**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**William Helmreich Oral History CollectionPRIVATE**

**Interview with Willie Lieberman**

**January 5, 1988**

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**PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Willie Lieberman, conducted by William Helmreich on January 5, 1988 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.**WILLIE LIEBERMAN**

**January 5, 1988**

WL: …May the 6th, 1923

WH: The country?

WL: Czechoslovakia…

WH: The city?

WL: …a very small town…Malyrackovec…

WH: You have brothers? Sisters?

WL: …my father was married before. His first wife died, and then he married my mother. He had five children with his first wife…two (of those) brothers who are still alive. They are here…they came here before the war…my father married again and my mother had nine children…I have five sisters and (three) brothers…

WH: How many were older and how many were younger?

WL: …one younger…all the others were older…seven were older…

WH: How many children do you have?

WL: We have one daughter…adopted daughter.

WH: Of the nine (brothers and sisters)…

WL: …two survived…me and a sister survived…five were married. None of the

married ones survived. Four of them had children. …one brother was

a…scholar…he had five children…my older sister had four children….

WH: What kind of work did your father do? Were they very religious?

WL: Of course they were religious. In Europe there were a different life than here.

Here everybody is free - more, whatever, no such thing, any little holiday, any

little fast. You know, like they have 20 fasts a year…I come from very, ah,

religious families, yes.

WH: Hassidishe?

WL: Yes…I would say they more – really Hassidic. My father had a long beard…my

mother wouldn’t go bareheaded, you know. She cut her hair, of course you know.

WH: And you, yourself?

WL: Me? I’m the only one from my four brothers. All my other three brothers went to

yeshiva…they never went to any other school, just yeshivas. Me, I didn’t…I was

the only one who did not…

WH: How did that happen? Was that your choice?

WL: Well, it happens. It was my choice. I didn’t want to…keep up with it. I didn’t

want, ah, …I didn’t have those, um, I don’t know why, I could have done it. I

was as smart as them. But I didn’t – want to do it. Of course, it was very hard.

We…they were struggling, my brothers. They didn’t, like you go to school here,

you live at home, you know. They went away, of course…

WH: Do you remember your parents?

WL: …my parents…as a matter of fact – they died at home. They were lucky…my

mother died in 1939. She died of stroke. She was very young…about 20 years

younger than my father…

WH: What about your father?

WL: My father died in 1942…he died of a heart attack…he was in his 70’s. He died at home…

WH: You were about 19 or 20 years old?

WL: …I was – 19.

WH: What type of person was he – strict, lenient?

WL: He was not strict…a nice person. They were struggling, you know, the later years a real struggle to survive.

WH: Economic?

WL: In all ways…it was a rough life…in 1938, I think, we were occupied from the Hungarian…and they took all the rights from the Jews…we had a little grocery (store)…it was a small town…200 families maybe. Only 5 were Jewish…we had a *minyan* (minimum number of men for religious services) from two towns…

WH: Your parents weren’t well off?

WL: No, no, no…maybe in the early ‘30’s and ‘20’s…my father inherited some things from his father…land…cattle, sheep…then things started happening. After the Hungarians occupied our town…things started going very bad. Then they took away – you had to have a permit to have a store…a license, so then somehow we leased to the store to somebody, to a gentile. A gentile family. It was suppose to be a partnership…but it was the end. Like a, the early ‘40’s…most of the family they gathered together to the concentration camps in 1944 in our place.

WH: How far did you get in school?

WL: Very small…I want to *cheder*(religious school)…of course every Jewish boy, who didn’t go to *cheder*? I went until about 11 – 12 years. And also Czech school…

WH: Same amount of time?

WL: Same amount of time, right.

WH: About six years?

WL: Yeh, yeh. No, more than that…my father tried for me to become a *yeshiva* *bocher* (young, single man studying at a yeshiva) like my brothers but I didn’t follow up.

WH: Were you able to say at the age of 12, “I don’t want to go anymore”?

WL: …well, I didn’t do well in the Jewish studies. I didn’t do well. I wasn’t – I couldn’t have done it. I didn’t want to do it. Maybe I could have done it if I wanted it…

WH: In your other studies, you did alright?

WL: Yes…I did alright. What can you do in sixth grade whatever…

WH: In the community where you were raised, was there anti-Semitism?

WL: …it’s not like you see here…there must have been anti-Semites by heart but not – as bad as the Polish Christians…Some people. I don’t say everybody. I’m not including everybody ‘cause there were exceptions…like you see on television show…these guys laughing and gloating…we didn’t have this kind of thing, really. We didn’t have this kind of thing.

WH: Was your family involved in the community, religious life, political life, anything like that?

WL: Political? There was no political life…In our town, where I come from – they didn’t even have a …mayor…I don’t even think we had a town hall…

WH: The community?

WL: My father was very well involved…in the other community…

WH: How was he involved?

WL: They built there a shul…I wasn’t even born…he was well-off and he contributed a lot to that shul…my father…was a cantor…me and my brother…acted as his choir…the family was scared of him, sort of, because there was no life at home. You know, there was no – economic…wasn’t way to make a living there, to work…

WH: Was your father the type of person who pushed you to be independent or the opposite?

WL: He didn’t push me. He would have LOVED for me to be a *yeshiva bocher* … you go to yeshiva until you get married…but I did not do it…when I was around 12 or a little older, I went to learn tailoring…but the war interrupted everything…it took years to become – but I didn’t finish it. I – just, ah, it just dwindled away. You know – my life was, eh, a waste. As a matter of fact, those days those years there was such a - turbulence there…everybody was looking to survive.

WH: When the war began, 1939…what happened to you during the war? Where were you?

WL: …the little I learned in tailoring…there was a shortage of people that time because they took everybody away…the older Jews they took them away already- to labor camps. That was before Auschwitz…the Hungarians took them to labor camps…and I worked for about a year…as a tailor…as an apprentice.

WH: Then what happened?

WL: …from there…for survival…I tried to buy things and sell things, you know, eh, legal or illegal. You know. I’m not talking about drugs. I’m talking about a pair of shoes or, or material for…clothes…used to buy some ration tickets from people who used to sell it to you, you used it resell it…

WH: You stayed there for how long?

WL: …stayed there, stayed home until…1941…then I heard there were opportunities in Budapest, Hungary…in Hungary there was terrible anti-Semitism…before the Germans marched into Hungary…

WH: Czechoslovakia didn’t really have it like that…anti-Semitism?

WL: …Czechoslovakia itself…the Czechoslovakian government…they were very, very well loved by the Jews…

WH: Did you feel patriotic towards Czechoslovakia?

WL: Yes of course…

WH: You felt positive?

WL: …Yes! Because all the Jewish people…who went to these Czechoslovakian schools…there were different schools. There were Czech schools and Russian schools…a different type of Russian…like Ukrainian…

WH: So, you went to Budapest?

WL: …Yeh…’41…there was nothing at home. Nothing, nothing whatsoever. Nothing…Hungarians came in and took away all the rights from the Jews…in our town…more than half of the people were poor. When I mean poor, they didn’t have what to eat. Completely not what to eat. Not that you ate good, you know. The food was potatoes and bread. That was good, you know. In ’41 I went to Budapest and I found a job in tailoring…I stayed there from 1941 to 1942…I lived in a rooming house…

WH: What happened then?

WL: Then I got a letter, a telegram that my father was very sick and I went home. By the time I came home he was already dead… I stayed home…I was 17…I started off again, buying flour, tickets, you know these rations tickets.

WH: We’re up to 1942-43?

WL: Right. In 1944…a week before Passover…they gathered all the Jews…

WH: You were 18?

WL: Yeh…and they took up into where…the shul, our temple was…somebody told me…that all the Jewish boys that were born my, eh, age…they had a…letter to go into labor camp…we heard later that the Hungarian government did it specially…to get together, to get out the young boys away from the Germans…

WH: So they gathered you in a synagogue.

WL: Yeh. I’ll never forget. They, they, they took everything – we had a house, cows…the next day they told everybody to go back home from there. So, then they told the people that the only thing that they holding us back because they have no room where to take us that time. They didn’t have no room to take the people. They didn’t have, I don’t know what they had – they didn’t have no trains or whatever…I grabbed whatever I could and I ran to, er, the nearest station, train station…

WH: You mean you didn’t go to the gathering place?

WL: …my sisters…and I were hidden…I didn’t go to the gathering place…the others were to gather all the Jews there into the temple.

WH: You didn’t go?

WL: I didn’t go. No…

WH: Why do you think you didn’t go and the others did?

WL: Why I didn’t go? Because…I had a girlfriend…and her mother was very smart and she knew all along. She was talking about it constantly. They were killing Jews in Poland…things came back. People knew. It was no secret that they were killing the Jews there. And she always knew that they were killing so she said let’s try to run.

WH: So you felt you were being warned?

WL: Yeh, of course…they were killing…we knew that they were taking – these people are going to the trains and taking them to Poland. We knew about it.

WH: You knew that if you went to Poland, you would die?

WL: Yeh! …I knew that I had to go – actually, you had to go. If you have this invitation to go, I mean, you had to go. You have to report. Like – you have to go. Although there was no order to keep the – nobody would have known if you – where you go. They kill you here, they kill you there, you know, no problem.

WH: You went to the labor camp?

WL: Yes, I went…then they formed a group. Two hundred and fifty of us. They put us on a train…cattle wagons…to Rumania…we worked…we dug trenches…near an air field…we saw Russian fighter planes…shooting up the small airport…there was no defense there…when they saw us…they started with machine guns from the very low flying…the ground was shaking…

WH: You thought you were going to die?

