

**Lydia Saneve[?] Bazar**  
**Narrator**

**Wayne Clark**  
**Interviewer**  
**NYS Military Museum and Veterans Research Center**

**November 29, 2010**  
**Home of Lydia Bazar**  
**Saratoga Springs, NY**

Lydia Bazar    **LB**  
Wayne Clark   **WC**

**WC:** Today is the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2010. We are in Saratoga Springs, New York. My name is Wayne Clark, I'm with the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs, New York. And, for the record, would you please state your name and your date and place of birth, please?

**LB:** My name is Lydia Bazar, actually Lydia Saneve [?] Bazar. My parents' name was Saneve [?]. And I was born at this particular time in Poland in 1928, and my family used to own, in the Carpathians, we used to own the oil fields. We were very known in the area, and it used to be, at this time, the petroleum was sold to Flagler then later on to the Rockefellers. My schooling as a child was actually still just beginning, the schooling I have there. But in 1939, with announcing the war when the Germans invaded Poland, the first things they did was bomb my city.

**WC:** And you were about eleven years old then?

**LB:** Yes, ten, eleven years old. So what happened, just any bomb on any city is very treacherous, but being that this was oil fields, it created just enormous fires, and I lost one of my very good friends and her father got killed as a result of the bombing.

Now, the entrance of Germans was very short. They kind of came, stayed very short time. Kind of didn't have time to shake up the country for any reason and then the Russians arrived. Now, at this time, the Russians stayed for two years, and probably this was one of the scariest times in my life. But immediately, after a few months, they start picking up the people, people talking on the streets with each other, they would take them apart and wanted to talk [about] what they were talking about. And, all of a sudden, they start, maybe in a year after, they start coming with a regular train – not a passenger train, but just a one of those big ones – and they would pick up the people, a whole family, unannounced. They drive to your home, they pick you up with whatever you have a chance to grab, they put you in the train, and off you go to Siberia.

**WC:** Now, did your entire family survive that initial bombing attack?

**LB:** Yes, yes we did. I have a brother from my mother's first marriage. After her husband died, she married my father. He is seven years older than I am. So at this time, we were kind of, you know, everything was new. We lived a quiet life and all of a sudden, those incidents, those scary incidents. And they are not just regular incidents, they very much touch on life itself. You going to live? You going to die? Where are you going? When the Russians come in, they took all our family, thirty people, to Siberia.

**WC:** Did they come in and take your family's possessions, too?

**LB:** In the beginning, they just come and say "Get your things, you're leaving." And whatever you can grab, whatever you can put on, that's all you were leaving with. For this reason, I remember all those three years is I used to dress with three pairs of socks. And this

was every night I slept with full clothes. The entrance to our home was kind of a like a long road. So anytime, somebody by mistake, some truck, a regular truck, would come in and just dump you on in there. One day, they came and took my father's three brothers and their families, they took them. Grandmother escaped and ran to our house, and she said "I'm going to stay with you," and we were very happy with that. But my father, he was not afraid to see what was really happening. He was concerned for his brothers. He walked to the train, but they wouldn't take him. Not that he wanted to give himself up, but they had a list of exactly who they were taking. And they ask him, where was the grandmother, my grandmother, and naturally you cannot lie to them. Anything you say wrong, they can shoot you, life is such a little thing to them. They say "Tell her she has to come, but we got...you see what we can do." Naturally, she returned back. Interesting, they didn't take us. I mentioned to you Dbrislav? The city I'm talking about, being petroleum was a big thing for a city as such, and a lot of the population was the Jewish population. They were good businessmen, they came, so there were a lot of.... So my father was handling my grandfather's estate, that was the biggest oil estate at this point in Poland, and us, and as a result of it he was very connected with Jewish people.

Now you have to understand, the Jewish people at the time already knew what was happening all over the world with the Jewish situation. You cannot blame them, they have to attach themselves someplace. They cannot go with Germans, you're going to hear pretty soon what happened to them. And they knew already what could happen to them. But still, it sounded so unrealistic. So what happened, they must in some way shield them, they were already in Russian, so to say, government. They had a higher position than anybody else. But Russian understood too, that they are scared of Germans, so they used them in different positions, in the government of the city. We never knew, but possibly this would happen, that's the reason they didn't touch the four of us. The Russians didn't take us to Siberia.

Now all of a sudden they're becoming, a change of the hands —

**WC:** Now approximately what year was this?

**LB:** Say, we were talking two years, 1939, so we're talking 1941? 1942? Something in this vicinity.

**WC:** Ok.

**LB:** So, all of a sudden, the Germans are coming in and taking over, again, this territory. Before the Russians left, there was an undescrivable event, what happened in this city and other cities. In fact, this day, the priest's son came to visit my brother, that was in school already in Lviv. It's a city, I think he was in college there. He comes in to visit him, and on the way back, in fact I walked with them a little way till my brother said "Go home." He spent all day with us. But the city was under tremendous scrutiny of Russians leaving. After they left, my brother returned back home. But after they left, there was [unclear], so to say KGB, they were full [unclear]. Not killed, but murdered, young people, and this boy was one of them. Once he came to the center of the city they picked him up. The young girls, young students, had hair cut off, hair pulled way back, breasts cut off, you know it wasn't like "I'll shoot you," but they murdered them before this happened. I mean, it was an experience just to think about it. The streets were lined out with all those young people, some older people were cut in, too. And the parents were looking to find them and looking to bury them, and so on.

**WC:** Now why did they do this, because they were students?

**LB:** No. The youth is usually our protestors in any country. Students can change the country. When they make uprise, there is different uprise. You know, family men, is married, he is not going to stick his neck out to wind up in jail or be killed. He has his family to think about. But students, always it's a different thing. I could name many countries what happened, and how the students achieve independence, or what they were fighting for, it was granted to them. I mean, when they left it was like, "Dear God."

