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SWB: Tell me where you were at the time of liberation and

what liberation was like, what you remember.

BUD BRODECKI: We were in Terezienstadt, and we were woken

up somewhere in the middle of the night, by people screaming

you know the, those Czechoslovakia. We didn't understand

everything they said, but they were saying like, long live

our president, I don't know, which banish[?] or something

and it was a lot of going on you know. So we all went to

the windows, but it was dark you couldn't see much. But the

day break was still trains coming through with prisoners,

now the communication wasn't like nowadays, you hear

everything you see everything. There's a lot of people

didn't know that the war came to a, to a end, and their were

freight trains coming through with German guards standing on

the, in on the steps, and we hollered to the prisoners, the

war is over, you're free, but they were so numb that there

was not, not even a reaction from those people. And

eventually some people start coming in, men with their

colored arm bands, you have it around your arm you know, it

was saying police or something, they just came up overnight,

and they were taking off the German guards out of the trains

and taking their weapons away. And I think they became

prisoners, and then they were marching through. But that,

for a while, that just didn't make any difference, because

we still didn't have any food, people were kept dying from

dysentery, from sicknesses, there was, I wouldn't, you

didn't know if you have to feel joy or what, you were just

more or less so dehumanized that some people were happy,

some people were just staring, I mean there was no, no-no

feeling like you get hijacked or something and so, and then

you get liberate [laughs] after six years, there was, you

didn't know what happened to your family or, why you're here

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and they had to die, I mean there was different mixed

feelings at the time.

SWB: Was it disorganized, was it, right after the

liberation, what was it like. Did anyone come and take care

of you?

BUD BRODECKI: Ther-there was some if I can't remember, some

people from Red Cross and-and uh, th- see where liberated by

the Russians. So, little-by-little people were coming, but

uh there was a lot of depatriation. You know like they ask

you if you're from Russia, they let you go back to Russia

other countries, uh, you know it can go on now 50 years

back, it's hard coming to all the details really unless you

ask me specific questions.

SWB: Do you remember getting toothbrushes, do you remember

getting...

BUD BRODECKI: No, we-we don- we didn't get that. Uh, I

think we were getting some food and with the initially we

were in prison clothes you know with stripes and most of us

were dirty and some people got things crawling around you

know. So we were taken to the uh-uh-uh-uh they call it bath

houses, you know in ancient time[?] they had big place where

people had you know like steam baths and all that of course

that was for, private people but at that time they will

confiscate those big places, and they were running the

prisoners in and they- and they told us to disrobe, take all

your clothes off and you had to walk through something like,

now if you hear that everybody might have a different story,

because there was not standard like-like you go to McDonald

and here or and somewhere else, you know everything was

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different. So we were walking through something, you know

they had kerosene, which you, you walking through that.

Then they totally examined you if you got uh I really don't

even have the American name for it, there's something like

you were loused there some of them go in your skin, so they

were examining all over if you had those things and uh. And

they were disinfecting you and then you had to take a- a

shower. After the shower, well that was the interesting

thing. After the shower, you, so, I don't know where they

get all the clothes and all, nobody got the right size but

you had, they were supplying clothes from a laundry or

something. So they ran us like in a room about the size of

this or bigger, 100 at a time and they told us to go against

the wall you know. All of a sudden we see screams, they

were running women and nude on the other side of the room.

But it wasn't like today, people were not interested in,

everybody was looking like a skeleton. Only thing that

would happen, some little boy recognize some relative you

know, I don't know sister, mother, neighbor. He got

screaming so everybody turned around and see if he can see

somebody he knows. If you did, you say when, when did they

take you out to the, did you know what happened to my

mother, to my father, if my house is there. All of a

sudden. Everybody got mixed up and nobody was wearing

clothes but people were trying looking up relatives, those

nurses came up, said oh my God, you better get back in your

places. Then they were giving us some soup I remember and

some clothes. They didn't care what size you wear and they

s- handed out, it looked like the stooges you know, and uh,

and uh they send us some different uh places you know,

temporarily, like uh, like we soldiers were staying you know

cousins[?] or whatever you call it. And everybody, they

were registering who is from where, who wants to go home. I

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registered I am going to Russia, you know. And I-I-I-

somebody called me, I-I left for a minute I came back and a

truck took off without me so. There was some heartbreaking,

I didn't know where I was going, I was so... You come out

from something naked without no belongings and you really

don't, it doesn't matter where you go you have no family, no

place. We didn't really want to go back to Poland we heard

some bad stories about Poland what was going on in there.

SWB: So tell me how you ended up coming to Lansdberg.

BUD BRODECKI: Well there was also something like, we decide

to go at the time to Palestine which is now Israel, but it

wasn't legal because the English intelligence wouldn't let

us do it. So we were getting false papers, you know. Like

we are Greeks or Italians which justified the directions we

were going you see. And we were in Austria on a train, I

forget at the time we were Greeks or Italians or something.