WL: I didn’t think about it…we were working and we didn’t have it too bad. We had food. They gave us food, good or bad…

WH: Hungarian soldiers?

WL: Right…we had a lieutenant…a very fine man. He didn’t show any anti-Semiticism. Not at all…he never punished anybody…but the soldiers themselves did beat up a lot of people. Once a guy, he gave me a smack over my head…killed my eardrum, my hearing…He smashed me so – he was a big giant man. He was like a weight-lifter…anyway, …the planes came down…we saw the trains…going backwards…all the Hungarian guards run away…the Russian partisans broke through the German front…

WH: What happened to your brothers and sisters that were killed?

WL: I never knew nothing…they were older…and married…on their own, far away from us…(except) my sister’s husband survived…

WH: Then you went back to your town?

WL: They loaded us up on cattle wagons…we went all the way back to Hungary…into a big barracks…a big city…this was the end of October, 1944…we used to lay (rail) tracks…then they took us over to Austria….

End of Tape #1, Side A

**Tape #1, Side B**

WL: The Hungarians beat us...they were new guards...we had to walk...in the cold to the...Austria-Hungarian border...they divided us into two groups...the Germans...there were two of them only...to take us over the border...to Austria...these two Germans gave us over to...about six S.S guards...there were about a hundred of us in the group...all Yugoslavian S.S ...from there we walked...to the front line...we were digging tank traps...and fox holes...and bunkers...there were thousands upon thousands of Jewish men working.

If you couldn't work no more you die...they killed many people...

WH: This was a concentration camp?

WL: Yeh...of course concentration camp...this Yugoslavian S.S. didn't treat us very, very bad...then bombing came and we march...towards deeper into Austria...then an empty German truck came...and filled up the truck with young men...I went up on the truck...they took us to a town in Austria and there was a big stadium...where they were making bread for the front and we loaded bread...on the trucks... we were in seventh heaven...we were able to eat a piece of bread...we were there for about a week...they we were marched deeper and deeper into .....Austria...for about two days without nothing. No food at all . . . we were eating grass...they took us into another town...we ate raw horse...the most food I survived off - snails...the American planes came...and bombed...it was just a mess... we were marched...to Mauthausen...and somebody told me that there, my brother is there...my oldest brother was there. I found him - they told me where he is and I went...on top of the hill they were burning bodies there, in the open...the crematorium couldn't take no more there were open pits...and there burning there...people were dying like fleas, There was rain, mud...typhus. My brother - I came there and I saw - I found mybrother. He was lying on a board. Stretched out like this. He was a tall man. He was much taller than me. About 6' 1" or 6' and he was a giant of a man...he could qualify for anything, you know, such a SMART…and he was lying there and when I saw him I started to cry...I started to cry so - and he's asking me - and he’s recognize me and he saw me he saw me and he says, "Why, why you crying? Do I look so bad?” Do I look so bad? Do I look so bad?" And he was a skin and bone...so then, the next day he died. Like that he died...then they took us...by the hundreds they marched us...not far from Mauthausen ...a huge building...with dirt floor…everybody was sick already...an epidemic of typhus. They were dying like fleas...we stayed outside under a tree. It was April. It was still icy, rain, icy rain falling, you know. At night, you know, we were staying there under the tree and making a fire. We could-they allowed us and there was wires all around, the guards standing, standing around the camp, you know, there was this small, outside this, ehr, this with the wire there was a road brought us - we came in there, that road. Outside there was this building there where the guards stayed. There was, I think, a kitchen that, too, sometime they brought us in some beet soup. Beet-I don't know what it was. Water. Nothing but - there was also there they brought us in once, I think, I remember they gave us, I think, ehr, I remember on the third day they came, they gave us, they sliced up a bread, also divided it into slices. I don't remember how many people a slice of bread. And, uh, there people were dead all over the place. They were dying like fleas. And the more I remember, a couple of days there was rain, the weather was so bad, I don't now how long it lasted.

A day or two. Rain, rain. And then all of a sudden it cleared up, and, the-sun-the sun came out. This-and we were-I'm staying outside already. I was staying-we were-didn't go inside the building because there was no room. There was dying, people dead allover the place there. Dead. You know, you lie down and you huddle together to keep warm, you know, so you could get up in the morning.

Or next to you, and, each side was dead. You know, you were in the middle, still moving, you know. People were hanging down from the-there was there these beams you know, open beams, you know, they were hanging down from beams, sitting up there, you know, trying to-there was no windows, you know, the

windows they were (nervous laugh) they had a hole in the, you know, in the wall - some place. There was a door there, one door to a enter a big building (nervous laugh) with no place to if somebody put a match in-everybody would have burned inside - you know, there was no place to escape, there. Anyway, so I-what I want to bring out is I saw-there was this young man. I was under a tree. He was under a tree with me and another two people, one is still alive, he's here, and one is dead. He died right after the liberation. Ah, this young man, he was in striped uniform. A striped uniform. He must have come from Poland, someplace, or someplace far because we didn’t have no striped uniforms. We didn’t have – we has civilian clothes. You know, we didn’t, we weren’t – he must have come from – a young boy, a young boy. This, this German S.S. man came in, he were a sergeant, I think, I knew that time the ranks, or I recognized them, you know. Sure because I’m so long, you know already who they are, you know. I come in there. He cames in with a – pistol and starts shooting in the air. Everybody, you see they were dead all over the place. After all this rain. Because they were groups who used to pick up the people and carry them four – two by the hands, and two by the legs, you know, and carry them, there was about 100 feet away, or 200 feet away, there was groups digging, there was groups who were digging, then they got more – a little more food they were digging big hole, big gr-graves. They threw – threw them in, the dead there and they buried them there. They – listen, filled up one, they fi – they took another one. You know. There was – that’s how they buried them there. So one day we walked in there and there were dead all over the place. The people won’t pick up. You know, there was details to pick up these dead people from the – shouldn’t – cause epidemic – they were afraid of their own, they, they gonna catch it too. They gonna die themselves, you know. I was already sick with typhus that time. I didn’t know it, but I was, I was very sick.

WH: It finally caught up with you?

WL: Yeh, I was already sick. I, I, I knew I couldn’t, you know, I was very, very sick. I er, was still able to move, uh, so he came in – everybody started hollering, then, everybody should grab dead and carry them over there, in German and we understood. We take over this, uh, to the grave, there to and throw them in the grave and line up back up again and march – so this kid, he came over there to one guy with lines, this you boy I telling you about, he was there – his ho–ho-who done the, sake – poor guy’s sake. He started kicking him. “What’s with *der* (you)?” You know, - the boy plead crying, he was sick. “He should get up!”

Made him get up and he walked in – I saw this – he walked into the grace and he – the boy didn’t even walk any other place. He walked straight on top of the grave, he walked. He knew he wasn’t – you know, the boy walked with a walk to the grave. He didn’t even walk on the side or, a – walk away from the side when he came they – he was walking behind them a few steps, you know, the sergeant. We were already there. I mean, we grabbed everybody – everybody grabbed he was sick or not, you knew, I knew always what to, to happen. If I only could move. I always moved. ‘Cause I knew that if I tried to move, if you don’t move you dead, you know. So, I, uhm, I never forget this. I saw them with this, um, guy, this kid walked up there. He was (nervous laugh) probably younger than me. I was young, too, but he was probably – not more than sixteen years old. And he walked up to the grave there and he – and I’ll never forget, I turned my head and saw that he aimed at him. And he shot him. I’ll never forget I saw in the middle of the night, I saw the, the bullet hole in this – little –the boy’s neck, and the blood started running down – and he just fell in the grave then. Then he came or he walked over closer, the sergeant, and gave him – (inaudible) you know and shot him once more in the head. So, that was the story. And then we – and he says, we were there standing, we were all these boys lined up, and he says, “Soon you’ll all be dead.” (In German), you know. (inaudible) So he walked to the back to there and that was – but soon after that, a few days later, I don’t think it was more than a, um, I know it could have – must have been soon, because if not, I would never survived no more. I was already – so a few days later, on May 5th, I think it was May the 5th, yes, May the 4th at night – we heard trumbling on the roads. The road was not far out from us. It was first at night we heard a lot of shooting. A LOT of shooting. We saw traces of bullets flying all across from us. Flying across the woods there, so um, when they – we didn’t know what was happening. Just a lot of shooting at night. Then the next day in the morning, they say – we looked around, we - everybody looking, we don’t see no guards anymore. Posts – we don’t see the guards. We don’t see the German S.S. If you don’t see S.S., no S.S. men – finally somebody come crying, hollering, “Hey, the Germans – the American –American armies! The American armies. The American armies are here!” So the American pass by the forest. They didn’t even know there’s a camp in the side there…

WH: So you were liberated?

WL: May 4th, ya. Night. Maybe 4th or the 5th. Next day the 5th. It was, I remember, it was a nice – it was muddy there. Mud there. And it was terrible place there. And, but, the sun was shining, so – we just (he paused before going on)…

(Looking at family pictures. Then Mr. Lieberman continues on with his story unprompted.) So, after that, what happened…then, we were liberated…I got very sick…I had typhus…I stayed in the hospital…for a few months after the war…1945…from there we were wanderers. We were wandering around…to look for family…then I heard I have my sister who is here, she survived, she’s home…I went back to my town…I heard that my sister is there…finally we got together…I didn’t want to stay there…it was Russian occupied…so one day…I couldn’t get a pass no more so somehow I arranged it, for myself to get out. The train…we paid off…the engineer of the locomotive…I crossed the Hungarian border to Czechoslovakia…and that’s where I met my wife…we were married in a DP camp in Germany…this was in 1946…We stayed there until 1949 and waiting to immigrate to America.

