**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**William Helmreich Oral History CollectionPRIVATE**

**Interview with Isadore Froiman, Adela Froiman,**

**and Sabina Taubenfeld**

**September 23, 1989**

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**PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Isadore Froiman, Adela Froiman, and Sabina Taubenfeld, conducted by William Helmreich on September 23, 1989 as research for his book *Against all odds: Holocaust survivors and the successful lives they made in America.* The interview was given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct. 30, 1992 and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.**ISADORE FROIMAN, ADELA FROIMAN, AND**

**SABINA TAUBENFELD**

**September 23, 1989**

(Parts inaudible –voice over)

WH: ...so there were four of you...

ST: ...yes...

WH: ...and your name is?

ST: Sabina...and the American spelling is ‘Taubenfeld’.

WH: and your first name is...

AF: A-d-e-l-a...

WH: And you (all) live in this house...the same address?

AF: ...yes...

WH: Very nice.

IF: We lived together for 25 years...

AF: It’s nice, I don’t know if it’s nice or not nice.

WH: But that’s the way it is.

AF: Yeh...

ST: That’s right (laughing).

WH: So what town were you born in?

AF: Minska(?)...near Warsaw...

WH: And where were you born?

IF: ...the same city...

WH: Did you know each other before the war?

IF: I knew her, she didn’t knew me, I mean, it was here a a little child before the war...

AF: I knew his sisters...

IF: ...I had four sisters and three brothers...

WH: How many made it?

IF: My brother, too, but he died 8 months after the war.

AF: And he didn’t know about it at all, he was in the woods. He was with me. In camp the last day in working camp for the Germans we used to work...they took us out to work and they used to bring us back to the camp and he was with me together and he had still two sisters and a little brother.

AF: We were all together, in the –because it was in the same city, and they took the last one about 120 people but they got used to them, they can still walk...and worked in a factory...it was a bridge, to make all the bridges. Even before the war, this is a factory to –even before the war...

WH: ...when you grew up in the town, did any of you belong to any Zionist organization?

AF: Yes, Shomer Hadachee(?)...

WH: Were you active?

AF: I have pictures too.

WH: ...and did you belong to it also?

IF: She was young, she was –(inaudible).

WH: ...that year were you born?

IF: In 1915.

WH: And you were born?

AF: In 1922.

WH: And you were born?

ST: In 1930.

WH: ...were you in hiding the whole time?

IF: No...I jumped out...(inaudible) they took me to the train to Treblinka...

WH: They took you in the train to Treblinka and you jumped out?

IF: Yes. Jumped out.

WH: You jumped out of the train?

IF: Yes. On the train.

AF: ...and my brother too.

IF: Adela, please. Later on we’re going to –(inaudible –IF tries to continue talking but AF interrupts)...

WH: ...I’m going to switch back and forth between you...

IF: Okay. We went through a lot. I mean, it’s not written, this is (inaudible) you couldn’t even write them. I jumped out –from the train, and before the train, I (inaudible) a few times they took a selection, they call it a ‘selection’...a few times they selected me to (?) because I was young, strong, I mean, in the gas chamber, in the train we jumped out, a few people jumped out from the train. A lot. A cousin jumped, too, but he got killed right on the –under the rails.

WH: When did you decide to jump?

IF: This was about 20 kilometers after –going from Minsk to Treblinka...

WH: You knew you were going to the gas chamber?

IF: Sure, sure we knew.

WH: ...since you knew, right, and everybody else knew, why didn’t they all jump?

AF: (AF interrupts –inaudible) If you jump they kill you...one in ten survive...

IF: there’s something else. The jumping was already the last hopes. I mean, in something...

WH: (response needs translation telling them that they should speak English for transcription purposes)...

IF: You see, the last thing was –(inaudible) to see the last minute what the situation, what we was in the last minute, what they took us, in the gas chamber. You can imagine. We were standing together, I mean, people, some (inaudible) and some with a child on their arms (inaudible) what kind of life you couldn’t expect someone to think about, to dream of this kind of (inaudible) –to see that –(inaudible) to be in this situation, to still be, to want to be alive. The old people whether they went to the gas chamber, they didn’t care any more. Because, already, the gas chambers took already it was in the last part. Before we go,-we got through in the ghettos, we couldn’t imagine to –what –we, what this meant one day to leave the type of German (inaudible). One minute was worse than the other one. You couldn’t learn –example. You did today something. This way. And you wanted to do this the certain way, too late. You got killed. Today you got –you helped yourself, you got alive, you got out alive, and this way, we went this way. And tomorrow, you want to get same thing do (inaudible) already yesterday, you got -.

WH: What happened when you jumped? Did they start shooting?

IS: Yes...and a lot of them got killed...under the rails...

WH: Let me ask you a question. You were jumping to die. Do you think that it took courage to jump?

IS: Yes.

WH: Why do you think so?

AF: Yes, I think so.

WH: Why do you think so?

AF: It took courage to jump, too...

WH: Were you on the train also?

AF: No, I was in hiding...in 1942 the Germans came to our town and said, ‘All the Yuden rausch!’ Some girls were still in their nightgowns...and they took them all out in the market, everybody. With my, my brother was in the Polish army...and we had a bakery...and we were up in a bunker...hiding...my brother took me, my sister, my mother and father, and my brother, and a cousin, we had a cousin who my mother raised, and we were up (hiding) in the bunker. And we saw everything what is going on, what they doing. They took out all the people in the market and they used to shoot in the groups...it was unbelievable. We didn’t talk about it. We –I didn’t want to think about it, what happened...

WH: I’d like to go back to -.

IF: To the jumping. We jumped not to get to the gas chamber...and be gassed...

WH: How did you jump out? Did you have to unlock the train?

IF: No...you made a little hole in the wall...you pushed out the little window...

WH: Everybody on this train knew that that were going to Treblinka?

IF: Yes.

AF: You think so?

IF: Yes.

WH: And everybody knew that they were going to die?

IF: Yes. Yes. Because they died already on the train.

WH: ...they knew that if they got to the gas chamber they would die.

IF: Yes.

WH: So what have you got to lose by jumping? Even if they shoot at you?

AF: Not everybody could do it.

IF: First of all, they haven’t got the guts already. They got already a disappointment already in life. (inaudible). To stand in the line, to go on the train, (inaudible), nowhere to go. When I jumped out, (inaudible) where to go now? Where to go now?...everybody they see you, they going to shoot you. I’ll tell you the truth, I haven’t got the ability to speak. If I had the ability to speak, to tell you what things the Polish people did to the Jewish people.

AF: It’s still harder to explain.

WH: Well I read in the book -.

IF: No, this is nothing. This is nothing. The simcha, the pleasure, the pleasure what I had to see him, to help out (inaudible) I couldn’t forgive him the pleasure but I had to do that. Only the pleasure...(inaudible)...where to go, we didn’t have where to go...in the forest...we lie down...

WH: ...what about these people who hid you...why did the woman hide you?

IF: She wants a piece of bread...

WH: So she did it for herself?

IF: She did it for herself.

WH: What about the people who hid you?

AF: Same thing. A piece of bread.

WH: I remember in the book reading that you were hiding and these people are coming and they’re saying, Let’s give them away! I hear a Jew here! I know you have Jews here! And she says, I don’t have any Jews.

IF: ...to hid a Jew, and to have a pig, every animal has to be registered by the Germany. If they find a pig or any animal not registered, you got shot for that...so you’re better off at least you got something to eat (if you hide a Jew).

AF: If you hide a Jew, here’s a few dollars.