And we ran out of food and I don't know, people were trying

to get some food somehow, the sickest came out of where we

were going, for some we got surrounded by English jeeps and

some American soldiers and they turned the train around and

we went to Lansdberg which we never been over there. You

know in Landsberg where Hitler wrote Mein Kampf. His book.

And uh, my son, where my wife I mentioned that my son right

there. And uh, he was one of the first babies born and we

were uh one of the first people got married after the war.

We had like 300 guests at the wedding, I didn't know 90

percent of them, you just, celebration, you know, after the

war, people getting married, so, we didn't have any food,

everybody brought apples and food and bread and we even have

a band playing which didn't sound too good, ... they just

were playing and uh... I think I can drift away from your

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question, you should get me back on track.

SWB: Yeah, I'm gonna get you back on track but we're just

about to run out of film, and we need to put a fresh roll

up.

[CAMERA RELOAD]

[CR#2]

SWB: Tell me about life in Landsberg, what it was like.

BUD BRODECKI: Well we were put in rooms that was ex

military camp, in Landsberg. That's one thing it was, there

was every sign of it, you know, like there was military

establishment, so we put, we put in our rooms and bunk beds

you know and uh so you start up police department an

employment office, everything was kind of temporarily, and a

hospital, of course was a hospital there because it was a

military establishment previous to when we arrived. And a

lot of people didn't work and a lot of people worked, of

course, the pay wasn't much, there was like a, you were more

on the rations they were giving out food or clothes and

things like that. And uh I was trying to get, you know, to

work or do something. I went to an employment office. It

so happened that the chief of police and the chief of the

employment office had the same name. So I went right in the

police station, some of my friends have been in camp who

were there, come out join us, and I say I never want to be a

police officer, because you know from the war the police you

know that... Well he says that's not like it was before the

war, we just watch warehouses and stuff like that he says,

you get a sewage and you can eat in the cantina, you get a

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carton cigarettes every week and all those goodies. So they

talked me into it and that's where I happened to be for the

next four, four and a half years.

SWB: When you were first at Landsberg, were the conditions

good or...

BUD BRODECKI: Well, we can compare the conditions before we

got there, s- comparing to that was fine, I mean, like if we

go now it would be terrible but, you know, uh it's just you

were at least free to a point, a lot of times they wouldn't

let us out of the camp but I was different. Some, after the

camp all overflowed they got some places outside the camp

like on the next street so I managed to move in and out of

the house we \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ everybody got a room in

there you know, and so of course it was not like being in

the concentration camp. You could go in the city and some

people were tailors and some people got entrepreneurs they

were selling stuff and you know and like a little town

developed. And some people went traveling. And finally we

had a little dance hall and of course there was a hospital

and you know you kind of you were kind of getting kind of

into a better future [laughs]

SWB: So tell me how it happened that you met your wife,

tell me the story of that evening.

BUD BRODECKI: Well uh my wife arrived with a girlfriend of

hers, both of them were like between sixteen and seventeen,

and they went to a, there was a dance, and the band was

playing and the one of the guys in the orchestra was a

Greek, and he just tried to follow them home. When they got

home he kind of forced them \_\_\_\_\_ in their room. And-and he

s- I don't know what he was saying but he was saying to my

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wife like you're gonna have to marry me tonight whatever it

was he put a big knife on the table. The neighbors heard

some screams because there was tin walls so they called

police, I was one of the police officers came to the scene

you know. So we arrested them, and we were men and they

were right cute so, [laughs] we came next day see how they

were doing and that's the way it started you know and uh.

Of course later on I got attacked by this Greek and several

others were trying to beat me off and uh well that's a, we

were all kind of young people and...

SWB: Tell me about dating your wife, what kinds of things

did you do after that.

BUD BRODECKI: Well we, we only knew each other for three

months till we got married so, dating, we went to \_\_\_\_\_\_

together we walked and uh you know hugged and things like

that, just like everybody else is doing. We didn't have

cars we just walk you know.

SWB: Did you write her a poem?

BUD BRODECKI: Yes.

SWB: Do you remember it?

BUD BRODECKI: Well they was in Polish, she got it written

down somewhere I couldn't translate it you know we didn't

have, it was her birthday so I just wrote it I got no money

for gifts I'll write you a poem and tell her what I thought

of her and things like that and she saved it somewhere.

SWB: What did you think of her?

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BUD BRODECKI: Well you can, uh you know, that was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

and I told her she got beautiful teeth and eyes and this and

all that. [laughs] mess and somehow must appeal to her

because...

SWB: And then tell me how you decided to get married.

BUD BRODECKI: I went decide to get married uh it's hard to

tell you know some that would do something I mean you forgot

where now we-we were like in lot[?] there was no any

relatives anybody around I mean just me and her and she and

me and there was only thing to do was to get married. And.