WH: From ’46 to ’49, you were simply there because you were waiting?

WL: We were waiting to immigrate – everybody was waiting for one thing: To immigrate to America. A lot of people went to Israel.

WH: Didn’t you have relatives who could give you an affadavit?

WL: We had relatives…I got an affadavit, but there was quotas.

WH: What quota were you on?

WL: I was on the Czech quota. But it was so many…it was very slow.

WH: If you had said you were stateless, would you have gotten in early?

WL: Stateless? But I had to come from some place. Had to be born.

WH: Some people said that they were stateless.

WL: Well, we were stateless, I mean, we had no quot-

WH: They put you on the Czech quota?

WL: Czech quota, yeh, but, eh, we were on the Czech quota. We were born in Czechoslovakia – who knew what to say when you come into a place like this before they – before they had things happen, you know. You never know what’s gonna happen. What, what gonna be.

WH: So you were in the camp. What was it like there?

WL: What was it like there? It was free. We go free. We went, you know, we had, ah, a small, little room. And we lived there. We, we had ah, like we lived in a – big, eh, floor, a lot of rooms. A lot of small, little rooms…

WH: You weren’t working?

WL: We were something. We were working something in there. We were doing like, for instance, also doing tailoring. Making coats for the other campers, you know. The Americans set up there some kind of a shop there to make the clothing for the, you know, the people in camp.

WH: Could you leave to go into the local town?

WL: Yes. Of course. We could leave to go any place. We were free. We were free.

WH: Was it boring?

WL: It was boring, yeh, well…I don’t remember who came to entertain us one time. They will show movies, and then once came, ah, (can’t remember)…we created our own…football, games, soccer games…I was in the (Jewish) police force…the Germans couldn’t come into our camp.

WH: I see that they have Hebrew sighs there. (Response to pictures being shown of buildings and family in the past by WL)

WL: Well, possible…

WH: Looks like is says, “Work solves all one’s problems” (in Hebrew).

WL: Almost sounds like German (WL spoke German translation *arbeit macht leben zes*: work makes the life sweet). …you asked if – how come I got on Czech quota. I was on Czech quota, okay. But, how, we were waiting to come here.

WH: You had someone to make affidavits for you.

WL: Yes. But you see what happened, while we were waiting for these affidavits, already, there came a time that Truman, President Truman, gave permission for 100,000 refugees…to come in, or whatever, so I don’t know how many, so I fell into that quota.

WH: Did you consider going to Israel?

WL: We were considering. We were. But she (his wife) got sick and she had major surgery there after the war.

WH: Otherwise you would have gone?

WL: We might but we have family here – I never thought about it. I never thought about yes or no. I never thought about it. I probably would have gone. Maybe I would have been happy (laughing). You know-

WH: You never know.

WL: You never know, but I, I don’t, I don’t see why not. I – other people are happy who went there.

WH: But did you take any steps towards doing that-?

WL: No. We didn’t have to take any steps. You wanted to go, if you tell them today you wanted to go, the next week you gonna go on.

WH: But you never then?

WL: No, I never told them I wanna go. You see what happens: She (his wife) had a sister. She came here in ’47 so she was already here. And my sister came here already in ’47. So we already had roots here, you know, we already had – not roots – family already here, you know – besides aunts and uncles, you know –

WH: You didn’t have family in Israel?

WL: Israel? No, we didn’t have family in Israel. No. No. I had nobody. She (his wife) had an uncle in Israel.

WH: Is that the key reason you’d say “family”?

WL: No, yeh, well, the only family – my one sister, she came here.

WH: But this was the main reason?

WL: Yeh.

WH: If you had not had family here -?

WL: Had her sister gone to Israel, there’s no question – there’s no question that we would have probably gone to Israel.

WH: When did your sister go to America?

WL: 1947. We came in 1949…

WH: What was her (your sister’s) reason for going to American rather than Israel?

WL: There was family. A lot of family here. Aunts, and uncles and cousins…

WH: You knew that the results could be different, that Israel was a place where there was fighting going on, where it was difficult to go in, American was supposedly a land of opportunity -.

WL: Yeh,

WH: Did you think of these things?

WL: No, I didn’t…let me be honest. Like I said. Like I said, I didn’t come here, I knew I not gonna get, ah, here, ah, I don’t know what. I didn’t expect anything from here because I didn’t have no rich family here or anybody to (laughs) make me ah, take me as a partner or something. That I never even thought about then. But, ah being that, like I said to you before, that the family was here, my sister was here already. And I have here two brothers.

WH: How did you get to the United States…by boat?

WL: By boat. From Bremerhaven. Yes.

WH: What was the name of the boat?

WL: Holbrook. (His wife adds “General Holbrook. A war ship. Oy! General Holbrook). Yeh.

End of Tape #1, Side B

**Tape #2, Side A**

WH: You told me…about going to Philadelphia…you thought you weren’t liberated.

WL: Well, right. That’s exactly, exactly! That’s the point. Where I – when we came from er, in Europe, in the actually, we went to the consulate you know, there, before you come here…immigration…for hearings, you know, there they question you things. And, they looked at our papers and told us we going to Philadelphia. So we were worried all along that we going to Philadelphia but we have her our – her sister and my sister, living in New York…I was thinking to myself, I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to travel from Philadelphia to New York. I don’t know how far or what.

WH: The other thing that was interesting…the doctors you went to, and they gave you Elavil and – medication…for for(ty?) years, (that) is a long, long time…the question I wanted to ask you is this: You know, any person who has any kind of difficulty in life…there are two approaches…one is to take pills and the other approach is that people sit down and they talk with you and they try to find out what it is that is bothering you. Did you ever do that?

WL: I had that in St. Vincent’s Hospital. I had there a steady psychiatrist. I was going there…once a week. And I was going there for about half a year, maybe a little longer.

WH: You went about 25 times?

WL: Yes, at least. At the end, there was a woman psychiatrist…she was very nice. She was, the way she was sitting and listening to me and she was talking to me, and at the end she decided, she said that she will give me, she decided that I should go on Elavil for steady. But, as a matter of fact, if I recall, when she told me this, the way she was telling me, she told me that, eh, “You might be on Elavil for the rest of your life but you will be able to sleep” which, er, I – she prescribed for me…whatever she prescribed for me I took – I cut down to half…and it was going on for years. I was…always anxious, you know worried, and you know, always something bothered me but I was able to sleep, you know.

WH: You said you didn’t like to sit with your back to anything-.

WL: Right! That, that, that, that’s a that’s a whole story, when I yeh, that was years, until I got used to, you know, I was talking about that to people, and to doctors, I was talking about that. I remember we had a family doctor (Dr. Brody) so he, um, he saw right away that I have problems, you know – (the wife interrupts and offers juice, seltzer, cup of tea, bread, rugeleh) so that was the story. So I, as a matter of fact, you talk about (inaudible) all your life (inaudible) stay on medication, that other things that could solve your problems, in my case it seems that it (the other things) didn’t. I was on medication – I demanded the medication – not that I was addicted to it or something like that. I was not addicted, but it seemed I could not cope without it. I couldn’t sleep. I remember, I used to go in New York to a place where I used to buy the medication without prescription already.

WH: Why? How?

WL: There was a drugstore there so the guy knew me. So he just gave me the medication…for years…I always tried to use as less as possible. As little as possible. I never tried to use a lot of it. I always, but – I always had to have some kind of medication, for some reason or other.

WH: How many hours a night do you sleep?

WL: Five. No more than five. No more than five hours.

WH: At a time? Or do you wake up?

WL: I wake up sometimes, I used to wake up more, and I sometimes I sleep through a little more, a few hours more, and I wake up, and I go back to sleep for an hour. I am always restless….

WH: Do you remember your dreams in the morning?

WL: Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. I never dream anything good. Always bad. That I remember. Always bad. Always something’s that something’s happening to – you know, something bad. I never dream good dreams. Good-good-good, I don’t know (nervous laugh), I mean some people dream that they go, you know, that they go, you know, that they go here, they go there, they –

WH: That they make a million dollars!

WL: I don’t dream about that. But, I, eh, you just, you know, I eh, some people dream they go you know, they go on vacations, and then they have, eh, I don’t know, all kinds of other things. But, I’ll tell you, lately, for the last (nervous laugh) year or so, I come home and after dinner, I sit in the chair in the bedroom, then, the television, I sit on the chair and I fall asleep there. In the chair. And I sleep for an hour or so…after dinner. Then I wake up and watch television, and I go to sleep at midnight. Not before. Always, 11:30, 12 o’clock. And, I wake up 4:30, 5:00…

WH: Your daughter lives…

WL: She lives in Fresh Meadows…

WH: You would consider yourself a careful person, right, not a person who takes risks?

WL: I take risks, I take risks, but I don’t know how to handle risks. I, uh, risk (inaudible) I – I try not to. I’m very, I uh, I’m very, uh, undecisive person. Very undecisive. I can’t decide whether, you know, what to do, that costs me a lot. Really.

WH: How did it cost you?

WL: Cost me in different ways. Humanitarian. A lot of, uh, I didn’t do things I was suppose to do, you know, I didn’t, - I had wartime bought some things in (inaudible) didn’t get out of it when I was suppose to and just let it go to hell, you know.

WH: What’s your definition of what success is? What do you consider success – what do consider to be a successful person?