IF: He hasn’t got the ability to buy a piece of bread because they were very poor.

WH: ...were you hiding together, for 14 months?

AF: Yeah.

IF: Yeah.

ST: This was the last 15 months. In 1943, June 6th.

IF: ...I could sit with you for years...and tell you the stories...for 15 months we had to sit quiet...and like this (demonstrates position).

WH: This is not a matter of luck, this is a matter of wanting to live.

IF: Yeah, very much.

ST: Yeah the will to live.

IF: You young and I was looking outside on a Sunday we saw the young shiksas and they go to church and I was sitting and crying, Why? What I did? What I did wrong? What? Crying, and we wanted it very much. I wanted to survive. But the minute I survived I said, It didn’t pay.

WH: Why?

IF: It didn’t, nobody would work.

ST: Nobody was left, what to do.

IF: We look around, nobody was there, and we asked the Polish people if there are some Jews, (name of town-?Mazowizki?. Everybody wants to go to their town.

WH: To see what’s there. To see who made it.

IF: Yes...and everybody came out from the hiding places, from the woods, one from here, one from there...

WH: When you came back, did you go to a D.P. camp after the war?

AF: Yes, yes. Sure. Went to Germany.

IF: After the war.

WH: To me, I am very interested in knowing what happened after the war...what made you decide to live after the war?

IF: Well, I’m not going to kill myself...

WH: But some people did.

ST: Yeah, it’s true.

AF: It’s true...first of all, we went to (inaudible) she couldn’t walk at all.

ST: I was in the hospital.

AF: She was in the hospital to stay there. I was swollen like this...

IF: We couldn’t walk.

AF: Sitting like this for 15 months!

ST: I couldn’t walk.

WH: ...when she (the woman who hid you) threw you out, where did you go?

AF: In the woods...for the night...then the daughter came back for us.

WH: After the war, you went where, to which camp?

AF: We went first to Loge...

IF: After the war I buried 6 people, because I was everything, the (inaudible), the shamus, (inaudible)...

WH: You went to yeshiva?

IF: Yes...(inaudible) after the war they wanted to make me a rabbi in that city...

WH: After the war, it must have been hard, it must have shaken a person’s emunah.

IF: Yes.

WH: To come back and see everybody died except one brother.

IF: Right.

WH: How did you do it?

IF: This is a big question, but -.

AF: No answer.

ST: We just didn’t want to think about the people (inaudible).

IF: ...(inaudible) a lot of people (who were religious(didn’t want to know from nothing. No more, no more yiddishkeit. With me, it’s like that. I used to- we used to have a very religious house, my father, very religious...(inaudible)...I sent to yeshivas...I used to be in this way...(inaudible)...and something else. When if I had (inaudible) to say, I’m not, I’m now no more thinking about God (inaudible). I haven’t got to talk about it. Because, what I am, I am so, so thinking, thinking that you know, to know, even the science doesn’t know even now, what they say, the last word. (inaudible)...

WH: In other words, this is the way you were brought up.

IF: Yes, yeah...in my house this is the way it was.

WH: How come they went away (who? inaudible) and you didn’t?

ST: I just- I don’t know. Something happened like a miracle or something...(inaudible).

WH: Are you religious today?

ST: So, so...I light candles...(inaudible).

WH: If not for the Holocaust, do you think you’d be more religious?

ST: Probably.

WH: You mean it affected the way you think about things.

ST: Yes, it did affect me. I start to become more religious when I’m in New York.

WH: Why?

ST: I used to be out of town, I used to live in Indianapolis...

WH: I want to go back for a moment. You met after the war and you got married in Europe?

IF: In Salzburg.

WH: Do you think that if you hadn’t met him, that you would be religious today? Or do you think that it’s more because you go together, and then there’s children, and there’s a community?

AF: Yeah, that’s right...yes, together we have a family...

WH: Most of the people that I interviewed, it is very difficult for them to feel emunah...but they feel they grew up this way, and that it’s important to keep to it because this is what you remember from your life before.

AF: Yes.

IF: I’m yisroel chai. That’s definitely something. You have to have something. How many nations disappeared in the world since the Jews became a nation? How many?

WH: all of them.

IF: (inaudible) there must be something. I don’t know what to say.

WH: Well we’re very stubborn...after all, you did jump from the train.

IF: Yes.

WH: And after all, you did hide in one spot for 15 months.

IF: Yes.

ST: It’s hard to believe in something...(inaudible)...

IF: It’s happened to me, she was working with my brother in a place in (?) and I took laundry to the Polish people, there was no place to wash, I was the youngest, so she said, she went to a German, and she told him I’m Jewish...and that German didn’t shoot me. He said, You know something, he knew a little Polish too, You run, let the Polish woman know that I shot you. He didn’t, and I run away. So, a little bit, you see, you don’t have to- you have to believe.

WH: But you have to explain about those who got killed. Why did God choose to kill them?

IF: You see, I am mixed up. I’ll be honest with you. Sometimes I feel that. (inaudible).

IF: Don’t give him an argument not to believe. Don’t give him an argument. (laughs).

WH: You mean she doesn’t need much?

AF: ...(inaudible) I left the Warsaw ghetto a week before the ghetto got burned.

WH: I’ll tell you something. I don’t think I’m going to change anybody’s belief at this stage in life.

IF: No, no.

AF: No, no.

WH: But do you discuss it sometimes?

AF: Oh, yes...but it took years...

ST: Not in the beginning, you know, now more...

WH: Do you dream about the war?

AF: In the beginning it was terrible.

IF: Years, -.

AF: I used to wake him up and he used to wake me up. Because in the dream I was running away from the German and I was hiding under a bed. It’s funny. Under a bed I was hiding...(inaudible) you know, thunderstorms...(inaudible).

WH: If you hadn’t married a survivor, how would it have been for you?

AF: I would have been in an institution.

WH: Why?

AF: Because...just thinking about it. The best thing what after the war to do, to pull yourself together a little and to make a life for yourself. A family. You didn’t care who (inaudible) you got together...(inaudible) and you knew somebody from our town, and you knew somebody from our town, you can’t go wrong. How little you know, our town was a nice people. Nice Jewish population. Really nice...then we get married, we gonna make a home, and the best thing was to have a child. You know, you didn’t have to think about gornishe. You have the child, you think about the baby, and you give it all the love. You put the love what you have, you put it in the baby. And you busy. And you, -you understand?

WH: Sure.

AF: And you don’t think about gornish. He needs to make a living; otherwise...it would be, forget it.

WH: So what happened to those people who didn’t have children right away? Who didn’t get married?

AF: They tried. Mostly everybody was trying to do this. You know, like to make a family, to build up (inaudible) the Jewish.

WH: If you had to come to America single, and you would have married an American, not a greener but an American, do you think he could have understood you?

AF: Yes, maybe...(inaudible).

IF: I don’t think so...(inaudible).

AF: If he is intelligent, you know, he would understand. But he wouldn’t know any way, I’d have to sit down and talk to him about it.

WH: But even so, even with talking, you can’t explain it.

IF: No. No. You couldn’t describe it...one day’s life you couldn’t describe nobody. One day only...(inaudible).

AF: Just arriving to this bunker, and how we got the bunker, it’s a- you can’t- ten books you could write about it. It’s unbelievable. It really was a miracle. A miracle.

WH: When you talk about it today, do you like feel that, did this really happen?

IF: No.

AF: Sometimes I don’t know. I –I know it’s happened. You know. I know.

IF: Sure.

WH: Sure.

AF: We come from a pretty big family...(inaudible).