We heard from my aunt that they picked her up with her newborn child. They wind up in Siberia, and when they dumped her in the wintertime, they dug the hole in a mountain, and were living in this hole. They went from Colhosp [?], when they cultivated all these farms, they made it like one big farm and they called this Colhosp [?], and there, when the chicken would run off, they'd share between those people. They had hardly any clothes but what they take in five minutes when they say "In five minutes, get ready, you're leaving." Anyway, we thought, wow, what a great thing to see the Germans coming, they must be more civilized. Something like this would never happen. And a strange thing would happen, it was hard to describe. Oh, by the way, they took--the Russians--took my cousin, my father's oldest brother's son, and they boiled him in a kettle. You know, to describe to anybody, such happenings, you are so scared, you are so fearful. On top of this, when the Russians came, you couldn't go to church. I had, as a child, I liked to... we got Mother [unclear] in the church, and even when the church was closed, I still used to... we had a back door that went to the cellar, I could go there and pray to Mother [unclear]. To today I have this picture, I called my family back home and said, may the [unclear] of this altar.

Anyway, when Germans came, people politically were so lost. You know, Russia now accusing us of being collaborators with Germans. It isn't true, we were not any collaborators, only where do you go? Those people, we already learned, two years, they demolished us. They closed the churches, universities, things were happening just unbelievable. Interesting part, but it kind of, for a while, got very quiet till they established themselves, and their true identity was come into the picture. At this time, we first realized that there was something called pogrom, and we never realized in the beginning, even going to school, how could it be so, that they can take you from your home and just take you away and kill you? For what? Regular, just families. I'm not talking some political people or something like this. Just average human beings to be exposed to something like this.

Anyway, at this time I started going – this was like, high school – I’m almost coming to the end of German occupation. They would come and search the homes. They searched our home for whatever they could take. If you have a cow, or a pig or something, they would try to take this away from you. But when they announced the pogrom, we see the police walking – our house was very far from the street – but we could see the line of people with little, you know, not like luggage but cloth tied up, Jewish people we knew, with those hats like this (gestures a hat shape on her head). Women were walking in the street... We figured they must have just... you know, there used to be so-called ghettos, they were in Germany, they were all over the world, where Jewish people have to live together. This was barricaded, and everything, they can’t come out, you know. I always say we have so many geniuses in the Jewish nation, and the reason for it was, they could never step out much of this place, the youth or anything, and their most time was devoted to study. Those parents spent days and nights sitting and teaching the children. That’s the reason that, so to say evolution, produced this kind of people. But with regular students you just go to school and do your work and come back home, and this is it. There was continuous input the parents put on those children. So we realized that there were ghettos, but in our city there wasn’t. There was too much of business people, you know Jewish were very wealthy business people, they were dealing with oil, with refineries, and so on and so forth. So what happened when we saw those people walking on the streets like this, we said, dear God, it’s unbelievable, but maybe even I didn’t know just my parents knew at the time.

I used to, and my brother, used to take piano lessons from a very famous piano professor, Doctor Professor Schalit. In fact his son, Schalit – you know on television, this bushy-haired (gestures) –

**WC:** Oh, Gene Shalit?

**LB:** (Nods) Gene Shalit – it has to be his son. But I remember when I used to come in for a lesson. He was younger than I, and he used to have this bushy hair, and his mother used to have bushy hair like

this. And his father was almost like totally blind. His ears were very stiff (pulls ear upward), like this, and when he would be sitting like that having lunch, and I'm playing, he would say "Not third finger, not second...." This kind of quality. He was a composer. In fact, his father and him came to America for recitals and so forth. Some phenomenal music they did. Anyway the parents didn't want anybody to know, but we were hiding Professor Schalit in our house. So, a couple days apparently, they knew it, I as a child was able to tell you, but the home was a very big home. There were maids, there were stablemen, so somebody must have seen that he was there. So as this pogrom is going on, and they are taking, and they are bringing people at this point, marching someplace, a woman runs into our house with this little banner on (gestures around her arm), like this, Jewish identification, and she start talking and we realized why she is there. She doesn't want to be home, they are walking to the houses and pulling people out. And in a couple minutes there are Germans with machine guns (gestures gun) walking in our house, and saying "You're hiding Jews." Apparently, somebody from the help reported that we were hiding Professor Schalit. But here is this woman, and she said, "No, I'm a neighbor, I live right here, I come in to borrow something" – she had a little cup – I forgot what it was at the time, flour or something – "I'm in [unclear], probably this is what they're talking, hiding," and she say "Come on with me, I'll show you where I live, I just come in to borrow something, they're not hiding me." They took us all outside, my father, my mother, my brother was not home – he was in Lviv, in college – and this woman, she was a little woman, a little bit taller than I was. And she was holding my hand, and my mother, my father, we were standing in a line. They're still questioning her, "Where is your son, where is your husband?" And she said, "I'm not married," and so on and so forth. They they looked at her, you know with those guns, and they say "You're coming with us," and she say "No, I'm not going nowhere." With that, she finished the sentence--pow! She fell down, and she pulled me, holding my hand very tight, she pulled me right with her, I fell on top of her, and my parents thought that I was killed, too. So my mother start crying, and they just say "You be lucky, we're not doing nothing to you." And they left.

As you look from our house, there was – maybe four, five miles – was the hill, and we see the bulldozer digging the hole, going steadily through this mountain like this (gestures in a line). And they brought all those people right up to the top, and you just heard the machine gun, da-da-da-da-da-da, so I asked my parents “What is this, what are they doing?” and they say “Don’t worry”. You know, they’re worrying how scared I am. It was almost, as I remember my childhood, it was continuously fear. It took me, when I came to this country, many years to lose this fear. You know, but it was always, kind of, uncertainty, anxiety, something will happen to us. And so when they killed those people, it was (shrugs). And this keep on continuing, all kinds, but they knew the Ukrainians didn’t have a place to go. We couldn’t go to the Russians – we already have a history of three hundred years, what the Russians did to us, you know – took our country, kept until today, we’re having a repeat right now. And so when all of a sudden the war starts, and the Russians start coming closer, there was nothing else for us to do. In fact, my father was not going. He’s going to stay and we’re going to face this thing. “Where are we going to go?” my father say. We used to go to a resort in the mountains. It was on the border of Poland, Krinitza--it was a very famous resort – and what was about it, we felt that we would be safe there, you know – the war is not there. You know, you cannot think any other way. So my uncle ran to our house one morning and say to my father “Nicola, for intelligent man, you’re stupid. What is more important? Your life, or all your possessions? What’s going to happen to your kids, staying here? In two months, you’re going to be in Siberia, and you’re never going to see the light of coming back home.” So my father, my mother start to cry, and he said “You have nothing to lose, at least go, and you can always come back when everything turns all right, you can come back.”

