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From Shtetl to Shtetl

A Journey Across Three Continents

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Speaker: Franklin Gaylis

Transcribed by: Rachel E Lieu

[Holocaust Living History Workshop](#)

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From Shtetl to Shtetl: A Journey Across Three Continents (2013)
Holocaust Living History Workshop

- Time Transcription
- 00:00 [The Library / UC San Diego]
- 00:04 Michael Snyder: Good afternoon, or good early evening.
- 00:05 [From Shtetl to Shtetl A Miracle...of Jewish Survival by Franklin Gaylis]
- 00:08 Michael Snyder: I made a mistake already, look at that [laughter] hope you're marking on a curve. Uh, welcome to the Holocaust Living History Workshop 2012-2013. Yet another banner event. My name is Michael Snyder. I'm not connected directly with the workshop but, uh, Suzanne Hillman, who's standing taking a sip of water - is the, is director your correct title?
- 00:33 Suzanne Hillman: Program coordinator.
- 00:35 Michael Snyder: Program coordinator. So, if you have any questions please ask Suzanne because I wouldn't have the answers. Um, there are, I'll still tell you briefly, there are four more events, uh, during this academic year. Uh, on the table you'll find brochures that provide the next four events. So please, um, pick up a brochure, and enjoy the others as well as this evening. Suzanne gave me the honor this evening of presenting Dr. Franklin Gaylis. We have not met before. I had the privilege of having a brief discussion with him and what came to my mind immediately was a Hebrew phrase [Hebrew], excuse me. And what that means is to return is to remember and we're at a point in time, uh, in our lives, in our, in our collective memories, where Holocaust survivors - as all of us - will not be here forever. But we're getting to a very critical mass considering that the Holocaust ended in 1945, and what everyone had to fight through to make it to today, and as Dr. Gaylis will tell you, to San Diego. The discussion we're about to hear is living proof about how one person and one family's journey can provide a family and a community with a vehicle to never forget and to learn, and into the incentive to learn more going forward. Um, with that it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Franklin Gaylis. Dr. Gaylis is a physician who through his, through his travels from growing up in South Africa to emigrating to the United States in 1982. He came to the HaKotel and that led to a different journey. That trip to Israel led to a journey of questions of how his Jewish family ended up in South Africa and ultimately the bigger question of what to tell his children about their roots. Tonight is part of the Holocaust Living History Workshop here at UCSD [University of California, San Diego].
- 02:36 Michael Snyder: Through the generosity, research, and hard work of Dr. Gaylis we will again link the present, the past to the present, and future. Dr. Gaylis's presentation is of particular interest to me in my role as manager of a new endeavor at the USC [University of Southern California] Shoah Foundation, wherein testimonies of Jews in Arab countries during the Shoah will be added to the visual history archive. And the visual history archive is the centerpiece of the Holocaust Living History Workshop here. And Suzanne can tell you more about that. And just speaking with Dr. Gaylis this evening for a few, a few moments I can tell you his talk is going to be too short because there's so much to drink in. Dr. Gaylis's From Shtetl to Shtetl: A Journey Across Three Continents, um, in his Shtetl to from Shtetl to Shtetl: A Journey Across Three Continents Dr. Gaylis shares the insights he gained in the course of his quest for his Lithuanian and Latvian roots. Dr. Gaylis

says to the Dr. Gaylis's to the bulk that led boy...Who typed this? I did. [audience laughter] His journey led Dr. Gaylis to the Baltics, into several small towns in South Africa, revealing fascinating stories that weave each illumination resulting from journeys through his family's past. Simply put, these stories provide an education for us all in the importance of our past, the freedoms we enjoy in the US today, and the need to be ever vigilant in both protecting those freedoms and understanding the central role that Israel plays in the life of Jews everywhere. It's my pleasure to introduce the distinguished Dr. Franklin Gaylis.

04:15 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Thank you so much Michael, and thank you Suzanne for inviting me. Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you all for coming. It's a great privilege and pleasure to share with you some ideas, and some thoughts, and some experience into Mr. - forgive me the name - but [unclear] who, who initiated the, uh, invitation. I, I really thank you all for coming. This is a great privilege for me to be here tonight to share a phenomenal story of our family. A story that I believe is miraculous and I feel it's a miracle that I'm here as a Jew in 2013 speaking in La Jolla at UCSD [University of California, San Diego] campus and I think the reasons for that comment will become clear during the course of the discussion. So, why share the story? Firstly, it's an incredible story. It's a story that despite thousands of years of persecution, suffering the greatest atrocity in the history of mankind, assured the Jewish people continue to thrive and make important contributions to the world. After two thousand years of denial, we have a home, the amazing state of Israel for the Jewish people. It's a profoundly important story, one that offers many lessons that should not be forgotten. And memories fade, and I feel a sense of obligation to tell the story and teach future generations. And I'm proud to see my young cousin Joel, who just came in, and several other young people here. Hopefully, it'll have an impact.

6:02 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Let me give you a chronological impression of how I see Jewish life over the last four thousand years, and this is - as a physician - I'm used to looking at data, and statistics, and graphic displays. This is a very rough estimation of a chronological event of Jewish life over 4,000 years. So, if we start off over here the first Jew Abraham has the covenant with God. And that's 4,000 years ago and we can see there's enough. We then have it down when the Jews are enslaved in Egypt and we're at about 1500 BCE [Before the Common Era] Moses helps liberate the Jews - and we're going to have Passover just in a week's time. And we have the Exodus back. We have the first temple built by King Solomon about the year 1000 BCE. And then we have the down again here, where the first temple is destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 the - of interest - King Cyrus liberates the Jews who are exiled in Babylon and within a few decades later they're back in Canaan and the second temple is subsequently built. We're up on a high here and then we know in the year 70 CE [Common Era] the Romans destroy the second temple and we're exiled to Europe. We have the crusaders in the 11th century the Spanish inc - Spanish Inquisition. And I'll put this little up over here where the the the graph I've indicated life for Jews improves. And I just thought, when you look back at Germany in the 1920s and the early 1930s three quarters of Berlin's lawyers were Jewish. Every theater had a Jewish director I est, I imagined that life was pretty good for a short period of time and I needn't remind us what happened but the Holocaust - the greatest atrocity in the history of mankind occurred. We survived it and that's why it's a miracle we're here. 1948 the creation of the state of Israel. And just for the

perspective of where we're at, up here in the stratosphere, and Michael and I were talking, we can't take this for granted. We are living in one of the greatest periods, I believe, in Jewish history as free. We have the freedom, the ability to be here in San Diego and elsewhere in the world.