WH: Is your husband a survivor also?

ST: No, he survived Russia...

WH: He was in Siberia?

ST: Yes. He was all over...(inaudible).

WH: What year did you come here to the United States?

IF: We went to Israel, we were almost 4 years in Israel...we sent from Israel, 4 years in Canada...a year in Indianapolis, Indiana...

WH: All together?

IF: She took us.

ST: I brought them...(inaudible).

WH: After the war-.

IF: After the war we were together, we moved to Loge, from Loge we went to Germany, from Germany I was in Prien...for children under 18...near Munich.

WH: You were in a children’s home?

AF: Yes.

WH: Who sponsored this?

IF: HIAS. The Joint. The UNRA...

WH: You were about 16 then?

AF: Yes.

WH: So after a while they sent you to America?

AF: Yes.

WH: You left from Bremerhaven?

AF: Yes...and we came to New York...

WH: Did you have any relatives in New York?

AF: No.

WH: So who (met you)?

IF: A friend.

End of Tape #1, Side A

**Tape #1, Side B**

WH: When you arrived in Minneapolis...

ST: A social worker came, she picked me out from the plane and took me to the family...I came from New York with a plane to St. Paul.

WH: What year did you come to New York?

ST: In 1947...I didn’t have anybody so I was sent to St. Paul.

WH: Who took you in? A family there?

ST: Yeah. Everything was arranged by the Jewish organization. It was the HIAS or something. They had a social worker. They took care (inaudible).

WH: Why didn’t you go to Israel with your sister and brother-in-law?

IF: We didn’t go.

ST: They didn’t go, they were still -.

IF: They took out the kids before...(inaudible).

ST: We were in Germany (inaudible).

WH: So you were thinking that you were going to join her in America at that time?

ST: Yes...when I arrived in New York my father had some friends here and I knew somebody...and he made out papers for them to come. My brother-in-law didn’t want to come to America. He wanted to go to Israel...

WH: What was it like in...with the family that took you in, in St. Paul. Tell me a little about that.

ST: The family, I’ll tell you something, it was strange.

WH: In what way?

ST: It was –they had two children, you know, they couldn’t understand the way (inaudible) we didn’t have the relationship. (inaudible).

WH: Did they know Yiddish?

ST: A little bit. Very little. And I didn’t know English. I was trying to learn.

WH: Why did they take someone in?

ST: They got paid for me. I don’t know if that was the reason- they got a monthly payment. I had a social worker. I stayed for a while and the social worker ask me, I was the type I don’t know. I couldn’t complain. I says, this is what already happened, so what am I going to complain.

WH: So, compared to the war-.

ST: The social worker realized that I wasn’t happy which I wasn’t.

WH: Why weren’t you happy?

ST: Well-l-l, we didn’t have relationship. It was something you know, I was looking for something. A little more compassion. A little more- I was alone.

WH: Did you feel that they weren’t that warm?

ST: No, no. They weren’t.

WH: They didn’t make you feel like part of the family?

ST: No, no.

WH: Do you think they could have done more?

ST: Yes.

WH: In what way?

ST: They could show a little bit more compassion. That’s all- it’s not the food that you get on the table. But a little love. You can’t buy it.

WH: You feel that they could have done that.

ST: Yes. (inaudible).

WH: Do you feel that they really understood what you went through?

ST: No.

WH: Did they ask you?

ST: Not too much. (inaudible).

WH: You mean, to them it was like a deal...(inaudible) like foster care today.

ST: I wouldn’t say that. Then I got, you know, when I stayed with them I got, one night I got very sick. I had pains or something like that. And, I screamed (inaudible) I couldn’t get down, I screamed horrible. But you know, they took me to the hospital. And there was a Jewish doctor over there. And he came over to visit me. He knew I don’t have. He was nice. He was compassionate. I’ll never forget it. And I had some stones that had to be removed...they didn’t take a penny...the agency arranged it. He (the doctor) was compassionate. When something had to be done, he stayed with me, that doctor. He was a very busy doctor, and he stayed with me...I’ll never forget it. This what I call compassionate...so you ask me, They were compassionate? They were not.

WH: And then you left-.

ST: I left them for a different family...that family they had. many children.

WH: What kind of work did the first family do?

ST: He was a salesman...paper dry goods...they weren’t religious at all.

WH: It must have been strange to you to live with a Jewish family who wasn’t religious.

ST: ...to me it didn’t matter. After the war it didn’t matter. It was kosher or non-kosher. You see. You didn’t think of those things.

WH: Most people started to think of those things after the children came.

ST: That’s what they did later. But in the beginning you didn’t think of it. Because on Saturday I got a little job, so I used to hang dresses, I used to baby-sit to make a few dollars.

WH: Did they send you to school to learn English?

ST: Yes...during the day.

WH: Did you want to go to high school?

ST: Yes, that’s what I did.

WH: You were nine years old when the war started. You missed elementary school.

ST: I just went and tried my best. You know, it’s like that. You don’t have to know that- you have to have a will to do it. So, without the language, you do it. And the teachers were nice, too. There especially was a one teacher, she wanted to adopt me, she was non-Jewish, she wanted to take me. She had no children, she never got married, and so, you know, you like somebody.

WH: Did you meet any kids your own age?

ST: Yes, I did...

WH: Were they nice to you?

ST: Mostly there were a few kids, one was from ?Romania?, I tried to associate more or less with somebody whom survived different. A survivor looked for another survivor. You understand? There were a couple of boys, and there were just a few girls. About 5 of us.

WH: You hung around together.

ST: Yes...

WH: Did anyone make any negative comments to you about being a greener?

ST: No.

WH: How did you get to Indianapolis?

ST: I had a boyfriend.

WH: That you met where?

ST: In the camp...twin brothers who survived and he had a family. His mother survived...and the mother had a brother and a sister in Indianapolis...who had come before the war. So naturally he went over there. We used to write to each other.

WH: So what was it like when you went to Indianapolis?

ST: I worked over there...I was there 7 years. We married over there. This is my second husband. We got divorced after 7 years. We had no children.

WH: Sorry to hear that.

ST: Yeah.

WH: The man that you married, is that the one that you knew from the camp?

ST: Yeah. That’s right.

WH: Do you think that maybe when you think about a person like that, and you get to meet them in Europe, that it’s romantic, but not so realistic...?

ST: In German, we got to know each other, and I’ll tell you something. I know it’s not honest, but I’ll tell you something. I was looking, he was nice and everything, I wanted a family. Somebody to belong to, I was alone. He had a family. He had uncles, that was something. And when I came to visit, he said, Here’s a ticket. I had no money, I had nothing, you know. I was trying, and then when we were in Israel, I was trying to scrape a few dollars I made from babysitting. I wouldn’t buy myself a chocolate bar for a nickel. I didn’t have it. But I sent packages to Israel because they were starving. So, I tried to share whatever I had, you see. I used to baby-sit as much as I could. And I had to do the dishes, I didn’t mind it. I got paid 50 cents an hour.

WH: How old were you when you got married?

ST: Twenty...then he went to the Korean War, three years he was away.

WH: You were alone for 3 years. It must have been very hard.

ST: Yeah. But his family- he had a mother, she loved me like a daughter. Her daughter’s name was the same name as my name. So, she felt, the daughter she lost, the daughter lives on. And I’ll tell you something. I didn’t treat her as a mother-in-law. I treated her as a mother. Because a mother I didn’t have. So it works everything, both ways. So, you see they took me in, they showed me a little bit, but it was hard...I had wanted to separate before (the Korean War) but an uncle I liked very much, he talked me out of it. And I listened. You listen sometimes....and somehow I stayed on 7 years. It’s a long time every time I look back, but you know, you do. You make many mistakes in your life, but you can’t go back. You’re still going to make mistakes, but not the same ones.

