Shirley: This is December 13, 1993. I’m Shirley Brickman interviewing Cantor Isaac Goodfriend for the Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. Cantor Goodfriend, please give me the town where you were born and tell me exactly where it is and a little bit about it.

Cantor Goodfriend: The name of the city is Piotrkow . . . P-I-O-T-R-K-O-W. There is . . . a section of Poland, which was [called] ‘Trybunalski.’ We abbreviated it T-R-Y-B because it used to be a province where the governor [was] stationed. [Piotrkow] was part of this particular province. It is near Lodz [Poland], the second largest city in Poland. It is about 44 kilometers, to be exact, south of Lodz.

Shirley: Chazzen, when were you born there?

Cantor Goodfriend: I was born in 1924.

Shirley: The exact date?
Cantor Goodfriend: January 20. This is what I found in my birth certificate. I suppose they registered me at the same time I was born.

Shirley: Did you have sisters or brothers?

Cantor Goodfriend: I had two sisters and two brothers. I was the oldest.

Shirley: And their names?

Cantor Goodfriend: Their names . . . my sister . . . right after me was . . . Hinda Braind [1926-1942]; then my brother, Henikh David [1928-1942]; then Sara Malka [1932-1942]; and then Yekheil Yaakov [1938-1942].

Shirley: What was the age difference between the children?

Cantor Goodfriend: Between the children? I would say between me and my sister, a year-and-a-half; the other ones . . . about three years apart.

Shirley: You were the oldest?

Cantor Goodfriend: I was the oldest.

Shirley: Chazzen, [what was] the name of your mama and your papa and where [were] they born?

Cantor Goodfriend: My mother was born in the same town [Piotrkow]. I would say an estimate [that] she was born in 1905. My father was born in Lodz . . . in 1902.

Shirley: And their names?

Cantor Goodfriend: My father was Shoel or Szaul and my mother’s name was Pessa . . . P-E-S-S-A.

Shirley: Chazzen, can you tell me a little bit about your home? If you were going to paint a picture for me with words, can you describe the home where you were born? Did you stay in that home for a while?
Cantor Goodfriend: The home where I was born . . . I returned to that home, which was my grandparents’ [Berish and Chaya Lipshitz] home in Piotrkow, many times before [World War II]. I remember vividly the house is still there and the apartment is still there . . . the same apartment and the same house. By the way, I visited there a few years ago for the third or fourth time, the city. This was what I would call a more elaborate apartment than we had in Lodz, that I grew up in Lodz. It consisted of one huge dining room [and] a huge bedroom. Then [there] was a store in that apartment because my grandfather operated a dry goods store. The store was in the apartment. Of course, a kitchen and a little corridor walking into the apartment. I remember it vividly. At the right-hand side was the door to the store. Out of this particular room, where the store was, was a balcony where I used to play when I was a little child. Then on the left-hand side, right opposite was the kitchen. Then we walked a few steps and we came into the dining room [where] there was everything included: the salon, the living room, the dining room . . . in one room. Then to the right, there was the bedroom.

Shirley: One bedroom?

Cantor Goodfriend: One bedroom. A very large family. This is my mother’s parents who had nine girls. My mother was the oldest of nine girls, no boys. I remember vividly. Everybody slept [in the one bedroom] . . . until they got married, of course, and moved out of the house. But this is . . . I can see it now.

Shirley: You lived with your grandparents?

Cantor Goodfriend: Just until I was one year old.

Shirley: And then?
Cantor Goodfriend: Then my father, being that . . . he was born in Lodz . . . he went back into his business. He was with my grandfather in business, a dry goods store. We lived in Lodz until the war broke out.

Shirley: Was this a business that family members had done for a long time or was it just a popular business to be in?

Cantor Goodfriend: No, it was . . . it was a business . . . because don’t forget, Lodz was then known as a textile town, all the textile factories were in Lodz. It was called by some people the ‘Manchester of Poland’ because . . . Manchester, England is a textile town . . . so that Lodz was known for it. Mostly, it was operated by Polish-Germans or German Poles, and by Jewish people. This was a business that my grandparents [Fishl and Rivka Gutfriend] were in. They were known in the community . . . because if a married couple they wanted to buy their trousseau. They used to go, “I’m going to the Kupka.” The Kupka’ was the nickname for my grandmother because she wore a kupka, I don’t know if you what . . .

Shirley: Explain that.

Cantor Goodfriend: A kupka is sort of a turban instead of a . . . she wore a sheitel, too . . . in order to make it look beautiful with an old broach. In a picture . . . maybe in the old Yiddish movies, you can see that type of head gear. They said, “Are you buying your stuff, your linen for your daughter’s wedding?” [They would answer,] “Of course, by the Kupka.” She was known for that. That was wholesale and retail.

Shirley: Were there competitive businesses like that?

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4 Jews were an integral part of the textile industry of Lodz, which was known as the “Manchester of Poland.” (The city of Manchester had been the center of Great Britain’s textile industry since the Industrial Revolution.) Jews owned many plants and factories in Lodz, including one of the largest in Europe, which was owned by Izrael Poznanski.

5 A kupka is a head covering worn by Orthodox Jewish women. It is a silk scarf often wrapped like a turban around the head.

6 A sheitel is the Yiddish word for a wig worn by some Orthodox Jewish married women in order to conform to the requirement of Jewish Law to cover their hair.
Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, my G-d, and how. It’s the old story: the competition in this particular business. It was tremendous because every second store was a dry goods store.

Shirley: Why were they so special and so popular?

Cantor Goodfriend: Popular because all the merchants from all over Poland, when they came to buy merchandise for their stores in the far away cities, they came to Lodz. This was the only place to buy . . . like people here go to New York [City, New York], to the garment center, to buy garments or whatever they need for ladies’ ready-to-wear or menswear. This was the known in those days: Lodz was the city.

Shirley: And the name of the store?

Cantor Goodfriend: It was Gutfraijd.

Shirley: Did you always have the same name: ‘Goodfriend’?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, Gutfreind, Gutfreund.

Shirley: Chazzen, tell me a little bit about your . . . you lived there for about a year and then you moved to Lodz?

Cantor Goodfriend: To Lodz, right. I went where my family lived.

Shirley: And the house that you moved to?

Cantor Goodfriend: This was an apartment. I remember that apartment quite well because don’t forget, I went all through the schooling in Lodz—cheder[7] and yeshiva[8]—until the war broke out. We lived in a huge apartment . . . complex consisting of about four entrances . . . in a courtyard were four entrances. We lived opposite the gate on the second floor. Our apartment

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[7] Cheder [Hebrew: room] is a Jewish religious elementary school for boys, usually held in a room attached to a synagogue or in the private home of a teacher. It was traditional for boys to start cheder at three or five years old, learning to read Hebrew from a primer and studying the Book of Leviticus. Girls did not attend cheder.

[8] Yeshiva [Hebrew: sitting] is a Jewish educational institution for religious instruction that is equivalent to high school. It also refers to a Talmudic college for unmarried male students from their teenage years to their early twenties.
consisted of a kitchen and one room. A kitchen . . . we walked right into the kitchen . . . then it was the bedroom, dining room, the library, the salon and the drawing room—you name it.

**Shirley:** For five people in the family?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** Seven people . . . Sure. It was sweet. We thought that [there] was nothing better in the world. We lived . . .

**Shirley:** Can you tell me a little bit about your mama’s personality? What kind of person was she?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** She was very pretty. She was very beautiful. She was not tall, but she had kindness on her face, always. Blue eyes and always sweet. I never heard a harsh word out of her mouth or screaming or yelling.

**Shirley:** Did she work with your father?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** Yes, she worked in the store.

**Shirley:** What about papa? Tell me about him.

**Cantor Goodfriend:** He was a very good-looking man. He was always running; he never walked. I always had a hard time keeping up with him. Very popular . . . he was very popular among his friends. Very jolly. He had quite a nice voice. He loved to sing and to conduct services in the *stiebel* [Yiddish: communal prayer house] among the *Hasidim.* He wanted for me, of course, at least to be a rabbi or simply a learned man. I had the biggest respect for him. It’s something that is . . . you tell it today to our kids [and] they don’t understand what you’re talking about . . . the respect for a father. This was innate. It was something that we didn’t have to be taught in *cheder* or [that needed] somebody to tell you how to behave toward your father. It was normal. It was natural.

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9 *Hasidim* are followers of Hasidic Judaism, a Jewish mystical movement that was founded in eighteenth century Eastern Europe by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. It promotes spirituality through the popularization and internalization of Jewish mysticism as the fundamental aspect of the faith.
Shirley: You had a close relationship with your father?

Cantor Goodfriend: A close relationship? I never addressed my father in the second person, as “You,” like, “Hey, you,” or “Du” [German: informal “you”]. We spoke Yiddish. I always said, “Let my father . . . Let Zolda tapeshe gaben, Zolda tapeshe kommen. Let my father do this,” as you would address a dignified person, a noble man. [I called him.] “Sir.” Maybe it was a little more than we are used to. In the [American] South, we say, “Yes, sir” and “No, sir” or “Yes, Ma’am.” Still, this [relationship] was not close . . . that is to say not chummy, a pal. He was a father. He was not a pal. He was a pal as far as love, but he was a father sitting in chair. [He was] taboo. Standing up when he walks into the room. Not to speak before he does, wait your turn.

Shirley: Who taught you this, Chazzan?

Cantor Goodfriend: Nobody. It was within you . . . something that you don’t learn. You live it.

Shirley: You said that you went to cheder and to the yeshiva?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.

Shirley: Tell me about your education until maybe you were eight or nine, ten years old.

Cantor Goodfriend: I can tell you when I was five.

Shirley: Please.

Cantor Goodfriend: I remember when I was five, we had a big celebration. The celebration was [because] I started [to study] Chumash.11 I started to learn Chumash. Bar mitzvahs were . . .

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10 Yiddish is the common historical language of Ashkenazi Jews from Central and Eastern Europe. It is heavily Germanic based but uses the Hebrew alphabet. The language was spoken or understood as a common tongue for many European Jews up until the middle of the twentieth century. The vast majority of Jews living in Lodz before World War II spoke Yiddish, but increasingly used Polish.

11 ‘Chumash’ is another word for Torah or the Five Books of Moses of the Hebrew Bible.
we didn’t often celebrate in bar mitzvah parties like . . . we had an aliya and your bar mitzvah.\footnote{\textit{Aliyah} [Hebrew: ascent; going up] is the calling of a member of a Jewish congregation to the \textit{bimah} for a segment of reading from the \textit{Torah}. The person who receives the \textit{aliyah} goes up to the \textit{bimah} before the reading and recites a blessing thanking G-d for giving the \textit{Torah} to the Jewish nation. After the reading, the recipient then recites another concluding blessing. The \textit{bar mitzvah} [Hebrew: son of commandment] is a rite of passage for Jewish boys aged 13 years and one day. At that time, a Jewish boy is considered a responsible adult for most religious purposes. He is now duty bound to keep the commandments, he puts on \textit{tefillin}, and may be counted to the \textit{minyan} quorum for public worship. He celebrates the \textit{bar mitzvah} by being called up to the reading of the \textit{Torah} in the synagogue, usually on the next available Sabbath after his Hebrew birthday.} But when you started \textit{Chumash}, it was a big thing for a youngster of five. This was when you make a \textit{Chumash Seudah}\footnote{A \textit{Chumash Seudah} is a party usually held in a private home to celebrate when a young boy has begun to learn \textit{Chumash}. The boy will often wear a crown of gold foil and perform a question and answer session to explain why they study the \textit{Chumash}.} . . . I remember the color of the bags that were packed for all the children from my school to come. They were [filled with] goodies: candy and whatever, chocolate. Special red bags with gold letters. My name was printed in gold letters on red bags. I remember I even had to prepare a speech that had to do with the portion [of the \textit{Torah}]. We didn’t start [with] Genesis. We never started [with] Genesis. It was known—in our days in certain segments of our people, traditional homes or traditional surroundings—they don’t start with the Genesis. They started with the Book of Leviticus. The reason for it . . . this was explained to me then—and now, of course, it’s the same reason—because it deals with sacrifice. The Book of Leviticus deals with sacrifices . . . that when a young child . . . he’s as pure as the sacrifice. You started him off at this level, with purity to get him used to the learning and study of the \textit{Torah}. Leviticus was a [\textit{Yiddish; sounds like “yichor”} 16:11].

\textbf{Shirley:} The celebration was in your home?

\textbf{Cantor Goodfriend:} In our home, yes. I don’t remember how many children were there, but this I remember: my aunts and uncles and cousins, they helped to pack those little bags. It was a celebration. Birthdays we never celebrated.

\textbf{Shirley:} What did you celebrate?
Cantor Goodfriend: No one.

Shirley: Holidays? Yontifs?\(^{14}\)

Cantor Goodfriend: Yontifs . . . sure.

Shirley: Learning.

Cantor Goodfriend: The celebration was to go to synagogue, to _shul_ [Yiddish: synagogue], with my father—of blessed memory—and celebrate _yontif_ the way it’s supposed to be done.

Shirley: Was there any part of your Jewish education that began before you were five? Were there any regular instructions?

Cantor Goodfriend: Sure. I had a teacher. At first when I was three, my father took me to _cheder_. At three, they took me to _cheder_. At three, I got the first haircut and [he] took me to _cheder_. Going to _cheder_, it was a custom to wrap the child in a _tallit_ [prayer shawl]. We lived . . .

I remember the first _cheder_.

Shirley: Tell me about it.

Cantor Goodfriend: The first _cheder_ was . . . I remember the name of the _rebbe_, not because I remember when I was three . . . I mean vaguely. He lived in one of the apartments on the third floor, very mean-looking man. I remember his name was Nosen Viotklok. ‘Viotklok’ in Polish is ‘windmill.’ My father carried me. Then my father used to tell the story that people thought going back from the _shul_ . . . from _besmedrech_ [Yiddish: prayer or study house] in the morning . . . when you carry something wrapped in a _tallit_, they thought it was _Sefer Torah_ [handwritten copy of the _Torah_]. They used to stop and kiss it. So they used to touch me, kissing.

Shirley: He was carrying you?

\(^{14}\) _Yontif_ [Yiddish] is a generic word for Jewish holidays. It includes all but the High Holy Days of _Rosh Hashanah_ and _Yom Kippur_. 
Cantor Goodfriend: He was carrying me. It was just across the street or across a few blocks.

He was carrying me. I was only three.

Shirley: When you were three, you began . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, I went to cheder . . . the Alef-Beys [Yiddish alphabet] . . . the blessings. I was taught the minute I opened my mouth . . . I was taught the first blessings in the morning when you get up and to recite the blessings over food. This was a normal thing. You wouldn’t eat without a motsie, you wouldn’t eat without the shahakolov, or for the fruit, prihahaitz. We were used to it. This you didn’t have to learn in cheder. Cheder was more controlled than . . . in the cheder. I couldn’t [wait] until my mother or my father’s sister used to bring some goodies in the middle of the day to me. For me, this was the highlight.

Shirley: You stayed all day at that age?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, all day. Sure, all day. I remember the konchek on the wall. The rebbe have a konchek . . . A konchek is five [leather] straps. You had five straps hanging there. Just to look at it, this was enough to scare us.

Shirley: What was the purpose of that?

Cantor Goodfriend: The purpose of the konchek is to hit you over your hand if you didn’t behave or you didn’t learn. And he used it.

Shirley: That was an accepted thing?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. He used it. He got permission from the parents to use it. I wouldn’t say I got the konchek, the taste of the konchek, every day but sometimes it didn’t avoid me either.

<End Tape 1, Side 1, 01>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 1, 02>
Shirley: Chazzen, before I go back to the educational part of your life, I wanted to ask you something about your grandparents because you said you lived with them . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.

Shirley: . . . for a short period. Did they live a long distance from you? How far were they from you?

Cantor Goodfriend: I had two sets of grandparents. My father’s parents lived in Lodz, which was very close to our house where we lived. They lived in the same building where their business was. The business was downstairs in the front, in the street. They lived on the second floor facing the main street. I always liked to go to visit them because as a kid, [I liked] to sit in the window and see the streetcar go by and watching the people . . . curiosity. Always when I came to my grandparents’ house in Lodz I knew that there would be goodies. My grandmother didn’t know what to do and my grandfather wanted to know one thing: What did you learn today? He tried to examine me. “Come on, sit down. We’re going to learn something.” Or, “I’ll wake you up at five o’clock in the morning and we’re going to learn the Talmud.” And he did it and I did not dispute [it]. To me, it was a great honor.

Shirley: Did you have an opportunity to spend time with your mother’s parents as well?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. This was already a trip . . . like packing. We used to say, “[Yiddish; sounds like “kincha hona America 1:33].” They gave you sandwiches on the road. It’s only 40 kilometers away [by train], but they gave me hard-boiled eggs [because] G-d forbid that I should starve . . . 44 kilometers. It took about four or five hours to get there.