08:51 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: The structure of the talk, firstly I'm going to introduce some general comments and then talk about the graphic, pictorial history of our migration over 4,000 years, my personal interest, and those who influenced me - and there was some significant heroes in my family who did influence me - our trip to the Baltics, Lithuania, Latvia, our trip with my parents and my wife back to South Africa just a few years ago - which was another fascinating experience, something that I didn't know much about - and then some closing comments. So let me share with you a picture. And you know they say a picture is worth a thousand words. I don't - this picture speaks volumes. You've got a, a baby and a [unclear] and a number. And take what you want from this picture, but it says a lot and I'm going to walk you through this cartoon which I think is amazing and says it all for this whole talk. You have a little fellow sitting next to an old man and he says "I've got to tell you mister that's an awfully boring tattoo on your arm. It's just a bunch of numbers." To which the old man responds, "Well, I was about to age when I got it and I kept it as a reminder." "Oh, a reminder of happier days? No, of a time when the world went mad. Imagine yourself in a land where your countrymen followed the voice of political extremists who didn't like your religion. Imagine having everything taken from you, your entire family central concentration camp as slave laborers, then systematically murdered in this place. They even took your name and replaced it with a number tattooed on your arm. It was called the Holocaust when millions of people perished just because of their faith..." So, the little fellow says to the old man, "So you kept it to remind yourself about the dangers of political extremism?" To which he responds, "no my dear to remind you."

11:04 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: I think this is an excellent cartoon which really, again, speaks volumes. So why share the story? Do we need to keep reminding ourselves of thousands of years of unfortunate events? I think we do. Caracas, Venezuela - 2009 - desecration of the synagogue. We just read recently of Hugo Chavez, who was not a great friend of the Jewish people, who embraced [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad, but this is Caracas, Venezuela. We don't want murderers. We don't want Jews. Get out. That was a week after Israeli ambassadors and diplomats were expelled. Helen Thomas. We've all seen Helen Thomas in action at the White House. Her, self-proclaimed, regret in 2010 made her most controversial quote, in which he said, the Jewish people should get the hell out of Palestine, suggested they go back to Germany and Poland. She obviously doesn't know her history. How welcome we were and especially what happened to Jews who, after the Holocaust, went back to Poland - how welcomed they were. Well, that ended her career. One medical slide and I would have loved to have shared this with Miss Thomas if she was sitting here. Our son Greg, who actually did his Bachelor of Science at UCSD [University of California, San Diego], on this very campus about four years ago, called me with great excitement after a molecular biology course. And he said, dad, you want to know where we're from? Mesopotamia. He said I took our DNA in a micro in a molecular biology class sequenced the DNA. Whatever they were doing in the lab, downloaded it on the web and this is what he got. Our family's DNA sequence indicates an ances, ancestry from Mesopotamia, Babylon, Iraq today, where

Abraham was from 10 to 12,000 years ago. This was from the web, based on the DNA that we have.

13:11 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Another example, a local physician who I work with at one of our hospitals commented one day about three years ago, he was sitting with a non-Jewish physician who said to him. It's time for the Jews to get out of Israel. They are the reason for our problems in the Middle East. So my friend said to him, but where should they go. He said the non-Jewish physician said to my friend, give them each a million dollars and send them to Miami to live with the rest of them. This is a colleague. This is for somebody who we worked with in San Diego three years ago. And my friend commented how he said the gentleman had actually used a lot of them for us Jews. And lastly, I pulled this quote from the newspaper just recently Premiere the former Italian Premier, uh Silvio Berlusconi sparked outrage when he praised Mussolini for having done good despite the fascist dictator's anti-Jewish laws, and was Berlusconi who also defended Mussolini for allying himself with Hitler saying, he probably reasoned it would be better to be on the winning side. The Premier of Italy, and Associated Press, UT [Union Tribune] January 28, 2013. We need to keep reminding ourselves. I'm just gonna bring out a few comments which are of concern to me, and this was a picture of in an article on Romney's effort to become the President last year, and I'm just gonna filter out some of the comments that I took out of this newspaper clip. It was filled with issues of assimilation - ethnic enclaves have given up to integrated cities. This is about Jews - Israel is faded as a driving issue in their home - they are disconnected from their ancestral roots - people are becoming less observant as they're less tied to Israel, less tied to their faith, and less tied to their history. And this is on a, a reporter who's done a lot of investigation and was commenting on the Jewish vote, but I thought those were some concerning comments.

Dr. Franklin Gaylis: This is what's happening in the United States today. Let me share with you some issues that happened right here where we're sitting 50 to 60 years ago, just as an example of how things have changed. Not sure, I'm sure many in the audience are aware of this, but for those who aren't La Jolla has not always been very friendly to Jews. And the late Roger Revelle warned La Jollans about 60 years ago, you wouldn't have a university if you still refuse to sell your home to a Jew. And [Mary] Ellen Stratthaus did a publication and a report [*Flaw in the Jewel: Housing Discrimination against Jews in La Jolla, California*] on the flaw in the Jewel antisemitism in La Jolla and if you speak to people who know the history of La Jolla, they will tell you it was in the CC&Rs [Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions] not to sell a home to a Jew not too long ago. And Mr. Revelle, who was the founder of this very campus, alerted the community that if they didn't allow Jews to buy their homes or buy homes in the community they wouldn't have a university. And I believe it was Jonas Salk who also insisted that he bring his entourage to UCSD [University of California, San Diego] but that they'd be allowed to purchase property in La Jolla. Things have changed a lot in the last 60 years. My parents, who I'm privileged to have both my mom and dad sitting here today, are members of the synagogue Adat Yeshurun just around the corner. And I took this from their website and I thought, how fascinating. What a contrast. Welcome to Adat Yeshurun, a vibrant Jewish community in the heart of La Jolla, the jewel. Forty, 50 years later, how things have changed. We cannot take it for granted. I'm not sure if the building, the construction is happening here at UCSD [University of California, San Diego], but this will be the

medical center funded by the generous philanthropy of the Jacobs family on this very campus where we weren't welcome just 60 to 70 years ago.