I remember the German big truck, Army truck, like a convoy was going someplace, and my uncle – officers were staying in his house – and he say, “Ok, take your whole family, and we take you with us and keep on going, then when we have to drop you off, two hundred, three hundred miles away from here, you’re going to be on

your own.” And that’s exactly what happened. My mother run to me and say, “Lydia, take the luggage and put whatever clothes you find, put in there.” You know, as a child, scared, crying, this, I went and put in Professor Schalit’s music from the piano, my doll... hardly any clothes. So we went on this truck and we continued for maybe another three hundred miles, and they say “That’s it.” But invasion was moving pretty fast.

**WC:** Let me ask you, did the Professor stay there? He didn’t come with you did he? Professor Schalit?

**LB:** Oh, Professor Schalit, this already, we lost total track. They were moving at this point, Jewish people were out. We didn’t have no communication, but your life was at stake. When Professor Schalit heard that they shot this woman, at the time I explained to you, he said “I cannot endanger your family life anymore. I have to go back home.” From this point, everything was wiped off. This was already coming to the end of their German occupation. They already knew they were forced to move out, too.

So at this point, when they dropped us out of this German truck, my father say “How are we going to continue farther to get there?” The resort where we always used to go with nana, governess, and all this, for two months in the summer? Oh you know, we could stay in this villa, or this villa. They brought – everybody, those families that were with us – they all brought horses and a wagon. You know, a regular wagon (gestures a rectangle), I will never forget, I was laying in back and my feet were bouncing on the floor of the road as we were driving. At this time, no food. We bought some pig or something, and they cut it up and put it in a wooden barrel, but in a couple weeks when we got closer to the mountains it started smelling very badly. At night we slept under the wagon, but in the morning the dew would make you totally wet. I’ll never forget – to me this was funny- but they opened this barrel, all the meat was just maggots, and they were taking this meat to the water and washed it, and roasted it, and still this is what we ate. Once it’s washed and roasted, it was safe to eat. So this is how we continued. Finally, we

were coming with this wagon, sleeping under this next to the river every night, following some river (I forgot which), till all the sudden the Germans got wind of us. This whole caravan of wagons with people sleeping under it. They figure, we're going to do something. So we were close to Upper Silesia, and I remember my father sold the horse (or did we give it away?) They put us on a train, and we wind up in Upper Silesia in Chemnitz. Chemnitz was the city, a factory, a forty mile long steel factory. They brought us to those barracks, and the room, a little room like maybe twelve by sixteen. There were bunk beds made out of wood, like for the army. I don't think the army had them, but what happened, they would get an assignment, what bunk you were sleeping on. And in this room, around the walls, there would be five or six families. At night you take the blanket and attach it to two nails there so you can sleep, but other people may be still not sleeping. In the morning, after the assignment, they send us to the kitchen and give you like army, silver, aluminum dish, you get maybe a scoop of peas, maybe a scoop of potato, and maybe a piece of bread, this is it. I remember my mother always saying, "You know I'm not hungry, Lydia, you eat this." But she was so worried that I was so skinny, and growing so tall. And later in life, I found out why she wouldn't eat. Anyway, in the morning they would take us to this forty mile long steel factory. Everybody is going inside – even I – I'm not with my parents, my mother's someplace else, my father's someplace else, my brother was on those cranes, those big cranes.

**WC:** What were they making in this factory?

**LB:** All different parts. Different parts for whatever it was. At the time I don't know. Forty miles, it's a big place. When they put me in a truck, separating me from my parents and take me someplace, I would drive for a while to get there. And coming back home to meet my parents at the gate, I would travel for a while again. So when we wind up there, I remember I had the job – there was a machine that had like a drill – and I would drill with this machine, a hole in a little steel like this (forms a round hole with her fingers), thick steel, it was like a screw hole, and there was nobody around me. I was just doing

this there, and next to me there was this big mountain of – (turns to her husband offscreen and asks, “what would you call this [unclear]?” and he says “I don’t know”) –

**WC:** Now how old were you at this point?

**LB:** I was probably thirteen, going on fourteen, I should be, maybe, there. But I was very tall for my age. Anyway, so we got there and at this point you feel at least you have a job, you have a place, and the Russians are still very far away from you. But we heard stories that the Russians are giving big money to get us back. They would pay anything to get all those people that escaped back to Russia, so to say, I don’t think they’re going to take you back home. We, at this point, you know, this job wasn’t bad, it was all right. One day, all of a sudden, we heard like forty planes on top of us, in a formation. The sound of it was so alarming. So many planes driving together. And bombs start coming, like candies coming from heaven. And there was no place to run. Nobody asks you what’s going to happen to you. But the reason, I tell you, there was, like steel cotton, a big mountain next to me. I used to dive right inside – how could anything help me? – but as a child, I didn’t know, still a young person, I didn’t know what to do with myself. The sad part was to go at night to meet your parents, and I’d see the place is on fire all over, but still you have to work. So when the bombing stopped and you’re not on fire, you continue doing what you’re doing. Anyway we were lucky, when I would come back, my father and mother, and my brother, was there.

But at this point, already so many months with no proper food, no proper hygiene, we all developed fleas. I remember this very tight comb – I had a mop of hair – and I remember, always, all night just combing this thing out. And my mother would say “Put it in a little dish,” and then to kill those things they would put something on it, I forgot what it was. Or I saw some people with matches lighting it up. It was – but you know, for some reason, as a young person, you don’t see this as very bad. My parents, I could see this tremendous fear in their eyes, looking at me. But to a young person, it was like

adventure – what’s going to happen tomorrow? Anyway, we were there, I would say, probably two or two and a half months working there.

**WC:** Now were your parents working in the factory too?

**LB:** Yes, but we would only... at night, we could come to the same room, sharing with another twenty or thirty people. And to go to canteen, where they give you this – whatever you call--meal. And at this point, my father comes, and a priest from our city was in this group too, a very lovely, educated man, very concerned what is happening, from all kinds of standpoint, what is happening to people. And how they valued God, why is this happening to us? And try to talk to everybody. All of a sudden, my father come one evening and say, “We have to run. The Russians are very close already, coming to Chemnitz.” Where are we going to go? There is big Germany in front of us. My father spoke many languages, he spoke Latin, Greek, he went to prep school back still in Poland. And he was very educated, so they ask him to go to Burgermeister of Chemnitz and ask if he would put us, attach us on a train to some army convoy or something, and then, just to get us out. Naturally, we have to give him everything we had, whatever jewelry, whatever money, whatever possession we owned in a package for him. I never forget, my father going at night to see him, and we figured, maybe they’re going to take all this from him and shoot him or something. You just sit and wait all night long. My father came back and he say “We have four wagons to attach to army convoy, and it’s going to Regensburg.” And so this is January.

