: Oh sure. And my kids are here and many times I had some people that I didn't know even, invited them to the, to the --

ISAAC: Oh sure, people always invite people for, for dinner and --

INTERVIEWER: Celebrate. Any special foods that you like?

ISAAC: Yeah, special food. We make gefilte fish, we make...

INTERVIEWER: Gefilte fish.

JUNE: This is a lost art.

INTERVIEWER: I know, my mother makes it, too.

ISAAC: Oh, I will help you make it --

JUNE: We made a, a, a video of it.

ISAAC: We make the last time, the last time we make about --

INTERVIEWER: You should sell it. You'd make a lot of money.

JUNE: Oh, I didn't make it my daughter and then she forgot what she had on it and used it again.

ISAAC: You learn a lot of people how to make the fish, American. You let us teach them how to do it.

INTERVIEWER: That's good.

ISAAC: Become our friend, I mean, friends.

INTERVIEWER: That's good. Then they also have here: What does being an American mean to you?

ISAAC: Being an American. I wish I would be here --

INTERVIEWER: A lot earlier.

JUNE: Before the war, before the war...

INTERVIEWER: Much sooner.

JUNE: Before the war.

ISAAC: You bet. I tell you it's, it's a good country. Some people don't appreciate it because they have it too good. It's a good country. No doubt about it.

JUNE: Except they --

ISAAC: They're going to spoil it here.

JUNE: They don't, they don't consider what you know but how much you have --

ISAAC: Well --

JUNE: -- the money is everything here.

INTERVIEWER: You think that's, is that unique, unique to Americans or -- ?

JUNE: A lot of politics. It's still the best country I'll tell you but, but see what I would erase of this, the freedom of speech because it's not worth if what I wanted say, I say it anyway and most people do. But the printing, what happened, you know, like, Ku Klux Klan, the, the, Skinheads, they all printed the, all the prints go, are done here and goes all over the world.

ISAAC: And goes all over the world. Because of freedom of speech.

JUNE: And this is no good because, because that's what in, in Germany, you won't find it. You don't find there the, the book *Mein Kampf*. They won't, you, it's because they are ashamed of it. But here you can buy, anybody can buy. There was a meeting last week or two weeks ago we were at the --

ISAAC: At the Center.

JUNE: -- at the Center that they were some speakers who said how, and they agree with me.

ISAAC: How it's, how it's getting here. Terrible.

JUNE: Did, did you know that I got a hate letter after giving a review in, in paper on when they had that thing, that, with this guard from Buchenwald, that time that he was shooting the police?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, right.

JUNE: And they call me because my name is in, in, in, registered in, in *Star*, so they call me before I said...

ISAAC: Yeah, they come interview us.

JUNE: -- before I said, "Jack shit [undertone]," they were already by the door. And next day I got a hate letter --

End of Tape