- 17:47 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So a little bit about history. And I'm gonna just bring out some quotes that I've come across, and then just touch on my hero - Winston Churchill. History may not repeat itself but it certainly offers lessons. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Remember what Alalek and even from our Torah portion, remember what Amalek did to you on your journey after you left Egypt. Do not forget, from parashah Ki Tetze and that was in Deuteronomy. The person who I have the greatest respect for Winston Churchill, who both my dad and I read avidly, said - and I've just finished the book by James Hume *Churchill the Prophetic Statesman* - and Mr. Hume met Churchill in 1953 and he recalls how he said, study history, study history. And he said to his grandson at the tender age of eight, learn all you can about the past for how else can anyone make a guess about what's going to happen in the future. Richard Nixon made the comment of his appreciation to Churchill that he had the mind of a historian and the courage of a soldier. Churchill could see the patterns of the past being repeated in the present. He foresaw tyranny with the Nazi Empire. He foresaw the Cold War. He foresaw so many things but he was a brilliant historian and he relied on history to guide him in his judgment of the future. And Churchill said, the longer you look back the farther you can look forward. And I worry that we're suffering from a lot of amnesia, and short-term memory loss, and long-term memory. And that's why I feel passionate about giving this talk to remind myself and hopefully others.
- 19:52 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So why did I get interested in genealogy, Jewish history, our family? About 16 years ago, in 1997, my wife Jean and I were asked to get make some comments on our trip from South Africa, the saga of South African Jews, migration to San Diego, and sitting with our young daughter Jackie, who's at college, and our son, who's about to get married soon, a long time ago I realized, I didn't know much about my history in South Africa. And I didn't know anything about where we came from prior to South Africa. And I started reflecting back on some events in my life. And I'm also very grateful to have my cousin Warren Shapiro here and Warren will know this lady, Aunty Tzilla [Cecelia Levin nee Boruchowitz], Aunty Tzilla the doyenne of our family, the matriarch, my great aunt, my granny's sister. When I was 22 she tried to tell me the story of the family and she used to - my mom insisted that we go and visit her and pay respect to Aunty Tzilla. I visited Aunty Tzilla in her little flat in Joubert Park, Johannesburg and she'd tell me, Franklin, about the family, she brought them out, all the doctors, the businessmen, the lawyers were here because of what she did. Aunty Tzilla heard it many times. I was preoccupied with my girlfriend at the time, my wife Jean, in medical school and it didn't resonate. How I wish I would have an hour with Aunty Tzilla today to really learn the story because she saved the family, my grandfather Frank Lotzof, unrecognized patriarch of the Lotzof family. Just looking through his hundred-year-old, um, document - great timing here are my cousins from Houston Ziki and Joe. We're waiting for you, welcome. [laughter] [crosstalk]
- 22:00 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We're on a relevant portion for you, my Uncle Ziki, who is the nephew of my late grandfather Frank Lotzof. Looking at his passport, which I got a few years ago in Israel, and looking through the document I realized that he went back to Latvia to bring out his brothers. I believe he saved much of the Lotzof family,

my Uncle Jack Gaylis, my dad's late brother - who started this effort to try and find out more about our family - who didn't live long enough to see and hear what we found, but just a beautiful human being. And then our cousins, known and unknown, who perished in the Holocaust. When I grew up I asked my when we started learning at Jewish day school about the Shoah, I asked family members, did we lose family in the Holocaust. Now, we were fortunate. We didn't lose anybody. Well, you'll see that we did. And then there's a place that's dear to my heart that Michael commented on, this wall, a bunch of rocks but when I stand there, there's a connection to thousands of years. To think that our family was once here. This is the Temple Mount, the magnificent picture, the Dome of the Rock mosque, the outer wall, the Kotel Hamaaravi, the Western Wall, the perimeter wall of the second temple, and just back here would be the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. I mean this is real estate that's amazing. I mean when you go there and you think this is phenomenal, also - unfortunately, tragically - the source of a lot of conflict.

23:46 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Auntz Tzilla in 1905. This magnificent woman who was in Bloemfontein, and remember the migration out of Eastern Europe happened between 1895 and 1905. There were two periods of migration. She came out first and this is a spectacular picture of Auntz Tzilla with my mom's mom - my grandmother - Ida, Fanny, and Etta. And these are the four sisters but she was the first out, I believe, to leave. Why? I don't know because I've never listened to what the story she was trying to tell me, but she went back to bring her sisters out. And Warren, my cousin, is here. I'm here. My mom and dad are here. So many of us are here, I believe, because of her actions. Had she not gotten out and had she not gone back to get her sisters, we wouldn't be here. I estimate we have about 60 to 70 cousins here in San Diego related to Auntz Tzilla. She died at 102 an amazing woman. Rummaging through photographs of the family, I know who all these folks are. I said, who's this young girl? Top cousin, top of the this, top cousin died in the Holocaust. What's her name? Do we know who she is? No. Just a quote from the Talmud. We can't forget and at Yad Vashem in Israel, The Hall of Names, 10 meters high, 600 names with testimony of people who died in the Shoah. And there's a reciprocal cone into the ground filled with water dedicated to all of those who we don't know and that's part of why I do this just to remind myself of what's happened. We were privileged to participate in the development of the Holocaust Memorial Garden at the at the JCC [Jewish Community Center] and this was the commemoration. And here is the granite wall with names of San Diego family members who perished in the Holocaust. And this was the front page of the Union-Tribune [Newspaper] the following day. Lazar Edelstein, Sossa Boruchowitz. Those are the names that we had inscribed. Lazar Edelstein is my wife, who's sitting here, her great uncle - her grandfather's brother. And I, just because I had to condense the talk, I have video attesting to what happened.

26:30 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: He was in Libau, Liepāja in Latvia in 1936 when Jean's grandfather went back to bring him out and, the way her aunt described, Lazar, said to Jacob, why should I leave? 1936 Latvia - I have a wonderful home, wonderful family, wonderful business, there's no reason for me to leave. He and his family were burned to death in the Shoah. Sossa was the fifth sister, so this fifth sister, why didn't she come out? I don't know. I'm going to digress now before I get into the Latvian and Lithuanian trip, just to give you the geography. Abraham left or came through southern Turkey, establishes the government with Hashem. Comes down

through Lebanon into the promised land Canaan. They exile to Egypt the - Moses brings the people out. Forty years in the Sinai, through Jordan, on Mount Nebo. One of the greatest events that Jean and I experienced was standing on Mount Nebo in, in Jordan and looking over the West Bank. Joshua brings the Jewish people back into the, into Canaan - Israel today - the first temples built, destroyed, were exiled to Babylon. King Cyrus, 2500 years ago, the king of Persia helps liberate the Jews back into Canaan, um, and then, we, the next major event is the destruction of the second temple, which is destroyed, as I indicated earlier in 70 CE. And then the migration - and this is a tough slide, just let me get - here's Israel. You can barely see it on the map. There's Syria, Iraq. Don't have to tell you what's going on in this part of the world at the moment, but we're exiled to Western Europe - Italy, Rome, Western Europe. We live in Western Europe for about a thousand years and then an amazing text which I found so helpful *Pictorial History of the Jews* by Sir Martin Gilbert, who actually was Winston Churchill's, Churchill's, biographer, depicts here in all these black rectangle indications of towns throughout Germany, Holland, these are where towns where the Jews were attacked with violence or expelled. We know what happened in 1096, the crusaders. There was decimation of the Western Jewish community and then there was such persecution over the next few hundred years, that the Jews started migrating east and the reason they migrated east was because Grand Duke Gediminas [of Lithuania] offered them protection. Casimir the Great [of Poland] in 1330s to 1370 issued a series if a Jew enters the house of a Christian no one has a right to cause him any injury or unpleasantness. And this is the reason why our families migrated from Western Europe, where they were being persecuted, fleeing Germany a thousand years ago to Eastern Europe. Vilna Lithuania, this was an old map of Lithuania. It was a much bigger country than it is today. Poland and just to give you a perspective Belarus, Lithuania, Poland is known as the Pale of Settlement, where four to five million Jews eventually lived in the late 1800s.

