

I Became A Wage Earner

Khane, female, from Kaunas and various small towns including Panevėžys:

“I became a wage earner. I carried water and took care of children, for which I was paid [...] Thursdays were especially hard for me because then the women would go to town to shop for the Sabbath and leave their children with me, for which I was paid. I would be surrounded by four or five children; they all had to be diapered, and I had to prepare each one a different meal. They were so much trouble! I would run from one crib to the next. As soon as one child fell asleep, another one woke up. It was really awful when they all started screaming at once. Also, sometimes, a child would fall and get a scrape or a bump. Then his mother would yell at me and not want to pay me.”

Excerpted from “Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust, ed. Jeffrey Shandler (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in cooperation with YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2002), 37.