WL: The most important thing would have happened to me if my daughter would – my daughter, we LOVE our daughter, we love her all our – she was everything to us. If she would have married really something – and we should have had something, some kind of, you know, pleasure out of this, you know, this privilege. I, as far as I’m concerned…I was always opposed to the whole thing, you know, and it happened, it started in school at Stoney Brook, they were both going to the same school. And going back they were going like for 6 or 7 years before they got married, you know, and this is what happening now, my wife, er, that’s my wife’s problem now, too, she’s also, affected her, too, you know. Being maybe I was a little bit more, eh, affected me more than her and I was reacting to it so maybe that made her a little bit more anxious about this. So that was, that was, that was under my first success. Other things, is ,uh, it mattered, everything else, every thing else we had…we have a nice beautiful house…

WH: Married life is one thing – but there’s also having children…

WL: Well, but you see, I’ll tell you what happened. I know, I’m not stupid. And, uhm other members of the family are not stupid. And, uh, everybody else looks a different way. I see, he’s immature, and if he ever grow up, I don’t know, I hope so. But, I don’t, I don’t – I, I just can’t – I just – he’s just completely um, irresponsible.

WH: How old is he?

WL: 28. In one way I just can call, like I can say it to you only on one way IRRESponsible. That’s the only thing I can say…

WH: Your daughter – she’s not complaining?

WL: Yes. That’s what I hear, that’s what I know…she comes here…she gets him…she’s a smart girl…she knows what she’s doing. I hope! So –

WH: Do you feel in your way you succeeded?

WL: Yes! Of course! Yes. I did. I mean, we have everything we need. We can afford things that we, a lot of people can’t (laugh) I mean, we did well. We did, you know, we – this actually, this house made us good, you know, made for us, eh, did well for us, you know.

WH: Has this type of success brought you happiness?

WL: Ahhh – money? Well, everybody likes to, you know, be comfortable, to have things, you know. We always – we never had any problem with money. We always went on vacations. I mean, we weren’t big spenders. We didn’t spend a lot of money, I mean, we didn’t spend on big things, but we were, uh, average. I’m satisfied…

WH: In a way, though, this thing in the married (intermarriage?) alright, one thing. What about about the other things? Didn’t your daughter bring you *nachas* (pride) in other ways?

WL: Yeh. She did…

WH: Where did she go the high school?

WL: Cardoza…(public high school).

WH: So she did well?

WL: Yes. She did very well. She did very well.

WH: She was happy?

WL: Yes. Always been. She always, eh, as a matter of fact, we bought her, when she was six I think, a brand new piano…we took her for lessons. She went for quite a few years but she didn’t want to play later on, she didn’t want to keep it up, so she just gave it up, okay. What can I tell you?

WH: But she knows how to play?

WL: She knows. Sure she knows. She learned – she had a very good teacher, she had one of the best and – a woman from Jackson Heights…she was an elderly person…that woman did nothing but teach her piano. She was strictly a piano teacher, you know. And she was very, very strict with her, you know. I used to take her. She used to have, I think, twice a week, and as a matter of fact, when we moved away from there, she had piano lessons there, while we were there, still living in Elmhurst, and when we moved away from there, I used to go for that woman, pick her up, she didn’t drive, I used to pick her up and bring her here.

WH: Was this like a big sacrifice for you?

WL: No, No. No. It was no sacrifice. I, just, uh, not far…

WH: You adopted a daughter. Would you like to have adopted more children?

WL: No, no. We didn’t even think about it. Never even thought about this. Never. We never even talked about it. Never thought about this. That’s it. Never even – never came to – we never even thought about it. I don’t know why. We never even thought about it. Just for this, this one…we had a small apartment in Corona to Elmhurst, a bigger apartment there. So we went – as a matter of fact, my wife initiated the whole thing, you know, then I let her alone, and we went, and, uh, we both wanted a little girl…

WH: Do you like to be in charge of things, or do you feel more comfortable when others are in the forefront?

WL: No. I’m, I’m not, uh, not pushy. No. No. No. I’m not pushing myself to take like, some other people…who go up to the summer place we have there…they have a committee there, they try to push me in here…I didn’t respond…they wanted to make me a recording secretary…so I said, “Look, I’m not good in English, I’m not in spelling, …I wouldn’t be able to keep up with all this, this…fighting going on at the meetings…(he’s laughing) so I just said to the, “no.”

WH: What’s more important to you – to have a job that gives you security or one that’s exciting and challenging?

WL: Job? (laughs)…well, as far as job is concerned I don’t care any more…I’m planning to retire…everyone says, “Why you gonna retire? You’re a young man, you know, you look young. You are, you know.” I’m going to be 65…and they say, “So what you gonna do?” Friends of our, “Why, why you wanna leave?” But…my plans were different. I was always thinking about it…we…love Florida…but when you have a house like this, you are stuck, more or less, you know, you have (inaudible) responsibility to people…sometimes I’m sorry…why we didn’t sell it? Let’s say, a couple of years ago we should have sell out, and –

WH: Would you say you’re an optimistic person, basically, or pessimistic?

WL: Neither. I don’t know. I don’t know what to say, I, eh –

WH: I’ll give you an example of what I mean. When you see something happened, do you think it’s going to turn out good or do you think it’s going to turn out bad, usually?

WL: …(thinking)…I don’t know. I can’t make up my mind…I always was optimistic. I used to be an optimist, you know, I used to think, ahh, it will be alright, be alright, but you know, same thing is going on is Israel, and all things, and –

WH: Do you worry about (Israel)?

WL: Oh, yeh, I worry about it. I’m worried about these things, killings and you know, rock throwing, and things like that and shootings and I hope the end will be good, you know, and I’m worried about it. Who isn’t?

WH: You know that some people have *mazel* (luck) and some don’t. Do you think that people who are lucky, with mazel, do you think they make their own mazel or do you think it’s something that’s going to come to you?

WL: Uhh – it’s gotta come to you and it’s uhh – I believe that people have mazel. Some people have luck, you know, the less they know, the more they look into things, the more luck, the more luckier they are, you know, that less action they take…we were always, you know, eh, not that I’m complaining that we don’t have enough, I mean, that we don’t have what we need – but, you know, we could have done easier for ourselves and be more, eh, we could have done, eh, more, eh, not to have to go…in the post office, it could have been done like other people did.

WH: Do you think that things would have turned out better or worse if you had lived some place else in the United States?

WL: …I never thought about it…I don’t think so…I don’t think we could have done better, maybe worse…

WH: If you had to do everything all over again, when you go back over the last 40 years, what, if anything, do you think you might have done different? If you had the choice to do things over again?

WL: …the problem is, things were knocking at your door and you didn’t go it…I’ll give you an example. Monetary things…back 32 years…I bought a stock…I should have bought…a different stock…it would have been worth today…a quarter of a million.

WH: So why didn’t you?

WL: I don’t know. I just don’t know…and 8 years ago…my neighbor’s house was for sale…hindsight, I didn’t do anything…I could have…I was afraid…that time I felt, really, I was sick. That time I felt, really, always – I didn’t sleep good…on medication…my mind wasn’t clear, you know, I was like, like in a, like in a daze sometimes…so I didn’t exercise things. I didn’t do these things. But, hindsight, I could have. Could have done a lot of things…I let stocks go down the drain…

WH: In what way do think, you might be different from the average American Jew or your age? …do you see ways in which your interest or your values, what you consider important, do these things in any way make you feel that you see things differently than say, a Jew born in America, who didn’t go through all this, what you went through?

WL: I don’t even think about this. I never thought this. I just see a Jew, a Jew, you know, as a, I like to live in a Jewish neighborhood.

WH: Your friends, your good friends, are they all survivors?

WL: Yeh, mostly, mostly our friends are survivors. Most of our friends, yeh, I would say. Of course we made some friends now, you know, since we bought a place in the country – Monroe – there’s people there who were born here…in America. Some of them are older, some of them are younger than us, you know…we are in between. We fit in very well there. Everybody likes us. I have a friend of mine a physician…we are the best of friends…he is my fishing partner…

WH: He’s born here?

WL: Of course! …you see we have a tremendous setback here. A tremendous setback here. We have here, especially my wife’s friends, and also my – you know, we had here right two doors down from used to be a woman, she was a survivor…and she died of cancer a few years ago…another one here, also a survivor, across the street, she also died of cancer a few years ago…so, it’s tremendous loss to us. These two people they were really my wife’s best friends…like sisters…tremendous loss…

WH: Are there a lot of survivors in this community?

WL: Yeh – quite a few…

WH: Do you feel, that you had all these adventures in Europe, that you lived through the Holocaust, do you feel in a way that like if nothing happened to you then, that nothing is going to happen to you? Do you fell like you live a charmed life? Sometimes people say, “if I could live through that, somebody must be watching over me…”

WL: No, no, no, no, no. I never thought about this. I never even thought about that. No. that was just, you know, one of those things…we’re lucky we survived, we’re lucky we survived, and that’s it.

WH: Do you think you survived mostly by chance, or mostly because of things you did to help yourself?

WL: Well, the reason I would say that I survived because I went in the later. You know, they took us in later. If I wouldn’t have – I think, that if I would have gotten in before, I probably would have been killed, too. You know, I probably would have died like even like my wife’s father…froze to death…people were dying just the day before the war ended.

WH: There were people who went in the same time as you, who didn’t make it.

WL: A lot of them. A lot of them!

WH: Why do you think you ended up different?

WL: …Why? …I don’t know. I’ll tell you the truth, I don’t know because I was so sick. You know, at one time, after the war, I weighed 40 kilo (about 85 pounds), I was skin and bone, I was. As a matter of fact, after I came out I was in…the hospital…I was like in a coma for a long time…I didn’t know what was going on around me…I had surgery…I had tremendous big something, some kind of grown on my back…I had typhus…such a high fever…about three months I was in the hospital…I wanted to leave…but they wouldn’t discharge me…once…they let me go out…for a few hours…when I came back…I said, “I can’t go.”…I felt I couldn’t go…a few weeks later…finally I decided…to go out…

WH: How important do you think it is, in terms of the future of this country, in terms of your own children, how important do you think it is to have a good education?