30:20 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So, we decided we wanted to go back and find out what happened. Could we find anything in Eastern Europe? Myself, my wife, Richard and Lorraine Abramson, cousins, Jill, their daughter, and the star of our trip uncle Dave. Uncle Dave Lotzof who Ziki and Ziki's, brother who was born in the Shtetl and we had no idea what we were going to find, but we were going to go back and see if we could find something. So we wanted to see Lithuania, Latvia, Riga, Vilna, and I'm going to walk you through our trip now. I just want to point out a few things Riga and Ludza. This is the Shtetl the Lotzof family came from, my grandfather Frank who I believe went back to the Empire where actually Jean's Great Uncle Lazar Edelstein was murdered here. But please just appreciate Russia, how far Ludza was off the beaten track and how they went after every Jew that they could find to exterminate the entire Jewish people. Here we are in Riga. Tatiana is our national guide, Richard, Lorraine's husband, and Uncle Dave. We piled into this little red van and we traipse through Latvia and Lithuania. But before we even started our trip our guide gave us this family tree. And I said to her, Tatiana where did you get it from? She said this was from the Riga archives. I mean I couldn't put a family tree together like this. They had all this information, just like this and it was tremendously exciting because I wanted to see where the family came from. It's almost two hundred years ago. Shmuel Lotzof and this is my Great Grandfather [unclear] two, two wives. I looked at this little box. I said that explains it, my mom's name is Rhoda, her Hebrew name is Rocha Leah. She's named after her

grandmother. I get down to the next generation and I see all these names. There are the eight children from [unclear] and I see [unclear]; that's Uncle Dave's father who was with us. And Zikki who's sitting here in the audience, all the way from Houston, he's not typed in for a specific reason. He wasn't born in the Shtetl; he was born in South Africa. So, Zikki, correct me if I'm wrong but your four siblings were born in the Shtetl, and you and the rest of you were born in South Africa.

33:05 Zikki: Right.

33:07 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So, there's no way the Riga archives knew about Zikki, but they knew about Uncle Dave. But where was my grandfather Frank? I'm Franklin. [I] could never work out, how did I get a name in South Africa, Frank, Franklin? I was named after my grandfather I never knew and I couldn't find him here. That bothered me for a split second until it all came, became clear. My Hebrew name's Efraim. He was Afroim. He was never Frank. He got to the Ellis Island of South Africa, Cape Town, and he probably said, what's your name? Afroim, forget it. You're Frank, next. So that's where the name comes from, but his name was Afroim Lotzof. Here we are the first family members ever to go back to Ludza, Jean and our cousin's husband, Richard, the rest of us, and the cow. So let me hope this all works, otherwise, we've got Mark to make sure this... I'm going to show you some video clips.

34:16 Speaker 1(woman and her translator): [music] [Finding the Lotzof Family in Ludza] The whole Jewish community here tried to find which Lotzof you are, there are several here. Sara Lotzof, Sarah Lotzof, we got Sarah Lotzof. Isaac, Isaac, yes we got Isaac. There are children of Isaac here in Ludza. They are here.

35:04 Speaker 2: Who is? Really?

35:07 Speaker 1: Isaac Lotzof!

35:11 Speaker 3: The children came back and they are here [crosstalk]

35:18 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We walked. That was in the home of one of the Lotzof. We knew there were three Lotzof homes that we got from the [unclear] and we're standing in the garden. We didn't expect anything. We were just hoping if we could find a home that belonged to the family. Well, we've just been told that we found, that there's family alive with the same name in the shtetl. That was an amazing experience. So they take us to a cafe, a 7-11. We walk in and the local guide says, she's your cousin. Now how many people have been back to Eastern Europe and, you know, found very little because it's all been wiped away. So we walk in and her name's Oksana. She doesn't speak a word of English. She's never heard of us, but we get introduced as her cousin. She was blown away. This is Oksana, Lorraine, and Jill, her daughter, and Uncle Dave, and myself. An amazing experience. This is our first morning in Latvia. We then get taken to Lotzof homes and I'm going to point out this is our local guide, um, here - this lady. I don't remember her name, Sarah, I just remember. All she spoke was Yiddish and she and Uncle Dave had a great time chattering away together in Yiddish. None of us could understand. Tatiana and we're standing in this road where the Lotzof family came from. And we see the well. We see a guy pumping water from the well, and then we see the lake, and then we see the red house. And I was drilling Uncle Dave for four hours, what do you remember? He left the shtetl when he was seven years old. I said, Uncle Dave, what do you

remember? And he said Franklin three things, the well, the water, and the red house. And here we are standing in this road with Uncle Dave and this is bringing back all these memories, This was the shtetl he left when he was seven years old. He was shipped off to South Africa and he remembers meeting my grandfather, my mom's dad, Frank Lotzof in Cape Town, at the docks, but that's all you remember.

- 37:41 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Uncle David, do you remember this lake?
- 37:44 David Lotzof: I do remember the lake.
- 37:45 Speaker 3: What memories does it bring back to you, this lake?
- 37:48 David Lotzof: Well, I remember that the house we lived in was near the lake and this, I think, is the lake.
- 38:01 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Yeshiah Isaiah, our great grandfather. I never knew much about him. I picked up this picture from one of the cousins. This is the lady living in his house, Oksana's grandmother. I'll explain how they got here.
- 38:22 [Franklin's Great-Grandfather's house] David Lotzof: This is where the Lotzofs started, all the Lotzofs.
- 38:29 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So this was Yeshiah Isaiah's house?
- 38:33 David Lotzof: This was his property. He bought it and he was the owner of the place and that's where the family started, the Lotzof family.
- 38:44 [The house where the Lotzof family started]
- 38:45 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We had now found family alive. We've found homes in the matter of four or five hours in the little shtetl and we're standing in the same road as Jean and Richard taking pictures. We said, what's this building? It looks different to the homes. And Sarah says, we think it's a shul, but she probably said, it is a shul but there were only 13 Jews left in the shtetl from 4,000. Jewish life had been decimated. We break in the back door, literally, and we come into a cheder room and it looked like Kristallnacht had happened the night before. The desks turned upside down, books. I'll walk you through. This is not a great reproduction. I'm still working on it but try and appreciate what, what it was like to walk into this unexpected cheder room.
- 39:42 [unclear / crosstalk]
- 40:34 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So we just found, it had been untouched because it was so far off the beaten track. It was just filled with machzorim, um, I found a shofar, a breastplate and I brought it home, probably wasn't supposed to but it hangs in my library in our home. But hundreds and hundreds of books, and you can see tefillin, books that were open. You could almost imagine what had happened to Jewish life. It's hard to explain. You can see candlesticks, books on the floor, just littered all over. There's Uncle Dave. Because of the electricity, somebody had used it for a while. We can't work it out, but this was probably many, many years old, this little shul. And then Jean comes to call us and says, guys, you've got to come and see what's next door. Look at this, the ten commandments.