WH: Do you ever hear from the family now?

ST: I’ll tell you something, his uncle came to visit me. And tried to talk me out of divorce...if I would consider and come back.

IF: They are rich people, they are famous people over there.

ST: But I left. They just put me because I wanted to divorce, they put me to the wall. I couldn’t get out much of anything. You understand? Which wasn’t nice to do it. I worked, too. But he, you know, he has uncles, and the money was- they know everybody, but I didn’t care that much. Whatever it is, this time I wanted out...

WH: You mean, it just didn’t work out?

ST: It just didn’t work out. There’s a lot important between us, and it just didn’t work out. I wanted to leave. He came, he used to send me flowers, he sent me a gift...

IF: And a few years later he took me out, he once took her, too...and I was like a brother.

WH: It sounds like a one-way thing. He didn’t want to break up the marriage.

IF: No...he was crying like a baby.

AF: He wasn’t growing up.

ST: I had my reasons...the only thing I’m sorry that I didn’t do it, I shouldn’t wait 7 years, but- ...

IF: No...I went to Israel to be in Israel because I couldn’t look at German eyes, not Polish eyes, I didn’t want to look for nobody’s eyes. I didn’t want to know nobody. (inaudible). English, American, they all the same. All of these, they want to kill you by any chance they getting. Not before,-and it will be the same thing. So long as there will be one Jew on the (inaudible) there will be the same thing. (inaudible) One is afraid of the other one. One is afraid of the other- a husband(?) is afraid for a wife(?)...constant fear. (inaudible).

WH: You were already in St. Paul.

ST: Yes...St. Paul I was in for two years.

WH: So, you went to Israel.

IF: We stayed two years in Germany, in the camp, in a D.P. camp (inaudible).

WH: How did you get to Israel?

IF: When the State was declared in 1949, in November. (inaudible).

WH: Could you have come to America if you wanted?

IF: Yes...I got twice papers. I didn’t want to show my wife at that time...

AF: I didn’t know about it.

WH: You must have been disappointed.

ST: Very disappointed...

WH: So why didn’t you write her and tell her to come to Israel?

AF: I didn’t want to do that. She got married over there and he wouldn’t come. She got married over there, and a rich family, and she was suppose to be rich...

WH: Life was hard in Israel, but it was hard for everyone, and you had, you were fulfilling the dreams of living in Israel. So, did you want to leave?

IF: No. How many times she sent papers?

AF: He didn’t want.

WH: He didn’t want to leave.

IF: No...she became ill...she didn’t eat, nothing, she was so like a- she couldn’t eat nothing. First of all, we hadn’t got what to eat that time...and something else, she couldn’t take the heat. Even now, it comes summer time, she suffers a lot...(inaudible).

WH: The health problem you had, was it from the war?

AF: From the war...

WH: So finally, you loved your wife, so you went back.

IF: After all, how much can she suffer? We suffered so much...

WH: Is that your proudest achievement, you children?

IF: Yeah. Yeah, I think so...

WH: Tell me a little bit about the children. What are they like They all married Jews?

IF: Yeah. That’s good.

WH: What would you done if they hadn’t?

IF: Oy, don’t ask. I don’t ask myself that. I don’t know. I don’t know.

WH: It has happened to some survivors.

IF: Plenty...

WH: Sometimes I wonder if it hasn’t happened more with them. I don’t know.

AF: It might be (inaudible). Even my youngest, my husband wasn’t that thrilled. You know, he doesn’t know from nothing, you know, Yiddishkeit, not too much. American boy, the 4th generation...(inaudible) a little high society, alright, I’m not afraid of this, I pretend (?), I’m alright (inaudible). I don’t make myself lower, like I’m lower than they are or something.

WH: How did they act towards you?

AF: Oh, fine...the mother, I met her the first time, my daughter made a wedding by herself, I was a guest, just. In Baltimore. And she went to a rabbi, she made glatt kosher, everything...(inaudible) and when I came I saw it the first time I made a hotel.

WH: This was the youngest one?

AF: The youngest one. This was different from the other ones.

WH: Did she go to the yeshiva?

IF: No...Hebrew school...

AF: She knows, she can daven...(inaudible)...

IF: She organized the shul over there...

AF: The rabbi, he is thrilled about it...

WH: Reform, Conservative, what?

AF: Conservative...a nice rabbi.

WH: Your youngest daughter, where did she go to school?

AF: Princeton...to high school...Stuyvesant, New York.

WH: You’re second daughter?

AF: My middle daughter, is a speech therapist...(inaudible)...Brooklyn College...

WH: She got a master’s at Brooklyn also in speech?

AF: Yes...she has everything...and my oldest is a teacher. My oldest, she went back to teach...

WH: (break in tape to eat and talk about their book)...so when you came back to America, you came by boat or plane?

IF: By plane.

WH: And when you came back, she was living in Indianapolis,-.

IF: She was living for 4 years in Canada...(inaudible)...

WH: So, when you came back, didn’t you hate it here, I mean, you were coming to the land of the goyim. You said, you didn’t want to live in a goishe land.

IF: Years, and years, I couldn’t forgive myself...(inaudible) why I came. Years later I got used to it, I mean, after all you have to live there. I mean, you’re living already, you have to be-.

WH: what was your first impression when you came here?

IF: First impression? Very bad.

WH: Why?

IF: With the people, this, this (inaudible) the people, they look on you.

WH: Behavior.

IF: Behavior from the people, how they look on you. And you know, what they look at. If you are not rich, they (inaudible) look on you even hard (?). (inaudible). You feel something a little- I mean, -you didn’t make it.

WH: That they’re snobs.

IF: But I didn’t care. I care less. Thank God, I- without money, I (needs translation and inaudible), I mean.

IF: You know how much work this is?

AF: Yes...it’s not only the work, first of all, it’s a little house, you know, he’s on my back, you know you think I’m doing something wrong, I know the job (inaudible...discussing going away for Pesach) but he wants more...and I said this, I’m not going to do it. Absolutely...(inaudible).

ST: You mean you’re writing a book for this?

WH: Yes.

ST: and you put in the names?

WH: Only if you see it first. In other words, If I would mention anything that you said, if I would mention by name, I-.

ST: You see, I was married for the second time. My daughters don’t know that I’m divorced. Never told them...I don’t know why, but it didn’t came out. If it didn’t came out in so many years until now, we didn’t. Now, one got married last year and one just got engaged...maybe it’s a mistake, but after so many years, I never mentioned it...(inaudible). After the other one is getting married, I am going to sit down (and tell them).

WH: You have to tell them.

ST: Yes.

WH: Your youngest who is engaged...is he Jewish?

ST: Yes...and the oldest married an Israeli...and she lives in California...I want to see it, but my husband is not a traveler...I would go by myself. I want to see it, but (inaudible) we are a team (?) together.

WH: Where in California?

ST: She...works in Berkeley...my other daughter...does echogram...she is good in chemistry...

IF: Only girls in this family.

WH: They all went to college?

IF: Sure...

ST: If I was married at 20, maybe I would have had another one. But I got married already later, so two was enough. Let them be well. So this one, they planning to move to California too. So, I don’t like it. But nothing to say. He’s an Israeli...(showing pictures).

WH: After everything you went through, isn’t it amazing that your daughter went to Princeton?