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15 The Talmud [Hebrew: study] is a legal code spanning 1,000 years and based on the teachings of the Bible. The Talmud interprets biblical laws and commandments. It also contains a rich store of historic facts and traditions. It has two divisions: the Mishnah and the Gemarah. The Mishnah is the interpretation of Biblical law. The Gemarah is a commentary on the Mishnah by a group of later scholars.
Shirley: How did you travel?

Cantor Goodfriend: By train or by bus, but mostly by train. Somebody was waiting for me. My aunts were waiting for me. Don’t forget, I was the first male in my mother’s family... the first male born child in my grandfather’s family. They really spoiled me a little bit until my other brothers were born.

Shirley: Chazzen, do you know who you’re named after?

Cantor Goodfriend: Sure.

Shirley: Do you know anything about those people?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, I do.

Shirley: Please tell me.

Cantor Goodfriend: I am named after my great-grandfather who was a great rabbi and a great scholar. He was known in this part of Poland. He was known not only for his scholarship, but also for his involvement in the community... to such an extent that he used to make sure that the Jewish people don’t desecrate the Shabbas [Yiddish: Sabbath]. He used to go home and... see that the coach drivers ...

Shirley: [Yiddish; sounds like “Balegovich” or “Balegovas”: 3:24].

Cantor Goodfriend: Balegovas, yes... [Polish; sounds like “adyroska” or “adroshki”: 3:25]... they used to take people from the train station to their homes. It was like they have... in Central Park in New York... 

Shirley: Horse-and-buggy.

Cantor Goodfriend: Horse-and-buggy. They used to call it ‘adroshki’. He used to... about twelve [noon] to one o’clock... he used to tell those drivers, “It’s about time to go home and get ready for Shabbas.” They used to come with the, “Rebbisak” [Yiddish]... always impressed
him with the title, “Rebbisak, [Yiddish; sounds like “ibitchela”: 3:48]. We didn’t make a living. We don’t have enough money to go home and prepare for Shabbas. We didn’t have a fare today. We need some money.” So he reached down to his pocket and gave every one of those drivers enough money to go home and make Shabbas. They should not desecrate the Shabbas. He was known for that.

Shirley: What is your full name?

Cantor Goodfriend: It’s Isaac . . . Yitzchak. In Hebrew it is Shmuel . . . I never use the middle name.

Shirley: Chazzen, in your home everyone spoke Yiddish?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yiddish.

Shirley: No matter who . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yiddish.

Shirley: You learned because you listened to it?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yiddish was . . . this is what you heard, this is what you spoke. I went to school and I learned Polish, of course. It was obligatory to go to the secular [school] to learn, to take secular education.

Shirley: When did you learn that if you were going to cheder and you were . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: The cheder later on had the secular subjects as well. We learned math. We learned history, geography, nature. We had to learn. It was . . .

Shirley: When you were a young boy and you lived in Lodz, were there a lot of young children in that complex where you lived?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, there were a lot of children but my parents selected my friends.

Shirley: Explain that.
Cantor Goodfriend: [They selected] with whom I’m allowed to play with and with whom I shouldn’t have any connection, any contact. They wanted me to play with the same children who have my background. Because in Poland, and especially in Lodz, in this particular area, it was no problem as far as keeping Shabbas—maybe with one or two exceptions in a complex of a few hundred people. There were 76 tenants in that [complex].

Shirley: All Jewish?

Cantor Goodfriend: All Jewish. There was one . . . the superintendent [who was called Yoozefier (Joseph)] . . . what was called the ‘Shabbas goy’ to light the oven . . . in the wintertime we needed one. We’d pay him 10 cents for opening the gate after 11 o’clock at night. Otherwise, it was only Jewish. Coming back to . . . the children that I played with went to . . . maybe to the same house of worship, the same stiebel, or maybe wore the same garb. They had payess [Hebrew: earlocks]. I had payess. These are the people I could associate with. I cannot play ball on Shabbas. I could not skate. Everybody had skates in wintertime . . . I couldn’t do it because this was not the proper way. I was to sit and learn on Shabbas. When I got older, things changed a little bit. But when I grew up, this was the way you were supposed to live.

Shirley: Do you remember any particular kinds of games? You said skating . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, games. First, they were afraid I’ll get hurt. Number two, I was not a big sports man . . . to go and play ball. I didn’t see any interest in ball. Some of my “friends”—my acquaintances . . . we knew each other, we grew up together—they went to ball games on Sunday or Saturday. They had quite a few teams in Lodz.

Shirley: What kind of ball?

Cantor Goodfriend: Football . . . soccer. Hakoa, HaPoel . . . They all had Hebrew names. But these were all the organizations that were more Zionist inclined. The observances already fell by
the wayside. Or they’d go to a movie. I never went to a movie until we were obligated to go to see when the head of the Polish government died . . . every child had to go and see the funeral. This was in 1935. I was led into a dark room and I was scared to death. What’s going to happen? It’s too dark. I kept yelling, “It’s too dark. I want to get out of here.” We had to watch the movie of . . . [Marshal] Pilsudski was the name.  Pilsudski was the prime minister of Poland [in the 1930’s].

Shirley:  What was the environment like when you were a young boy as far as what was going on in the community outside of your complex? What was happening in Poland at that time?

Cantor Goodfriend:  In the community? I could only tell you what I heard. We had the [news]papers. We read the paper. Every day, my father had a paper. He read an Agudas paper, which was a religious daily newspaper. Don’t forget, in Poland we about 35 to 40 daily newspapers in every language: Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish . . . We knew what went on. I remember my father used to read the paper Friday night for my mother . . . read it out loud . . . stories—what we called ‘novele roman’ [Yiddish: short romance story]. There was a roman about the Mafia in Chicago [Illinois] that went on [unintelligible: 10:12] . . . I was sitting with my mouth open just to swallow every word, to listen. Then I was interrupted, “Chumash,

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16 Marshal Jozef Klemens Pilsudski was a Polish revolutionary and statesman. He was the first chief of state (1918–1922) of the newly independent Poland that was established in 1918. He was appointed First Marshal of Poland, the highest rank in the Polish Army, in 1920. After leading a coup d’état in 1926, he rejected an offer of the presidency. He served as Minister of Defense until his death in 1935. Polish Jews, who supported his opposition to extreme nationalism and antisemitism, viewed Pilsudski favorably.

17 Agudas Yisroel was an Orthodox Jewish political movement popular in Eastern Europe between the two world wars.

18 Among the major cities and small towns of interwar Poland, there were an estimated 1,700 Yiddish daily newspapers and periodicals published. Thousands of other daily, weekly, and monthly publications in Hebrew and Polish were also produced.

Shirley: Who was the greatest influence on you as a young boy?

Cantor Goodfriend: The greatest influence . . . being the oldest, it was my obligation . . . it was put on me that I have to be the role model. Influence is simply the surroundings. Influence was the school, the cheder, or the yeshiva later on. Influence was the Hassidic rebbe that I was taken to when I was five years old. I was told, “You should know that we are mishpokhe [Yiddish: family] with the rebbe.” [I asked,] “How so?” My father and my mother told me that my great-grandfather, who I am named after, his son married the daughter of the famous rebbe. Her name is ‘So-and-so Shevala.’ I called her ‘Mimi Sheva.’ She was knowledgeable in Jewish learning, the same as her husband the rabbi. To me, I had such awe for them, just to be in their presence. He had a face like an angel. It never escapes me. He had a snow white beard. I could count every hair in his beard. This is how immaculate he looked. [His beard] was all the way down to his girdle [belt]. When he used to say Kiddush or Havdalah, I looked at his eyes.19 I thought I’d see G-d. To me this was . . . he was not earthly. He was something heavenly.

Shirley: Saintly?

Cantor Goodfriend: Saintly, heavenly. This in itself is a big part of the establishment in my way. We said, “This is the way to live. The other way was not our way of living. This is the right way of living.” To me, nothing existed outside my four [unintelligible; sounds like “cubits”]: 13:09 surrounding me. This is the way I lived. I don’t remember Rosh Hashanah at home.20

19 Kiddush is a blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. Havdalah is the ceremony marking the end of the Sabbath or of a festival, including the blessings over wine, candles and spices.
20 The cycle of High Holy Days begins with Rosh Hashanah [Hebrew: head of the year; i.e. New Year festival]. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. The tradition is that on Rosh Hashanah, G-d sits in judgment on humanity. Then the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. Prayer and repentance before the sealing of the books on Yom Kippur may revoke these decisions.
How come? I don’t remember *Rosh Hashanah* because my father took me with him every *Rosh Hashanah*. We wanted to go to the *rebbe*, to the Hassidic *rebbe*. It was only 15 kilometers outside of Lodz. Alexander was the name of the city. The Alexander *rebbe*. I don’t remember.

**Shirley:** Were you the only one who had that opportunity?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** No. I was the oldest. Later on my brother . . . no, I don’t think my brother ever went . . . yes, later on, maybe once or twice. I felt myself privileged to go there because first, my mother had a sister living in the same town where the rebbe lived, number one. Number two, my uncle was . . . now I would name him the ‘Kissinger of Alexander.’ He was . . . nothing was decided without him. He was the Secretary of State of Alexander. This was proven to me when I visited the now Alexander *rebbe* living in Israel. They talked about my uncle. Then they . . . I didn’t compare notes with them . . . they said, “Avremeleh Kubitz. I would call him the ‘Kissinger of Alexander.’” And he was. There was nothing he could not do . . . I was sort of taken in to the makings of certain things into the community as a whole. It’s a large community, 180,000 Jews in Lodz. [My uncle] knew what went on. If somebody needed a favor, who’d they go to? My uncle Avremeleh. Somebody wanted to try to get out of being drafted in the army, who do they go to? Avremeleh. They need help. He had connections.

**Shirley:** Did your sisters have an opportunity to learn?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** My sister . . . the one that grew up, she went to a regular public school.

**Shirley:** A Jewish child was allowed in the . . .

**Cantor Goodfriend:** Yes. It was a Jewish public school. Let’s put it this way. It was like a Jewish . . . it’s not a day school . . . it was a Jewish public . . . most of the kids were Jewish. She

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21 The village of Alexander [Polish: Aleksandrów Łódzki] is about 15 kilometers (9 miles) northwest of Lodz.
22 This is a reference to Henry Kissinger, an American diplomat and political scientist. He served as National Security Advisor and later concurrently as United States Secretary of State in the administrations of presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Kissinger was born to a Jewish family in Germany in 1923. The family fled to England in 1938 and then the United States.
was a good student. But we still had a teacher coming to the house twice a week. Even though I went to yeshiva and cheder to learn modern Hebrew . . . we spoke Yiddish at home, but we had a teacher who taught us Yiddish literature.

Shirley: To all the children?

Cantor Goodfriend: Just the two oldest ones because the others were too small. My brother was four years old.

Shirley: It’s a lot of time spent in education.

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. And the homework and if you were checked to do it properly. My sister helped me a lot with the secular homework.

Shirley: Chazzen, you said Rosh Hashanah you would love to go out of town with your father. What about the other yom tov [Hebrew: Jewish holidays]?

Cantor Goodfriend: The same thing. The other yom tov was Yom Kippur. Or Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur . . . Shavuot we used to go to the rebbe. The reason we went that often is because it was not too far and we had a place to stay. We didn’t need a hotel. There were no hotels in the whole city. Thousands of disciples came to the rabbi, but there were aachsania [Hebrew], inns, that private people had. They rented out a bed. They rented out two beds, rented out the floor . . . to sleep on the floor, or a mattress. So there were the goats, and the chickens, and the geese, and the ducks in the same room. So what? Achsania . . . [we] didn’t have to go to an aachsania. I had an uncle and he was in the lumber business. He was not a poor man. We all stayed there.

Shavuot [Hebrew: weeks] refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah by G-d at Mount Sinai. It occurs at the completion of the seven-week counting period between Passover and Shavuot. Shavuot, like many other Jewish holidays, began as an ancient agricultural festival that marked the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. In ancient times, Shavuot was a pilgrimage festival during which Israelites brought crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, it is a celebration of Torah, education, and actively choosing to participate in Jewish life.
Shirley: And **Pesach**?24

**Cantor Goodfriend:** *Pesach*. On **Pesach** we have to stay home. *Pesach* was family . . . cannot leave my mother alone and go away for **Pesach**. There were always little ones. There were always little kids.

Shirley: Do you remember **Pesach** at home?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, sure. I remember **Pesach** at home. Do I remember? I remember many, many **Pesachum**, as we say, many **Pesachs** at home. One particular **Pesach**, this I’ll never forget . . . this was a **Pesach** in . . . I came home from the *yeshiva* for **Pesach**. My father sent me away about 200 kilometers outside of Lodz. It was closer to Krakow,25 closer to Katowice,26 Sosnowiec.27 This must have been in 1937. I was about 12 years old, 12 or 13. I come home and I see something is wrong. This was three days before **Pesach**. There is nothing in the house. Usually, the family goes to bake *matzahs* [unleavened bread], rent the oven of the baker. This was the way it used to be done. The whole family—brothers and sisters and in-laws—they rent the ovens say for three hours. The whole family comes and they bring the flour and they make and bake *matzah*. They bake the *matzah* . . . not machine *matzah*, what we call ‘Manischewitz,’ we call machine *matzah* or any other of the packaged *matzah*.28 Our *matzahs* they were not so

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24 **Pesach** [Hebrew: Passover] celebrates the anniversary of Israel’s liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating *matzah* during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover.

25 Krakow [Polish: Kraków; German: Krakau; also spelled ‘Cracow’] is the second largest city in Poland, situated on the Vistula River, about 214 kilometers (133 miles) south-southeast of Lodz. The city is one of the oldest in Poland and dates back to the seventh century. When the Germans occupied Krakow in 1939, the city became the center of the Generalgouvernement [German: General Government], a separate administrative region of the Third Reich.

26 Katowice is a city in southern Poland, known for its heavy industry. It is about 192 kilometers (119 miles) southwest of Lodz.

27 Sosnowiec (Sosnovtza) is an industrial city county in southern Poland, about 180 kilometers (112 miles) south of Lodz and just north of Katowice. About one-third of the population was Jewish prior to World War II.

28 Manischewitz is a leading brand of kosher products based in the United States, best known for their *matzah* and kosher wine.
straight; there were not so round; they were a little burned, but they were matzahs. But to do it by yourself, this was the greatest mitzvah.29 It wasn’t because of the food, it was the mitzvah—packing, baking matzos. One put the . . . a reidel . . . to make the holes in the dough.30 One was making the dough, kneading the dough, and one was rolling. One was minding the oven, another would put wood in there and [another to] put in the matzah . . . we used to call it matzah [unintelligible Yiddish: 20:33] . . . one matzah into the oven. The whole process should take less than 18 minutes according to the law because if it’s more than 18 minutes it starts to ferment and it’s no longer called ‘matzah.’ It’s already leavened bread.31

Shirley: It’s like an assembly line.

Cantor Goodfriend: That is exactly what it was. Anyhow, I come home and I see there’s no matza. Immediately, you start thinking, “My G-d, was has happened?” Then you feel . . . you’re the oldest . . . you feel that something is wrong. They didn’t tell me. Nobody told me.

Shirley: You had been gone for . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: For the whole winter. But for Pesach I came home. So my father is about to search for the chametz.32 This was the day before Pesach. He said, [Yiddish phrase] . . . “Let’s start the Maariv . . . the evening prayer in the house.” He stands up and he starts the [unintelligible: 21:40]. Right here he cries. That’s all I needed. I grabbed his hand and I cried, too.

Shirley: Not knowing why?

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29 The Hebrew word ‘mitzvah’ refers to precepts and commandments as commanded by God. In its secondary meaning, the Hebrew ‘mitzvah’ refers to a moral deed performed as a religious duty.
30 A reidel is a wheel with pointed teeth used for perforating matzah, which prevents the dough from rising.
31 Leavened products are forbidden on Passover and there is a commandment to eat matzah on the first night of the festival of Passover. The sages concluded that after eighteen minutes the dough ferments making the dough rise and ultimately forbidden.
32 Chametz is any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt that has come into contact with water and been allowed to ferment and “rise.”
Cantor Goodfriend: No. If there was a time that I prayed with intensity and inner fervor and emphasizing not just every word but every letter, feeling that I am really talking with G-d, not to G-d, with Him. I understood already what gives that. Very simple. There was no money. There was no money to buy the matzah.

Shirley: But no one said it?

Cantor Goodfriend: They wouldn’t go to the . . . could have asked the sister, you might say, take a loan and buy . . . but for my father, that was a problem. We davened. Then [my father] searched for the chametz. Seven o’clock in the morning, he went down . . . on Pesach, he goes down to the store. Not a full day but you have to see, maybe, efsher [Yiddish: perhaps] maybe someone will show up. Sure enough, he opens the store, in walks a merchant from Galicia, an old cash customer. [The customer] always used to try to squeeze . . . cash and bargain and say, “It’s too much. [Yiddish: 23:20]. If it’s cheaper, I’ll buy.” He really bought a lot of merchandise. The minute he left, my father closed up the store. He was in the store maybe an hour . . . an hour and a half. Nine o’clock he was home. Mother said, “Ir shoyn heym? [Yiddish] You’re already home? His face full of smiles, “Let’s go.” They bought everything that we needed. It was yomtovdik [festive]. Of course, I believe that G-d heard me. He answered. These things you don’t forget. These things are in my memory. But, of course, it was a different Pesach and you strengthen your belief. By this you strengthen your belief. You can’t help it.