- 41:33 Jean Gaylis: We are in a shul in Ludza that has been totally decimated. Well I'll tell you something, they might have destroyed this building but they haven't destroyed the Jewish spirit, that's for sure. They tried.
- 41:57 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: My grandpa was maybe bar mitzvahed here.
- 42:03 Jean Gaylis: Your grandfather Frank? Probably, you're probably right he was bar mitzvahed here. Of the luvav! And the Ertog! This is the worst desecration I have ever witnessed first-hand. [music]
- 42:49 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: That's upstairs [unclear] We were then taken out of the shul and, I estimate, our family lived, this is probably where they spent most of their time because they were relegated to living in these shtetls. They were kept apart from many of the other aspects of life in, in the, in Eastern Europe. That's why they, they, they had to live in shtetls. Their lives were probably, you know, pretty much organized around the synagogue. We were then taken into the forest to see the memorial to 833 Jews that were who were killed in Ludza and here we are in the Jewish cemetery in Ludza, where our family - there was actually a Lotzof section - that was sectioned off. You can see in, in Eastern Europe it was typical to engrave a picture of the deceased on the, on the tombstone. So I'm going to share with you what we found.
- 44:05 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: This just reflects the large Jewish community that was here in Ludza and there's hardly a Jewish soul, there's fourteen Jews in Ludza today.
- 44:19 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We're walking down to the memorial. [music] [Walking to the memorial and graveyard of the largest massacre of Jews killed by the Nazis in Ludza. The graveyard of the Jews who were murdered]
- 44:37 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: It's typical, it reads the victims of fascism - not Jews - the victims of fascism. Wherever you go it's always the victims of fascism.
- 44:49 [Finding names of the Lotsof family members on memorial. Six Lotsofs were murdered in this forest.] [music] [830 Jews were killed]
- 45:03 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We found in the cemetery, this memorial. We don't know who put it together. It was a stone, the first six names are Lotzofs. I'm sure there were many Lotzofs. These, this is so typical of Eastern Europe. How many people were killed and murdered and have never been acknowledged? We just don't know them and that's why Yad Vashem, as I said, in the hall of names there's a whole section - the reciprocal portion of the hall of names - for those who we don't know, the nameless. A little digression to talk about the perpetrators. Einsatzgruppen, the killing squads, the mobile killing squads under [Reinhard] Heydrich's command. [Adolf] Hitler, [Heinrich] Himmler, [Reinhard] Heydrich, four Einsatzgruppen, 4,000 troops. They killed between 1.2 and 1.5 million people. They couldn't do it on their own. They got it done with the help of many accomplices, the locals. These are all the sites. Liepāja, where Jean's great uncle perished. Siauliai. This is Latvia, Lithuania, Riga, Vilna, Kovno, the Ninth Fort, horrible places to visit but which echoes such horrific events that transpired several years ago. Einsatzgruppen [unclear] and these were very well-educated people who lived there. One was, they called him doctor, doctor because he had two PhDs in law. And this [Franz Walter]

Stahlecker's report to [Reinhard] Heydrich in, I think, this was in January of 1941 depicting Judenfrei. This is Estonia, Latvia - 35,000 Jews had been killed in Lithuania. When I was reading the, just to refresh my memory, this number represents - they estimated there was still another 128,000 to go. They were committed to wiping every one of us out and it was close-quarter killing. You've seen these pictures. These pictures reflect what was going on in 1941 - the close-quarter killing and this was the reason for the genesis of Zyklon B and the gas chambers. The troops were having a hard time doing this. They needed a more efficient way of murdering Jewish people and many others who perished in the Holocaust and let us remind ourselves that it wasn't just Jews, there were many non-Jewish people that were also murdered in the gas chambers.

- 47:51 [Kuldīga Shul - Converted to Movie Theater] Dr. Franklin Gaylis: I wanted to share with you not only did they kill Jewish life but this is a picture [So we are standing where the synagogue was. - Franklin And this was all filled in to form a movie theater. I'm just walking around looking for any remnants. Original molding probably from the original synagogue but everything else has been replaced and it is now just a movie theater. We've just made it back behind the movie screen and this is what you see. This must have been [unclear] They have just taken down everything that was over here. And this must have been where the altar was.]
- 48:56 Speaker 4: And if you look all the way up, this is the original outside of the building, and there was probably a Magen David up there.
- 49:04 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: This was a huge synagogue. It's now movie theater. Kuldīga, where Jean's family comes from, it was unbelievable. It was, must have been, a four-story synagogue in a little town. The commitment to Jewish life was so strong and I'm sure that's all they had in their lives. They weren't allowed to become professionals. They weren't living in places like we're living today. Ventspils, close to Liepāja, where Jean's family comes from. We went to look for any remnants of the family. We didn't find much, but we did come across this memorial to the thousands of children, and there were I think there were 1.5 million children that were killed in the Holocaust. Many came from Europe. Let me see if I can go there and apparently in the fields over here for many years you could find satchels and backpacks from little kids from all over Western Europe and Eastern Europe that were slaughtered in this field. This is a dedication memorial in Ventspils. I'm going to show you now a video clip of a fascinating interaction.
- 50:15 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Where we go, we were, because of Richard Abramson, our cousin who was on the trip with us, he had contacts in Latvia. We managed to arrange a meeting with the President of Latvia and this was quite a trip to bring Uncle Dave back 80 years later. Having fled 80 years earlier, to come back and go into the Presidential Palace and have coffee with the President. Before I show you the clip, what was fascinating, which doesn't come out in the video, but in our discussion with her she said we were fortunate in Latvia, no Jewish blood was spilt. There were 20 concentration camps, 80,000 Jews died, 80 percent of the Jewish population were decimated. This was the President. She got a Ph.D. in childhood psychology, I think, in Canada and this was what she told us.
- 51:14 Lorraine: was meeting with the President of Latvia and it's rather ironic that our ancestors left as perilous immigrants and here my dad is coming back 82 years later

being invited by the President of the country. We just wonder what Michele, Frank, and his brothers might think if they could see us now. We're in the waiting room and we'll soon be going in and, uh, this should be a very special meeting with her.