AF: Sure...believe me, we didn’t have much. But we tried. Nobody knew about it. People were talking about this, about money, I have money, too. That’s all...(inaudible).

ST: My husband, too, he believes in education...

WH: Did you ever talk to them about the war when they were growing up?

AF: Yes.

WH: Or did you not want to tell them?

IF: No, no. They know. We talked a lot. Every time, every occasion, we used to tell them...but they didn’t want to hear much, too, because they so sensitive.

AF: And my little one, she right away she cry (inaudible) terrible...(inaudible).

WH: So you did talk to them about it.

IF: Sure, sure we did...

WH: (inaudible-talking about his book and being translated into English)...

AF: Why did this book come out? So that my kids could read it, too. (inaudible). They don’t speak Jewish...(inaudible)...

WH: So, you went to Montreal first, and you were there for 4 years, and then how come you came to America? Because then you were able to get in?

IF: I couldn’t come to America. We had to go in through Canada and we had friends over there. They survivors too.

WH: What was it like in Canada? Was it nice?

AF: Canada? Yeah, it’s nice...(inaudible).

WH: When you came (to America)...you went to Indianapolis?

AF: Yeah.

WH: What was Indianapolis like?

AF: Aak! Not for me. I didn’t like it. I’ll explain to you what Indianapolis is like that, most people belong to the Reform, then you have Conservative. I belong- .

End of Tape #1, Side B

**Tape #2, Side A**

AF: (inaudible)...from Poland and they came into Indianapolis, I remember when I arrived, there was a brother and a sister, from Indianapolis, they were from Poland. They didn’t stay too long because they moved to New York. They didn’t like it...and the Hungarians, I have to give them a lot of credit, they, for each one, they’ll do everything they can. (inaudible).

WH: More than the Polish (inaudible)?

AF: Oh, forget it. The Polish people are not (inaudible...).

IF: One time, the Hungarians, they helped them (inaudible).

WH: What about in New York?

AF: Oh, there are a lot of Polish people here...(inaudible) the Hungarians...when they get together, you could be around, (inaudible) they speak their language. I went to my husband’s aunt, (inaudible) it was some kind of affair...as soon as they get among, they don’t care who is around. They speak their language. I didn’t- I would never do it to anybody. Speak Polish, when somebody doesn’t understand it. It wasn’t my place to say anything, which I didn’t, because that’s not the way. That’s not the way. (inaudible).

IF: They still stick together. The Poles stick together 100%...(inaudible). You are second class for (?them?)...(inaudible).

WH: I guess that everybody thinks that the other one is second class.

IF: Right...(inaudible).

AF: What’s to defend...

WH: The point is, that they survived already. But what about the Americans? The American Jews, when you first came...

IF: ‘The American Jews, they couldn’t- they haven’t got the feeling. They couldn’t understand...(inaudible). They couldn’t have the feeling, because they don’t understand us at all. Because, first of all, when we came, if you are a survivor, you must be, you must have killed somebody. This is the way they see us.

AF: Some of them.

IF: Some. If you are a survivor, you must have killed somebody.

WH: They have this idea that the nastiest people survived...(inaudible).

IF: Right. This is their idea. That to survive this (?) you must have- be- something wrong.

WH: What do you say to somebody when they say something like this?

IF: What you can do? You can open your heart and show him that what you got through, what you- you gonna,- you couldn’t...(inaudible). Until now to. It is the same thing. It has the same meaning, that you are a survivor- .

WH: Maybe they feel guilty that they didn’t do much during the war.

IF: They didn’t. They didn’t want to do.

WH: You think that they could have done more during the war?

IF: Sure. 100%.

AF: The only thing what we wanted them to do was to attack the concentration, you know, the (inaudible), bomb us all.

WH: You think it does any good when they show the films about the Holocaust?

AF: Yeah.

ST: Yeah.

IF: Yeah.

WH: Do you think that it could change some people’s minds?

AF: Yes.

ST: Yes.

IF: Yes.

AF: I don’t know if change- .

IF: For people to know, not to forget.

ST: I don’t know.

AF: You have to remind people.

IF: Let them know that the worst thing was that they are not (?inaudible-cheating?...)...in Shoah...(inaudible).

AF: I was watching (Shoah), I wanted to know where my mother got- you know, I didn’t know about it.

WH: In the film Shoah.

AF: The Shoah.

WH: It’s a nine hour movie. You watched the whole thing?

ST: The whole thing. Every night of it...(inaudible).

AF: Many times I was thinking, I wish I would- .

IF: Right. But still, better off. Still better off.

AF: (inaudible). We were running, from one place to another one. How to survive. (inaudible)...you make it or you not. You go to a place, you stayed. You made it, or you not. For her, every day was important. Every day. It was something else (inaudible)...

WH: Do you think that there were some kapos who got away and live in New York?

IF: This was a world you couldn’t judge, you couldn’t learn, you couldn’t judge, you couldn’t know. (inaudible).

WH: Do you think that you survived purely because of mazel?

AF: Me? Yeah, I think so.

ST: Yeah, I think so.

WH: Pure mazel.

AF: Yeah.

ST: Yeah. Mazel. A lot.

IF: Three times I was to be killed. Me.

AF: I was worried three times already to shoot,- be shot.

IF: A miracle. This I- that I survived...

WH: God helps those who help themselves, didn’t you also do something yourself?

AF: Oh sure! We were running once-...

WH: So it wasn’t all luck.

AF: No.

ST: No.

AF: Luck, you have to do something...(inaudible).

WH: You didn’t talk much about this, but you lost a lot of your family...there are people, they lose a family, a brother, a sister, and they get terribly depressed, and they can’t go on living. You lost so many people during the war, and in such terrible ways, and you yourself lived so terribly during all those years, how did you find the strength to go on after everything that happened? How could you- you can’t erase the memory of everything that happened. You sit here now, 45 years later, you know everything that happened. From where do you get the strength to go on? Let’s say that somebody would come to you and tell you, right, that I had a terrible crisis, (for example) my mother died of cancer, and my son was killed in a car accident, someone murdered him on the street, what message would you give them? To tell them how to go on with life after you suffer so much. What did you learn from it?

AF: Life must go on.

WH: Why must life go on?

AF: You have to, you know, pick up the pieces. Like,- and try to be, you know,- it’s hard. (inaudible)...after the war, and even Israel, and here too, people they still call me, and you know, their problems and this, and I was alright. I don’t know. I explain to them, I- you know, you have to know what to say according to what they say, and what to answer, and what- more or less.

WH: To answer to whom?

AF: To the people what they complaining their problems. A lot of people, they have problems.

WH: Right, they do. But mentally,- (inaudible).

IF: I don’t know from where (he? Their cousin?) had the strength to be so normal.

WH: That’s what I’m asking you.

AF: (talking about?). He (?their cousin?) was 20 years old, he was raised with us together, too, he loved my father very much. More than his father. And, he was in Russia. I remember when we left Poland to Russia, and you know, we got him after we came here, we didn’t know where he is. I knew he’s alive, but I didn’t know where he lives. We had the same name (?) like me, and everything, you know, (inaudible) after 39 years, we got him. He’s in San Diego. He lives with a English family.

WH: You found him.

AF: An English family, Polish-English. He’s not married. He lives with a family. This is something- I was sick. After him, cost me $2,000 when I came. (inaudible).

WH: I don’t understand. What is it?

IF: They raised him.

AF: They took him in.

IF: He was in the army...General Landers...and they came together, and they took him in, and they lived together...(inaudible).