WL: I think it is very important.

WH: More important, than say, a person’ shouldn’t get like a minimum amount and then go into business?

WL: …you hear all kinds of stories…

WH: But generally, you think it’s very important?

WL: I think so. I think that for young people today, from what I hear. I listen a lot. You know, being the work that I’m doing, you go crazy, you know, sorting mail. That’s what I do all day long. So you go crazy, you know, so I listen a lot to radio. I have a radio connected in my, eh, I have a radio, you know, and I listen all day long…

WH: What’s the main benefit of education?

WL: …to better yourself…people get ahead, or course…I watch only television on channel 13…

WH: Are you yourself sorry that you didn’t sacrifice more to get an education in Europe?

WL: Myself? I had no chance. I had not chance. I had no chance. I didn’t have the pre-…you needed to be educated before you going to higher education, you know…I didn’t even think about it.

WH: On the question of what do schools teach, do you think that it’s the obligation of the school to teach only the facts, or should they also teach values – how people should behave, morality, or do you think the school’s job is mainly to teach the facts?

WL: Morality is, eh, I think morality is, I think morality is very, very, very much of the –

WH: The school should do it?

WL: …home? I think it’s both – home and school…very hard, very hard for anybody but you try.

WH: Did you send your daughter to any kind of day school?

WL: Yeh, she went to yeshiva…she went to Hebrew High…

WH: Did she have a bas mitzvah?

WL: Yes…in Camp Ramah…

WH: You sent her to Camp Ramah?

WL: Yes…every year she went to Camp Ramah. We send her to the, eh, she went cross-country with Young (Israeli group) …with Camp Ramah to Israel. She was twice in Israel. She was once with us…and we sent her to Israel with Camp Ramah for a whole summer…and didn’t want to come home. She was about 16, 17 at that time…

WH: G-d forbid your daughter had come home from Stoney Brook and she said she wanted to marry somebody who wasn’t Jewish.

WL: I cannot – now, I can’t say that no more…now I cannot say it because I – I cannot talk about that now. Now, right now, I don’t know. No feelings about that. What happen later, I don’t know…

WH: Does it matter to you in terms of how you see it, if a person converts?

WL: I don’t think that’s wrong – anything wrong with that.

WH: Some people do. Some people feel that they’re still not Jewish…

WL: Well, what does the Jewish law say? The Jewish law says that if you convert, you Jewish…

WH: Does your daughter identify as a Jew as much as you do?

WL: Yes, well she identifies. She keeps a kosher home…She’s teaching him. He doesn’t come from a kosher home for sure not.

WH: …she keeps a kosher home by herself, not because you asked her?

WL: No, she wanted to. She wants everything. For the holidays she, they come here…

WH: When you went on vacations, would you ever leave your daughter with somebody else?

WL: Well…no…she came with us…we used to rent a place up in Monroe.

WH: Did you ever feel like you wouldn’t want to go away for a weekend and leave your daughter alone with somebody else…?

WL: …my sister could have stayed with her…

WH: But you didn’t do it?

WL: I don’t think we ever went away without her…as a matter of fact, she was very tiny when she was little, a baby, you know, she used to go to a …pediatrician…so he used to tell my wife, he says, “You must love this baby so much because,” he says to her “you keep her so clean! So dry! So well groomed – dressed,” and things like that, you know. Which was true. We kept her – she was like a –

WH: When you decided that you wanted to adopt a child, did you feel that there should be more Jewish children in the world after everything that happened in World War II?

WL: I never thought about it that way.

WH: It was a personal decision?

WL: Personal decision…well, it was my wife’s decision and I went alone with it. I didn’t think about it…

WH: Now, you have a good relationship with your daughter?

WL: Yeh, of course sometimes we have a little…disagreements. I don’t like it that she started smoking lately. And I don’t like it at all. But she did it because of him. He smokes and she – so she – I think she does it too and I –

WH: Did you talk to her about the war? About the Holocaust?

WL: Yeh, she knows about it. Yeh, sure.

WH: When she was growing up, did you discuss this with her?

WL: Yeh, she knows. She knows about the whole thing…

WH: How (old) 13 – 14 years?

WL: Yeh…my wife more than me…she knows all about it…

WH: Do you think that the fact that you and your wife are survivors has influenced her in any way? That is affected her in any way?

WL: …I remember she used to …talk about…with my wife…about her little sister (wife’s) …who went to Auschwitz…

WH: Did you spend a lot of time with your daughter when she was growing up? Take her places?

WL: She was going without us!

WH: At what age?

WL: …she was going to sleepaway camp when she was…12…

WH: I mean when she was 5,6,7,8,9,10.

WL: She used to go skiing with friends when she was a young girl…of course we used to take her to the movies, to the Bronx Zoo, parks, but most of the time in the summertime we were away…

WH: During the year, on a Sunday of something. Were you working or -?

WL: Ya…but we used to take her we used to go a lot to Philadelphia…for a weekend…when she was 12 we went to Israel…

WH: Did she ever express any view about the Holocaust that was anything special that you remember? Or maybe something in a different view than what you might remember?

WL: If you will talk to my wife about that…she will tell you more about it…I didn’t remember talking about it too much about the Holocaust.

WH: Did she ever say to you that you are over-protective?

WL: Yes, maybe. Yes, yes, yes. She probably did…

WH: Did you worry?

WL: Right, right, right…yes…

WH: You don’t think she’s right?

WL: I don’t think it helps a lot…they do what they want to do anyway…

WH: Does she have an opinion to the fact that you survived? Does she respect you for it, does she admire that you go through with it? Does she like say, “well you were lucky!”

WL: No. I never heard her say that…she used to like us to do well…she used to talk to me that I should do well, I should have a good job. I should make out good. You know. As a matter of fact, when she was in high school she was working in…supermarket…babysitting…camp counselor…

WH: She didn’t have any emotional difficulties, anything like this as a result of growing up, or anything like that?

WL: No. No…

WH: Would you say she’s as hard or as easy to bring up as the average child?

WL: Ya, she was good. She used to do her homework all the time. She was a very bad eater all the time. She didn’t eat. She was a baby, she didn’t eat. When she was growin up she’s skinny…

WH: Did she have nightmares…?

WL: No. I don’t think I heard about anything -.

WH: Is she pretty independent from you, now? …financially…as a person.

WL: Oh, yeh. She’s independent. But, you know, she’s got difficulties with carelessness…that falls on her shoulders…

WH: Do you ever worry what’s going to happen to your daughter and son-in-law if you’re not around? Is that something that worries you, like if you move to Florida and you won’t be around and they’ll need you suddenly and you’ll be down there. Is that why you don’t want them to be so dependent?

WL: No. It is a lot of…on my mind…my wife is not worried at all about this. Me, I personally am…I don’t know. I’m worried one thing. I’m worried for my daughter. That she shouldn’t get into some kind of trouble because of him…she’s responsible for things…he’s a very irresponsible person…car accidents, get traffic tickets, speeding…I try to not antagonize him…my wife don’t feel good. This is the result. This is why she don’t feel good…she has anxiety…takes medication…she sees the same way I do…but she tried to defend – she loves her dearly! I do too! …I say we gotta be strict with them…we give them a new car…when they got married…he smashed up the car…he said “we have no other car”…what do I do? I had an old car…I ran out and bought another one for myself and gave them my old….

WH: But surely that’s not the only area that’s a problem – only cars?

WL: Well, there are other things. He could get a – he could have do something, some kind of work to help along…he’s finished…suppose to finish school…he’s in a clinic…a chiropractic clinic…

WH: That is a profession.

WL: Yeh… but at the end of this semester he has to produce. He has to show so many students, so many patients he has to see, at that certain time, in this four months, or whatever…so, if he’ll graduate…then he gotta get state (credit).

End of Tape #2, Side A

**Tape #2, Side B**

WH: Would you say that you are more or less religious now than when you first came to this country?

WL: No. No.

WH: Same?

WL: Same. I wasn’t religious then, I’m not religious now.

WH: What are you today?

WL: I’m not religious at all.

WH: Not even conservative?

WL: Ah – I belong to a conservative shul, but I’m –

WH: House is kosher?

WL: Yes…we only buy kosher meat…we have two kinds of dishes, we have two kinds of dishes for Passover…I belong to the synagogue since I’m here…

WH: How often do you go?

WL: Once in a while. My biggest problem is, I work Saturday.

WH: That’s a problem.

WL: That’s my biggest problem…I used to be off on Saturdays…I went every Saturday (to shul).

WH: In other words, you would go every Saturday.

WL: Yes, if I would be home, of course, definitely. Definitely, yes…if I’ll be – ever the possibility again, wherever I’ll be. Wherever I’ll be. Here, in Florida, or wherever I will go to synagogue. I will go Saturdays….

WH: What do you like about shul? …you would go every Saturday, why?

WL: Ya, why not? We spend a few hours there, and I went, I got an *aliyah* (the honor of ascending the bima to the Torah), you know, I grew up with a religious home…

WH: Do you believe in G-d?

WL: (Ha!) Believe in G-d? (Ha!) I, well, you (Ha!) gotta believe in something. I don’t know. I don’t know how to (Ha!).

WH: Well, would you say you’re not sure?…

WL: I don’t really know if there is somebody. What happened, where was G-d when we – (Ha!) killed all the Jews? I mean, well, all those people. You know, what happened?