- 51:43 Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga [President of Latvia]: [unclear] Eighty years, we've come a long way and we're very proud. [unclear]
- 52:28 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: So this is Madam President with Uncle Dave. A great man, Uncle Dave. I think he died either a year or two after the trip and this trip would not have been the same without him. Just an amazing fellow and kept up. He was 87 at the time. Here he is with Lorraine, his daughter, and Jean. One thing that was interesting and one needs to remember - that there are many good people in Lithuania, Latvia, and everywhere else. It's not everybody who were perpetrators of the atrocities. But these people looked so dejected. They were so depressed. They had been subjected to the wars between Germany and Russia for centuries, and it's not a pretty place, what's happened there. We were so lucky we got out. Latvia, Riga, the Choral Shul - look at that magnificent synagogue. This is what it is today, the memorial Choral Shul because it had a Jewish men's choir. Two thousand Jews were locked up in the Choral Shul and the Shul was set alight. They were burnt to death in 1941, the fourth of July. That's what's left, These are some of the remnants of the original, magnificent synagogue.
- 54:00 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: This is Rumbula [forest], just outside Riga. [We are walking down the path to the death site where 35,000 Jews from Riga were massacred. This is where all the 35,000 people were massacred.]
- 54:33 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: If any of you know Hanna Marx, Hanna is an amazing woman and Hanna survived the Riga ghetto. Hanna's father perished in that forest - one of the 35,000 and I still am committed to videotaping Hanna. Rich, a friend of mine here tonight, has offered to help me because Hanna is one of the most remarkable people. How she managed to come back from that most horrific period of time, losing a father at the age of 16. And Hanna described to me what the snow looked like in Riga in Rumbula. It was red. It was just filled with the blood of Jews. They massacred 35,000 Jews in two days. 2009, Riga, the judge overturned a ban on the commemoration of Nazi invasion of Latvia. And this is what you see, a few years ago. Move on to Lithuania, in the interest of time, I want to get through this so that I can give you a perspective. We came through Joniškis the border we looked for the little shtetl where Tzilla and my grandmother came from, Kruk. As I mentioned, the Grand Duke Gediminas welcomed our family. They had been there for six to seven hundred years and we knew nothing about the experience there. Vilna, the Jerusalem of Lithuania, and even eastern Europe. 106 synagogues in the city. Six daily Jewish or Hebrew publications. The greatest of the great rabbis the Vilna Gaon. This was a place of great thinking. In a Vilna, in Lithuania, 96 percent of Jews were were murdered, one of the highest ratios in the entire Eastern Europe massacre, by the Nazis and the locals. The great shul of Vilna, an amazing synagogue was dynamited and bombed by the Nazis, and bulldozed by the Russians, and here we're looking at the picture of the synagogue which was somewhere here with our local guide telling us where the synagogue was. Jewish life was taken away not only in human life but every aspect of our culture and our history.

- 56:56 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: The Vilna Gaon, considered one of the greatest thinkers of modern times, in this - I think in the 18th century - he lived. This is a statue. You find little pieces of memory and recognition of Jewish life in Lithuania. A book that's worth reading, I couldn't put it down, by Rich Cohen, *The Avengers [A Jewish War Story]*. Abba Kovner, who was instrumental in forming the [unclear] in Israel at the age of 17 with two young girls 16 years old they came in and out of the city through the sewers and they caused havoc on the Nazis. It's a great book to read about what happened in Vilna. And wherever you go you'll find a forest or a cemetery which just tells the horrific story and this is one of the most important stories of Vilna. Paneriai, a forest and you walk down there. It's a beautiful forest, like any other forest and you get to the memorial here and you read the inscription. Eternal memory of 70,000 Jews of Vilna and its environs, murdered by, murdered and burned here in Paneriai by Nazi executioners and their accomplices. You could put in Lithuanian, local, white band accomplices. There were 100,000 people murdered and it was horrific to hear the story, but both Jewish and non-Jewish people. And these are one of the six pits. And if you read another book, *The Jews of Lithuania [A History of a Remarkable Community 1316-1945]* by Masha Greenbaum, she describes in her final chapter, the bloodbath, how babies were smashed, their heads were smashed on the trees, and thrown into the pits. That for years, you could still see the blood stain on the bark of these trees. And these are these pits, reflecting a memorial to the many that were killed and executed here. And here we are, this just exudes death, the whole of Lithuania. It's a tragic place.
- 59:10 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Moving on again, in the interest of time, I had to get back to Kruk [Kriukai]. Where Ludza in Latvia for my grandfather, Kruk is where my mom's mother comes from, and Warren's granny as well, all originated. We couldn't even find it on the map and the Esikov family, the Shapiros, the Gaylises, we all have roots over here, from this tiny little town. Probably one of the first of our family to come back. We found this lady, 82 years old, dilapidated home. She tried to give us - I wanted to find out what happened to the fifth sister - didn't find any information. But that was where the shul was, again destroyed, doesn't exist, nothing there. We rummaged through pictures again, didn't find anything but what you'll notice is how backward this place is. This lady is about four foot six, has a chandelier. She's taller than her chandelier. The house was sinking into the ground. There'd be no refurbishment. This place has stood still in time for probably hundreds of years. And when, wherever you go, where there was a Jewish shtetl and the Jews always first formed a, built a cemetery, and then a kosher butcher. So I'm told. And Zudu Jews, we found this the Kruk, um cemetery and we went in looking for anybody of Borochovitz origin, and you can see the Magen David in the inscription. The problem is, it was always, um, uh, Sam son of Moshe. It was never a last names, so we could never really find whose stones these were, but as Jean will just depict for us what we found here.
- 1:01:03 Jean Gaylis: We're in the remnants of the Jewish cemetery in Kruk and you can see that they're only about, uh, 25 graves maximum. So we'll go and see if we can find any of Franklin's family.
- 1:01:22 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: We went on to Kelmé and then many, many shtetls. Jean's family comes from Kelmé. There were 13 children. This is where the Musar movement, a very pious group of Jews, started off. We found nothing. We found this

is what the shul looked like. It's now a grocery store, supermarket, but we always found a cemetery, and unfortunately, we couldn't find any of the Saphir family members and stones, but they, they were buried there. There's no question. They've been there for many hundreds of years. Just take a look at this. I'm not going to read it, but this is what a German soldier describes as the massacre.

- 1:02:17 Text of slide: [Particularly active in the Kaunas pogrom was the so-called “Death Dealer of Kaunas”, a young man who murdered Jews with a crowbar at the Lietukis Garage before a large crowd that cheered each killing with much applause; he occasionally stopped to play the Lithuanian national anthem “Tautiška giesmė” with his accordion before resuming killings [32][33] One German soldier described the scene: The behavior of civilians present (women and children) was unbelievable. After each man had been killed, they began to clap and when the national anthem started up the joined the singing and clapping. In the front row there were women with small children in their arms who stayed right until the end of the whole proceedings.]
- 1:02:32 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: To me it's important to realize that neighbors, who had been living side by side with Jewish neighbors, turned on them. And this didn't happen just in Lithuania, it happened in Latvia, it happened in Ukraine, it happened in Poland. And it happened even after the War, when Jews went back, from what I understand, to Poland. The Einsatzgruppen released criminals from the local jails and they just unleashed it. It's hard to understand how neighbors, who'd been living side by side, could just turn on their neighbors and massacre them. Encounters between in 1941 - 4,000 Jews that was one of the first open massacres of the Jews there. My granny, Mina, my dad's mother - that's me as a probably a two or three-year-old. But the story behind this amazing woman; she was 15 years old when her mother and father said, go, my child. [They] sent her to Southampton, England with a chaperone, put her on a boat, sent her to South Africa - no email, no phone calls, no no planes back. A 15-year-old daughter, could you imagine how bad things were to just send your child to South Africa? And Mina came from Tauragė and this is um just a video clip of Tauragė and what we found there. Tavrig - there is always a Yiddish name and a Lithuanian name.
- 1:03:59 [We've just heard an incredible acknowledgment of what happened here in Tavrig and the tragedy and apology for what happened by two local ladies, very touching.” - Franklin Gaylis]
- 1:04:03 Speaker 5: Nobody was shot here, they were all shot in the forest. They were killing about two days. The killing lasts two days. It was the work of Hitler.
- 1:04:14 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: These are two elderly women who told us the story.
- 1:04:22 [Jewish Cemetery in Tavrig of those who were murdered by the Nazis.]
- 1:04:26 Speaker 5: It's an all-Jewish cemetery. Let the blessed memory of the passed away. Which means that your ancestry are still here. The generations that lived before your mother, they are still here. This is the spot.
- 1:04:44 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Just in closing, I'm going to say a few words about South Africa. Here's my late grandfather Frank and his brothers. Here's his passport - 12th 1920 -