AF: (somebody-who?)...wrote him a letter that nobody survived, and he got a nervous breakdown.

WH: After the war?

AF: Yes. And he’s mentally- you know, very intelligent. You could talk to him about everything. He reads a lot too. He knows everything. You know, it was funny, when we met him, he said, I’m going to recognize you. I said, Don’t worry, you’ll recognize me. We didn’t change too much. (inaudible). And he did, right away. I wouldn’t recognize him...

WH: What does he do now?

AF: Oy, he lives with them...honestly, he calls me, we don’t know if he changed the religion-.

ST: We don’t know.

AF: We ask him that- we don’t know...he changed his name, he took their name. After the war.

WH: I want to go over this again. He lost his family during the war.

AF: Yeah, nobody’s alive.

WH: How did he meet up with these Americans who took him in?

IF: They were together in the (inaudible) Russian- (inaudible) a Polish guy.

WH: What does this Polish guy have to do with America?

AF: The Englishman- he was in the Army with this man.

WH: Which was based in England.

AF: Yes.

WH: The whole army was based in England.

AF: Yes...(inaudible) and this guy got married a few weeks, and he came to the wife and said, You know something, I have here such a nice guy, and he has nobody, he is Polish...and I will take him to my house, and she just got married. What she needs another man in the house? But, she did it, and they took him in, but he...(inaudible) has such a brain, they make him rich, they have homes, they have- what they have.

WH: Where?

AF: In San Diego...and he has nothing...(inaudible)...he’s a sick guy...mentally...he still thinks we are in Treblinka...mentally.

WH: He never married?

AF: No...this is another book, really, what we went through- we went through, we went to see him, we stayed in a hotel, we didn’t sleep all night, looking how to do in the morning to wait for him to come to see us, and he came with his family, the family was (inaudible) behind him, and he came, and you know, and then we didn’t stay by him. We didn’t go to his house, we went to a friend’s house.

WH: How did you find him?

AF: My oldest daughter...went to California for vacation and I gave her a whole list because he had an uncle over there in Los Angeles and I remembered the name...and I said, Sue, you take the book over there and call up.

ST: Try every night.

AF: Until you find him...she called up and she got it right away.

WH: You remembered him from before the war?

IF: Yes...and when my daughter came home, I said, This is not my cousin. And she said. Ma, this is your cousin, he changed his name. I couldn’t believe it. And then I wrote a letter, and he didn’t write. And he didn’t call.

ST: I wrote a letter.

IF: And I said to my sister, Let’s try one more time....and he called...and you know you should see me. I was shivering, and I was stiff like- it’s unbelievable. Just listening to his voice...and I talk to him, and I (ask) how come you changed your name? Yes, I changed it...it’s a whole story...the lawyer told him it’s the best to change the name...

WH: How did he come to America?

AF: With them...and they went to Canada...then America...

WH: Where did he have a nervous breakdown?

AF: In England...he told us when we went to visit him. I was crying when I came back on the plane. I had time to think about it. And, I was sitting- and you something, she said, the lady, first of all, she was very afraid of us. And she didn’t greet us warmly. She thought we came to take him away. All the money.

ST: Because over the phone, he said to me...the people are from England, I said, Are they Jewish? he said, No....and the people (were suspicious of us) she (the lady) said, After so many years, after 39 years, all of a sudden I came to see him? I said, You know something, it’s never too late. This was what I said. Right away, it’s never too late. She thought that we came after 39 years...to take him away...when I went to see him, I took a check from the bank, because I didn’t know if he has a penny. Maybe we have to help him...maybe he needs something. And I took a blank check. To give him money when I came there. You know something, he said he’s not working, they not working, so I ask, From where do you make a living? They don’t need it, Because he bought (inaudible)...and he’s still punishing himself.

WH: For what?

AF: For what? He lost everybody, and he has nobody is punishing. I wish this, he said, I wish this, I said, George, forget it. Until I got used to the word, George, took me a long time. On the plane going back, I was sick terrible...because the lady said, He didn’t want to be as Jew....this is what she said to me...

WH: What was it like when you first saw him?

AF: When I saw him...he came over right away to us because he recognized us...and I said to him, George, listen, you were 20 years old, and you knew where you are, and who you are and everything. He knew everything, what did they change him? Or something, they had a good Jew, a crying Jew,-.

ST: I don’t know...he didn’t want to talk...I was sitting, and he moved away from me...

WH: Are you in touch with him now?

AF: Yes...there was time when he didn’t want to come, and I figured that if he didn’t want to come here, then we go there...then we went and I invite him here...and I told him that when you come to my house, just remember, you come to your parent’s house too. The same thing. The same thing, you gonna feel comfortable.

WH: How old is he?

AF: He just turned 70...

WH: Would he talk to me?

AF: No...he’s still going to a psychiatrist...(inaudible).

IF: He’s not Jewish anymore...(inaudible).

WH: On the whole, do you think he’s happier now that he saw you?

IF: A mixed...

AF: Half and half...

IF: He’s mixed up...(inaudible)...the minute I saw him, we talked about- not about money- we talked about everything, never about money. We talked about everything, not money...(inaudible). Believe me, I could drink a coffee and a piece of bread. And I’m satisfied. And I don’t like somebody to give me, I like to give something to somebody else, but I don’t care. We never talked about money.

WH: What kind of work did you do?

IF: I worked a grocery.

AF: Waldbaum’s.

IF: I worked very hard. They did me a big favor, they give me overtime, not to work Shabbas, they give me overtime...I worked all my life, very hard.

AF: I managed. I managed, that’s all.

WH: What did you do at Waldbaum’s?

IF: A Dairy Manager...in Boro Park...

WH: Where did your oldest daughter go to college?

IF: In the Bronx...Lehman College...she’s a teacher...she lives in Pomano, New York.

WH: Where does the middle one live?

IF: Marlboro, New Jersey...

WH: You didn’t have money to send them to Yeshiva...

IF: They went to Sunday school...I didn’t have money to pay (for Yeshiva)...

WH: Did you feel, since you went to Yeshiva in Europe, that it was important that your kids go to Yeshiva? Or did you feel that for girls, it wasn’t so necessary?

AF: For girls, no...(inaudible).

IF: I couldn’t afford it. I would have like it...(inaudible).

WH: But to send to Princeton was very expensive.

IF: She got a scholarship...and we helped, too.

WH: When the kids were growing up, did you ever go on vacation?

IF: Never.

AF: Never.

WH: You wouldn’t go on vacation.

AF: Never.

WH: Did you leave the kids with a baby sitter to go out?

IF: No, no.

AF: I couldn’t afford to pay...the first time that I went by myself, this was my vacation.

IF: I go the second year to Israel. Every second year I go to Israel...by myself...she doesn’t want to go.

WH: Why don’t you want to go?

IF: She doesn’t like the heat...(inaudible) and I’m not staying in hotels, I’m running around like a (inaudible) to see friends...

AF: I was there twice, I don’t want to go again...I have trouble with my legs...(inaudible)...

WH: Your sons-in-law, they went to Yeshiva?

IF: Yes.

WH: Are they religious?

AF: No...they don’t keep up, the kids they go to Hebrew school...(inaudible).

WH: Is that very important to you? Does it really bother you a lot that they are not that religious?’

AF: No, not me...they have to live their own life.

IF: It bothers me, (inaudible) when they want to come Succas. (needs translation)...

WH: Do you think that if they had gone to Yeshiva it would have been different?

IF: Yeah, for myself, I don’t know- it would be different for them, life, but I would have liked it better.