WH: You don’t think that the fact that the person believed in G-d would help them survive the war?

WL: Right. I mean, they were the first ones they took, maybe you saw films and pictures. They were cutting down their beards, holding them, making pictures…

WH: From what you say, from your own experiences, did religious Jews act any different in the war?

WL: Yes. I, yes, yes. My brother. My own brother. My younger brother…he was the youngest in the family. I never saw him after that he left home. He died. I heard he died because he didn’t want to eat with non-kosher food. Whatever was available and I also remember a young man my age…I don’t know where he would up, where he is, and he was a very, very fine young man, and I remember he used to, he never wanted to eat the food that they gave, in the, but we had it and we used to work, he never wanted to eat the food there. As a matter of fact, we used to give him … our bread or something like this…and potato soup…made with challah (?) fat…I’m talking about the labor camps. Forget the concentration camps…while we were still working, we still had food…

WH: It’s a difficult question – if there is a G-d, how did the Holocaust happen? The question you asked, right?

WL: I never asked that question. I never even think about it. But I believe that there must be if everybody talks about it…rabbis, and everybody – and I’m a believer because I come from believers. I mean, I come from, I told you, a very religious family. My father was religious, my uncles were religious. My brothers were religious. My mother was religious…

WH: But if you are a believer, do you think that there’s any way of explaining how all this terrible things could have happened to the Jews of all people?

WL: I never thought about this. I never thought about this. I always feel, - I heard some people say sometimes, “where was G-d?” “What happened to G-d?”

WH: What do you think when you hear that?

WL: I don’t know. I have no expression about it. I don’t know, know, know – I can’t answer that. I can’t - there’s no answer for that. No answer. There’s no answer that’s a – what one human being can do to another, you know, if you can call him that.

WH: Was this a real shock to you when the war…you saw, like you mentioned that the Yugoslav SS hitting people, was it a real shock to you that people could be so cruel to other people? Did you think that people were capable of something like this?

WL: They were – because they did it.

WH: I mean, did you remember the shock?

WL: I…who was thinking those time. Who…all we were thinking about is we have to

get a piece of bread or something to eat…our trouble began way before that. Way

before we went to labor camps…in 1938…the Hungarians marched in and right

away we were prosecuted…the Jews…they took away all the rights from us little

by little, slowly so you barely survived…in our town there were about 45 Jewish families…there were three young boys who are going to school…so they picked us out in the winter time… to go outside and cut wood for the fire. All the other kids were inside learning….they picked out the Jews to go outside and cut the wood…

WH: The fact that your wife is a survivor, does this make a big difference to you in your relationship – how important is it to you that she also survived?

WL: No…I don’t think it’s any (Ha!) I never thought about this-

WH: Well, if you had married someone who wasn’t a survivor, do you think they would have understood you as well?

WL: I don’t know. I don’t know. I think…most of people who are…American people who were born here…I think they understand and they feelings for that, but I don’t know…but, we always say that. You cannot – people who weren’t there, you can never describe, you can never – uhh- describe what happened…there, you know you can, you know, people cannot imagine the things that happened there who weren’t really there physically, you know in the place, you know, you cannot, you cannot have the imagination, toward the, the, the sight, what was going on, what was going on, like you were a person was just like over here, he would step on a cockroach. That’s what a Jew meant to the Germans. Exactly. It’s exactly like it is. The, the Germans I used to say they used to hear, they used the expression sometime, they used to, I don’t know where it happened…I remember they…used to have dogs, you know, these German Shepherds used to train dogs to the – they used to tell the dog, “mangle, bite and hunt” you know-

WH: I understand. Human being, we should bite this dog, not a Jew.

WL: …and yet…I think there was some, I imagine there was some people…German people…very few. I would say a very, very small percentage, you can count them on your fingers, that probably felt – were against…I met one guy like that.

WH: Do you think that you blame today’s Germans for what happened then? …Is your attitude, once a German, always a German?

WL: Yeh, I think so. I think so. I think not in general, because there’s some young people now are learning different, they went to Israel, they learn –

WH: Do you think there’s something special about the German people that made them do this?

WL: Uh. I think they could do it again.

WH: What about Americans?

WL: Americans…yes, yes, they could do it. They could do it. I don’t know if…what happened then…they could do it in the same manner. Some could. Maybe some could not. But…it could. You never know…

WH: Do you think Jews could act this way?

WL: …I don’t think so…

WH: Why are they different?

WL: Because Jews are more compassionate. I think they are more compassionate that other nationalities.

WH: What makes them more compassionate?

WL: I don’t know.

WH: But you think that this is true?

WL: I think so. I really think so. I really do. I really do. I think that among the gentiles that are here in this country forget about the Germans – I know they could do it. Austrians. They are, they cruel people. The only people I knew that were nice people is Czechoslovakian people most Czechoslovakian people, they were nice people, they were liberal, nice…Slovakia itself was anti-Semitic…

WH: On the question of the holidays, different Jewish holidays, which one is most important to you?

WL: Which one is the most important, (laughs)? Obviously, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur –

WH: …do you have a *seder* (traditional Passover meal)?

WL: Yes. Sure. Mostly at my house. Mostly at my wife’s sister’s house every year.

WH: Do you light Chanukah candles?

WL: Yes, I do. Yes –

WH: Do you fast on Yom Kippur?

WL: Yes, definitely, definitely.

WH: Do you do anything on Friday night to make it special?

WL: No. Not really. I’m not religious at all.

WH: You don’t light candles?

WL: Yeh! Oh, yeh! My wife every Shabbos, yes. Oh yes! No question about it. Every holiday.

WH: Do you have a mezuzah on your door?

WL: Yes. No question about it.

WH: *Ta’anit* Esther (the fast of Esther), you don’t fast?

WL: No, no. I don’t fast…but time will change I think when I’ll retire. I think I’m gonna pick up more…

WH: More religious?

WL: Yes, I think so…*aliyahs*, I’ll go to more to shul, you know, I’ll probably keep up more, become more active in the…

WH: Some people said that it was only as a result of the Holocaust that the State of Israel was able to come into being.

WL: Possibly, possibly. Maybe yes. Possibly. Uhh – we have a lot of…negative things about, about America. We see what happens when they came, when President Roosevelt and there came a boat, came here with Jews and they sent it back…they didn’t let the Jews in, they were all got – they were all wound up in the crematoriums. Right? Uhh. Same thing with the English…

WH: You would never say that it worth the sacrifice, so many Jewish lives?

WL: To establish a Jewish state?

WH: Yeh.

WL: No, no. I didn’t, I didn’t. NO! That – oh, you mean in that way, that because so many Jews was killed, so many Jews was killed the State of Israel was established well, I never even – oh, come on…no, I don’t think that –

WH: Some people do.

WL: Why, you think I, ahh, maybe they would have been a Jewish state even if they wouldn’t of killed even one Jew. Would have been a Jewish state except that we just ahh, the Germans, were just ahh, deported all the Jews, they would have probably, er, just made a, - they could have just deported the Jews, not taken – made crematoriums and kill them just to eliminate them, you know.

WH: You mentioned you belonged to the burial society, the *Chevra Kadisha.* Do you belong to any organizations in general?

WL: No, no.

WH: No clubs, no societies.

WL: Well this is a society. So, well, this is – but I never go for a meeting. I only send in my dues money-

WH: You know there are organizations of Holocaust survivors, for example.

WL: Yeh, yeh. We, we, we, we-

WH: Do you belong to any?

WL: Ya, we go – we have…once a year…every year under a different place, they have –

WH: What do you have?

WL: They have a, ah, uhm, the Shoah, and they have this ahh, -

WH: Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day: literally Day of the Shoah/ Holocaust)?

WL: Yeh. They have a gathering in the shul here and sometimes in different temples.

WH: Which organization is it?

WL: They organize it the communities itself, organize it.

WH: It’s not a formal organization?

WL: No, no. Not a formal organization. No. No, not formal organization, no, no.

WH: Except you belong to a synagogue?

WL: Yeh. I belong to synagogue. Yes, I belong to synagogue.

WH: Your groups of friends, when you came here to this country, where there certain places like parks, school, or anything where you used to get together with other people who came here…

WL: We used to meet on the beaches, summertime, sometimes.

WH: Did you do things with other survivors as a group in the early years – did you go places?

WL: Oh, yeh! Yeh! We used to go, we used to have, we used to have gatherings, we used to have like, ah, we used to used to have gather up, used to have like, ah, used to have to gather up used to have like, used to make, used to make like parties, you know, parties, like um, dance parties, you know for a ball or whatever they used to call it. You know, once a year.

WH: Where was this?

WL: We used to have it in the the Palace some place in New York. A big place. We used to gather.

WH: What street?

WL: Some place. We used to have like a big, big gathering. They used to come together there, hundreds of people. They used to be organizers. They used to organize it. They used to charge, you know. Used to charge. Some people (?) for money, for profit, they used to organize it.

WH: Who went? You went to it?

WL: Oh, survivors from the areas we used to –

WH: How did you hear about it?

WL: We knew, we knew from other people, from other people, from other –

WH: Do you remember the name of the organization?

WL: Bar-(inaudible) Ball it used to be called. You heard about this?

WH: …Manhattan Center Hotel…on 34th Street. What about on other occasions – you said something about going to the beach. Did you go to the beach?

WL: Yeh.

WH: With whom?

WL: Friends of mine…we used to meet a lot. We used to see a lot of more of these survivors, you know. We used to meet them.

WH: Where did you meet them?

WL: We used to go to the affairs. Bar Mitzvahs, you know…later on we used to go to their wedding, you know, so –

WH: What beach did you go to?