when he went back through Leepajas. Somewhere over here, here's Riga, Lipa, Libau. I believe this is when Frank went back to get his brothers out like Tzilla got her sisters out. We went back to South Africa to a little town, Heilbron where my mom was born. Frank Lotzof and Ida married and lived, and they were probably married in the shul. This was the old shul in Heilbron, in South Africa, and we found that there's the original aron ha-kodesh, the bimah in, which is now, it's an Afrikaner museum. There are no Jews left in Heilbron. It was interesting when we came into the town, we found my mom's home. And the man living in the home said to her because he remembered her, Rhoda, when the Jews left, the town died. It was an interesting comment but little did I know about Heilbron and this - unfortunately I don't have subtitles so hopefully you can hear my mom, um, talking.

- 1:06:01 Rhoda Gaylis: Two old Afrikaners lived down the street from our home, our first home not the one that you saw. Anyway, and um, I used to go on my bicycle and ride and have coffee [unclear]. So, one day I said to her, Rachel what is in the chest in the kitchen, in the living room, and she said to me, that is the papers we were going to hand you when Hitler came. And I was just like my mommy and daddy, and Doreen. Still.
- 1:06:45 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: What did that mean? They didn't care about it?
- 1:06:47 Rhoda Gaylis: [unclear] they wanted to save me.
- 1:06:50 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: That's in Heilbron, South Africa, neighbors. Well, Heilbron was a center of antisemitism in South Africa and I'm not going to go through all of the the, the details. There, there's actually some interesting history here. Harry Lotzof, our cousin in Heilbron, took the famous photograph of Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt in Yalta. So we had a famous photography, a photographer in the family, but what's interesting in 1934 there was severe antisemitism in Heilbron instigated by this Afrikaner called [unclear] a lawyer. And Jews weren't allowed to walk on the same street as non-Jews. They weren't allowed to do business. We're talking about Southern Africa. I never knew about that. I grew up in what I thought was a free society, certainly, it wasn't. Um, I'm going to move on to the, my dad. He's talking about the Afrikaner and the Germans.
- 1:07:53 Hymie Gaylis: The Germans supported the Boers with regard to arms and they were very Pro-German. Anti-British. The Germans helped the Boers, they supplied them with arms in the Boer War.
- 1:08:07 ["They also made no secret of their intention to do their worst by the Jews, once the triumph of Hitler's Reich had finally come about."]
- 1:08:08 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: That is part of the what was happening in South Africa. During the Boer War, the Germans supplied the the Boers, the Afrikaners, against the British and they had all this sympathy towards the Germans and Hitler. And if you read *Heshel's Kingdom* [by Dan Jacobson], which is another fascinating book on South Africa. I just pulled this out, the Afrikaners made no secret of their intention to do the worst by the Jews once the triumph of Hitler's Reich had finally come about. There's no doubt in my mind that we wouldn't be here, those of us, my parents who were born in South Africa, if Hitler prevailed in, in Europe. The Afrikaners had every intention of doing the same. The gray shirts with the brown shirts. the

Ossewabrandwag was, you know, just a fascist, antisemitic group and they had every intention of wiping out the South African Jewish community. Well, I kept close to time. Some reflections and then I'll take questions or comments. What I get out of this is the need to appreciate and cherish our secular and our religious freedoms we have. The importance of family and community. When I think back of Auntie Tzilla and Frank who went back to bring out siblings, looked after them. We have to be vigilant. This has been, the story goes on for thousands of years, and Israel and Jewish organizations for the Jewish community are vital to our survival. So, I'm going to stop with these thoughts and please, um, questions or comments, welcome.

- 1:09:59 Speaker 6: why the choice of South Africa as a destination, for example?
- 1:10:03 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: A great question. Um, in 1881 the People's Party assassinated Tzar Alexander II. It was a Jewish woman Gelphia, Elfin. I may be wrong.
- 1:10:22 Susanne Hillman: Helfman. [Hesya Helfman]
- 1:10:25 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Helfman, thank you, a historian, for correcting me. That allowed that was license for them to initiate the pogroms in 1881. Gold was found in South Africa five years later. I think a combination of the squalor the, the putrid conditions that they were living in in the Pale of Settlement - relegated to this tiny little area. It was horrific the way they were living for many, many years, the Jews. And all of a sudden a guy like Barney Barnato, I'm not sure if he was the first, but he's, he's notorious for being one of the first Jewish miners in South Africa to find gold. And word must have traveled quickly. We've got a great place. Get out of there and that's when the influx, or influx, the immigration started because of the horrific conditions of life in the Pale of Settlement. It may be an opportunity and I think that's why my granny, at 15, was sent out by her parents. Unfortunately, you know, we, there's a lot been written but there's not enough documenting the family events, and, and really how did somebody send out a 15-year-old daughter? But it's something to that effect.
- 1:11:40 Speaker 7: You referenced that the, uh, migration, uh, ended basically in about 1905. I know my mother came to this country about 1919 [unclear]. They escaped then. And I just, just a further question. I tried to look up - their name was changed at Ellis Island, nobody knows their name. And I've tried - they had a name from the village it doesn't exist. I've gone online. I wondered if you had any suggestions.
- 1:12:09 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: It takes a lot of research. You're better off than we were. We didn't have an internet. The first letter I wrote to Lithuania, we were just given a name. But Jewishgen.org, maybe? There are so many websites where you can scour and try and retrieve information. But, you know, it's just a matter of trying to find old letters. That if you can find any name, you know, reminding you of where the family came from. From where in the Pale of Settlement? Do you know which country?
- 1:12:39 Speaker 7: It changed hands so many times, who knows?
- 1:12:42 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Well it did. And that's a tragedy that so many of us don't know our roots. Um, 1895 and 1905 were the two periods of mass emigration. In fact,

Zikki's grandfather, Zikki's father Mehele came out, I think, in 1914. Is that correct? So people were getting out all the time and as I commented that um Jean's grandfather went back to bring out his brother in 1936 and he didn't want to get out so they were we know there were nine million left over there two-thirds were exterminated. Zikki, your comment?