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33 Davening is the act of reciting Jewish liturgical prayers during which the prayer sways or rocks lightly.
34 Galicia was a political and geographical region between present-day Poland and Ukraine. The historical region disappeared from the European map after World War I. Today, the east part of former Galicia is part of the Ukraine, while the western part belongs to Poland.
Shirley: At that particular seder or at any seder that you remember, when you were the only one . . . did you ask the Fir Kashes [Yiddish: four questions]?35

Cantor Goodfriend: No, the youngest.

Shirley: The little one . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: The little one.

Shirley: The only one for a while.

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.

Shirley: In Hebrew, in Yiddish?

Cantor Goodfriend: In Yiddish, yes. [Cantor Goodfriend chants part of the Four Questions in Yiddish.] We do it even today at our seder.

Shirley: In Yiddish?

Cantor Goodfriend: We ask in Yiddish, in Hebrew and in English. We already had a seder in our house where we had a Russian, he asked in Russian; a couple from Mexico asked in Spanish; we had one who spoke Arabic, he asked in Arabic; and, of course, Yiddish, one of my kids. If we are together, they do it now. If not, Betty [Grossman Goodriend, Isaac’s wife] does it. The same . . . Yiddish.

Shirley: When you had the seders and it was Pesach in your home, was it only family, only mishpokhe, or were there other people at your table?

Cantor Goodfriend: There was always a guest . . . what we call ‘to take an oyrekh’ [Yiddish: guest] . . . [Yiddish; sounds like “ . . . oyrekh . . . yontif.” 26:10] This was not checked on. [We

35 Seder [Hebrew: order] is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. The seder incorporates prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. During the seder, the youngest person sings the four questions [Yiddish: Fir Kashes; Hebrew: Ma Nishtana]. These questions provide the impetus for telling why this night is different from all other nights.
“May I bring somebody home?” We just said, “He was standing in the doorway at the synagogue . . .”

**Shirley:** Is an oyrekh like an orphan?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** No. An oyrekh is a guest.

<End Tape 1, Side 1, 02>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2, 01>

**Shirley:** Chazzen, let’s talk about Hanukkah. Tell me what you remember about Hannukah. Was there an exchange of gifts? Were there latkehs [potato pancakes]?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** We did not make a big to-do about Hannukah. It was something that was celebrated, I think, universally in Poland or in Eastern Europe the same way all over. The only thing that we made sure that we had [was] the oil for the Hannukah menorah because we used oil. We didn’t use any candles. For the kids, it was something that we looked forward to it. We looked forward to the Hannukah gelt [Yiddish: money]. Exchanging gifts? No, we did not exchange gifts on Hannukah. We exchanged gifts on Purim. But Hannukah was just simply a festival of fun; lighting the Hannukah menorah, singing songs and, of course, waiting for the Hannukah gelt to be able to play dreidel

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36 **Hanukkah** [Hebrew: dedication] is an eight-day festival of lights usually falling around Christmas on the Christian calendar. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees in 165 BCE over the Seleucid rulers of Palestine, who had desecrated the Temple. The Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple altar to Jewish worship by rekindling the menorah but could only find one small jar of ritually pure olive oil. This oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days, enabling them to prepare new oil. The Hanukkah menorah, or hanukiah, with its nine branches, is used to commemorate this miracle by lighting eight candles, one for each day, by the ninth candle.

37 **Purim** is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire from destruction in the wake of a plot by Haman, a story recorded in the Biblical book of Esther. According to the Book of Esther, Haman planned to kill all the Jews, but Mordecai and his adopted daughter Queen Esther foiled his plans. The day of deliverance became a day of feasting and rejoicing. Some of the customs of Purim include drinking wine, wearing masks and costumes, and public celebration.

38 A shalach manos [Yiddish] is also called a “Purim basket,” and contains gifts of food or drink sent to family and friends on Purim.
with your siblings or cousins.\textsuperscript{39} Then if you got 10 cents or 10 \textit{groschen} [German or Austrian coin], five \textit{groschen}, it was a big deal and you tried to win in order not to have to go to your father for another nickel, for another five \textit{groschen}. It was an ordeal . . . Will he? Won’t he give it to me? If he gives it to me, he has to give it to the others. It was a whole political ramification. You didn’t know how to handle it.

But this was . . . I remember my mother—of blessed memory—she used to prepare the goose for the \textit{schmaltz} [Yiddish: rendered chicken or goose fat] for \textit{Pesach}. We waited for the \textit{glibenets} [2:06], of course, and she waited for the \textit{schmaltz} in order to be able to fry to \textit{latkehs}. We didn’t use oil to fry because the oil that we bought was I remember from Palestine . . . it was called ‘\textit{shemen zayit}’ [Hebrew], pure olive oil. It came in a tin. I remember the pictures on that tin, an olive tree and with the Hebrew [writing on it]. I looked at this particular tin and I said to myself, “When, how could I get there? How can I go there?” Suddenly it hit you: the Promised Land, \textit{Eretz Yisroel}, to go to \textit{Eretz Yisroal}. This was something that was part of the upbringing and part of the connection that we had. The story of Hannukah we didn’t have to be told. We did learn, though, there are special portions in the \textit{Talmud} that deals with Hannukah. I had to be prepared in case an uncle or a grandfather would ask me the famous question: “What does so-and-so say on this and this particular statement.” I had to know. If you didn’t know, first you didn’t get any Hannukah \textit{gelt}. Secondly, you looked like a fool.

Your father sends you to school and you don’t learn anything? You’re no good . . . all this kind of stuff. We had to be ready for these things. In other words, the holiday . . . be it Hannukah or any other holiday . . . it was not enough just to observe, to celebrate the holidays. We, as kids,

\textsuperscript{39} The \textit{dreidel} is a four-sided spinning top that children play with on \textit{Hanukkah}. Each side is imprinted with a Hebrew letter. These letters are an acronym for the Hebrew words “A great miracle happened there” referring to the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days.
had to know why and the reasons why we do certain things. It was part of the life that I was used to and part of our being what we were, what we are, being Jewish.

**Shirley:** *Shabbas.* I would like for you to share with me a little bit about that special day of the week.

**Cantor Goodfriend:** *Shabbas.* . . . we have in our tradition that the week is divided into two parts. The first three days of the week belong to the *Shabbas* that had passed. The second three days of the week . . . that is, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday . . . belong already to the *Shabbas* that is about to come. The whole week was geared around *Shabbas.* You want to make sure that you get the fresh piece of chicken or turkey or whatever the case might be, or a fresh piece of fish to prepare for *Shabbas.* Everything was geared to *Shabbas,* the day. This is the day that we all wait for. Not just because we rested on the day . . . that goes without saying. We didn’t have to be told, “You’ve got to take a day off.” No, we did not take a day off. We took a day in. We took the day in, as this is part of the climax. It’s part of the climactic week to have this day that they devoted to different things, not the mundane things. *Shabbas* was a day that we looked forward to study. *Shabbas* was a day to rejoice with the family. *Shabbas* was a day that you knew you were going to be dressed nicely, in a clean shirt. If you have a new *kapote,* you put it on for *Shabbas,* which I wore a silk *kapote* and a hat that was newer, a velvet hat.\(^{40}\) For the weekday, I had a regular satin . . . not satin . . . it was gabardine, it was cloth. But *Shabbas,* we had a *sahmit* [silk] and a *hittel,* a velvet hat for *Shabbas.*

**Shirley:** At what age?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** Since I was . . . since I can remember at what age, since I was five or six.

We used to call our Yiddish *hittel* the ‘little visor,’ and then the round velvet hat. This was

\(^{40}\) *Kapote* is a long robe traditionally worn by male Jews in Eastern Europe. For weekdays it was made of lightweight gabardine but on the Sabbath a heavier silk *kapote* was worn. Today, *kapotes* are primarily worn by very Orthodox or Hasidic Jews.
something that you felt *Shabbas dik*. There is no translation for the word ‘*Shabbas dik.*’ I feel *Shabbas dik*. I feel like the Sabbath. You feel festive. This is the best word I can describe it. You feel festive with your dress, with your manners, with everything you do on *Shabbas*. You eat a little better Friday night and you can smell and feel and taste the *challah* and the fish. You have to be ready to sing *zmires* [Yiddish: songs], to chant the *zmires* songs. We had *zmires* for everything . . . every meal. We would sing *Shalom Aleichem* when we came in from the *stiebel* to the house, welcoming the angels, thanking the angels for accompanying us from the *shul* to the house. Then a special prayer for my mother, *ayshes chayil*, “a woman of valor,” and all the prayers that go with it. Then you make proper *Kiddush* and see that everybody . . . wine for *Kiddush* was not something that everybody could afford. Sometimes, I remember we didn’t have wine for *Kiddush*, like buying a bottle of wine. This was an expense. We used to take raisins or currants and boil it in a pot of water and then squeeze it through a towel and we had wine.

**Shirley:** And a little honey?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** No. We didn’t use honey. Honey is not wine anymore. Honey doesn’t make it kosher. They make [unintelligible: 8:30] of a wine. We just squeezed it. I used to be the squeezer. To squeeze it, we have enough for two cups of wine for *Kiddush* and *Havdalah*. This is enough and for each child Mother had a little bit from *Kiddush*. Otherwise, this meal played a major role. Then came the real thing. “Let me hear. What did you learn today?” We have to say something. You have to say something that you learned today. What does Rashi say . . . what does the other commentator say about this particular verse. What about *Gemarah*? What did you learn in *Gemarah*?” This went around the table. My father wanted to know. Then when we

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41 *Shalom Aleichem* [Hebrew: peace be upon you] is a traditional song sung by Jews every Friday night upon returning home from synagogue prayer.

42 Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Shlomo Yitzhaki), known as Rashi (based on an acronym of his Hebrew initials—RAbbi SHlomo Itzhaki), was a medieval French rabbi whose widely read commentary on the Talmud and the Tanakh remain a centerpiece of contemporary Jewish study.
had our meal, when we had a guest, he wanted to show off how much I know. It’s a ‘pu pu pu’. . . they started to spit out. G-d forbid that somebody will give an evil eye. You shouldn’t know too much. It’s not good [in the Jewish perspective] you know too much [in the eyes of others]. Not good for an evil eye. Stop right there.

Shirley: A beautiful day . . . a beautiful night.

Cantor Goodfriend: Then, of course, the day was a regular Shabbas day. They tried to play with the kids . . . not to play what they’re playing, like playing ball or roller skating or anything that would desecrate the Shabbas. I remember we used to play cantor and choir. When I was a little boy I used to put a towel around my neck. This was the tallit. We had a few kids who sang in the choir and they were the chazzen in the big shul. We used to sing for ourselves. We knew the melodies. One became the choir conductor, one became the chazzen. We used to play chazzen and choir. I didn’t know then that I would become a cantor one day. But this was the way it was.

Shirley: I was going to ask you, was there ever a time where you participated in a choir at a young age?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. I used to help out . . . there was . . . at the Rebbe, there was what we call ‘baltefilleh.’ That was a master of prayer. It was the equivalent of a chazzen. Maybe to a higher degree, the master of prayer. He conducted services. He had his own choir. He had a [unintelligible: 11:00] . . . I used to know the melodies before Rosh Hashanah, before anybody else. I remember people used to get to me. They wanted to bribe me to sing the melody before it is . . . published . . . we didn’t publish music, but before it was heard. This is already something that is against the law.

Shirley: Is that okay or not okay?
Cantor Goodfriend: It was not okay. I wouldn’t dare do that because I was scolded. I did it once [for] a friend, an uncle or a cousin. He wanted to show off. He knows already what the *baltefilleh* is going to sing. Who squealed? Who was the one? Then they would not let me into the rehearsals. I had an in there with the people because of my father and because of myself. I used to know the melodies ahead of time. I used to sing since I was a little boy.

Shirley: Did you ever think during those years that . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: No.

Shirley: Nothing? It never entered your mind.

Cantor Goodfriend: I had cantors in the *mishpokhe*.

Shirley: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. He was a chazzen in a small town. We had an expression, “Ich hob . . . Lowicz.” Lowicz [Poland] was a little town not far from Lodz. My cousin . . . his name was David Soperstein . . . he was a chazzen in Lowicz. To me . . . I always looked up to him. Why? Because I saw him when he was practicing with his high hat and the long gown that he was wearing . . . a little bib that you’d call the . . . old-time *chazzohnim* used to wear a white little thing to cover . . . ornament. I have one that I used to wear in Germany. When I was a chazzen in Germany, I used to wear one. This looked very impressive. Especially when he let me use his tuning fork. In those days, a tuning fork . . . he put this to his . . . then I heard the sound. To me, this was a great thing. We always tried to get the tuning fork. If one kid had a few *groshen*, he bought a tuning fork. Everybody wanted to play with that kid because he has the turning fork, so you better be good friends with him. Then you can have it . . . let me use it. I used to walk around with the tuning fork.

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43 Lowicz [Polish: Łowicz; also known as ‘Loivitch’] is a town in central Poland, approximately 50 kilometers northeast of Lodz.
Shirley: What age in high school or in later years . . . were they always in a yeshiva and you learned . . . secular studies?

Cantor Goodfriend: When the war broke out, I was in the sixth or seventh grade.

Shirley: Give me the year, Chazzen.

Cantor Goodfriend: In 1939. I was supposed to enter the seventh grade. I was 15. We couldn’t . . . there was no school. The schools were gone. Until that time I learned what had to be done as far as Polish history goes and math. We did not learn algebra or the complicated subjects in math. But I did not stand still. I learned by myself in the ghetto.

Shirley: Before you get into the time when the war broke out, did you or your family members have any kind of warning or feeling before this happened? What was going on in your home, in the town, before the war actually started?

Cantor Goodfriend: The feeling was that there will be a war. This was the feeling. In 1938 we thought . . . in March the war is going to start in 1938. As far as antisemitism, Hitler came into power . . . we knew that [there as anti-Semitism] in 1933 or 1934. There were already refugees coming to Lodz before the war from Germany. Not far from us was a kitchen, a bread line, where the refugees used to be fed. I saw those people, the way they were dressed. I said to myself, “They don’t look like poor people” because I was used to seeing really poor people without shoes, without a coat, and without a shirt and everything torn. They used to stretch their hands for an ahduveh [Yiddish: 16:00], for a handout. I would consider them poor. But the people that came from Germany, they were dressed in a coat and tie. They were dressed like Deutschen [German people] because they didn’t wear the same long kapotes as we were used to.

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44 In addition to closing Jewish schools, the Germans closed or destroyed Polish universities, schools, museums, libraries, and scientific laboratories and decreed that Polish children's schooling end after a few years of elementary education.

45 Austria was forcibly annexed into the German Third Reich on March 12, 1938. Three days later, German forces invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia.
They were dressed worldly, European-style, without the beard. [I] said, “There are Jews? Those are Jews? Where is the beard, their payess?” Then we were told they were thrown out of their homes, they were chased out of their homes, and we have to help them. They used to come more and more every day.

As far as anticipating a war . . . yes, we knew that there was going to be something. We then became suddenly involved in, “Why a war? What does Germany really want from Poland? Is it the [Danzig] Corridor? Is it . . .” Then we were told that at the First World War, Poland annexed part of Germany and it really belongs to Germany and there was a dispute. They want back the Corridor. Everybody said, “No. Because of this the Germans will never go into war. Because of the Corridor? They’ll somehow . . .” Then when [Prime Minister Neville] Chamberlain came back with the promise, [we said], “See, G-d does not want a war.” That’s what we said. “If G-d doesn’t want a war, there won’t be any wars.” We miscalculated, of course. Then we had preparation as far as digging trenches [and] the civil defense. I must tell you, my father was very . . . suddenly very active. He was given the gas masks to be sure that people . . .

Shirley: To distribute?

Cantor Goodfriend: . . . to distribute. Also to be sure what the people have to do to warn the people how to save themselves, how to protect themselves in case of gas bombs that will come down. Because everybody thought this is what’s going to happen. I was very important suddenly

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46 The ‘Danzig Corridor’ or ‘Polish Corridor,’ was a small narrow piece of land, which was ceded to Poland after World War I. It provided Poland with access to the Baltic Sea, but in the process divided the bulk of Germany from the German province of East Prussia. In the spring of 1939, Hitler demanded the annexation of the Free City of Danzig to Germany and extraterritorial rail access for Germany across the ‘Polish Corridor,’ the Polish frontier to East Prussia.

47 Arthur Neville Chamberlain was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from May 1937 to May 1940. Chamberlain is best known for his appeasement foreign policy, and in particular for his signing of the Munich Agreement in September 1938, conceding the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany. Chamberlain is famous for returning from Munich, getting off the plane, waving a piece of paper and saying the world had “peace for its time.” One year later, Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 and World War II started.
because my father . . . he is the civil defense. He let me carry a gas mask, too. I walked around behind him. The rest is history.