**WC:** January of 1945, was it?

**LB:** I would say, possibly, 1944. So we got on this train and there is no place to sit, no place to lie. In the middle there is a little oven, like a little steel thing going to the roof. And it’s January. No bunks, no nothing. This is just, they gave us this. I remember whatever we had, so to call luggage, this is where you sit all day long, where you sleep all night long, around this oven. No place to go to the

bathroom – forget it. When the train stops, it's snow, you're afraid to jump off. They not tell you "We're going to stop here and you can do whatever you wanted." There was no way. When you open this door, and we were like Negroes, just a white piece (gestures a line across face). All this smoke, we were covered with it. So we were on this train almost this month, this was January. Every bone is sore, you never know how you fell asleep. This was the worst part, not to lie down on the floor, but it's very cold, to sit on this little package you have all day long and all night long, it's unbelievable. So one night we wind up in Regensburg. But the train, they have underground places. So the army train goes underground, and there is a bombing. This is this famous bombing where they leveled Regensburg, one of the biggest German cities, they almost leveled it. So when we woke up, the bombs were just – you get used to it, to those things. You heard the bombs coming – this is like lightning – oh it's far there, oh it's close here, this is approximately how you analyze how far you are from danger. So, we woke up in the morning and they say we cannot go with the army anymore, there is the wagon, what are you going to do? And then they ask you, where would you like to go to work? And this time, my father spoke German, and knew the geography and everything, he say "We would like to go to Wurzburg." The reason he chose Wurzburg, Wurzburg was famous for Red Cross hospitals. Huge building, and on the roof, big red cross.

**WC:** Is that where that big castle was, too, Wurzburg?

**LB:** In Wurzburg, yes. This was the winery country, mountains were growing wine, and doing all kinds of wines, and so on. But besides, it was very hospital type [place]. So everybody felt you're protected there. Nobody is going to bomb the city, when there is sick people in those hospitals. When we arrived, were you surprised. Whole Wurzburg was on fire. We left Regensburg, and apparently those guys who were bombing Regensburg went to Wurzburg and knocked this out. You know, at this point you get used to it: to hunger, to cold, to dirt. It is already part of your life. There's going to be another day, let's hope everything.... Let's hope the snow melts and

it gets warm. So at this time, when we got to Wurzburg, the Germans had to do something with us. There's a bunch of people staying at the station, and where are we going from there? So they got us into the school and they start separating us in different corridors, "What can you do? What can you do?" My father say, "Why don't we say we are farmers. That way when we wind up on the farm, we will have food to eat. So let us say we love to do this work, to be farmers." So, all over again, it took like a week, all this, and all of a sudden they got my family, and the priests' and some other people we knew. We were all going to Augsburg. It is upper part of Germany that is quite famous for factories that make porcelain. But we are going to the farm. So as we arrive there, all over again, we wind up in schools sitting until people who have no farms come in to examine us, what kind of people we are. And so a young guy comes in, and he was a doctor, and he say "My grandmother has a farm right on the border of Slovakia, and she lives alone, and she is an old woman, and I think you would be very good as a family for this farm." So they came in and pick us up with a truck, and take us to this farm. This farm was so neglected, and so dirty, and everybody had an assignment. My father and my brother have to work in the fields. I'm to clean the whole place and make sure there is wood to fire up the whole house all the time. And the place was just so dirty. And there was no soap. I never forget, though today I have to think about it, they take this straw, you know like wheatstraw. And you soak this in water, and it creates like a soapy [unclear]. It bothered me, but we have to live in this farm. I cleaned this place all up. And the woman, his grandmother, was like a three hundred pound woman, so she couldn't do much, and she was in her eighties or nineties. And she was always, like "Wow, you can really clean!" And I felt I wanted to clean so we could live in a clean – you know, it really bothered me. Even, I tell you what, still when we were home, when all the help left and there was nobody, I was doing all the jobs, even then. And it was good preparatory for what I wind up, when we wind up on a farm. Now at this point, we felt so safe. There was food, there was milk, we could nourish ourselves, and hard work was the least, when you were worried.

So we are in a little village, only four farms. To go to the town, you go up a hill, and there is a little, not significant, you don't even call a town – it's like a few farm houses and a few stores, and so on and so forth. So I always was elected to go there to get the bread, or whatever supplies needed, going up a hill. So it was such an adventure, to go by myself way to the city to get stuff. Finally, I got a bicycle. But all of a sudden, the Americans are coming. You don't have a radio, you cannot find out news, there is no newspaper coming. You live in such ignorance, what's going to happen tomorrow?

**WC:** Did the Germans tell you to be afraid of the Americans at all?

**LB:** There was nobody to talk to except this old woman. We were farm workers at the time, there was nobody that could tell you anything about anything.

**WC:** But there weren't any German soldiers around?

**LB:** Right now, there is nothing. All of a sudden, one day they decided our farm, our farm where the four of us are working, there are twenty or thirty officers coming to stay. And my father say "Why are those officers not on the front? Why are they coming to stay in a little village like this?" Like, four farms, insignificant – why are they coming? Something is cooking up. And they send me to get the bread this day, and I remember it's something... the officers are coming in this day, my mother kind of smeared me up. You know, I'm a very tall girl for my age, and she say go to store. Coming back from store, I hear from shooting, but I don't think so much about it. As I'm passing by, I see the body of a young man lying there, but I figured maybe he's sleeping. I better go home quick. I came back and I tell my father and mother what I saw. She say "Something is happening, there is underground opposition coming in." And maybe, say, called up this young man and killed him so he wouldn't spread the news, or it happened at night, or... you don't know." So every day those officers are staying, say in the kitchen, my mother and I are serving and cooking for them. The window is like this,

open, and the door goes like this (gestures how the window, door and table were situated), and this big table going right up there, facing the window. The window is open, it's already spring. And as we are serving the meal, all of the sudden, we see a jeep coming. In the jeep there are four guys sitting, and they don't look German. This is an American jeep with four guys. Those officers, not making any commotion, still eating, they put the machine gun on this, and just da-da-da-da-da, killed the guys right there. My father says, "Listen, Americans must be already on the hill," in the city where I went for bread. They're going to burn the village. This wasn't just an army thing, this was some important guys they send to check out the area. So, we don't know whether to go to sleep, the Germans are looking at us, and we're just like there's nothing to it, I'm outside chopping my wood, branches for heat, and right away, cleaning start, cleaning everything, prepare for another meal for them. They don't talk to anybody, even – my father speaks German – they don't talk to him, either. They stay very quiet. They took the whole stable, with the hay, and they slept out there.