- 1:13:23 Zikki: Yes, uh, my niece Lorraine has the photograph of the boat and the names of our family that came from Russia to South Africa. Call Lorraine and she will send the book to you as well.
- 1:13:45 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: It's an amazing story but that's why I want to acknowledge those who made the effort to get their siblings out. Any, any other questions or comments? Yes [unclear].
- 1:13:57 Speaker 8: In our congregation in Reno, Nevada we have a couple. He's also a doctor, um, from South Africa and I think they go back periodically. So, are there any Jewish communities left?
- 1:14:12 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: I think 5,000 Jews left. I'm not sure if it's Vilna or the whole of Lithuania. I mean for the...
- 1:14:16 Speaker 8: I'm talking about South Africa.
- 1:14:19 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Oh, South Africa. Yeah, there's 50,000. How many? More? More than 50,000. I stand to be corrected that my wife says there are more. I have to listen to her. I'm sure they're more. But the the peak of the Jewish community in South Africa I remember was about 120,000. At least 50 percent are like us, emigrated in the last 30-40 years. But yes. This, our son is getting married in Johannesburg in December to a South African young lady. A beautiful young lady. So there is a big community. They're very Orthodox. You know, it's interesting. it's like shtetls there, you know. It's very, it's totally the opposite of what's happening in the United States. Um, they say persecution is the best antidote to assimilation and that's unfortunately what happened in Eastern Europe and that's, I think, what's happening in South Africa. Yes ma'am.
- 1:15:17 Speaker 9: what do you, what do you attribute the Latvia President's ignorance to? I mean she's been - she has a Ph.D. from Canada and she knows the history of her country and so for her to be so ignorant to speak to a Jewish family and say things that are just so, that, that are so - that are just - they're untrue. But not just untrue, they are just so, um, you know. How, how did you deal with that when you were meeting with her?
- 1:16:02 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Jean we heard that.
- 1:16:06 Jean Gaylis: We were just very, we were very polite and we didn't say anything and she maybe - she's totally in denial and it's just it's very rude to visit the President and say that you've got your history facts wrong. so we brought in the Shoah Foundation and things like that. But we were just were respectfully quiet
- 1:16:26 Speaker 9: Right.

- 1:16:27 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: I couldn't say it better but, we bit our tongues and we knew our, the facts. I, I can't tell you why maybe it's an embarrassment but, um, or embarrassed of the of the history there. And she's a good woman. It's, it was a little disappointing because we went to some of the, um, the, the memorials there, the concentration camps and they, they, you saw Rumbula. Maybe it's politics. We know what they're capable of, politicians. Um, yes, ma'am.
- 1:17:08 Speaker 10: What is there, what was your feeling regarding how the people react to Jews and to Zionism in that area?
- 1:17:18 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Yeah today, I, I can't comment with any authority because I don't remember. We were welcomed. Let me, let me qualify that statement, in my profession, um, as a urologist I was an invited speaker. I contacted the professor at Kovno, Kaunas, and Jonas, can't remember his name, he sends me an email every year. He welcomed me like a colleague with, in Jerusalem or South Africa a wonderful guy and we had a very open discussion but I didn't get into the depths of the history there. It was difficult, but there are a lot of good people there and there's, there's a gentleman in Israel who has really been pushing the Vilna, the Lithuanian government to acknowledge their past and I think there have been some barriers that have broken down to recognize the atrocities perpetrated by the Lithuanian community. And the, there was a speaker at um the JCC [Jewish Community Center] a few weeks ago on her trip back to Lithuania and about Jewish revival in, in Vilna. So I think they are much more open. But clearly, there's still a lot of hostility. I mean you can look at videotapes and interviews of Lithuanians and I wonder how much has changed. Sir.
- 1:18:52 Speaker 11: My family left for South Africa in 1882. I came from a place called Naishtot. In your travels through Lithuania, did you happen to come across that city? That town?
- 1:19:03 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Is it in Lithuania? I don't recall it. It's probably not one of the biggest, you know. There's Ponevezh, Panavicz, Shovel, Kaidan, Veiden, Tavig, Kovner, Vilna - those are the big Jewish cities. But the shtetl we come from, Kruk, it's not even on the map. So you really, we, we couldn't find it on the map. You need, um, and I didn't show our guide and if you want I can always get you the name of our Lithuanian guy because she knows every little shtetl. So, if you have an interest, there are people who on the ground who will find you information, if you know the name. Any other questions, yes ma'am.
- 1:19:48 Speaker 12: I'm just curious, the cousin you found, were you able to ask her how her and your relatives survived?
- 1:19:56 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: It's a good question because, um, what, what I believe happened - the Oksana, who was in the little cafeteria - the little 7-eleven - and her grandmother, Anna Lotzof. Anna was married to Isaac Lotzof, a distant cousin. And what we, what, what actually did happen - when the Nazis were coming into the shtetl - as I pointed out the shtetl abutted the Russian border - he fled into Russia. He married this lady and after the War, he came back and everybody who'd stayed was no longer there. So that explains how, how we found family alive. Well, I... Rich?

- 1:20:42 Rich: I just want to say, you know, what you're doing by taking your story to a personal level a lot of people, especially gentiles, it takes - I think - what are incomprehensible events to a lot of people and takes it to a personal level. So it becomes comprehensible and understandable because you can visualize your own family in that, in that situation and, you know, I wish more of that was being done but we, you do a great service by doing that.
- 1:21:10 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Appreciate that. I think and and I think what Michael's doing working with the Shoah Foundation and what Steven Spielberg has done. I mean, you know, these are just amazing efforts by people who have vision and foresight to keep the story alive. Because, as you said, Michael, we're entering a period when many of the survivors will no longer be with us and who's going to keep telling the story. And this is not a Jewish story. This is a story of humanity and it's vital that the story - because it could happen, you know, I've got friends who are Kurds. What's happened in Iraq, and what's happened to the Armenians, and what's happened in Rwanda, what's happening now in Sudan. Genocides have happened. They are happening. In, the when we look at the Museum of Tolerance when we look at the Shoah Foundation. These are all vital institute, institutions to educate folks. So, I'm going to stop there. Thank you so much.
- 1:22:42 Suzanne Hillman: I would like to say something about, uh, in connection to what you just said. Some of you may not know that here at UCSD [University of California, San Diego] we have this wonderful, truly wonderful database. You mentioned Steven Spielberg - It's the Visual History Archive, a database of about 52,000 videotape interviews and it's only, um, available to 42 institutions worldwide. Michael already mentioned it and I'm here to facilitate research. Anybody can come, uh, you can just come to campus and you can do genealogical research or just try to, uh, learn about the past and with a human face. You know, like, we were lucky - we had your story here but some of these were the interviews that are in the archives. They are of people who survived the Holocaust, of rescuers, of other groups, and I strongly encourage you all to take advantage of this really wonderful resource. And now that I've advertised for that, I'd really like to say this was a wonderful presentation and I thank you for putting so much effort into this. Thank you Michael for the good introduction and please, before you leave, take a flyer or a brochure and come again to our future events. And I'm sure you take, um, people can mingle with...
- 1:23:31 Dr. Franklin Gaylis: Sure. I just want to thank one other gentleman. This gentleman. Michael, Mark, sorry. This talk doesn't happen without audio visual and technical support and this gentleman was great to make sure that everything worked because if, if there's a glitch it's just - it just doesn't happen. So Mark, thanks so much.