Shirley: I know you lived in the area where there were all Jewish people, but did you feel any antisemitism if you left the area?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. Antisemitism was getting stronger by the minute.48 There used to be what we call them, the ‘boycotts.’ They used to stand in front of Jewish establishments. [They had] swastikas on their arms. They yelled out loud, “Don’t buy from Jews.” They used to stand in front of the store not to let customers in. Jewish customers they could not keep back. The Jewish people made a living from the non-Jewish customers who came in, especially in Lodz to buy before a holiday: to buy stuff, clothing, or whatever they needed. This was held. We used to call them the ‘Endeks.’49 They were open antisemites. Closer to the war, they starting wearing the brown shirts already, so these [people] were already indoctrinated Nazis.50 It grew from day to day. It was a prelude to what was to happen, the unexpected, because nothing was expected the way it happened.

Shirley: When the war actually broke out . . . ?

Cantor Goodfriend: I remember where I was exactly.

Shirley: Where were you? Try to tell me, if you can, the steps that took place then.

48 In the 1930’s, antisemitism became more intense in Poland, in part thanks to Nazi propaganda. Organized attacks wounded and killed Jews in April 1933, May 1934 and in September 1935. Wealthy Jews were arrested in 1938 and guards were placed outside Jewish shops to prevent non-Jewish customers from entering them.

49 An Endek [Polish: Endecja] is a member of the National Democratic party of Poland, which was created in 1897. The party was ideologically antisemitic and fascist, calling for a Polish-speaking Catholic Poland.

50 This refers to members of the Sturmabteilung, often shortened to ‘SA.’ They were commonly known as ‘Brownshirts’ from the color of the uniforms. They were the paramilitary wing of the Nazi party and played a key role in Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in the 1920’s and 1930’s. They provided protection for Nazi rallies and assemblies, disrupted opposing political parties, intimidated Jewish citizens and engaged in general street thuggery.
Cantor Goodfriend: Sure. I was in Lodz. The war broke out on September 1, 1939.\textsuperscript{51} We were gathering in the courtyard and tried to listen to the planes coming overhead. There were a few radios. We didn’t own a radio, but neighbors had a radio. They used to announce, “\textit{Atrogee!} Here comes the planes! So-and-so serial number” . . . The siren started to sound. You looked for shelter. You were told that when the sirens go . . . three intermittent sounds . . . that this is . . . you have to take shelter. Then, when there is one long sound that means they’re gone. So we waited . . . [the planes were] coming one after the other, but we did not hear any bombs. No sounds of bombs. Lodz is not too far from the German border . . . maybe 500 kilometers . . . not even that.\textsuperscript{52} The first thing . . . let’s see what my grandparents . . . my father said, “Go look what my parents are doing.” I ran across the street . . . they lived maybe a five minute walk from us. I run across the street and by the time I got into my grandfather’s house, I hear heavy artillery roaring already. They took Lodz without firing one shot. Nothing was fired. They were maybe scare shots, just to scare the people. The Polish Army . . . we didn’t see a Polish soldier . . . the minute the war started. Not one soldier could be seen on the street.

Shirley: The Germans took Lodz with no problem?

Cantor Goodfriend: No problem. Lodz was the fifth column because a third of the population were Germans in Lodz.\textsuperscript{53}

Shirley: Chazzen, when you heard this and the Germans came in, were you at your grandfather’s house?

\textsuperscript{51} World War II officially began in Europe when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany on September 3. The Germans occupied Lodz on September 8, 1939. Within a month, Poland was defeated by a combination of German and Soviet forces that had meanwhile invaded from the west and was partitioned between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{52} Lodz was approximately 230 kilometers (143 miles) east of the German border.

\textsuperscript{53} A fifth column is a group of sympathizers or supporters of an enemy that engage in espionage or sabotage as a means of undermining a larger group—such as a nation or a besieged city—from within. During World War II, the term was often applied to Nazi supporters within foreign nations. On the eve of World War II, Lodz had a population of 665,000, of whom 34 percent (223,000) were Jews. Lodz also had a sizable German population, amounting to 10 percent of the total.
Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, when I saw the first German soldiers. Then it was nothing to it. I had to wait downstairs in front of the house to be able to cross the street and go back home when there were no military trucks, or artillery, or tanks rolling through that street. This was the main street to Warsaw [Poland]. From there, they went to Warsaw. They came from the west and they went east.

<End Tape 1, Side 2, 01>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2, 02>

Shirley: When they took the town and moved on, what happened?

Cantor Goodfriend: They took the town. First of all, there was already a run on bread, the bakeries. There were quite a few Jewish bakeries. In the house where my grandparents lived in Lodz, there was a big bakery. If you knew somebody we paid him for the bread. But nobody knew if the money is worth anything. The man, he had a lot of flour and he wanted to bake bread. A lot of people would have raided the place and they would have grabbed the flour and they would have grabbed whatever he had. So he baked bread. Really, he did a favor. What kind of favor to himself? I don’t know because the money wasn’t worth a thing. Nobody knew what he will do with the money. I stood in line to buy the bread. Another cousin of mine stood in line because we wanted to buy bread for everybody . . . for my family, for the grandparents and my cousin for his parents.

Shirley: How much could you possibly buy?

Cantor Goodfriend: How much? They [only] let you buy one bread. This is the very first time in my life I stole a bread. I went in line . . . I didn’t steal, I took it . . . I put it under my coat. I was so hungry that I started eating the hot bread. It was hot. I started eating. Then I came back

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54 Warsaw is the capital and largest city in Poland, located on the Vistula River in east-central Poland.
and they were pushing and shoving, pushing and shoving. They said, “There’s no way. Each one
gets one bread, no more.” In the pushing and shoving, I grabbed one and went . . .

Shirley: How old were you then? Fourteen?

Cantor Goodfriend: Fifteen. I didn’t tell anybody, of course. It was simply . . . “Somebody
gave [it] to me.”

Shirley: What was the next step?

Cantor Goodfriend: The next step is we heard already a little more and more shooting. We
stayed in[side]. Then it didn’t take long, about maybe a week, we already saw that the Germans
mean business. We already felt that they were taking over to a point where . . . you thought it
was fun. The civil defense didn’t mean a thing because there was nothing to defend.

Shirley: You mean excitement? What do you mean ‘it’s fun’?

Cantor Goodfriend: Fun for kids . . . a war, soldiers. [We thought] they don’t mean to take
Poland . . . poor Poland. What will they have in Poland? They got what they wanted. They got
the Corridor from Danzig. They got what belongs to them. But the rest, they [will] simply . . .
they’ll move on. They’ll go away.

Shirley: Could you go about your business?

Cantor Goodfriend: No. Nobody would dare go about the business because, first, you were
afraid. A few days later . . . I don’t remember when Rosh Hashanah was . . . but we had a
particular problem . . . my family, that is, because we did business with the Germans, with the
Polish-German weavers, the hand weavers, because we bought directly from them. They used to
manufacture towels, bedspreads, tablecloths. This was our main business. Most of this business
was in the hands of the Germans, of the Volksdeutsche [German: ethnic German people]. Being
that we did business and for so many years, they knew us. But they also wanted to flex their
muscles. They came to our house . . . not by themselves, but with the *Gestapo*, to point out, “He doesn’t deserve to have a business.” They made my father go and open the store and take out every piece of merchandise, by himself, and load it up on a truck . . . every thread of merchandise and load it up on a truck by himself.

Shirley: The man you had done business with?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. The *Gestapo* [were] standing there and hitting [my father] and abusing him. When he came back, he was all beaten up, black and blue. This was the end of the business. This is a man that did business with him and with his father, my grandfather, for years. I knew him, too. I knew his face.

Shirley: The business was closed.

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. There was nothing . . .

Shirley: Did you have money to buy anything?

Cantor Goodfriend: We didn’t have money to buy. But, it just so happened, right in the beginning, [that] the German soldiers, they would buy anything that they can lay a hand on. They were like soldiers coming to any town . . . they conquer a city . . . they could have taken it.

Shirley: That’s true.

Cantor Goodfriend: But there were some Germans, they paid. Where do you get merchandise? We starting organizing. We knew people who manufactured stockings. We knew people who manufactured socks. We knew people who manufactured different things: handkerchiefs, scarves, anything. We started going around and . . . the store, it was open . . . the store we had the location. It was like in a mall. We opened up and before you put the

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55 *Gestapo* is an abbreviation of *Geheime Staatsspolizei*, which means “Secret State Police,” the Gestapo was established in 1934 and placed under Heinrich Himmler. With virtually unlimited powers, it was highly feared. The *Gestapo* acted to oppress and persecute Jews and other opponents of the Nazis, including rounding up Jews throughout Europe for deportation to extermination camps.
merchandise up, it was gone. Any price you asked for, they paid in German money, in Marks, which was worth more than the local currency. For about two weeks, it was going real good . . . real good as far as money was concerned. People . . . they were on the ball. They wanted to do something and suddenly I became a big merchant. I went to this one and that one and schlepped [Yiddish: haul] packages on my back in order to sell it, buy new merchandise; sell it, buy new merchandise. We made it somehow until they put the vise a little tighter and squeezed.

Suddenly my father gets up in the middle of the night. This was in the same period of time, one month, in November. This was . . . in 1939. He said, “My G-d. Look! The shul is burning!” I said, “How do you know?” He said, “I can see the reflection on the wall.” Sure enough. We went on the roof to see. They put the synagogue on fire. What a synagogue! What a building! You cannot begin to describe the beauty of that synagogue. It was called the ‘Schnaydershul,’ the Synagogue of the Tailors and the Cobblers. It was the workmen’s synagogue. [It had] 4,000 or 5,000 seats. The most beautiful choir in the world. The architecture was so immaculate, so artistically done by hand. A few months before the war, they renovated the façade of the synagogue. We used to watch for hours how those masons, how they [worked] with little trowels, the way they carved out the artistic miniatures . . . of the resemblance of the Temple. It was unbelievable, unbelievable. And they put it on fire.

Shirley: Were there other synagogues in your area, or was yours alone?

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56 The Great Synagogue of Łódź [Polish: Wielka Synagoga w Łodzi] was built for the reform congregation in 1881 with funds from wealthy local industrialists including Izrael Posnanski. At the time, it was the largest structure in the heart of the city and was known as the ‘Great Synagogue’ or ‘The Temple.’ It was completely burned down on November 14-15, 1939.
Cantor Goodfriend: No. They were . . . all the synagogues were burned. But this one we saw because, don’t forget, *Kristallnacht* was in 1938.\(^{57}\) This was in 1939. First they wanted to take care . . . this was our way of thinking . . . [the Germans] wanted to take care of the synagogues first the way they did in Germany because they annexed Lodz to the Third Reich. Lodz became part of the Third Reich because of the German population there . . . a third of the population of Lodz was German. They had a fifth column already there. I think it was their influence that they annexed Lodz to the . . . and also maybe [because] geographically it was located closer to the German border.

Shirley: That disconnected a central place of gathering, the *shul* . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: The *shul* . . . there was no way now. I remember the first *Rosh Hashanah*.\(^{58}\) It was about that time, maybe two, three weeks into the war. We *davened* in our house because they had a [sounds like “baltier”: 10:10] . . . my father davened. They had the *Torah* reader and a *shofar*.\(^{59}\) We did sound a *shofar* under the bed. I remember the person who blew the *shofar* laid down on the floor and sounded the *shofar* that the sound should go under the bed so that somebody shouldn’t hear it. Because if they hear it, they’d come and denounce us. That’s all we needed. One kid was standing on the lookout to see if Germans were coming in. Because then they had already started to come every day to the courtyard and catch people forcibly.\(^{60}\)

Shirley: Doing what?

\(^{57}\) *Kristallnacht* was a state-sponsored pogrom on November 8 and 9, 1938. Across Germany (and in Austria) Jewish synagogues, homes and businesses were looted and burned. Jews were attacked on the streets and 91 were killed. Thousands of Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. The Jews were made to pay for the damages to their premises. The pogrom was called ‘*Kristallnacht,*’ which means ‘Night of Broken Glass,’ because of all the damage done to Jewish shop windows.

\(^{58}\) In 1939, *Rosh Hashanah* fell on September 14-15.

\(^{59}\) A *shofar* is an ancient musical horn made of ram's horn, used for Jewish religious purposes.

\(^{60}\) Immediately after occupying Lodz, anti-Jewish violence broke out in the city. The Germans began seizing Jews for forced labor, confiscating Jewish property, and executing or deporting to concentration camps hundreds of the city’s elite.
Cantor Goodfriend: Menial work, carrying a stone from one side of the street to the other side of the street. Simply to harass and to abuse and make fun [mock], like old people taking piggyback [rides] on another old person. [The Germans] stood around and applauded and laughed. This was very trying. It’s something humiliating. I will never forget that.

Shirley: It’s almost like you don’t want to leave your home then for fear that something could happen. Did people stay inside . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. The people stayed inside . . . we used to hide in the attic when we saw the Germans come. But the [Poles], the little [Poles], they took Germans and pointed out where the Jews were hiding. They shouldn’t get away with it. So what did they get? Maybe a bar of chocolate for that; maybe a pack of cigarettes. They didn’t care . . . to give away a human being. They helped to . . . even though it just to abuse; they didn’t kill in the first time, at the outset. They did not kill. They did not shoot anybody, simply plain embarrassment.

Shirley: Harassment.

Cantor Goodfriend: Harassment. The yellow star we started to wear right there and then, from November of 1939.

Shirley: I don’t know the steps. You’ll have to help me because listening to how it all began . . . and then it picked up speed with more harassment and more aggravation.

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, right.

Shirley: Then what happened in the town?

Cantor Goodfriend: In the town, people started to run [away] on their own.61 There were people . . . our neighbors . . . everyone is trying to use philosophy. Which is the best way?

Shirley: Where should we go?

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61 After the German invasion, Lodz had been annexed to the Reich. To make room for “repatriated” ethnic Germans [German: Volkesdeutschen], waves of Jews and Poles were deported to the Generalgouvernement. Others voluntarily left or fled to the Soviet Occupied Zone. By March 1940, almost 70,000 Jews had left the city.
Cantor Goodfriend: Should we stay or go? A lot of people said . . . they came to my father, neighbors, friends . . . “Would you like to join us? We are leaving. We are walking.”

Shirley: To where, Chazzen?

Cantor Goodfriend: To the Russian border, to Malkinia . . . the Russian border.\(^{62}\) My father said, “I can’t. What will happen to my parents? My parents can’t walk. I don’t have money.” We didn’t have any money to walk. My little brother was only . . . three years old, less than three, two-and-a-half, three years old. My little sister was eight years old, or six. Where do you go with little kids? You have to have warm clothes, food. It was wintertime. Winter was coming. Who knows if we won’t get killed on the way . . . [from] the bombs [or] from the army . . . shooting.

Shirley: Did a lot of people leave then?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, they left. A lot of them got killed. A lot of them didn’t get to the Russian border. It was a decision that we didn’t make. My father didn’t make that decision. We stayed. We stayed and every day it got worse. Every day.

Shirley: Is this already the beginning of 1940?

Cantor Goodfriend: Nineteen forty was already . . . a lot of things happened. In January of 1940, we already knew that there is going to be a ghetto in Lodz.\(^{63}\) We already knew that the ghetto is going to be closed in because where we lived, this was exactly the border of the ghetto . . . to such a point when the head of the Judenrat, Chaim Rumkowski, came to speak to us in the

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\(^{62}\) Malkinia [Polish: Malkinia Górna] is a large village in northeastern Poland, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Warsaw and 225 kilometers (140 miles) northeast of Lodz. Malkinia was a junction on the main Warsaw-Bialystok railroad line, which ran east from Warsaw. After the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 until January 1940, Malkinia was flooded with refugees heading to the Soviet border. Malkinia Junction was the end of the line for the eastern railway and the last station separating German-occupied Poland and Soviet territory because there were no railroad bridges across the Bug River. By 1942, the Germans had built a spur off the Malkinia line, which served to carry Jews to the nearby Treblinka extermination camp.

\(^{63}\) On December 10, 1939, a closed ghetto was ordered in Lodz. It was to be established on 4.13 square kilometers (almost 1.6 square miles) in the northern neighborhoods of Baluty, Stare Miastro (Old Town), and Marysin. The ghetto was publically announced in February 1940. Jews were to move in by April 19 while Poles and ethnic Germans had until the end of April to move out of the neighborhoods.
courtyard, everybody wanted to know, “Is our house going to be in the ghetto or outside the ghetto?” He wouldn’t give us the benefit of telling us, “Yes” or, “No.” He kept kicking the people. I got kicked, too. You shouldn’t ask questions. He said, and I’m repeating, quoting directly what he said, “By me . . . the ghetto . . . it won’t take three years and it will work like the finest movement in a watch.” [unintelligible, Yiddish: 16:00]. This was his reasoning. We had my mother’s family in Piotrkow, 44 kilometers away. They kept on telling us, “Please come.”