My father finally got us together and say, "Listen, they're going to burn this village to the ground, Americans. Let's, during the night, run to Americans." And we are, like, fled, and going like this (gestures uphill), and on the hill there should be Americans. We wait until midnight, we dress ourselves – it's still spring, accordingly, to it – and we start, one by one, quietly when we felt everybody's asleep, we quietly start running there. We didn't know, at this point, but we fed the Germans at noon, we didn't see them at night, so maybe they are gone. But we figure, Americans don't know, they probably going to still want to be sure – they lost the four men, now – they're going to attack the village or burn it or something.

**WC:** Let me stop you here; I have to change tapes.

**WC:** Ok, we're rolling again.

**LB:** So at this point, we are going to run to the Americans overnight. So it's only four of us, and we slowly got through the barns, hiding

from the old woman so she doesn't see us and doesn't call somebody. And we are slowly going through the fields, through the middle. There is a little rain, not much to call heavy, just a little rain coming down, and we are progressing through the middle of the field, growing potatoes I think, and all of a sudden we hear the machine guns from the Americans coming at us. So my father say "Lay on the ground, dig a hole with your hands and put your head right in the soil, down." "You can almost feel it, like the air over your head going. This is not stopping. Little shots from the Germans you might hear, little shots here and there, but we are talking, already after midnight, one, two, three o'clock in the morning. So the shooting keep on going, and my father say, "Don't move, just stay there, we should have never come, we could have been killed already." So as I'm laying down, and you don't lift your head, you're afraid you're going to lose your head. It is so funny, I feel, like, a knife, somebody put it in my back, and I turn and look up and there is a soldier with a helmet, with a bayonet in my back. And he yells to others, "This is a child here!" And more come, those were Americans. And naturally they ask us what is happening in the farm, and they say "Stay here now." We're the ones that created this firing, us walking to them.

So they got us back into the farm and our work continues, we need to eat, nobody going to feed us. But those American soldiers, they probably left sisters like me back home, so they see me chopping wood, doing heavy work, and they all wanted to help. They cut enough wood, I didn't have to do it, and they would bring cans of some meat, and they were very, very nice to us. But people all over were in such trouble because they were going to be caught under the Russians. Slovakia and Czechoslovakia are already being taken by the Russians. But we are so happy, we are on the side of Americans, the river that goes through is the division, so the Russians cannot do nothing to us. So a guy came in and said, people, so-and-so, they're good friends of my family, are already under the Russians, kind of hiding, no time to find out who's who. Can they somehow come here? They cannot travel on their own. All the roads are being inspected, and they're asking with who you're going, why you're going, and so on. One guy spoke Polish, and I say I have a family

there – they're kind of relations to us, I wish I could get them back here. They said, Lydia, don't worry – we're going to go with the tank there! So I have to go with them to recognize the people, to find them. You could have gone in the middle of the town with the tank and it was ok. Right now the Russians and Americans are still friends. So we drove there, we got their belongings, all in this tank, we brought those people back. And then other people start asking for other people. And next thing, I was going every day, usually in the afternoon, I was going with the tank to Czechoslovakia. At my young age, I was like a agent (laughing) to bring the people back to safety.

Anyway, it started getting a little bit – we're already under the Americans; we don't have to stay in this farm, we can get a job in the city. But this was like, you wouldn't believe it, it was like all farms, and no work. So we move in the city, and my father start buying some famous porcelain, and started selling it and making some money. Some professors that escaped from Poland, like we did, Ukrainian, opened schools – me, I'm losing four years, no schooling. So there is schools opened up and so on, but nothing major, not established.

**WC:** Now this is right after the war?

**LB:** Right.

**WC:** Let me just go back a little bit. When you heard about the death of Hitler and the war ended, was there a lot of celebration?

**LB:** (Shakes her head no) Germans are still Germans. They are respectful to their – you know, it almost...Hitler raised the young generation, so they were so for Hitler. They were very well schooled, when you looked at the German army, it was really pride to see their uniforms, their cleanness, their obedience, their everything. You know, he really... And they felt this *ubermenschen*, you know above everybody, they portrayed themselves that well. Even a lot of families suffered under the Germans, too. Not everybody was for

Hitler. Hitler created a lot of – his policies were not the policies of Germany. This was a new field, but youth prevails. They were so devoted to him and they felt that they were going to conquer the whole world, and nothing to it. And for this reason nobody celebrated [the death of] Hitler. Finally, we got a little radio in this little apartment, with three other families--

**WC:** The quality of your life, once the war ended, did it start to get better for you?

**LB:** Oh, still, three families. Those people who had been working on a farm, their other son had a restaurant, and on top there was one big room, so three families filled it and could live together peacefully. No small children. We moved all together and lived in this little building. But still everything is smashed up, the city, the bombs, so much repairs. But I tell you what, the German people are very unusual people. Look at the little town where we are. Come Saturday, a doctor, a farmer, a lawyer, everybody comes and sweeps the road very clean, very organized, and very obedient. It was a good example to see when the nation can raise themselves to some productive way of existence. Even you're down, but you don't give up, you still remain the same daily way of routine, and you respect your neighbor. You don't leave your side of the street dirty. And this kind of gives you a feeling that everything is all right, that there wasn't war. Everything is clean, everything is organized. I tell you what, this time there is war, and people, armies, trains moving, but my father speaks to me and says "We don't have nothing, we don't have money left, we cannot return back home. You need education in the worst way."

There were big camps of displaced Ukrainian people in Dachau, you know Dachau – the famous place?