WH: Is there anything in all these years that you regret that you didn’t do?

AF: I don’t think about it. I’m not so young any more, and- .

IF: (inaudible) all the time I was working, working, and the time I come home, it got 5 o’clock I’m home, and 8 o’clock, and (needs translation).

AF: He didn’t know about the kids too much. I did all the job...(inaudible).

IF: Everything has to be perfect...

AF: Not perfect, but I didn’t have too much, I couldn’t afford it, and my kids, they looked the same like other kids in school. Clean, and dressed. Not fancy, I couldn’t afford it, so I fixed by myself. I shortened it, I did that, you know, and everything, and they looked good...(inaudible).

WH: In terms of your own sanity, in all these years, it is good that you have these children, right?

AF: Yes.

WH: It kept you busy.

AF: Yes. Yes. Yes...not to think of what happened. You know something, until today, we have a friend, he has a granddaughter, she is a redhead. When I see this kid, I don’t know- it reminds me because when I was hiding, this Friday when they took out all the Jews, I was hiding, and some mothers, they took some money or something they gave the Polish people to take their little girls, especially the girls, in hiding. And I was sitting over there, and I saw through the cracks, you know you could see everything what’s going on outside. And I saw, after they took away all the Jews from the train, then a little girl, a redhead, get out (inaudible), they running out, you know some of the Polish women, they took away the money and told her to go, and she went, and the little one she went to see the parents in their house and a German was there and he called her, and he shoot her in the mouth. In the mouth. And this is what I saw. And each time when I see the little girl, the redhead, it reminds me of this.. Oy, she was beautiful. Beautiful. And I saw this with my own eyes. And you know, you can’t forgive it. But we tried, like I said, not to talk about it at all. And not to, -you know, all your energy, you gave to different things. That’s all.

IF: To the kids.

AF: To the kids, and to other people, to help people, you know, to call come people- you know, some people, they call you, they you know, they have problems, to help, and I was running here you know, from one place to another one. I didn’t have time anyways because from Poland to Germany, from Germany to Israel, from Israel to France too. We were in Paris. Ten days. What a shlep!

WH: And you were in Montreal for 4 years...

IF: We came...to Indianapolis in ’57...

AF: And the end of ’59 we came here (New York).

WH: You wanted to be in a Jewish place?

IF: Yes...we got during the war so much already...

AF: But the feeling, I’m a Jew, and I suffered being a Jew...(inaudible).

WH: Who are you going to vote for? Dinkins? Guiliani?

IF: No, no...I don’t know...I vote for Koch...

AF: It didn’t work.

IF: It didn’t work...(inaudible)...you know something, sine I’m here, he was the best. He was the best mayor. Really. I mean, not because he’s Jewish...(inaudible).

IF: He stand up for Israel. He stand up for the Jewish people...(inaudible).

WH: So what do you do now?

IF: I would rather vote for Guiliani than Dinkins. For Dinkins, for sure I’m not going to vote. That’s for sure. Or, I’m not going to vote at all...

WH: Is it because of Dinkins or because of Jackson?

IF: Jackson.

AF: Because of Jackson. Yes.

ST: Yes...(inaudible).

AF: Because of the (inaudible-? hymies?)...because he stands behind him. He stays behind him...(inaudible).

WH: How come they’re so against the Jews? How come they don’t understand? They also suffered, right?’

AF: They suffered, but not-.

IF: I’ll tell you why, because they, they ?don’t? have enough brains.

AF: I wish I would have suffered like them. Because it’s still not bad. What they did to the Jews, and this is already,-.

IF: The Jewish, they helped him. They went to march,- and they got killed for them! They got killed. They didn’t have brains, because the best thing is to keep with the Jews together, because we suffered, they suffered, it was the best bet for them.

AF: They are a minority, we are a minority.

WH: What about groups like the Puerto Ricans.

IF: That’s something else.

WH: Do you see them different?

IF: Yes. A 100%.

WH: Why?

IF: Because they are men with brains...(inaudible)...

WH: What about the Chinese, the Koreans, the Vietnamese, what do you think of them?

IF: They are nice. So long as they have brains, so long as they have brains and they think, they a family man, something (inaudible)...

AF: Chinese, family...(inaudible).

ST: -family...(inaudible).

AF: They saw together, they saw that-.

IF: Respect for-.

AF: You know, for parents.

IF: For parents. A little respect for them...

ST: Yes...very fine people.

IF: Yeah, they are.

IF: All of them except the shvartze.

AF: I talk to them. Some of them (inaudible) I used to meet and you know, some girls and we talk about- I wanted to know about them a little, and I saw their families, they helped each other, and the mother, the father, and the kids, and they so close with the parents. (inaudible). I liked that.

WH: Do you think that what happened in Europe could happen here?

IF: A 100%.

WH: A 100%...(inaudible).

AF: I don’t know...

WH: Could a Holocaust happen here, in America?

AF: Yeah.

ST: No.

WH: Could an American goy (?) Holocaust?

IF: Yes, yes, yes. If it wasn’t the green paper, the dollar, would be the same thing. (inaudible-? Chas vashala-?), with the situation with the Columbia, is a little bit (needs translation)...(inaudible)...in a situation like that, a boss knows if he has two card, he has to give something (inaudible) or he wouldn’t have the two card...(inaudible).

WH: Wouldn’t they blame the shvartze first?

AF: I don’t think so...(inaudible).

ST: It seems to me, yes...

WH: Do you think it’s going to happen here someday?

IF: Yes.

WH: Why?

IF: Yes, yes. Because America is not going to be rich. Japan, Germany, they going to take over.

WH: And we are going to get blamed.

IF: Then they will take over...(reads a letter from ?) before he died...and he wrote me that (needs translation).

WH: America is going under.

IF: (needs translation and inaudible) They’ll be a big laugh for me when I tell you. (inaudible-and needs translation.)...

WH: So, your opinion is that it wouldn’t happen.

ST: Ehr, maybe not...(inaudible).

WH: What do your children do?

ST: My youngest one is in California, she is 25...she’s working...in a mailing...advertising...business...and my oldest one who is married over a year, she works for Mount Sinai hospital. She does echograms...and now she is planning to move to California...

IF: For years and years, until now (inaudible)...until I find me a place.

WH: What do you mean?

IF: I was so nervous...(inaudible) I mean, I didn’t have a nervous breakdown, but-.

WH: Well, listen, if it didn’t affect you, you wouldn’t be normal, right?

IF: Right.

WH: If it didn’t affect you, you wouldn’t have any feelings.

IF: Right...(inaudible).

AF: You look at us, maybe you’ll think, we’re very nervous people. One thing, let me tell you-.

WH: I’ll tell you the truth, I saw he was nervous when I met you in the hotel. I saw that. But I remembered that you came up to me, I think it was after I spoke to somebody like that,- but this book was for me, so interesting, that I read it in one sitting. I read it in the hotel...

IF: This was nothing, written special. This isn’t a story, it’s a diary. A diary of-.

WH: But you see, I think, you’re asking my opinion, that you are a real survivor, why? First of all, most people would have gone crazy from going through all these things.

AF: Oh-h-h.

WH: But second of all, you showed here in this book how you hid yourself, how you adjusted to the situation, how you used your head many times. I’m not saying you didn’t have mazel, you need both, really, you have to have mazel and you have to use your head. The question-.