Shirley: To them?

Cantor Goodfriend: To them. “At least,” they said, “Piotrkow is not going to go into the Third Reich. They will not go into the Greater Germany. It is going to be a protectorate governed by a [German] governor in the city of Krakow. Why don’t you come?” I remember in the beginning of February [1940], they loaded up a wagon and a horse, loaded up a little bit of belongings, some furniture, some personal things, some linens. They put me on top of it and another cousin of mine, a girl (whose brother lives in Chicago) . . . and the two of us took off to go to Piotrkow. The snow was coming down like never before. I was dressed warmly all bundled up in sweaters and smuckes [blankets? 17:41].

Shirley: You made it?

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64 The Germans chose Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski, an engineer, to be the head of the Judenrat and to establish a Jewish police force to transfer the Jews into the ghetto. Rumkowski is a controversial figure: some see him as a savior and others call him a willing German collaborator and traitor. Rumkowski voluntarily surrendered tens of thousands of Jews—including women and children—to certain death on the German authority’s demands, based on his belief that if the Jews cooperated with the Germans, at least some of them would be saved.

65 In October 1939, Germany annexed most of western Poland. The former Polish Corridor and the Free City of Danzig were incorporated into the new German province of Danzig-West Prussia. The district of Ciechanow (Zichenau) was attached to the German province of East Prussia. The former Polish province of Poznan and part of Lodz were combined into a new province called the Warthegau. The Polish part of Upper Silesia, a small area of southwestern Poland including the cities of Katowice and Oswiecim (Auschwitz), was incorporated into the German province of Silesia. The remainder of partitioned Poland that fell to Germany under the secret provisions of the German-Soviet agreements of August and September 1939 was organized into the Generalgouvernement [German: General Government], which was further divided into three districts. The city of Lodz fell within the annexed territory of Warthegau. The town of Piotrkow was in the Generalgouvernement.
Cantor Goodfriend: We made the journey in four days because the horse got sick, the wagon got stuck in the snow, and we had to change to a sled. In the middle of the road . . . we had all those alternative plans because the driver, the balagohleh, knew that we had sons of a distant relative, who is a farmer in one of the little towns on the way. Sure enough, we got in there. First, we had a place to warm up a little bit. It was somewhere in the country. He gave us the sled . . .

Shirley: What happened to the belongings on the . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: We unloaded them and put them on the sled . . . a big one . . . a horse-drawn sled.

Shirley: You made it to your grandparents’ house—you and the cousin?

Cantor Goodfriend: [Me] and my cousin, yes. Her grandparents were there too. Her grandfather and my grandfather were brothers.

Shirley: Then what?

Cantor Goodfriend: We settled down in the ghetto in Pietrkow.

Shirley: Just the two [of you] . . . the whole family is still . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: The whole family . . . my mother and my father and the [other] children went by bus.

Shirley: That’s what I wanted to know.

Cantor Goodfriend: They went by bus. When we came, they were already there. They didn’t know what happened to us because we didn’t have any way of communicating. There was no telephone. When we came, they were already there. There we settled in the ghetto, which was
one of the first ghettos in Poland, the very first ghetto in Poland.\textsuperscript{66} When you walk into the [United States] Holocaust [Memorial] Museum, you see the first ghetto in Poland.\textsuperscript{67} This was it.

Shirley: You couldn’t possibly have taken everything from your home. You just took what you could, locked the door and you left?

Cantor Goodfriend: Just belongings . . . Why locked the door? The books . . . all the books . . . my father had very valuable books. I remember I put them in the water tank. The water tank never worked. There was never water in the tank, so I wasn’t afraid that they would get wet. It was known already among the rest of the family that I had a place where to hide the books. I found the place. We didn’t have a ladder to climb up, but I climbed up straight walls when I was a kid, so somehow I managed. I had my brother throw up the books. He’d toss it to me and I’d place them inside. We left everything. The candlesticks we took along. Whatever belongings we had. Safety deposit boxes, we didn’t have. They didn’t know what it means to begin with. We didn’t have anything. Whatever we had. We settled in Pietrkow and we started to live a ghetto life. When I say not only us . . . there were nine sisters. Out of the nine, two remained behind. One lived in the Protectorate also near Kielce [Poland].\textsuperscript{68} They didn’t move. They perished in their hometown. The rest of us stayed in this room, kitchen, and the store, and the bedroom.

Shirley: How long were you there?

Cantor Goodfriend: Until the end . . . until 1942.

Shirley: You said until the end . . .

\textsuperscript{66} Barely a month after the invasion of Poland, the first Polish ghetto of World War II was created in Piotrkow on October 14, 1939.

\textsuperscript{67} The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) is the United States' official memorial to the Holocaust. It was opened in 1993, adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

\textsuperscript{68} Kielce is a city in south central Poland. In 1939, there were approximately 24,000 Jewish inhabitants in Kielce or one-third of the town's population. Almost all of them were murdered during the Holocaust.
Cantor Goodfriend: The end . . . that means 1942, when they liquidated the ghetto. In 1942, they liquidated all the Jews from Pietrkow.⁶⁹

Shirley: What happened that day?

Cantor Goodfriend: This is a story by itself . . . what happens . . . what happened to the rest of the Jews in Poland.

Shirley: When they came in to liquidate the ghetto, where were you told to go?

Cantor Goodfriend: I was already working in the glass factory. In the beginning . . . it was very, very paradoxical in a way. You tried to get documents that you cannot work.

Shirley: That you cannot work?

Cantor Goodfriend: That you cannot. You have contagious diseases. Nobody can stay near you because they’ll catch it. If you showed this paper, you were never called to work. You showed this paper. You bribe a doctor to give you a paper like this. Then suddenly, it changed. You needed a paper that you’re healthy and need a job, to work. So we went to the same doctor and we paid him a little more. He gave you another letter: that you are healthy, you can work and you are very useful. We used it and got a job in the glass factory.⁷⁰

Shirley: You and your younger cousins?

Cantor Goodfriend: No. I was the only one in my immediate family who got this job. The other cousins my age, they got jobs in different factories, in other factories. But as far as my mother’s family, I was the only eligible worker because my sister . . . the girls, they didn’t . . .

<End Tape 1, Side 2, 02>

⁶⁹ On October 14, 1942 the Germans and local auxiliary troops surrounded the Pietrkow ghetto and over the next eight days 22,000 Jews were swept up and deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. Only about 2,400 Jews who were employed in factories and workshops remained.

⁷⁰ A number of local companies began employing the Jews—especially the younger workers—of the Piotrkow ghetto. Among the factories that employed Jews were the Ostbahn (Eastern Railway), the Kriesgenossenschaft, Phoenix, and the Petrikauer Holzwerke (wood factory), also known as the “Bugaj.” Many were also employed at the Hortensja Glassworks, which mainly produced jars and bottles, at the Kara factory, which manufactured plate glass.
Shirley: The date is June 12, 1994. This is the second oral history interview with Chazzen Isaac Goodfriend. We will begin this interview with the year 1939. Chazzen, I want to ask you: Prior to the year 1939, did you suspect any changes in the world prior to that time or was that the time when you actually felt things happening?

Cantor Goodfriend: We did suspect that something was going to happen. If it will or not, we were not sure. In 1938, for instance, when I came back home from the yeshiva in southern Poland . . . Sosnowiec . . . the talk was already [going on]. You felt in the air as to what would happen. We heard what happened in Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia. There was talk and also the situation was tense [with regard to] the dispute between the Germans and the Polish Corridor near Danzig. We didn’t think that there would be a war, especially with the intervention of Chamberlain . . . we did not expect that it was going to happen. But we did suspect that something is in the air. The question was: Will there be a war or won’t there be a war? In 1938, nobody was certain. In 1939, as we got a little closer, we saw that preparations are being done all over Poland, mobilization or digging trenches to support organizing the civil defense . . . before the date of September 1, 1939.

Shirley: Did you feel as a Jewish family that there were some differences or some changes, some animosity, more so than maybe others?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, definitely. The air of antisemitism was more open, more sanctioned silently by the Polish government. They were not afraid. In other words, the police did not take action if they saw Nazis with swastikas on their arms boycotting Jewish establishments, Jewish

71 The Sudetenland was an area along the border of Bohemia and Moravia near the Sudeten Mountains. The Sudetenland had a predominately German population that was incorporated into the boundaries of Czechoslovakia after World War I. The area became a major source of contention between Germany and Czechoslovakia until the Munich Conference yielded it to Germany in 1938 as an attempt at appeasing the Germans.
stores, like the stores next to my father. They did not go and arrest those people. They simply let them do it, let them have a good time. We felt that it was an open, hostile atmosphere between the non-Jewish community and the Jews.

Shirley: Was this anything that you would discuss with your family openly, or did they keep that from the children?

Cantor Goodfriend: There was nothing . . . Children, you must understand in those days, were not children anymore. I was already a teenager in my early teens. We knew what’s going on. We were not . . . it was not a question of keeping a secret because we knew. I was 11 years old when I helped my father in the business and I knew what was going on. Radios we didn’t have, but we read the papers. [We had] what we called a mikveh [quartig? 3:48] Everything was settled in a mikveh. We joked, “What Jew didn’t go to the mikveh before Shabbas?” All the politics and all the guilts of the world were settled in a mikveh. We called it ‘mikveh papers.’ It might be . . . most old people knew what was going on in the world and they had everything already settled [it] among themselves, that if Hitler starts a war . . . it’s an old joke on your arm. They used the [poliganz? 4:20] as an act. The Germans are in the . . . west and they attack. The Russians would come from the east and they’ll surround and they’ll crush them like this, closing their fist, until that’s it, [the Germans] are gone. This was sort of in a joking manner. Seriously, yes there was some sort of feeling that something is going to happen.

Shirley: Can you tell me, chronologically speaking, what did happen?

Cantor Goodfriend: What did happen was on September 1, we got up. We heard sirens and the announcement on the radio. At that time, the neighbors had a radio. We didn’t have a radio. Everyone was listening to the radio. They [said], “It’s coming on. It’s coming on. The planes are coming on. The enemy planes are coming on. Number so and so, go to the hiding places. Go to

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72 A mikveh is a pool of water, gathered from rain or a spring, which is used for ritual purification and ablutions.
shelters.” We didn’t have any shelters. There was no place to hide. [The announcers] said, “Bombs are coming.” [The Germans] occupied Poland without any . . . actually no resistance except for Warsaw. They might have had shelters.

We saw them. The first one to go on the street was a kid, a teenager, to see the German tanks rolling through the streets, right in front where we used to have our store. To have a better view, I remember we went up to my father’s parents, my grandparents. They lived maybe 200 yards away from our house . . . looking out through the window . . . their window was right smack on the second floor looking on the main street so we saw them better. The occupation army did not bother us then. We didn’t know what was going to happen. Simply [that] they were going to occupy Poland.

Shirley: Were there any changes economically while they were occupying?

Cantor Goodfriend: Economically, the only change was that we couldn’t go to the store. It was forbidden to go. It was dangerous to go. There was a curfew imposed immediately. The war was on. After dark, nobody should be on the street. This was immediately imposed. The minute they came in, there was all the posters [announcing restrictions] on the street. We could not move.

Shirley: What did you do for food?

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73 The Siege of Warsaw in 1939 was fought between the Polish Warsaw Army [Polish: Armia Warszawa] garrisoned and entrenched in Warsaw, the capital city of Poland, and the invading German Army. Warsaw suffered heavy air attacks and artillery bombardment during the siege. Parts of the city were reduced to rubble and the civilian population suffered heavy casualties. Germans troops entered the city on September 29, shortly after its surrender.

74 After the German occupation of Poland, restrictions were immediately placed on Jewish communities that were meant to economically and socially isolate them from their Polish neighbors. The occupation brought a Jewish curfew, yellow star badges, and mass conscriptions for forced labor. Jews could no longer engage in the textile business, and the Germans decreed that every Jewish business must have a German Treühand [German: trustee]. Jewish bank accounts were frozen and Jews were limited in the amount of money they could withdraw. Jews could no longer use public transportation, could not leave the city without special permission, and were not allowed to have cars, radios, and various other items in their possession. Synagogue services were also outlawed.
Cantor Goodfriend: For food . . . the only thing that we were standing in line for was bread. I remember in the same complex where my grandparents lived, there was a well-known bakery.

People could get to that bakery. We stood in line. The minute the bread came out of the oven . . . they still had some flour left over from before. The owner figures, “What will they do with the flour? We have to use it up and let the people have some bread.” He took money, but nobody knew what kind of money . . . we had zloty, Polish money . . . whatever he wanted to charge, we paid him. There was no price, as long as we could get the bread. There was shoving and pushing. You tried to finagle . . . you tried to get instead of one bread, two breads . . . organizing.

Shirley: Were you allowed to go into other stores to shop?

Cantor Goodfriend: Where were no stores. All the stores . . . they didn’t have anything . . . The stores didn’t have anything. Those stores who had something, it went in a few hours. To go out the wholesalers . . . we didn’t have these things . . . to go to the wholesaler. Every house, every apartment had their own bakery, the butcher, and little grocery store. We didn’t have good money for this.

Shirley: With your grandparents not far from where you lived, was it safe for them to be by themselves?

Cantor Goodfriend: That’s why we . . . they never lived by themselves. There was always somebody living with them. My father was the only son, and the two sisters lived with them all the time. Since the day there were married, they lived with them in the same apartment. It had four rooms so it was considered a large apartment.

Shirley: When did you actually feel that there was a tightening?

Cantor Goodfriend: The second day after they came. They came in and because they had the special troops already, we didn’t know the difference between the brown shirts and black shirts
and the brown uniform and the black uniform. We did not know . . . [to us] the Germans are Germans. They started to harass the people, just to make a mockery. About this, I remember vividly. The second day and the third day, they used to take the older people in front of our house and made them ride piggyback with another old man. They were standing around and clapping, the German soldiers. To us, this was a very, very degrading scene. Or [they were] taking the bayonet and shaving off half the beard. Just maybe took some flesh with it. It was very bad. It was a bad feeling. We thought this was the end and this is the worst thing that they will do.

Shirley: This was the second day?

Cantor Goodfriend: The second day.

Shirley: What happened?

Cantor Goodfriend: What we did . . . I remember what we did. The second day, we called together the neighbors in mebody’s house. I don’t remember exactly which neighbor . . . Kohl was the family name. They had a big room, a huge room. They lived downstairs. It was conducive to having a minyan there. We called the neighbors together and we said Tehilllem [the Book of Psalms], the chapters of a psalm. This was . . . then we’d cry a lot that G-d should help, that we should get rid of them, the same way they came, the same way they should go. That we should rid ourselves from this yoke and these terrible, terrible enemies we had. We were satisfied that G-d heard us. To our dismay, we experienced every day something else, every single day some new laws. Then they started to gather people to work. They came in the [court]yards and people would help them find the Jews—our Polish neighbors. The boys . . . they [would] point out that there was a Jew hiding, there was a Jew hiding, in the cellar a Jew was

75 The SS or Schutzstaffel was a powerful paramilitary organization in the Third Reich, responsible for many of the crimes against humanity during World War II. They wore distinctive all black uniforms.

76 A minyan refers to the quorum of ten Jewish adults required for certain religious obligations.
hiding. They take people to work. It was not a question that they needed the work; this was simply a sign of dehumanization of the people, a degrading of the Jewish people.

**Shirley:** I know you lived in an area where there was a tremendous amount of Jewish people. But there were also non-Jews. What was happening to them? It was an occupied city.

**Cantor Goodfriend:** The area where we lived, where I grew up . . . at this particular time we did not live in a non-Jewish area. On the contrary, we had 76 tenants in our complex, our apartment building. There was only one non-Jew. He was the superintendent, like the janitor. As I’ve said, we needed a *Shabbas goy.* He was the *Shabbas goy.* We needed somebody to light the fire for the children to have something warm and we needed somebody to come up and turn out the lights Friday night. We didn’t have to tell him. He knew. He gathered the *noch challah,* pieces of *challah,* that Friday night . . . they should last him for a week probably. He was a big, heavy man. Jebsco was his name. He had a big, vicious dog. I was scared to death always when I saw him.

**Shirley:** Did he behave nicely with you?

**Cantor Goodfriend:** He was one of the . . . he knew everybody since childhood. Was he nice? He was nice to us when there was nobody out there. He didn’t know better. If not, he wouldn’t be a janitor. He was not an educated man. He wouldn’t open the door after 11 o’clock, so you had to pull the ring. There was a ring to pull. This would ring in his house and he came out. If you didn’t have the dime or the five *haskadov* to give him for coming and opening the door, he’s

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77 A *Shabbas goy* is a non-Jew who is employed to perform certain types of work that observant Jews are not permitted to do on the Sabbath. Tasks typically included extinguishing the lighted candles or lamps on Friday night and making a fire in the oven or stove on Sabbath mornings during the cold weather.

78 *Challah* is special Jewish braided bread eaten on Sabbath and Jewish holidays.
curse you with all kinds of curses and swear words. You knew you had to give him something. Otherwise, he was very cooperative. He was not a lover of the Jews. He didn’t love us, no.