WL: In the beginning, Coney Island. Then we went to Far Rockaway Beach…

WH: Did you ever go to any hotels?

WL: Ya. We used to go to hotels all the time. A lot of time we used to go together with some people, ya, we used to meet there people in the hotels…in the late ‘50’s, early ‘60’s, we used to go away for vacation. We used to have in the summertime two week vacation, so we used to go to a hotel sometimes. My wife and other couples.

WH: Which hotel? Do you remember?

WL: Well, used to be a hotel called “Mayfair,” it’s not there no more…then there used to be Hotel Gilbert in South Fallsburg…it’s boarded up…

WH: In these hotels where you went…you went with friends? You didn’t go by yourself?

WL: Yeh. Used to stay there for a week. That was in the ‘50’s…we got my daughter in the ‘60’s. We didn’t go to hotels no more. We went to the bungalows…used to go away for the whole summer.

WH: You used to have off from work?

WL: No, I didn’t…

WH: In other words, what they called a *kochalain.* (? Cook alone?)

WL: That’s right. Used to be a hotel. Used to be a bungalow colony here in – I told you, Monroe used to be called, “Tel Aviv.” BIG colony! Huge. Like where we are now.

WH: You didn’t go to bungalow colonies in the Catskills?

WL: Once. One year we went. Thomsonville, called the “Sunshine House” something.

WH: There were places that you used to get together with people from the old country…that there were other people who were also survivor who went to the same hotels -?

WL: Like a convention? (laughs)

WH: Not like a convention…like for relaxation.

WL: Well, we always used to meet people in the hotel. They used to go – like where we used to go to hotels in the beginning, those years, there was a, there was always, like for instances, a lot of the people were in the needle trade, work in the needle trade, and there was a vacation time in the summertime. There was a vacation time in the summertime. There was a vacation time for everybody. That time there was vacation the first two weeks in July. So we used to go away. So we –

WH: You don’t do it any more?

WL: To go away to a hotel? No. Since we owned this, - well, except to go to Florida. Go to Florida last couple of years.

WH: When you go to Florida, do you stay in a hotel?

WL: Stayed – went to a hotel. We went to – we stayed with friends. Now we planning to go to, to I don’t know what we’re gonna – I don’t know what we gonna –

WH: What do you do in your spare time now?

WL: Now, actually, in my spare time, ah, I don’t have that much spare time. I mean…we go out, we going shopping. I go with my wife shopping. I go to – sometime we go out to eat. A fish dinner sometimes. Some place with friends of ours who live here in Fresh Meadows right here on 185th Street. Very good friends of our.

WH: Also survivors?

WL: Yes.

WH: Do you get together with friends…?

WL: Well…these friends are home…other friends moved to Israel also other two couples, they all survivors. We all get together so we play cards together.

WH: Is that what you find most relaxing?

WL: Naa. Uh, talking to them, playing cards…I’m not too big on cards, you know, but I like to talk to people.

WH: What activity that you do that you find –

WL: Fishing. LOVE fishing, yes!

WH: You did it your whole life?

WL: I used to like to go catch…

WH: You have a lot of patience, fishing.

WL: Yeh, but I got used to it. I have plenty of patience for fishing. I LOVE just to go out fishing…I only go fresh water fishing…

WH: …you’re a reader…

WL: I like to read, yes…

WH: What books, if any, have you read in the past year?

WL: You know, it’s a funny thing, you know, in the past year I read mostly magazines. Magazines, Time Magazines, Money Magazine, newspapers, Jewish Week…New York Times, Wall Street Journal…Wall Street Journal I read by accident because I get it for free…

WH: What books did you read?

WL: When I used to go to a library…I read books…from Moishe Dayan…the Israeli war. I always like to pick up books about, reading about the war.

WH: Which war?

WL: The German war. The German, Second World War. That was my, um, I always used to read that book. How they invaded Russia, how they were, um, slaughtering there the Russians and the German Jews and the, and the, the Ukrainians, Polands….

WH: In a way, watching those shows can make you feel lucky that you are alive…

WL: No, I never felt that. I never felt about that. I always knew it as only luck that I survived, I told you that, that – but as far as, I never thought about it, “Oh, how lucky I am I survived!” I never thought about this. As a matter of fact, we never thought we will survive. The last – we were just waiting – we knew that the end is coming and its gonna be either way. Either we’ll be killed or – we had hopes, of course, because we saw that things were going, you know the, we were always at the fronts and we saw the Germans running back, were moving back, so we saw that it, ah, always squeezing in from one side the Russians were squeezing, the other side the Americans, you know…

WH: How often do you take a vacation?

WL: Vacations? In the summertime…the last few years, in the wintertime, too.

WH: Where did you go the last time you went?

WL: Last vacation, we spent in the country up in our bungalow…Monroe, Highland Mills…

WH: You never had any pets, didn’t you?

WL: No. As a matter of fact, my daughter always wanted a dog…we never wanted a tenant with a dog…now we have a dog…upstairs.

WH: But you don’t like pets?

WL: I don’t hate them. I, ah, as a kid I used to have pets. Dogs, cats…

WH: How come now you don’t?

WL: I didn’t want to bother with it…my wife never wanted to clean after them…you can’t go away, you know, you have to take it along, you have to put it into kennels, and this and then I remember my niece had a dog and the dog got old and sick and it had to be put to sleep, and she was crying, ah. My daughter never forgave us we didn’t buy the dog. She, she was always, - she LOVES!…

WH: Does she have one now?

WL: No…

WH: This neighborhood, mostly Jewish?

WL: I’d say half and half.

WH: Do you have any good friends who are not Jewish?

WL: (Thinking – sighing) Good friends?

WH: I mean, really…good friends?

WL: Good friends. You meant that we socialize with? That we get together? I don’t think so. I don’t think so.

WH: If you think of your four best friends…how many of them are survivors?

WL: All of them. Aside from family…all survivors. One best friend of mine, he’s from Poland. We’re very close friends…

WH: In the shul you belong to, are you active?

WL: No, no, no, I’m not. I’m not too…I had experiences there I didn’t appreciate so I never really cared about it too much, you know…but you have to belong, you have to support some kind of an institution…

WH: Do you talk much about the Holocaust to other people?

WL: Ah – if they would start talking to me about it I would…I couldn’t stop.

WH: You’d never consider living there (in Israel) I don’t suppose?

WL: No, no. I never really…my wife says she would love to live there…our daughter lives here, family is here…we are established here…

WH: Do you give money to charity?

WL: Yes.

WH: What kind of charity?

WL: UJA (United Jewish Appeal)

WH: Considerable (?) amounts?

WL: Yes. Yes – the shul costs me…

WH: Do you give money to support Israel?

WL: Yes, yes, yes, yes…bonds…checks…Jewish Defense Force (IDF)…cystic fibrosis…my wife collects clothing…for yeshivas…

WH: Do you think that there’s any way that Nazism could have been prevented? Do you think that there was anything that could have been done to prevent it?

WL: Yes, I think it could have been prevented if…they, the United States reacted strongly in the beginning right away. Not…they were, uh, the United States was… neutral…

WH: When you think back about the Holocaust, was there anything in your life before the Holocaust that you especially miss?

WL: (Ho, ho.)…never had a good life. Never. We were always – we had nothing. We had nothing.

WH: There was one time you said that your family was well-off.

WL: Yeh, that was before my time.

WH: When you think back about everything that happened to you during the war, do you sometimes get a feeling like it must have been another life – it’s so distant now, we’re sitting here in this dining room, so removed from everything that happened, and then you think back about marching…doesn’t it feel kind of strange in some way?

WL: Strange – you’re numb. You’re numb. You feel numb. You know, how we lived, how a think like that could happen, you know, how things like that could happen to us. You know, how thing – how things like that could happen to us. You know, how thing – how, how easy is it, human beings could survive that what we went through, you know, and you know, how you could survive that, you know, like you, you just can’t –

WH: Stronger than you think –

WL: I told you, I told you, like I told you before, you just cannot if you think about it, you cannot – people who a – who, ah, didn’t go through there, who wasn’t there. Who wasn’t there. Can’t think about it.

WH: What did you think of the movie *Holocaust*?

WL: …I saw them all…that was…

WH: Not realistic?

WL: No, not really…if you were inside, if – they never show what was inside because they was so clever those Germans. They were hiding a lot of pictures of what happens really, inside…

WH: Do you have a feeling about buying German products?

WL: I never bought anything…that was made in Germany…

WH: Is it a matter of principle?

WL: Well…I would avoid it…I would avoid it…although they seem to be talking different now.

WH: How do you feel about the Germans that were born after the Holocaust?

WL: Well…I, I don’t know. I hope they’re not going to be – they’re not gonna grow up to be like their fathers. I hope.

WH: But you don’t know. You’re not optimistic?

WL: I believe the Germans could…again, if a Hitler came up and there would become economic difficulties in a country…I don’t think it could happen again. I don’t think it could really happen. They wouldn’t LET it happen because the best thing that ever happened to Germany that they cut them in half. You know, they deserve whatever they got, you know, they deserve it.

WH: You still think about the war, don’t you?

WL: Well, it’s not a good way. Never. Never. Never ends, you know. Never ends.

WH: Do you think more about it more now, than in earlier years?

WL: I don’t know…we always talk about something comes up, you know, talk about the mothers, father, sisters brothers…there’s never a meeting with friends or anything else doesn’t come up, you know, it always comes up.

WH: If you think about Americans, do you think Americans are anti-Semitic?

WL: …I think so.

WH: Most?

