

Walentyzna Kasprzyk

VK - When the Famine was intensifying, I had a friend from a large family, for whom it was very difficult. In the spring, she asked me to go with her to the forest to search for something to eat. I told my mother I was going with her. We went to the forest and we collected roots. Later she said that we should collect some tree bark from young trees, so we did. We took it to her house, which was across from ours. I knew that there was something happening that wasn't right. Later my mother told me, "God forbid that you wander off any further. Don't go any further." I didn't understand why. But my friend, Maria, said that her mother suggested that we go to the nearby hospital, because sometimes they threw out peels there. She asked if I wanted to go with her, and I said, "Why not? I'll go."

Interviewer – *You were six years old?*

VK – Yes. So we went [to the hospital]. But my friend said, "You know what? My mother said that there's a guard there. We have to hide and look to see where we can take something." That's what we did. There was someone standing there, we were hiding, and when he turned around we looked around and saw a garbage dumpster. We collected some potato peels, carrot peels, and ran away. We brought that home.

Later, when I started going to school, everyone was silent. Nobody said anything because it was prohibited [to speak of the Famine]. My mother always said, "Don't say anything." And she never told us anything [about the Famine]. In 1934, after the Famine, my grandparents came [to live with us]. Everyone was silent.