Shirley: When the occupation took place and you watched things change over a short period of time, were you taken to work? Was your father taken to work?

Cantor Goodfriend: It was so fast. Yes, my father was taken to work. My father . . . there were certain episodes where he suffered quite a lot. Why? Because we did business with the Germans in Lodz and in Poland. Being in the textile business, most of the textiles were manufactured by Polish-Germans, what we used to call Volksdeutsche. They were originally Germans but they lived in Poland. Lodz was the only city that the Germans didn’t have to fire a shot because a third of the population was German. I knew everybody because I used to go with my father to buy the merchandise . . . the textiles. There were the hand weavers. Very few of those Germans had everything mechanized. They still had the handloom to weave the merchandise, likes towels and tablecloths and bedspreads and drapes. This is what we dealt with: bed covers and so forth. I knew them and they knew my father.

When first there was a Rosh Hashanah, they didn’t go to the stores. The stores were all locked up because they were afraid. What good it is to open the stores that nobody can come and move around? The first Rosh Hashanah, there was a knock on the door. The Gestapo comes in. We were sitting down to have whatever we had to eat. I don’t remember exactly what it was. It was a matter of putting together something . . . if you had a little flour, mama baked a little challah, whatever . . . we had a meal. Whatever was available, we did not complain. We never complained about it, never. They came in and . . . right behind them was one who we did business with and my grandfather did business with—a Mr. Schmidt. He ordered my father . . . picked him up and started kicking him. [They turned him] round in front. They took
him down to the store and they pulled up the truck, a big one, and asked him to load the truck with every piece of merchandise in the store by himself. They didn’t leave a thread. These are people that we did business with. Here it was already four hours, it’s five hours, six hours, it’s already ten hours . . . my father is not home. I went out to the store. He wasn’t there. I went home and told my mother that I didn’t see him. I don’t know where they took him. A little bit later I heard some sighing on the steps. We lived on the second floor. Sure enough, my father could hardly walk from the kicking, the bruising and hitting him, besides taking all the merchandise. He came back. He said one thing only, “Thank G-d I’m alive.” That was all.

Shirley: Not knowing what was going to happen the very next day?

Cantor Goodfriend: No. This is . . . we took it. As we say, “We accept it.” We accept the fate. We accepted . . . this could be worse, the story is not yet written. Maybe G-d will help . . . maybe the next day will be better. Maybe something . . . they have their fill . . . They took the merchandise. This is what they want, this is what they came for. Then, “Goodbye.” They’ll leave. We were disappointed. Of course we were disappointed because the next day some new laws . . . the laws of putting on the yellow star . . . Who had yellow . . . ? This was a law. They will give you a day. In Lodz, we had to have one on the front and one on the back . . . two. They didn’t say ‘Jew.’ Didn’t have to say that but just the yellow patch in the form of a Magen David, the Star of David. Old pillowcases . . . they used to give you feathers that were down in those pillowcases. Mother took [a yellow pillowcase] and cut it up so everybody had their stars.

Then the next shock was burning of the synagogue. This was November. In November, they burned the synagogue. My father got up. It was in the middle of the night. We didn’t hear any noises except [we saw] the reflection on the opposite wall. It was like the reflection of fire . . . not smoke. At the middle of the night, you [could] see out the windows like
flames. My father said, “They’re burning the shul. The synagogue is burning.” The old temple. We were not the only ones. The whole [neighborhood] . . . all the neighbors were sitting there. They were crying. Such a synagogue!

Shirley: One synagogue in your area? In each area?

Cantor Goodfriend: In my area, no. Each area had dozens of synagogues. I’m talking about a huge synagogue. This was the Schnaydershul [Yiddish: tailor’s synagogue], the Shustershul [Yiddish: cobbler’s synagogue]. We called it . . . this was the artisan’s synagogue. Not rich people belong to the synagogue. They were tailors and cobblers and painters and carpenters and farmers and tin makers . . . simple people. But it was supported by one of the richest people in Poland, [Izrael Kalmanowicz] Poznanski. He was one of the [unintelligible, sounds like “popular mayors”: 21:20]. The fact is they established the headquarters of the Gestapo in his palace.79 This was called Poznanski center . . . Kalmen Poznanski—nice Jewish name. The synagogue could seat 4,000 people. It was a tremendous . . . two months before, they refurbished the outside. They brought in artists from Germany, from all over the world, because the masonry was so precise, so beautiful, the mosaics on the outside. It was done by hand. It was so beautiful, it was a sight to see and behold. We though . . . the first thing, “what happened to the Torahs? Are the Torahs safe?” This is the first thing that was on our mind. Synagogue is a building. You can build another synagogue. Are the Torahs safe? Nobody knew. Then we found out that some of the Torahs were taken out. People . . . risked their lives to save some of the Torahs.

<End Tape 2, Side 1, 01>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 1, 02>

79 Izrael Kalmanowicz Poznański (1834-1900) was a successful industrialist who made a fortune from textiles. His father, Kalman, had also been in the textile industry. Izrael built an opulent neo-Baroque style residence in Lodz at the turn of the twentieth century that became known as the Poznanski Palace. The Palace survived the war and is now home to the Museum of History of Lodz.
Cantor Goodfriend: Then every day was something new and not the way we thought it was going to be. It’s the old story, the “Der Mensch tracht und Gott lacht.” [Yiddish proverb: Man plans and G-d laughs.] A person is thinking, what G-d does is his own infinite way . . . out through the world and how things should happen. Unfortunately, it didn’t happen in our case. We tried to go on living. But events happened so fast that we didn’t have time to put pieces together and start planning for the next day. One thing was on our mind: it was survival. [We thought,] G-d will help and we will survive and then we’ll make plans.

Shirley: The family was still together?

Cantor Goodfriend: The family was still together. There was some talk about . . . among the neighbors . . . maybe it’s a good thing. Maybe we should get together and start . . . leave this place. Leave . . . walk or ride towards Russia. I am still talking about November or December of 1939. A lot of people took up the idea. They had a few dollars. They took knapsacks and started walking towards Malkinia, closer to the Russian border. Some of them were lucky enough to get through the border. Some of them were killed by German bombers because Warsaw tried to hold out longer. The defense for Warsaw took maybe four weeks. We decided not to go. First, my father would tell [them] that we cannot leave the whole family . . . his father had passed about in 1937 before the war. His mother and his sisters . . . he was very close [to them]. He was the only son. He was very responsible for his mother and sisters. So we didn’t go. Of course, his responsibility was [also to] his five children. We didn’t have any money to go. We needed something. We didn’t have it. We stayed. We decided whatever would happen with the rest of the Jewish people, would happen to us.

The Germans did not relax. They came there for a purpose, which we later learned was simply to do us in, as we saw. Every day [there were] new rules, new
restrictions. There was a short time in the interim where the German soldiers who were not directly involved in the process of taking care of the Jewish question, the Jewish people, they themselves wanted to buy something. You come to the city, especially soldiers, you like to buy souvenirs to take home, whatever they could get ahold of. There was a short time [when] the word got out that if you had some merchandise in your store . . . because it was your store, even though it’s empty . . . you bring it in [and] in hours it’s gone. You ask the price you want and you are paid the price you want. Among our people . . . the makers of men’s socks, they got the machine from the cellar. [They] had a few bales of yarn and they started making socks. They had some dye. They started to dye the socks in black or brown, whatever was left. I happened to know some of the people. I walked around and said, “Will you sell me a dozen? Sell me two dozen or three dozen.” Before I came and bought a dozen, it was already sold. I got two dozen, and it was sold. We started to wheel and deal just to have some money. By this time we got already in German money, Marks. We tried to live. We thought, “This looks good. If they’ll let [us] do commerce, we can try to make it go. Maybe they’ll stop this harassment and they’ll stop this going after the people.” It lasted a very short time, maybe two or three weeks. This is the one time that I was delivering a package of men’s socks to a different part of the city. I was carrying it . . . in such a way that in every entrance of every house I had to run in . . . because I saw Germans coming . . . to hide. My father was young man. My father at that time was 38 years old . . . 37. He was quite quick in walking, running. The two of us were running until one of the guards turned a corner and they saw my father running into one of the gates. They went after him and they arrested him. I tried to follow about 100 feet behind and see where they are taking him.

Shirley: Did they arrest him because he was selling goods?
Cantor Goodfriend: No. They arrested him because he was a Jew. The minute they arrested him, I saw the way they treated him. They made him run. One was on a bicycle . . . one of the soldiers. Of course, on a bicycle, when you run, [it goes] faster. He always hit him, “Run faster, faster, faster.” I followed and saw where they had taken him . . . into the Gestapo. It was now getting dark. I was afraid I won’t be able to get home to tell my mother what had happened. I made it home to tell her that he was taken to the Gestapo. She cried. We sat and waited, waited, waited. I said, “I’ll go back.” “No, no. Never go back. Wait. You have to wait here. I’m not going to lose you. If I let you go there, they’ll arrest you, too.” I said, “I cannot let him be there by himself. If they arrest me, we’ll be together.” [She said,] “No, no. You stay here.” We stayed and we waited. Later, maybe 10 o’clock or 11 o’clock, he came back. He could not walk up the steps. He couldn’t. We had to carry him up, with him leaning on me and my little, younger brother. He told us the story. They simply wanted to hurt [him]. That’s all.

Shirley: To scare him?

Cantor Goodfriend: To scare him, to hurt him. There was one of his suppliers from before the war standing there. They brought him in. He knew him. He was sort of instigating the others . . . Somehow he decided to have a little pity on him. Maybe it was something inside, maybe an angel, told him to let him go. This was something we didn’t expect.

We saw that it’s getting worse. To stay in Lodz is not a future. By then we already heard the talk about closing in the ghetto. This was already the end of December [1939]. They’re going to build a ghetto. Nobody knew where the ghetto was going to be. The people who were the bachers [Yiddish: important people] in the city, the Jewish Judenrat, didn’t know where it was going to be. But we saw that the Germans were starting to dig every 20 feet a hole. We said, “This must be for some reason, it must be for a fence or something. They want to
do something.” They had their plans already worked out in advance where the ghetto should begin. This is something that was planned ahead of time because you cannot come into a city and say, “This is it. This is what we’re going to do. They had maps of the city. They had people in that city who knew the city, exactly where the Jewish population is and where it is the best way to build this ghetto.

In order to build the ghetto, they had to reshuffle the population from the affluent part of town, where the people lived in beautiful homes. I would say they were considered very wealthy people. They were known all over the world. There was one Hassidic rebbe, who was the owner of the largest textile factory in Lodz. He was a Hassidic rebbe, the rebbe of [Paldonsk? 11:44]. There was another rich man who was manufacturing linen for bedding. He occupied a whole section of the city, never mind a block, a whole section called the ‘Widzew Manufacture.’” Widzew [Poland] is on the outskirts . . . a little town on the outskirts of Lodz.80 His name was Oskar Kon.81 In the Hebrew, [hoskadow? 12:20], our circle, our dynasty. People told us, image what the Germans did. They asked Oskar Kon to sweep the street in front of his palace. Can you image how degrading? Oskar Kon. The Oskar Kon. The richest man maybe in Poland. We said, “Is this is the end?” They started reshuffling people. People could only take what they could hold in their hands. They had to pass our house because we lived right on the border of the ghetto. Rumkowski was the leader of the ghetto. Chaim Rumkowski was the leader of the Judenrat in Lodz. I personally asked him, “Rumkowski, is our house going to be in the ghetto?” I didn’t get an answer. I got kicked.

Shirley: Why?

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80 Widzew lies east of Lodz. Today, Widzew is a part of Lodz.
81 Oskar Kon (1870-1961) was a wealthy industrialist and manufacturer in Lodz, Poland.
Cantor Goodfriend: Because he was mean. He was a mean person. Maybe I asked the right question and he didn’t want to tell me. Because the question was . . . had it been in the ghetto, we would not have left Lodz. We would have stayed in Lodz. Being that we were not sure, my mother’s parents outside Piotrkow . . . it was 44 kilometers from Lodz. Everybody said, “Come. Let’s stay together with the parents of my mother.”

Shirley: Were you allowed to leave where you lived and go to another area?

Cantor Goodfriend: Allowed? No. We were not allowed. Possibility to leave? Yes. It was . . . the ghetto was not closed down. It was open. We hired a horse-and-buggy with a driver and we put a few of our belongings on this way. A cousin of mine, the girl was probably 12 or 13, and myself. She, too, has family in Piotrkow because her grandparents also come from the same background. Our great-grandparents were the same great-grandparents of this girl. We rode. We started out on the road. It was a Saturday night. I took off the yellow badge and she did, too. We just put on the coats. [It was] freezing, but we were dressed for it. Snow was coming down like never before. Maybe . . . who measured, at least two inches. It was snowing, all night and all day long. We made our way to the first checkpoint and we were stopped. We were stopped at the checkpoint by the German.

Shirley: Where were you going?

Cantor Goodfriend: We were going to my grandparents’ house. The question was: “Who are you? Where are you going?” We gave the old story like Little Red Riding Hood, [saying] “I’m going to visit my grandmother and my grandfather.” They said, “Juden [German: Jewish]?” [We said,] “Yes.” [They said,] “Why are you running away?” [We said,] “We are not running away. We’re simply going to visit.” They didn’t notice . . . [unintelligible, 16:30]. We were shivering. We had to give papers. We didn’t have any papers. [They said,] “Are you Jewish?” [We said,
“Yes.” [They said,] “Where is the yellow star?” We begged, “Please, please let us go.” They let us go.

Shirley: Why just you and your cousin, Chazzen? Why were you chosen?

Cantor Goodfriend: Because they figured . . . they send two kids first. We’ll get there. They will come later on because they wouldn’t have to carry anything. We carried the load. But they will have simply to come as they are. It was much easier [without baggage]. For a few zlotys, you could have somebody take you across, which was not a big deal. We couldn’t go by train . . . all [the] Germans used the trains. The means of transportation was [by horseback] until the horse got sick in the middle of the road. We couldn’t go any further. We had to get off the wagon and push. Somehow in the middle of the road, in the middle of the night, I remembered we had a distant cousin’s cousin, who was a farmer in this particular part of Poland. I said, “Let’s go there and stay overnight.” We come in and I smell the freshly cooked potatoes . . . I could have devoured the whole thing just by looking at it. To make a long story short, we changed the horses. Instead of a four-wheel wagon, we got a sled. The sled could go on the snow.

Shirley: With all the things that you were carrying?

Cantor Goodfriend: We transferred the belongings onto the sled and we took off. It was . . . now I know why it took 40 years for the Israelites to be in the [unintelligible; sounds like “middle”: 18:40], because 44 kilometers took us three days. Very simple. We continued. We came to Piotrkow and we were welcomed into the family. We stayed there. After about a week or so, the rest of the family joined. My father came and my mother with the rest of the children.

Shirley: No problem?
Cantor Goodfriend: No problem. They came. We had some people who helped them. [They were] in disguise a little bit. [They came] also by horse-and-buggy but not by . . . they came at a
different situation.

Shirley: Did they all come together, those who remained?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, they came together.

Shirley: And your grandmother?

Cantor Goodfriend: My grandmother came . . . my father’s mother . . . came with her
daughter. At a different time, maybe a week later. They also came to Piotrkow. Then my
mother’s sister came. Most of the family—not all of them—most of the family came over to
Pietrkow. Why did we . . . were we anxious to go? Because Lodz was in the Third Reich. Lodz
was annexed to Greater Germany. Piotrkow was a Protectorate. It was ruled by a governor,
[Hans] Frank. It was more lenient. We didn’t have to wear the yellow badge. You wore on the
arm a band with a blue-and-white Magen David, which was . . . the lesser of two evils. It was
more dignified for them. But at least there was some sort of . . . more freedom, if you will. The
ghetto was a ghetto, but it was not closed. You could move around. You could go to a farmer
and buy wheat. You could go to a farmer and get some sugar. You could get some milk and
some cream. We had a lot of youngsters, young children. My youngest brother was only two

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82 Hans Frank was an early supporter of the Nazi party. He studied law and eventually became the personal legal
advisor to Adolf Hitler. After the outbreak of World War II, Frank was appointed Governor General of occupied
Poland. In this capacity, Frank was responsible for the exploitation and murder of hundreds of thousands of Polish
civilians, as well as the deportation and murder of Polish Jews. After the war, he was found guilty of war crimes and
crimes against humanity and executed on October 16, 1946.

83 Soon after the German invasion of Poland, Jews in the Warthegau (the German-annexed territory of western
Poland) were required to wear a badge on their chests, which was a yellow Star of David [Hebrew: Magen David]
on a black field with the word "Jew" inscribed inside the star. In the General Government, that part of Poland
directly occupied by Germany, Governor General Hans Frank ordered on November 23, 1939, that all Jews over the
age of ten wear a "Jewish Star": a white armband affixed with a blue six-sided star, worn over the right upper sleeve
of one's outer garments. There were heavy penalties for those caught not wearing it.