**WC:** Oh, sure.

**LB:** They took over, the Ukrainian people, they moved in there, thousands and thousands of people. Opened the schools, opened all

kinds of organizations for children, for learning, for singing, for dancing, to still promote the habits of their people. Not to forget: you're in different country, you're already not Ukrainian anymore. I say to my father, now I'm around fifteen, maybe, fourteen, fifteen, and my sister-in-law's sister was going to Dachau to visit somebody. I say to my father "I'm going to go with her and see how the school is there, maybe we all can move there." I come into the camp, and the camp is all filled up. They're not taking nobody in. So I have to figure some way of surviving. What I did, was say "I'm lost from my parents, I don't have nobody, I'm on the street. Would you take me in?" He say, do you know anybody there? There is my uncle, my first uncle, he's in this camp too. Their room, twelve by twelve, five families, everybody has a corner, there is no place even for me to put a bed. In the middle, there is a table. And I sleep under this table. I call home, then I try to get into the school. The school—it's impossible to get in, it's so overflowing. My sister-in-law's sister is going back home, and I say to her "You tell father I'm doing very well, I'm already in high school, I have a place to live, to sleep." And I'm sleeping under the table. And at night when I study, I put the lamp, I put my skirt high like this (makes a tent with her arms), so that everybody can sleep, and there I study. Or at night, I go to Dachau when they have areas where you wash yourself, there's motorcycles sitting there belonging to somebody, there would be another quiet place to sit and study. It was so lovely. The only thing in this room there was one wooden bench, and one student was going to medical school in Munich. And he say, "When I'm not there, you can sleep on this bench and get off the floor:" So finally, I graduated to sleeping on a hard bench with rolled up clothes for the head, and coat to cover myself. My father, in two months came to visit, and he got sick when he saw me. He say, "What are you doing to yourself?" I say, "Father, what, am I going to sit in this village looking through the window? I'm never going to get no place. What, am I going to be a cleaning woman there to survive?" Anyway, the Dachau is coming to be closed.

**WC:** Now, were you staying in the old prison camp, or just outside of the camp?

**LB:** No, this is the Dachau camp, right in the camp are the barracks, and those barracks are divided for living quarters, for halls, for studying, for different events. This – I don't know what was there before, but it's all fenced with wires.

**WC:** You didn't know it was a death camp?

**LB:** No, not then.

**WC:** You could see the ovens there?

**LB:** No, nobody show you ovens, those are all closed, nobody sees those. The only thing you know, when you live there in the camp, you go to eat in the area, they give you whatever. UNRRA used to supply the food there. I mean, normally, you get horse's meat if you're lucky, you get a can of it. The only thing after you eat it, your mouth dry out, and all the fat is all around your mouth, and that's – ugh! But at least you have meat.

So, they decided to divide this camp and send one part of the camp to Berchtesgaden, you know, where Hitler used to have his home, to another camp, where the army had a camp; and the other one went to Mittenwald, you know the two most beautiful places in the world. When they brought us there at night on those trucks and disperse us, it was almost unbelievable. There were four white mountains, they called this [unclear], the husband, wife, and this white facing you, and you're surrounded by this beauty of those huge mountains. I say to myself, "Wow, God took pity on us, from all these terrible things, brought us to such magnificent beauty."

Right away, the professors still from Europe organized high schools, sports, everything. It was [unclear]. I was assigned to live with another girl--she'd lost her parents someplace, and [unclear]; one room, how lucky! very clean, nice. One daughter was the daughter of a professor, one the daughter of a banker, upgraded families knowing how to live properly, clean, and respectfully. It was normal

life, normal life, just having very little. But study was unbelievable; it was such enormous work to catch up four years. It was just like continuously in the books. Some kids didn't care what happened, they were going mountain climbing. The beauty...you know, Hitler didn't choose this place just for nothing. The beauty was unsurpassable, it was like only you can imagine in a dream. Those barracks was brick barracks - in fact, I painted a picture of them - it was very nice. Professors were all from top universities, so we have the best schooling. And at this point you think, what are you going to do next with your life? People talking... we're going to America, we're going to Australia, we're going to South America, we're going to Argentina. Everybody knew somebody, but in the meantime we didn't know no one. Where to go, and who's going to take us? Who's going to send us a green card to come to this country?

After I graduated there, already even the camp was falling apart; still another year, it's dispersed, and everybody moved in a different direction. I decided to Munich to medical school; always loved medicine. Today, I practice on him (points to husband, laughs); you see, that's why he live so long. When I came there, all over again. My parents are still way in Augsburg, way up there. And my father... there is not phones so we can talk to each other. My father say, "Will you write letter?" I write letter as I take the notes in college. First letter, a line, last line, you know, quick! And my father say - and my father was a calligraphical writer, everything was most proper - he say to me, "Write shorter letters, but write so I can read!" (Laughs)

In Munich my father couldn't help me, nothing. I found somebody that wanted me to sell those steel brushes, and I never forget the snow was falling - not deep snow, but wet - no proper shoes, no coat. I'm cold, walking from one store to the other trying to sell in Munich those steel brushes. Some people were taking them, just looking at me as a student just trying to survive - "ok, I'll take two." Then finally I got accepted to the dormitory, that was paid by... the Americans supported this. One day a guy walk up to me and say "I heard your name is Saneve [?]. Are you related to Nicola Saneve? I

say, "It's my father." "We had been to prep school together in the Shamash. Then I lost track of him." He say, "Where are you going from here?" "We don't have no one to ask us to come anyplace." He say, "Listen, I'm going to America. Soon as I get there, I'm going to send you the papers."

I switched to pharmacy to get the degree. I never liked pharmacy, not in this country, it's just dishing out. You might as well be a salesman. In European pharmacy, still, then, you had it all in back, you were manufacturing this stuff. It was totally different, the pharmacy there. Finally he did send us the visas, and the hardship of the camps, when you are sent to come to this country. I lived in Augsburg, I lived in Stuttgart, till finally they put us on to Bremenhofen to come to this country.

**WC:** Now, did you come here as an entire family?

**LB:** Yes, I did. We came on a ship that was cargo ship, and we hit one of the biggest storms. The whole ship got so sick, I mean sick. In fact my mother was, with an IV, taken out. They knew my medical background. I and one doctor were all... even personnel, was all sick. We had a woman that got crazy, and I never forget I only could give her shots when she was in the shower. This was some journey, but coming to this country, this freedom.