WL: Most? …well…I don’t know…I know a lot of blacks who are anti-Semitic. They don’t like Jews. They say Jews have all the money…and try to cheat them…

WH: But you don’t think that most Americans are anti-Semitic, the majority?

WL: (heavy sigh)…what can I tell you. I have no – I- from what you read, you don’t think so. But in the hick towns…they (?) anti-Semitic (?) there…

WH: Do you think that the Americans could easily become actively anti-Semitic under certain conditions?

WL: They will with time! (laughs) With time! With time with the right leadership, you know, they will lead them, they could propagate, you know, propaganda, could make them, uh…

WH: Do you think that minority groups in this country, you think that they are really discriminated against? Like blacks.

WL: I think so…

WH: What’s your impression of all these minority groups?

WL: …I would be afraid to walk at night, even drive through at night…

WH: You’re afraid of them?

WL: I’m afraid.

WH: We’re talking about blacks?

WL: Yes. Spanish –

WH: One of the things this country fights to have is freedom of speech…if somebody wanted to make a speech in this community…and he was a person who believed that black people are inferior, genetically inferior, do you think he should be allowed to make such speech?

WL: No, no.

WH: If a person who was a communist wanted to make a speech, about communism, do you think he should be allowed to?

WL: …that’s different politics. That’s different than being inferior. Completely difference…

WH: What if a person who wanted that this country should become a dictatorship, he said we should do away with democracy, we should let the army run the country, made a speech about that, do you think he should be allowed to make such a speech?

WL: You couldn’t stop him. I don’t think you could stop him…

WH: What about a person who admits he’s a homosexual…maybe he’s in support of it.

WL: …I can’t see this…he should be allowed to…speak about this? I can’t see that. That’s a really tough question to answer…I think they’re sick people. Something, eh, something that’s a sickness or something. Some kind of a – something irrational. Something, eh, unreal…

WH: If a person admits he’s a neo-Nazi, should he be allowed to make a speech?

WL: He admits he’s a neo-Nazi – well, I don’t think, I don’t think he would make a speeches (laughs) without a reaction from survivors.

WH: (if?) he’s allowed to make the speech?

WL: I don’t think you could stop him.

WH: You’d like to stop him!

WL: Like to stop him – I don’t think you could stop him…I don’t think you could stop him.

WH: Do you think that this country, is really, you know they say that America is the land of opportunity for everybody. Do you believe it?

WL: Yes. Yes, I think so. I think so if you can do it…

WH: …prejudice people feel against groups, do you think that there is any way which it can be made less, which it can be reduced?

WL: Could be reduced. Well, it could be but these people would have to help themselves more or less…a lot of minorities they could be better off if they would want to be…do…help themselves…sometimes you try to build them a house and they destroy it…it’s a disgrace how they destroy things, themselves, their own…quarters.

WH: Why do you think…( they do this)?

WL: I don’t know…I think they got to be more educated and they don’t follow-up…they get involved with crime…

WH: Are you an American first or a Jew first?

WL: Equal.

WH: You say you’re equal.

WL: Sure…I just hate when America who does something against Israel…I’m always for – I’m an American, of course, I’m an American and I’m a Jew.

WH: Do you think that the Jew could ever be completely accepted in this country and doesn’t give up his Jewish identity?

WL: I thought we are accepted in this country?

WH: Then the answer is “yes” it could be.

WL: (laughing) I think from what I see, from what I read and the government works, I think are accepted…

WH: Do you have any feelings about American culture? …American ways of life? Do you feel that – I mean if you compare it to European ways.

WL: European ways of life I really don’t know much about European ways of life. But I come from small country there, small villages and those times you cannot call it life, it was just existence there, barely, so I only know the life in here.

WH: Some people say, for example, that Americans are too materialistic.

WL: …well American people are the only people, they hard working people…other countries are more relaxed…they don’t really go after materials things like here…

WH: …in your opinion do you think it’s okay for Jews to marry gentiles?

WL: No.

WH: Why?

WL: Because we can’t afford it. We can’t afford it.

WH: What did you think of the Viet Nam war?

WL: Viet Nam war? We should have won it.

WH: We should have stayed in?

WL: Not stayed in. We should have won it. Could have win it.

WH: By doing what?

WL: I don’t know. We could have win the war.

WH: When you said we should have won, what was our mistake?

WL: I don’t know. Being that we committed so many, so many so much material, lives, we should haven’t have lost that war.

WH: What did you think of the anti-war movement?

WL: I didn’t think much of that…

WH: Do you remember Watergate?

WL: Yes.

WH: What was your reaction to that?

WL: I think it was overdone…way over done.

WH: Why?

WL: I don’t know, I think that it was overdone. I think that, well of course these two guys, Haldeman…and Enrlichman, they weren’t good…but as far as Nixon, I liked Nixon…for Israel he was the best. He saved Israel from defeat, remember, in October, ’73 war…

WH: Political, would you say that you are liberal, or moderate, or conservative?

WL: I’m not conservative. Moderate. I live and let live…

WH: When you think of politics, and you think of the danger to American Jews, where do you think the biggest danger comes from, the left or the right?

WL: …I think the right…and the left…the left, they are sympathizers with the Russians. I don’t Russians at all…I do not trust Russia…I don’t think that Gorbachev is on the level…maybe he’s trying to, but I don’t think that all people behind him all those people there they are not going to let go, they’re not going to let – give up dictatorship there…let the people free choice.

WH: When you think of the leaders in this country, which political leader made the best impression on you?

WL: …President Truman.

WH: And which one did you fear most?

WL: Kennedy. Kennedy.

WH: Which one do you feel most nervous about? Which political leaders…make you most nervous today?

WL: I don’t follow-

WH: Which politicians?

WL: Jackson.

WH: What do you think of Kissinger?

WL: I think he’s a Jew and he’s pro-Israel…as Secretary of State…

WH: Did you ever accept restitution money for Germany?

WL: Yes, we did, we do.

WH: You were eligible?

WL: Yes…it helped us.

WH: Would you say now, you try to live the good life – restaurants, vacations, in order to make up for everything you went through…

WL: …no, no…I don’t think – we do as much as we can…we have a place in the country…it’s a luxury, of course…not everybody can afford it…I would love to be able to afford …to go to Florida…in the wintertime…I hate this cold, it’s killing my arm…

WH: So you have more of a good life, now – it’s not like to make up it’s that you retire?

WL: Of course I (have? give?) good life. What are you talking about, “good life”? We had nothing… I mean that nothing in the old country. We were – we didn’t have what to eat most of the time. You forget I’m not talking now when we were in the concentration camps, in the labor camps.

WH: …what I am really asking is, it’s find if you said to yourself “we had nothing all these years, so much, NOW I want to have a good time.

WL: No.

WH: You didn’t think -?

WL: No. Never. Never do that…well, you know sometimes my wife says…we have to buy a new car…

WH: …a survivor made a statement, a statement I read, in a book, I want to ask you what you thought of it in general…he said, “please don’t be shocked, but the survivors of the Holocaust, in my opinion,” and this is a survivor saying this, “are not the best people, not the most noble people, not the most good-hearted people, not the most ethical people.” What’s your reaction when you hear a statement like that? …He says that they are not necessarily the best people in the world – he’s a survivor…and, you know what I think he’s saying, I’m not sure, but I think that what he’s trying to say, is he is saying that…it isn’t necessarily to say that the best people survive, that the worst people survive, I guess he’s saying that it was only by chance, by luck that certain people survived.

WL: Certain people survived by chance or by selfishness or by certain things from – a possible, yeh but the average I wouldn’t say that the survivors are any different from any other people.

WH: In other words, you don’t think that it was a difference in –

WL: No.

WH: Some people, for example, who were nice to other people during the war, like everybody reacts differently…(some) people they had a piece of bread, they wouldn’t share with someone. Other people, they would. Do you think that, that in Poland or in other countries, do you think have to be mean and tough to survive or do you think (inaudible)?

WL: No. You couldn’t – no, I don’t think, eh, I don’t think you had, you had, you never had enough to – of course you shared, but eh, you had to be pretty tough to survive. You know you had to be pretty tough. Everybody for themself, you know, like I – but, eh, if, I’m sure people who had helped out others. If you had something to help out with, but most people didn’t have nothing. Really. Those years, in the – if you’re talking during the war, and before the war when tough times started, -

WH: Some people say “only the strongest survived.”

WL: No, it’s not really so. Only the strong? Well, the lucky ones were younger, the stronger ones, the healthier ones – you know, if you were healthy you had a chance to survive, if you will, if you had some kind of, in the genes – it was in the genes maybe that you had a little more -.

WH: …I just have some final questions I wanted to ask you… Do you see any difference between what happened to Jews during the war, and what happened to the Biafrians, Nigeria, remember Biafra killed millions of (?), Cambodia, they killed many Cambodians: Armenians died, do you see any difference between what happened to the Jews and what they call the genocide that happened to other people?

WL: Well, I know they killed a lot of people there –

WH: Stalin, they killed a lot of people.

WL: Stalin they killed a lot of people. But, eh, those people, I don’t know…they were…involved in politics, probably those people who were killed in the Stalin, let’s say, they were involved in politics, different politics…

WH: Not always, the Cambodians, and – people –

WL: As far as the Jews was killed, they were just singled out, for the simple reason they were Jews. They were just slaughtered. You know, they were just massacred. They just disappeared without a trace. You know, they were killed in the open.

WH: Do you think the Holocaust against Jews is possible in America?

WL: I heard it, I heard it say, you know, I heard it say, they said, in the – I heard it say before.

End of Tape #2, Side B

Conclusion of Interview

PAGE

**USHMM Archives RG-50.165\*0067 PAGE 48**

PAGE