84 Until the summer of 1940 the Jews could come and go from the Piotrkow ghetto and most were employed outside
the ghetto manufacturing goods for the Germans, making it easier to barter for food from the local Poles. As more
and more refugees arrived and Germans authorities resettled Jews, the ghetto population swelled to nearly 20,000
people. The ghetto contained 182 buildings with 4, 178 rooms; meaning roughly five people lived in every room.
years old, two-and-a-half years old, at that time. My cousin was two years old; the one who lives now in Israel. It was a different life. We felt sort of a more relaxed atmosphere.

Shirley: What time was this? After December 1939?

Cantor Goodfriend: This was January 1940 or the beginning of February, around then. But as far as going and gathering—we used to call it ‘catching’—the Jewish people who were [taken] to work, [to do] menial work like bringing stones from the other side and vice verse with the stones on that side because they’re bigger on that side . . . simply to . . .

Shirley: Make you busy?

Cantor Goodfriend: Not busy. To laugh at you, what you can do. Then they were more and more serious. They work in canals. They cleaned out the cities, worked on the farms, they cleaned out the parks . . . then the factories that were in existence in that city—the lumber factories and the glass factories.

Shirley: In Pietrokow did you work?

Cantor Goodfriend: In the beginning, no. In the beginning I tried to get out of it . . . They protected me. The family protected me. They didn’t want me to get involved, so they protected me. How can you protect [someone]? They used to hide me. I used to hide underneath the [window] seal behind the curtain. I used to hide in bed. You just crawl in . . . my uncle was sleeping, he was in bed. I made myself so small that they didn’t see my head. They didn’t look for me. Sometimes I crawled in with my aunt in the bed and covered myself so that they didn’t see a man sleeping there.

Shirley: They came into houses to check?

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85 In the spring and summer of 1940 Jewish males aged 16 to 45 were taken to labor camps in the Lublin area to build fortifications on the frontiers of the Soviet Union. Most died in the camps or from illness. The Germans also often captured men for forced labor or the Judenrat would supply workers. Forced labor involved backbreaking work such as street cleaning, repairing the roads, draining swampy fields, or digging trenches and canals.
Cantor Goodfriend: At night, yes . . . in the middle of the night . . . to catch people to work.

Shirley: Unexpectedly?

Cantor Goodfriend: Unexpectedly. Somehow I escaped. I was never caught. Never. Except they told us, word got out [that] if you show the guy that comes to get you . . . a paper from a doctor that you have very contagious disease, [they] cannot come in touch with you, they will throw back the paper and move back. They wouldn’t touch you. I went to a doctor. It cost something. He gave me all the contagious diseases that existed at the time. I showed it to them. They wouldn’t even look at me. They could have taken [me] out and killed me, too. But this was not the time yet where they simply . . . this particular town was under the Protectorate.

Shirley: Did you father work?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. Not work: they caught him. They caught him to work sometimes. Sometimes he was lucky that they didn’t take him. If they had a quota, they didn’t take him.

Working there in the ghetto and the ghetto was no . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: It’s interesting that in the ghetto, somehow we managed to do a little business. We couldn’t do business in the open. What we did was bartering in a way. I remember we used to, believe it or not, sell American money, Russian money, British gold pieces, Russian gold pieces, French gold pieces.

Shirley: Where did you get it?

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86 A complex economic system quickly was established in the ghettos of Poland. Jews would barter and trade or use their limited currency on the black market for food, clothes and other goods. A black market is sometimes referred to as an underground or shadow economy characterized by some form of noncompliant behavior with an institutional set of rules. Apart from the clothes and food trade, there was trade in currency, valuables, gold, silver, etc. A black market money exchange functioned in the ghetto, fixing a daily rate of exchange for gold dollars, paper dollars, golden roubles, etc.
Cantor Goodfriend: We had names for it . . . code names. Dollars we used to call *vecha* [0:53], gold dollars, $20 gold pieces, *hardreh*. The $10 Russian piece was a *fonya*. The English pieces we called a *fehhrdel* because it has a horse on the gold piece. The French, a *Louis*. [When someone said,] “Louis . . .” we knew that he was talking about a French gold piece. Now, who do we buy it from and who did we sell it to? We bought it from one Jew and sold it to another Jew. How much can you make when you do business like this? Very, very little. But the one thing you have: you had to have a good name, be honest. Because the person who supplied with all these things were people who were quite wealthy before the war. One in particular I remember because he was from Lodz. He lived in Pietrokow at that time. They used to have a big hardware store . . . a huge hardware store. He had a lot of money. He had a daughter and a son. The daughter looked not like one *shikse* [Yiddish: non-Jewish woman] but like 100 *shikses*. She was blond, very pretty, and she traveled from one city to the other. Somehow, she got the currencies and delivered [them] to her father. Her father was very busy doing the business. But my father, of blessed memory, had very good credit because he didn’t have money to pay for the piece that we took. Let’s say he sold a $10 gold piece or a $50 bill, which was the long, old dollar bills. The bills, I remember, they had a gold stamp. [They were] covered in gold, brought more money. They used the gold off gold dollars. Not the metal, but they had the long . . . one side was like a gold color. It had the stamp covered in gold. This was what brought more money. You picked up . . . it wasn’t too far . . . how big was the ghetto . . . walked over to Mr. Hiller and paid a *schiller*. He used to count and every count he used to sigh, “*Oy, eyns. Oy, tsvey. Oy, dray.*” [Yiddish: Oh, one. Oh, two. Oh, three.] The more he counted . . . he came to 100 he could hardly talk, he was so excited. That way, you could see on the table every currency from every different country had its own little pile. Then he was very, very excited. What happened to him?
What happened to all the Jews, with the money, with the currencies, with the dollars... He went the same way. His daughter got killed. She was caught. But he didn’t stop. He kept on doing business.

Then I remember, I did business with yarn. I used to buy yarn and sell it to people who made the socks in machines. I didn’t know anything about yarn, so I got burned. I bought yarn that was old, that didn’t go into the machine, it fell apart. This kind of business we did. Sometimes we made a few groschen, sometimes we lost. But it was sort of like doing business, take it from pocket and put it in the other pocket. This was called ‘doing business.’ It was a time... there were partnerships. No lawyers then, just by the shake of the hand they become a partner, 50-50. You did a little work and then you divide it at the end of the day whatever money you make.

Shirley: Is that what everyone was doing in order to make a living?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.

Shirley: Was that all they could do?

Cantor Goodfriend: Or something else: baking bread illegally; building an oven in the kitchen. Or what I did later on. I got myself a machine to make flour out of the wheat. I bought the water and then used to sit on the fifth floor with grain, the machine, and make flour. The flour I sold to the baker. The baker was downstairs... [he] had two guards watching that the Germans are not coming. How can you bake bread? It smells the whole neighborhood up. Well, we did it. Then I started to make men’s socks. I learned how to make men’s socks in the ghetto. I

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87 In German-occupied Poland, the amount of food allotted to Jews was meager. Within the ghettos, the starving Jewish population had to resort to the purchase of food on the ghetto black market, which was often supplied by smuggling and the extensive bribery of the guards. Prices on the ghetto black market were considerably higher than even those on the Polish black market. The prices of staples like bread and potatoes increased significantly. The prices of items like meat increased to the point of being almost unobtainable. However, as German authorities tightened control in the ghettos, it became more and more difficult to smuggle food in and resources were soon exhausted.
got a machine and then made socks. If the machine broke, I fixed the machine. We did everything. You name it; we did it in order to survive.

One thing we learned in those days: that if Hitler wouldn’t have killed the people, just simply for killing and getting rid of the Jews, the food [was not] very far removed from our needs. We couldn’t live without food. Not to say [Unintelligible Yiddish, sounds like “harnesyu”: 6:56]. You don’t eat meat. So you live without meat. You don’t eat bread? You live without bread. Potatoes? Can live without potatoes. Whatever you can get ahold of. A carrot is enough. If you find a potato, fine. If you find an onion; an onion is good, too.

Shirley: When you had five people in a family and . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: You managed.

Shirley: What could you eat? Where did you get the carrot? Where did you get the potato?

Cantor Goodfriend: Bread. Organize, organize, organize. Organize meant stealing. Very simple. Organize. You went to the farmer and you saw something growing in the field. You looked around and then you pulled out the potatoes from the ground. It was ready or not, who cared? It was something to cook. We lived. Later on, when we were incarcerated in the small ghettos, into the factory, they had to feed us. They needed the work. They knew if they wouldn’t feed us we would be able to work, to produce. Money, they didn’t have to pay. At least food they had to give us. This was already in 1942.

Shirley: Did they ever enclose that ghetto?

Cantor Goodfriend: Not until 1942. In Piotrkow the ghetto was open until 1942.

Shirley: Then what changed?
Cantor Goodfriend: It was the first ghetto in Poland. When you go to the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum] in Washington [D.C.], you’ll see the very first picture when you walk into the Museum. The first ghetto in Poland was Pietrokow. But, closing the ghetto was in 1942 after they liquidated the big communities. In October 1942 when we were told . . . the people who worked in the factory were told to go home for an hour and take a knapsack and come back within a hour at this particular point where they would gather us and take us to the factory, to stay there. We knew that something was going to happen. We knew that probably this was the day when they are going to take everybody. I remember the date. I was told to go home. I came to the house. I can see everybody. It’s the last time I saw them. I didn’t want to go. I really didn’t want to go. But they pushed, they pushed, they pushed, “Go, go, go.” I had built a hiding place . . . that I thought that they would never find. I became an expert in masonry to know how to make mortar and brick. I took bricks because I worked at [brick factory] in the factory. I built this hiding place for 40 people.

Shirley: Where was it in relation to . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: In the attic. You had to . . . in order to get in you had to go on the roof and climb through another entrance. It was a complete wall. Sure enough, after they send away all the Jewish people in the city, from Pietrokow, 162 people managed to hide. But the Germans used sniffing dogs. They found every hiding place . . . 162 Jews they found in hiding. They had to devise a way of killing them. They took them to the synagogue. They kept them in the synagogue for about . . . this was already in . . .

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88 In April 1942 the Piotrkow ghetto was closed and all non-Jews had to vacate the area. In September, a ‘Small Ghetto’ was created, with a few small blocks of houses enclosed by barbed wire. Thousands of Jews from neighboring towns and villages were brought into the larger ghetto as rumors of an impending Aktion circulated.

89 After the liquidation of the larger ghetto, the Germans and Jewish Police began searching for several hundred people who had hidden. They were incarcerated in the Great Synagogue, where some were brutally tortured or murdered. The first group caught was deported to Treblinka. On December 20, 1942, the remaining 160 people were taken to the nearby Rakow Forest, forced to dig their own graves, and shot.
Shirley: . . . December?

Cantor Goodfriend: No, this was in the beginning of December of 1942, 11 days in the beginning of December. I have the date . . . They took them out of the synagogue and they were asked to dig their own grave. This is where my mother is . . .

Shirley: Chazzen, that was your mother. Who else was included?

Cantor Goodfriend: My two brothers and sisters.

Shirley: And your grandmother?

Cantor Goodfriend: And my grandmother. My grandmother because my grandfather was shot in the synagogue because he asked . . . he was a very, very saintly man . . . he asked the guard to give him some snow to wash his hands before davening, before prayer. He offered a gold piece. [The guard] took the gold piece and killed him. He died in the synagogue.

Shirley: Where were you that day?

Cantor Goodfriend: I was working in the factory. Some of the [Polish] neighbors came running and happy. [They said,] “They just killed 160 Jews and they buried them. It saw it with my own eyes. In the forest, in Rakow Forest.” I knew exactly what had happened. I threw away the shovel. So did many of us in our group. We started to cry. The foreman said to us, “I don’t understand you guys. You cry. Why are you crying? Because they killed you Jews? Oh, come on. I lost 40 pigeons. I didn’t shed a tear. You know what 40 pigeons are? All my life I’d saved those pigeons. I didn’t cry.” Then we saw who our elders are . . . our protectors, the mentality of the protectors. This was the end of an era. I felt . . . I don’t know, I felt superfluous. I felt so unnecessary. I felt so useless and worthless. It doesn’t make any difference what happens to me. There was no urge to go on. You became sort of a follower or sort of a zombie alone in the dark. [You] say to yourself, I’m not going to do anything extraordinary. What’s happened to
everybody else . . . whatever will happen will happen. I will just go along with it, go along with the train. If told to unload a carload of coal, I’ll do it. Unload a car of soda like 200 pounds of soda, carrying on my back, I’ll do it. As long as I will have a piece of bread or potatoes. Plans? We didn’t make any plans. There was no use making plans. We had plans . . . I always dreamt . . . I always planned . . . how will it feel to be an uncle or . . . I couldn’t make plans.

Shirley: Did you have to remain in this factory?
Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.
Shirley: You were not allowed to leave?
Cantor Goodfriend: No, nobody was allowed to leave.
Shirley: How long did you stay working there before you thought, “I really have to change my life?”
Cantor Goodfriend: Until the end of 1943 . . . we lived. This was a life going on without purpose. We tried to cheer ourselves. We did concerts every day. We sang. We performed for ourselves. We sang. I sang. I had friends who were sort of frustrated actors . . . we tried to cheer ourselves up. One would cheer the other. We davened. We had services. We had religious services. The director of the factory came one Kol Nidre and the choir was standing there.90 He couldn’t understand what was going on. I was in the choir and I didn’t feel like davening. I didn’t feel like it. In those days, he came and offered us flour to bake matzo for Pesach. That was . . . I thought that was the end. This was just a few weeks after we came into the camp.

Shirley: Did you have any idea what was going on outside of your environment, in the rest of the world?
Cantor Goodfriend: Yes.

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90 Kol Nidre is an Aramaic declaration recited in the synagogue before the beginning of the evening service on every Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.
Shirley: How did you hear? How did you know?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, we followed the war . . . I did read German before the war . . . through non-Jewish workers. I asked them, “Please bring me a paper . . . any paper.” They used to smuggle in a paper. We saw that the front, in October of 1942, that the Germans are beginning to lose the war. They didn’t think so, but I and other people like me thought, “This is it. Stalingrad. This is it.” This is where they have the first zets [Yiddish: blow, hit], the first setback. This is the beginning of the end . . . finally the Russian took a stand and then they succeeded. This was October of 1942. I’ll never forget that. We used to read the German paper, the *Volkischer Beobachter* [German: People’s Observer] . . . the *Beobachter* is . . . “The People’s Overseer” is a good translation. We saw that it was going toward coming to an end but our problem did not come to an end.

In 1942, I remember I was almost . . . the papers . . . they sent me to the Gestapo . . . because I did something unintentionally. I was in charge of supplying bricks and mortar to four engineers who came in from Lodz especially to build a tall chimney for the glass factory. They needed tall chimneys like the iron and the steel foundries that they had, because the heat had to be at least 3,000 degrees Celsius to melt the glass. The guy who was operating the lift with the motor knew exactly [when to stop the motor]. He had to go to the bathroom. He asked me to take it over, please, and he’d be right back. So I did. But I forgot that every time they go a little higher, you changed a line, a white chalk line, in order that you had to stop.

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91 The Battle of Stalingrad took place between July 1942 and February 1943. In brutally cold winter weather, the Soviets were able to successfully defend the city of Stalingrad. The battle is considered to be a turning point in the war in favor of the Allies. The battle was also one of the bloodiest in history, with both sides suffering tremendous casualties.

92 The *Volkischer Beobachter* [German: People’s Observer] was a daily newspaper published by the Nazi Party in Germany.

93 In 1942-1943, a giant glass oven cistern, smelting pot and other small buildings were built at the Kara glass factory. Jews had to dig a deep pit and carry bricks and stones while foreman stood watch, ready to beat the workers with sticks.
Because if [you did] not, then the whole thing would [fall] right over you. Sure enough, I kept on going and I see bricks fall right on top of me. I see the four engineers are hanging on the freshly built chimney and one is trying to run down the emergency ladder. I stopped. I didn’t take long [until] the chimney, the whole thing, collapses. When I came, he took a [piece of lumber] and started hitting me all over. He could have killed me. I knew I was guilty. What could I do? I could say I’m sorry. It wouldn’t help. [He said,] “You’re going to get it. You deserve it. You’re stupid.” I said to myself, “What can I do?”[unintelligible, sounds like “I shared.” 20:44].” I’m led into the office of the director who was a mean guy, a tall [Pole]. The one who looked in my eyes a few days before when they gathered together a few people to send . . . before they came to the factory, to send them to where [Oskar] Schindler was—to Plaszow.⁹⁴ I was alone, remained alone out of 32 people. Thirty-one went on the truck. I was the one standing . . . just picture an empty square, an empty place. I was alone standing there and he looked straight in my eyes. I looked in his eyes without blinking, without saying a word.