End of Tape #2, Side A

**Tape #2, Side B**

IF: (talking about shul business). I’m working aleiyah...and with people, you know, (inaudible) to get along with people, to look at them, they want maftir, they want sheshe, they want, you know, they want (inaudible) and you have to be a psychiatrist too, I mean, to- I’m coming in the shul, I look around, I saw already in the face (laugh) what they want...(inaudible) thank God, I keep them all together. Fifteen years, I’m gabbi...(inaudible).

WH: ...is there something different about Jews than other people, in your opinion?

IF: Yes. Yes.

WH: What?

IF: Yes, because, because there, I’m a (?sofer), they want to learn.

WH: I know that they like to be called to the sefer...(inaudible).

IF: I’m a (inaudible-?sefer?) They have brains, they have brains, they have brains.

WH: So they really (inaudible) sachel.

IF: I’m a (inaudible)...is to learn (inaudible)...you study, you have to learn...(inaudible) they still using Israel laws.

WH: Did you get the feeling, that everything you lived through during the war, did you get the feeling that people were out for themselves or that they tried to help other people?

IF: ...people out for themselves.

AF: I expect much more.

ST: More people are selfish.

IF: More, more, yes. There’s more...

WH: They didn’t learn much from the war.

IF: Didn’t learn much. I’ll tell you why. Because ourselves, too, all Yiddish people, they have, if they couldn’t see that Israel, to be strong, Israel, everybody should thank Israel, because on account of Israel, we are alive. And everybody, they stay away from (inaudible)...

AF: And we could sit here, and talk, thinking we have something. If we would have had it in Poland- (inaudible)...(inaudible)...

WH: What do you think we should do with the Arab situation?

IF: The Arab situation, is a very, this is a very big thing. I’ll tell you why. Because there is no solution. You couldn’t give them away. If you let them in, they go farther. They will be the majority. And to turn away, is bitter, because after all, they are people, they have to live too. I mean, they have to live too. (inaudible)...you haven’t got a solution. Never in life. There’s no solution in life. It’s going to be on and on for years...

WH: But America, you think can be counted on to support Israel?

IF: No.

WH: No. Why not?

IF: Years ago, the Jew had something to say. Now, little by little they take him away...(inaudible).

AF: The propaganda-.

IF: In Israel, day and day, day and day, I mean, you see they getting dumped.

WH: Who? The Jews?

IF: The Jews. They getting dumped.

WH: What paper do you read?

IGF: The Times mostly...and the Jewish Week...

WH: You don’t read the NY Post or the Daily News?

AF: No, no.

IF: No.

WH: Tell me something, (inaudible...) it would be easier for you to read the Daily News than the Times, yet you choose to read the Times. Why?’

IF: The Times...I like the language...

WH: A lot of these reporters that write for Israel like Tom Friedman, are Jewish.

IF: Yeah.

WH: So you say that we are getting dumped, but they are still doing the writing.

IF: Yes, we’re getting dumped and dumped. Year after year...(inaudible)...but a shvartze, never...(inaudible).

WH: You never saw a social worker or a psychologist?

IF: No.

WH: And you never did either?

AF: No.

WH: Why not?

AF: I didn’t believe in-.

WH: You didn’t think it would help?

AF: Not me. I could help. I help plenty people. I have a (inaudible) oy, she drives me crazy!

IF: We have an old lady, she-.

AF: She’s 86, she drives me crazy.

IF: She said that we were only our ears.

WH: You are her psychiatrist.

AF: Yeah!

WH: She’s a survivor?

IF: No, no an old lady without children, without nothing. She said that I was only (her) ears. Don’t put me away. That’s what she said.

AF: Yeah, she needs my ears. And I give them...

IF: And we help her a lot, and she gives us so much trouble.

AF: Yeah, yeah, but I’m used to it.’

WH: So, what do you think of all these psychiatrists, psychologists, you think they are any good?

AF: You have to help yourself. They don’t help you.

ST: They help but-.

AF: The only thing you go to a psychiatrist, you know, you want to,- you can’t tell...this to the walls. So they go to a psychiatrist to- everything, and he is, - this is private too. If she is gonna tell me, (inaudible) stupid stories, stupid things or something, the psychiatrist she could tell because it’s private. He’s not gonna tell nobody.

IF: King Solomon taught her.

AF: Yeah.

IF: King Solomon.

AF: Yeah, because I have a machetanise (?).

IF: She has to go, yeah. King Solomon told us, that (needs translation)...(inaudible)...she’s good. I mean, the feeling.

WH: Yeah, it’s good.

IF: It’s good to talk. You feel better later on (inaudible). You see, the old woman, she talk me half an hour, now she said, I’m going to talk to myself. (laughs...inaudible).

WH: Now, this will be an interesting conversation.

AF: (inaudible) she’s from Poland...she’s very intelligent- the husband was a doctor...

WH: Tell me, did you think in all this time (you were hidden), did you feel that you’re going to get out of this whole thing, that you’re going top make it through?

AF: No.

IF: Never.

WH: Or did you feel that you are not.

IF: Never.

AF: No.

WH: You didn’t.

IF: You know something, it’s always there, and it’s always in front of you. Wherever you go, whatever you enjoy it, even you go to a wedding and you enjoy it very much and you see people, and we went to New York and we saw a show, and I saw the Jewish people, it’s a Jewish show, and we saw the Jewish people, and I was crying. I enjoyed it so much. Not so much the show, but the people. The Jewish people...(inaudible).

WH: Why do you mean it’s a waste of time?

AF: You know, but still, what I want to say is, still, even when I was there, with the Jewish people, what still- everything was in front of me.

IF: There’s my mother, there’s my brother. There’s my-.

AF: No, looking, -I don’t know. It’s still- everything is in front of me. You see everything is in front of you. You see everything what happened. All this. Even if you see everything, and you enjoy, like I said, you go to a wedding, and you enjoy it, it’s still up to this- you still, with everything, you seeing what happened. You cannot hide it. You can’t- you know, it’s always,-.

WH: Do you like to freeze food since the war ended...a lot of people were afraid, they didn’t know when they would have food again.

AF: No, no. I don’t watch the food. No, I don’t. No, no. Not in New York...I’m not afraid. I don’t bother with it...

IF: No...first of all, we’re not big eaters...we eat because we have to eat...she likes people, she likes people.

AF: I like people. I like the Jewish kids. When I see kids in Boro Park I kvell. I- everything, I don’t care. I kvell from them. You know why? Because what they did, to those kids, you know- when I see them, I think they are alive, they are still alive or something. There’s something about-.

WH: They look like-.

AF: Yeah.

WH: They look more like the kids in Europe?

AF: That’s right. That’s right. And they still- and I think maybe they didn’t do it, they still alive, and maybe it makes me feel good about it. When I see the Yiddishe kinder.

WH: Did you lose hope at any point? When you were in hiding, did you always keep your hope that you would get out? Did you believe that you would make it through?

AF: No, sometimes yes, but sometimes no. It was already too long.

IF: No.

ST: We couldn’t take it any more.

AF: Two more weeks we wouldn’t survive. She wouldn’t take it-.

ST: No. The lady would then begin to worry if her house was caught.

IF: The ?pace? it was too much the ?pace/ for them too...(inaudible) it was too much.

AF: I see a little mice, and I run...(inaudible) and I would never have a cat coming to me (inaudible) just touch me, it’s impossible...

WH: You don’t have any pets do you?

AF: No.

ST: No.

WH: None of you. How come you don’t have any pets?

AF: I don’t know. I have kids. I had touching them, then I had enough.

ST: In Israel I had a dog...

WGH: You had a dog in Israel?

ST: Yes...(inaudible).

End of Tape #2, Side B

Conclusion of Interview

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