When anybody says anything about America I will scratch their eyes out. You don't know what it means to live free, to say anything you want, express your opinion. Nobody... defend yourself at any cost, have help, have understanding. This I don't remember since childhood. Everything was so terrible. Right now, I'm so upset what is happening in Ukraine, it looks like we are turning back the Communists. Through mistake and things like that, we lost election to this guy, this Putin understudy. And in such a, not even year, it's what it used to be when it was under... it was only like.... never changed. Still persecution, all kinds of persecutions. I'm involved – we are involved – with the university there. We helped them at a time when there was the [unclear] revolution there, we helped the

students that participated in it. It was so beautiful without one bullet, and we got independent Ukraine, and after five years to elect something like this. Right now there is such a demonstration, but I don't know how anybody can change anything. America is very, I mean Obama is not making any comments. I don't know if he's, politically, that much wise about what the Russians are about. Still what it is. I don't think Russia ever changed – Putin keeps it this way. Still you cannot speak, you cannot say. Life doesn't mean nothing, they can have any literary person to be shot or.... It's nothing. They don't like educated people but those people can uprising and do something. So I don't know, right now it's such a sad thing. When I get a newspaper I feel like crying, what's happening in the country. Nobody can do nothing about it.

**WC:** Now, what year did you come to the United States?

**LB:** We came in 1950. And we came to Amsterdam, that's where he was. He was a lawyer and we lived there with his sister. When we came here to this country in the beginning, what do you do? So I started working in a shop where they were making (gestures lines on her hand) –

**WC:** Gloves?

**LB:** Yes. The people were so nice to me. Dear God, how those women were nice to me, how they tried.... I became a great seamstress in two months.

**WC:** Now, how did you meet Myron?

**LB:** I'm coming to it. So at the time when I was in Europe, when I was in college, I was engaged to a guy who was already finishing medical school. He was going to Australia, his sister was a doctor, and they were going to Australia, and I was supposed to go with him. But I say I'm not going, I'm going where my parents are going. Anyway, he wind up in New York too. When I worked in the (glove)

factory, this lawyer knew somebody that knew somebody... I tried to get into the atomic...what do you call it?... in Schenectady?

**WC:** General Electric?

**LB:** No...yes it is General Electric? But I needed to be citizen, you had to be five years to be citizen. No, not General Electric....

**WC:** In Milton? Knolls?

**LB:** Yeah, the Knolls. I remember I applied there, but no citizen paper, no way. Then I got a job in a private medical laboratory on Lafayette Street. Mrs. Hart [?] used to... but she didn't know nothing. I got right away promoted there, so big. Next thing... I couldn't find... you know, she was very nice, but her knowledge was not there. She just started this laboratory like a fun doing. But in totality, the laboratories in this time were not still advanced as they are now. It was all you come, white blood counts, you look in microscope, those days are over. I figured I'm not advancing there, and I see they needed somebody in St. Clare's Hospital. And it was my birthday. I went there for the interview, and he wrote, Dr. McGaffey was the pathologist in three hospitals (not like today – it was a different world), so he needed somebody that knew the stuff, knew how to make solutions, and so on, to run the lab. So I got the job there, and there I really start making money. I used to take a whole weekend, 24 hours, two days straight...they gave me a room to sleep in, but I was on call continuously for surgery and blood bank. So I used to do everything, chemistry, blood bank, you name it, pathology, bacteriology, all those things I got involved with. At this time I got paid double. And here we have nothing--buying the table, the chair, a bed--and my parents are not well. Then, how I met Myron....

I came to church, and the priest in church went to prep school in Shamash? with my father, too. (Laughs) So he say, "Why don't you join the choir?" I come in to church, and I still was not singing in choir... I come in late and I sit in the back. Myron come in and he

stood in front of me. At the time...now, I knew who he was. At night there was a concert, big concert with singing in the Lithuanian Hall, and I was the soloist, too, wow! And I remember how the hall is all dark, and the doors open, and I see the same guy who was in front of me in the church. And I see there was another person, and there was another person. And then it was New Year's Eve, and I went to see European movies, I didn't know nobody in the city, so I come in back, and my mother say, "There is some guy from RPI coming here, already three times," and he was the friend of my boyfriend. "And he wants you to come to the New Year's Eve party." And I say, "Mother, I don't want to go to the New Year's Eve party." And she say "Listen, he waked up" -- we are living now with my brother and two little kids, "he waked up the kids three times already - go with him!"

So I came there, and -- new girl shows up, everybody want to ask me to dance -- In fact, (turning and speaking to her husband) that Kribulich, I never forget, he asked me to dance, and John Wells -- you probably sent him!) And I see this same guy is sitting there, with crossed legs, smoking cigarettes, not dancing, just sitting there. I said "Oh probably this is a guy who wouldn't bother you." Anyway, I went to the concert, I'm singing in the concert, and after the concert, one of the professors, maybe ten or fifteen years older than I, asked me to go to the movies. And he say -- quite a gentleman, one of the greatest skiers and one of the greatest tennis players.... I say, "Listen, we don't have a phone at home. I have to go home and tell my parents that I'm going with you to movies." He say, "Ok." As we are walking out, there is a bar, and all the sudden his friend calls this professor, Matthew, and say "Matthew! Are you tough to talk to -- aren't you going to come in and have a drink with us?" And he say, "Lydia, we have to go, those are the old immigration, and they would feel that we feel too high and mighty to be with them. Let's go do this." I never drank. So I'm here, Matthew here, and here is Moon, and here is Myron (gestures placement of each person). And Myron is not even looking in my direction, and I figure, "That's the guy, I saw him before" but I have a boyfriend in New York, I'm going to marry him.

So then say, "Are you going to have anything to drink?" I say, "Listen, maybe I have some soda or something, we are going to movies." I still cannot speak good English at all. And Myron say, "We are going to movies too – why don't we go together?" And Moon – he looks at him. Up to now, he's ignoring me but now that I'm leaving, he's going to movies too! He say, "There's a very good movie" (we are in Amsterdam) "in Schenectady. Why don't we go to this movie? We still have time." So I look at Matthew, and Matthew look at me, and he say "What do you say?" I say, "Do we have to?" He say, "You know, he has a car, he'll drive us there. Like this, we have to walk." He doesn't have a car, I don't have a car.