**Shirley:** These were people who were going to be sent somewhere for safety’s sake?

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⁹⁴ Oskar Schindler (1908-1974) was an ethnic German born in present-day Czech Republic. During World War II, he was a Nazi party-member who became a factory-owner and is credited with saving the lives of the almost 1,200 Jews he employed at his enamelware factory in the Plaszow concentration camp. In July 1943, about 1,500 Jews from Pietrkow were sent to the Blizyn camp and another three truckloads were sent to camps in Pionki, Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski, and Radom. It is unclear whether any were sent to Plaszow. Only about 1,500 Jews remained in Pietrkow. These workers (including Cantor Goodfriend) were employed at and lived at the glassworks or lumber factories.
Cantor Goodfriend: No. Sent away to another concentration camp. We knew that they were going to eliminate workers. Those people who did not . . . were sent away. It was good to stay in the place, to stay in the factory.

Shirley: How did you get that lucky?

Cantor Goodfriend: I don’t know.

Shirley: Someone was watching [over] you.

Cantor Goodfriend: This same guy the next day was filling out the papers for me to go to the Gestapo two days later . . . because I do to the chimneys. By the way, it’s written up in the book.

Shirley: He could have killed you. He let you go?

Cantor Goodfriend: He could have . . . no, it was not a question of killing me. The question was to send me or not to send me, to go with the rest or stay. He looks [at me] and what a feeling I had—don’t ask. I looked straight in his eyes. He looked in mine. We must have remained there frozen, really nailed—not frozen, nailed—to the ground. I couldn’t move. He walked away. A few days later [the chimney episode occurred]. If it hadn’t been for the engineers . . . I became the “Girl Friday” for these four engineers. They took a liking to me and I became their maid, cooked for them, cleaned their quarters, food . . .

Shirley: For you, too?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. Nothing was lacking. Anything: the best. Here I tried to help with the head engineer. [I asked him,] “You believe?” He said, “Yes, I believe.” I looked at him. I recognized. I said to him . . . I knelt down, grabbed his pants . . . “You know, you are very smart.

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95 In the beginning of 1943, some 2,400 workers officially remained in the Small Ghetto (estimates put the actual population around 3,000 as those Jews who had survived the liquidation of the larger ghetto now hid in the Small Ghetto). In February and March 1943, around 500 people were deported to the Hugo Schneider AG (HASAG) ammunition factories in Skarzysko-Kamienna. In July 1943, the Small Ghetto was liquidated. Around 1,500 Jews were sent to other camps in the area. The rest were housed at the factories where they worked. By the end of July, the town of Piotrkow had been declared Judenrein [German: free of Jews].

96 “Girl Friday” is an idiom that refers to a female assistant or servant entrusted with a variety of tasks.
My life is in your hands.” I stayed sitting there, waiting for the order that the Gestapo should pick me up. He comes out, tears rolling down his cheeks . . . a Polish engineer. He [said], “Come with me.” He told me, “I told him [the director], ‘Do you want the chimney to be finished? Then

Itzac has to be here. We cannot finish it without him.”’

Shirley: That was absolute luck.

Cantor Goodfriend: Call it what you want. That’s why my book is called By Fate or By Faith.97

Shirley: Chazzen, at this point when they allowed you to stay and you worked with them, this was when?

Cantor Goodfriend: The end of 1942.

<End Tape 2, Side 2, 01>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2, 02>

Shirley: What happened next? How long did you stay there? What changes were taking place?

Cantor Goodfriend: Many changes. Changes as far as general changes [in] the war. The war started to move closer from the east . . . the Russians. The Russian started to come closer to Warsaw. They were 150 kilometers away from Poland. They always say, “Put your ear to the ground until you hear the trembling.” One hundred and thirty kilometers. They said, “If you want to hear, you hear it.” The old story. I still don’t believe how you can hear putting your ear to the ground, you can hear the trembling . . . hasn’t made it. Maybe . . . if you wanted to hear. Then

suddenly the sirens stopped. This was in 1943. Then there was the ghetto uprising [in Warsaw]. Then they really pinned us down. They wouldn’t let us out. Completely . . . nowhere to go. At the end of 1943, when we saw that the whole thing, the whole place is a waste. Nothing is going to happen. No Messiah will come and no redeemer will come and no army will come to save us. This is it. This is where we are unless a miracle is going to happen. Every day we were told, we were lectured that, “Anybody who dares run away, we will kill them. If we catch them . . . the whole camp will all be killed.” We were out of constant touch with my family who had already been hiding at a Polish farm. We had a courier.

Shirley: You have to explain that to me because your immediate family . . .

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, my immediate family was gone . . . I’m talking about my mother’s two sisters and my first cousin. They managed, in 1942, before they liquidated the ghettos, to go to this farmer. This farmer was a customer of my grandparents. My grandparents were in the trifle business . . . lingerie, mostly ladies underwear and stockings.

Shirley: On your mother’s side?

Cantor Goodfriend: On my mother’s side. This was their main merchandise: ladies stockings. They were customers. When they came up, she [the farmer] saw there was a baby, she said, “Come to my house with the baby.” She was the first one to go. This was three days before the liquidation of the ghetto. Then my youngest aunt, mother’s youngest sister . . . she looked like a

98 Throughout the summer of 1942 and into 1943, a series of mass deportations had sent around 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka. On April 19, 1943, the Warsaw ghetto uprising began after German troops and police entered the ghetto to deport its surviving inhabitants—a group of mostly young people who had heard reports of mass murder in Treblinka. The fighters were able to hold out against heavily armed and well-trained German soldiers, tanks and armored cars for nearly a month, but the Germans literally destroyed the ghetto building-by-building, block-by-block, burning and demolishing the ghetto one street at a time. On May 16, 1943, the revolt ended. Soviet troops were still battling German troops along the Eastern front in present-day Ukraine, some 1000 kilometers (over 600 miles) away while the ghetto uprising was taking place. In July 1944, the Polish Home Army (the anti-Communist underground resistance) launched another uprising in Warsaw. Although the Western allies dropped ammunition and supplies and the Soviet army was within sight of the city, no troops assisted the city and the uprising was crushed. The Germans razed Warsaw, leaving the majority of the city in ruins. The Russians did not liberate the city until January 1945.
real goy, like a real non-Jewish person: blue eyes, blond and nose like this . . . kol nostra [3:48], they used to call it. She spoke the language perfectly. She came afterwards. We were in touch through a non-Jewish neighbor of ours who used to bring notes. I used to write them notes. Then when I heard the director came . . . not the director, the assistant director, who was a real Nazi . . . This director, who gave us the flour for Passover and he came to services, he was good. He was very good. As a matter of fact, after the war, people went to thank him. He was another Schindler. But Schindler did it for money. [The director] didn’t do it for money. That’s the difference. This assistant director, he was wearing always a black uniform with his boots, the whip over us and coming like this, hitting with his high boots. He yelled out to us, “Sit down your behinds. If not, we know how to smear them. Remember what I say. I am very serious. You better listen to what you have to do and what you cannot do.” I said to my friend who was supposed to run away with me, “When I hear talk like this, I don’t like it. Tonight we’ve got to leave.” Sure enough . . .

Shirley: From the factory?

Cantor Goodfriend: From the factory the next morning. We came to the farm.

Shirley: How’d you get there?

Cantor Goodfriend: Walked.

Shirley: How far was it?

Cantor Goodfriend: It was about two miles through fields. We didn’t go the normal way. I left my tefillin in the barracks. I left everything that would have identified me as being Jewish. Except in that way would catch me, they would know I’m Jewish.

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99 About 1,100 Jews worked for the Kara and Hortensja glass factories. They worked as glass breakers and blowers or loaded and unloaded soda, coal, bricks, cement and other materials. Especially at the Kara factory, the managers and foremen were known for their abuse of the workers. At the end of November 1944, the last Jews of Piotrkow who had remained at the factories were deported to a number of different concentration camps, such as Buchenwald and Ravensbruck.
Shirley: Chazzen, you said your friend. Was it someone who worked with you? Another Jewish boy?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, another Jewish boy with two brothers and an uncle. They were supposed to run away from the factory at the same time. It was 6:00 in the morning, not 5:55 or 6:05 . . . 6:00 in the morning.

Shirley: Together with you?

Cantor Goodfriend: They came from the factory and us from the barracks. Because my shift was 2:00 a.m., their shift was from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. It had to be synchronized. If they would have stayed there at 6:01 a.m., they didn’t belong to the factory because they were supposed to already in the barracks. It had to be exactly. But G-d works in different ways. They managed to do it at 6:00 a.m. We didn’t.

Shirley: Why?

Cantor Goodfriend: Because there was a Jewish policeman who saw me and my friend dressed up. It was not my shift. He knew that we worked 2:00 am shift. Jewish policeman. We jumped out of the window. He was . . . in a nice building with his wife and his child . . . jumped out and starts following us. What did I wear? I wore new overalls I had never put on. When I came to the factory, I was given a pair of overalls, blue, very cheap material, but new. A pair of . . we called it ‘sneakers’ . . made out of rubber from the tires and a piece of schmatta [Yiddish: rags] around it. This was what we were supposed to wear. But I didn’t put it on. I put it under my mattress when I first came there. Ask me why? I don’t know why. I simply said, “Maybe the day will come I might need it.” I didn’t know when I’ll need it or what for I’ll need it. This was the day. [The Jewish Policeman] jumps of the window and starts following us. This friend of mine [unintelligible 8:20] . . . [said] “Just act normal. We cannot go talk to the guy cause he doesn’t
have a heart.” We knew him from before. [We decided,] “Let’s go and take our regular routine. We go to the barracks and pick up our pot to take some coffee.” In the morning there was a little room adjacent to the barracks that was built especially for the people, for the workers. Every morning somebody put a fire and there was some chicory . . . it was not coffee, it was black water. This [room] was between the two barracks. [We thought,] “Let them see that we act normal.” But he was a monster. He knew that something was cooking. He placed himself right in the center of the complex, so that he can observe us wherever we go, wherever we turn. Here were the two barracks facing the right side. We come in. I get my enamel pot. I had to see that the holes plates were covered with the bread, that it shouldn’t run out. Because usually for this we had four holes in the pot. And it shouldn’t run out. We came into this coffee house or this cafeteria and dig in to the big 50 or hundred gallon pot of black water. We started to sip and we used our heads. There is a little opening, maybe 10’ x 20’, not more without bars on the window. We both yelled out, “Drop it and let’s get through this hole.” We squeezed through. We were outside between the barbed wire and the barracks. We’re still inside the camp but between the barbed wire. This guy was standing out there. We were afraid, maybe he’ll come looking for us and that would be the end. There was no time to lose. I give him my hands to make sort of a [step] to lift him up. He gets up on the little roof. I said, “Lay low. Don’t lift your head because he might see you. Just lie there. Just roll towards the wire.” This was adjacent to the fence. Then we jumped. We talked about it before . . . we’d walk apart . . . at least 500 feet apart, not together. When he lays there on the roof, he looks back and sees . . . guards walk by. Sure enough, six guards walked by, right in front of it. When they turned, he jumped.

Shirley: How did you get up there? Who lifted you?
Cantor Goodfriend: I was a little faster. Maybe I was a little bigger and [I knew how to balance on thin walls]. I used to walk on straight walls. I got up . . . then I jumped down and started walking slowly, didn’t run. We walked about half a mile. I see a girl who comes every day to the camp and she brings food for her father. Sometimes she brings a piece of bread or a piece of cheese. They had a farm. We used to barter. We used to give her socks, or a shirt, or a piece of cheese, or maybe an onion. When I see her, I think, “Uh-oh, that’s it. She’s going to tell.” She starts winking . . . “Go with G-d’s speed.” The policeman was still standing there waiting. Later on we heard what they did to the whole barrack.

Shirley: Because of you? What did they do?

Cantor Goodfriend: They tortured them a little bit. They didn’t kill any.

Shirley: You made it to the farmhouse?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes. At the farmhouse we didn’t see a German until the last day of the war . . . until the last day when they left Poland. The last day of the war was in May [1945].

Shirley: This farmer knew you were coming and willingly accepted you? It’s a big responsibility.

Cantor Goodfriend: He didn’t have any other alternative. He was already hiding eight Jews there. He couldn’t turn his back now.

Shirley: Were they hiding or were they working there?

Cantor Goodfriend: They were hiding. I was working. When I came with my friend, we were the only one permitted to go out and work because both of us didn’t look Jewish. You saw the picture of the thing to thresh the corn? This was what we used by hand, threshing and working

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100 Piotrkow was liberated by Soviet troops on January 16, 1945. Out of the estimated 28,000 Jews who had been imprisoned in the ghetto, only 1,600-1,700 had survived, either in the camps or in hiding. The war in Europe officially ended on May 7, 1945 when German General Alfred Jodl signed an unconditional surrender to the Allies in Reims, France. The following day, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel officially surrendered to Soviet forces in Berlin.
about 20 hours a day. It was hard work, but it was free. We could go out. The neighbors asked them, “Who are these boys?” [The farmer answered,] “These are our friends from southern Poland. They came to work out on our farm.”

Shirley: Where was he hiding the women?

Cantor Goodfriend: In the last room, in the room there in the back, the back room. It was [a small room]. Eight people were sleeping there. There was a hiding place underneath the carpet. I built this. We dug [the floor] up after we came there.

Shirley: He fed everybody?

Cantor Goodfriend: He didn’t feed anybody. My aunt went out and bought bread and bought everything that was necessary. She could go out. She was not [Jewish looking]. She acted as part of the family. [People] thought they were married. This is a different story.

Shirley: You were safe there until the end of the war? No Germans ever came to check the place out?

Cantor Goodfriend: No. Except on the last night before the [Germans pulled out.] They came to look for transportation. They came and took away the horse and wagon and the farmer to transport them, to run away to the front. This was in January [1945].

Shirley: But you were there?

Cantor Goodfriend: We were there, but they didn’t see us. We were hiding. We heard . . . we had a big dog and a good dog. He used to bark. When somebody approached a mile away, he would start barking. He was on a chain in front of the house to the road. Remember, the dogs had a long chain and they run all the gamut from the house to the road.

Shirley: It was a watchdog.
Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, that’s what he was. We looked out through the window and saw they were coming. Down to the [dug out] ground, we went.

Shirley: The farmer left?

Cantor Goodfriend: [The Germans] took him with the horse, with the wagon.

Shirley: They thought he was a good guy? They didn’t take him to punish him?

Cantor Goodfriend: No, they needed the transportation. They needed anything to put some stuff in it. So what did he do? He was very smart. There was a traffic jam. The Russians came with their bombers and the streets were packed with everybody running away. After a few minutes, he saw that there was a traffic jam. He said, “Nobody is watching. Everybody is standing still.” He picked himself up, walked away from the horse and buggy and he walked home. They wouldn’t go after him because they were busy running away.

Shirley: He had a wife?

Cantor Goodfriend: He didn’t have a wife then. He didn’t have anybody.

Shirley: No children?

Cantor Goodfriend: No, he wasn’t married. He came back. We all said to him, “We will see to it you get your horse, you get your cow and you get your wagon.” The day after liberation, he produces a gun. He said, “Here’s a gun.” This neighbor was a German. He lived two farms away. [The farmer told us,] “He took away my first horse, my first cow.” We said, “That’s all you have to say.” My friend—the one I ran away with—and myself . . . we’re big shots! I’d never held a gun in my hand. We went into this German’s farmer and said, “Where is the horse?” . . . [We said,] “You want to live?” He says, “Take everything I have.” We said, “We don’t want to take everything you have. Just the horse and cow.” He stood fast. “Don’t raise any voice because we
will come back. We know what you did.” He got scared and he brought back the horse and the cow.

<break in tape>

Shirley: What happened when you returned the horse to him? Did he have any family? Was he connected to anybody at all?

Cantor Goodfriend: The farmer that we took the horse from or . . .

Shirley: The one you returned it to, the one who saved you.

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, the one that saved me. This was his aunt and an uncle that he was raised by. I don’t think he knew his parents. He was raised by them.

Shirley: They owned the farm?

Cantor Goodfriend: Yes, the old people owned the farm. It’s interesting. This is something that I think will remain with me and to the rest of us as long as we live. This is what he said to us. He sat us down, all of us . . . the old man . . . he sat like this [and said,] “Now you are free. You are free to go anyplace you want. Of course you can stay here as long as you want. But you are free. Where will you go?” We answered, “Home.” [He said,] “There is no home. Your home is gone. There’s nobody.” He didn’t have to remind us, but in his unsophisticated farmer’s common sense way of thinking, [he was saying,] “There’s no place to go.” We realized then that he really understood what he did. I think they meant what they said. They did risk their lives, definitely. The compensation . . . we did not give compensation. The only compensation we gave was our hands, our work. We did it gladly.

Shirley: Did the aunt and uncle support this hiding all those years?

Cantor Goodfriend: At times, no. At times, they didn’t support. As a matter of fact, she was a great Polish patriot. It’s interesting. Many times she mentioned to us, openly, “What will the
Polish government do for me if I’ll come and tell them I saved nine Jews? What will they do for me? But if I would come and say I did something for my country, for Poland, then I might be recognized. For saving nine Jews, I doubt if they would do something for me, to recognize me.”

Our answer was simply that we put our fates together, yours and ours. Now it’s too late. If you denounce us, you [will be punished by the Germans for hiding us].

<End Tape 2, Side 2, 02>

INTERVIEW ENDS