So Myron is taking us, he has this white convertible, so naturally I'm forced to sit in front with him, with the two guys, Moon and Matthew sitting in back. So he's very nonchalant, but he says "it's still too early for the movie." So we pass someplace on Route 5, and he say "Why don't we stop and have a beer?" he say to the guys. And Matthew, one of the greatest gentlemen of the century, very proper, very elegant man, he say, "I mean, we are already here, there is no other way we can do." So we went inside, and there was a little baby grand piano, and I figure let those guys talk, and I'll see if I still remember how to play the Schalit concertos. When I finish this, I say "We're probably ready to go." They're sitting and drinking beer. So I come back and sit between Matthew and you (points to Myron). And Matthew start feeling not that he was, in any way, with me involved. We were just like friends singing in a choir together, very proper, very gentlemanly, like I felt safe going to movies with him already. Myron speaks broken Ukrainian, and he throws little...you know, trying to embarrass him in some way, and I felt "now, that's not nice" and say "Hey, you don't speak English so good, so don't throw stones at this guy." I said something on his behalf, and Matthew say to Myron. "Myron, in Europe, when women defend you, at least you kiss her hand." Myron looks at him and says, "This is what they do in Europe?" And he grabbed me and he kissed me, not on the hand, he kissed me! And I don't know what to say at this point, and he say "This Matthew, is how we do it in America!"

(laughs). We never made the movie. One thing led to the other, then he decided to drop Moon and Matthew home, and Matthew say, "Myron, you're not going to take Lydia home alone?" And he say, "Don't worry, she's going to be very safe getting there." So he dropped me home, and he say to me, "I will see you Wednesday," and I figured this guy has a nerve! I say "Now look, I'm not seeing you Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday! I'm not seeing you!" And I got out and I left. (She holds up a picture) And what happened? Do we want this picture?

**WC:** You can continue with the story, and towards the end, we'll look at that picture.

**LB:** Ok. So on Wednesday – I'm living in my brother's place, and there's two little children. I'm on the floor, and they're sitting in back (gestures holding reins), and I'm doing the horsey walking, entertaining them, till my sister-in-law and brother come back from work. My mother is cooking a meal, when Myron walks in and says "Aren't you ready?" I say "I didn't say I was going." And he start a conversation with my father. My father, big historian, Latin and all this, but this guy is matching him one on one. And my father say, "I like this guy." Now my parents were in love with him first. He say "Finally, you brought home a guy who knows what he's talking about. He really knows history, he really knows everything!" So I say, "I'm still not going to movies with him, Mother. I don't think it's right – I have a boyfriend." My mother says "Listen, the kids have to go to sleep, it's a little apartment. What are you going to do, throw him out? Go to movies with him." So I went to movies with him.

Next thing, I'm working on Lafayette Street in this private lab, and I take a bus from there to Amsterdam and from Amsterdam to there. And the phone rings, I answer it in the lab. And he say "I happen to be in Schenectady. Would you like to ride back with me to Amsterdam? I can give you a ride." I said, "Well I have my tickets already." "But you have to. Come on! I'll drop you right away...." But, he would drive right through the mountains there, and show me

the whole scenery and everything else, and we became kind of like friends.

Then, my boyfriend wanted me to come to New York. I couldn't leave my parents. We'd been living with my brother. I need to get an apartment for the three of us, so we can have some life together. I need to buy them a bed, and this, and this," and I say, "I cannot come." He say, "Then bring the parents with you." My father is too much of a European gentlemen to accept such a grace. My father say, "When you have to go, you go. We're staying here." My father had a job as a dishwasher in one of the stores. So that's how it all went. Next thing I knew, I was seeing him (Myron) more. Then I moved to St. Clare's Hospital, and he used to go to General Electric to the Turbine Test department. He used to work overnight, and he used to sleep where we used to have frocks for pregnancy. There was like a little loft there. I had a whole hospital to myself, but I was taking whole weekends. If he wanted to see me whole weekends, he has to come in and sit there with the frocks (laughs).

**Myron Bazar:** I'd like to add something. Not now, when we finish.

**WC:** Did you want to hold up the photographs, and I can zoom in on each one.

**LB:** Yes. (Holds up photograph montage, and points)  
That's my grandfather, and my cousin. And that's my aunt, here powdering her nose. She married a lawyer that was asked to be a president of Ukraine, in exile.

**WC:** The next picture?

**LB:** The next picture is the oil fields.

**WC:** Ok, got it.

**LB:** And this here, is that resort, the famous resort we used to go for two months. There is my mother, my brother, little me with the doll,

and my uncle. (Next photo) And this is my brother and me, drinking. You see? It was like Saratoga where we used to go. The name was Krinitza. They had the mineral waters, and you see us sitting here, near the mineral waters.

(Next picture) And there was my father and my mother, already in Germany.

(Next picture) And there is my mother. She was the first woman in Poland to have the permanent. She was one of the most elegant women. Mother had the pictures in an album, and they got yellow. So I took all the segments, and every year.... This is this year (gives second montage to WC, but does not hold it up to the camera). This is my friends, the good times, not the bad times.

**WC:** Very nice. And you and Myron eventually had children?

**LB:** Yes. We have two of the greatest (reaches for a third and fourth photo montage) sons anybody could ask for. Our older son, the one that lives in Paris. And there is my younger son (holds up photos to camera)

**WC:** Ok, let's see if I can zoom in on that. The one in the center?

**LB:** Yes. His fiftieth birthday, at the Track.

**WC:** And his name is?

**LB:** Peter.

**Myron Bazar:** He's in the art business.

**LB:** (Holds up another photo grouping and points) This is the kid that never... he became one of the top skiers, and was invited to ski with the top in the world. Here is my older son.

**WC:** Walter?

**LB:** Walter. This was at [unclear].

**WC:** All right, very nice. Anything else we missed you'd like to add to the interview?

**LB:** The only thing. We are so fortunate to live in this country. And I wish that more people would understand that. When I hear anything, anybody saying anything bad about it, it really hurts me. But being born to such a freedom and good life that this country provides people, I don't know how anybody can say anything bad about it. You have to live through experiences, not just the war, living through experiences in other countries, how limited they are. Even how progressive they are, how limited they are in different things. But here you can come with nothing, and when you're really interested to work and progress, you can do it. This is amazing. Like I say, look at my life. I was born to very wealthy parents, we lost everything. I built with my husband some comfortable living. Then we had a fire and lost everything. To redo things like this in life, is very, very tough. But still, it's possible only in this country. I don't think, only by some sheer luck, but by hard work you can achieve anything here.

**WC:** Ok, thank you so much for your interview. Very well said.