SWB: Tell me about the wedding.

BUD BRODECKI: Well the wedding uh the word got around that

we were getting married and you know nobody had any money

and anything and there was a lot of people which do a black

market and stuff like that. There were no weddings though

there was one place two stories you know like a, over there

was a cafeteria you know just like a couple ballrooms

whatever we made it into and, we decide to get married in

that building and people start calling from all over \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ was like 300 or more people and people brought apples

and food and like I mentioned before there was a bunch of

guys brought instruments and they were playing and didn't

harmonize too good but they were playing for me a tunes and

everybody had a good time. We had a picture [laughs] ...

SWB: Did you have a rabbi?

BUD BRODECKI: Yeah.

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SWB: Tell me how did you find a rabbi.

BUD BRODECKI: Who knows, he show up from somewhere, I tell

you it's hard to come to details. We even have, we met my

wife cousin and we got the wedding rings and stuff like

that. Everything we not like it's supposed to be and then

uh we were actually I missed something, before the wedding

in January, in December we went to visit a friend in a

different city, a friend I been in the war with. And he was

real small quarters so he says you two gonna sleep on the

couch and I say hey, we're not married or anything, well he

says, I put a straw between you and we go to the city hall

you get married tomorrow. And a funny thing happened at

night, somebody knock on the door, there was American

military police. They were looking for G.I.'s sleeping off

in different places with girls, so I identify myself I'm not

the American G.I. you know, and I say we get married

tomorrow, he says I believe you, you know. So next day went

to city hall, so they say my wife is not of age, somebody

has to adopt her. So the couple we were with they were

older than us so they adopt my wife to give her permission

to get married. And we had to wait a few days because like

today when they, people get married they say, I forget the

exact words but they say if anybody against it, speak up now

or stuff like that, over there they put advertisement on the

board if anybody knows something that we shouldn't get

married to come forward and stuff like that, of course

nobody knew us, so we got this uh marriage license over

there it was another city it was Landswood Germany where my

friend was. When I came back to Landsberg oh the religious

people say that's not right we can't recognize, you got to

get married in a religious way. So then when I took place

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where I tells you before that religious wedding. And the

funny part of it was like four and a half years later we had

a boy two years old and we were going to United States and

they didn't recognize either marriage. We had to get

married by the military personnel to make it legal. So you

know, here is a, over there was a little different, you

know, if you had a baby you should get married, so this guy

look you're not married and you got a two year old son you

know it was terrible. Today it's a different world we're

living in. So we got married three times actually.

SWB: We just ran out, we have to put up one more roll.

[CAMERA RELOAD]

[CR#3]

SWB: Tell me how your wife looked that day that you got

married in Landsberg, with the rabbi. Did she manage to

come up with a wedding dress and a veil?

BUD BRODECKI: Uh, you got a picture here, I think she was

dressed all right, not as you know \_\_\_\_\_\_ stuff like you go

here to you know in the shops and they dress you up.

[laughs] And they tell you they got dresses for 500 dollars

to 10,000, I mean she was dressed okay. We even had that

uh, what do you call it in English, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ with the

SWB: Oh yeah, the thing over the wedding... the hoopa[?]

BUD BRODECKI: The hoopa[?], yeah. And uh...

SWB: Tell me about that, just describe to me what you did

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have that day...

BUD BRODECKI: Oh what we had, what part would you like to

know, the hoopa[?]

SWB: Just describe to me the day and the things you had and

then the people who came

BUD BRODECKI: Well there was a, I don't think we sent any

invitations out the word got around, matter of fact I forgot

something, another people came around they said they want to

get married if they can join us. They actually live in

Canada so we said why not [laughs] so they got included in

the wedding ceremony and they got married too. But we

originate the whole thing, and uh, they was real nice

because people show up from all over, you know, like there

was a camp, and there was like the only only thing going on

that night is a wedding, and everybody came in, th- it was

like, here they call it a covered dish, we didn't cook,

everybody brought some food and fruit and people bottles

whiskey and drinks and all was, unsolicited, that was real

like a community project and then the music \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ would play on a trumpet a little bit off tune [laughs]

but it, we had a good time really. It's a, it was a event

to remember.

SWB: Um, tell me about the visit of David Ben-Gurion. Do

you remember that?

BUD BRODECKI: Yeah, Ben-Gurion, the word got around that

Ben-Gurion is showing up in Landsberg where we were in the

camp, so we want to give him the proper welcome, the welcome

I said a few policemen he got some motorcycles and bicycles

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and it was a funny parade, we went and met him at the,

wherever he arrived, and we were riding like we were a

couple guys who were riding on a motorcycle backwards and

the Germans used to big parades they were looking and I

think they were comical but they didn't laugh. When he came

in the podium was uh uh, you know like you got a horse and

wagon, we just got a wagon, he got up on that and he spoke

you know and his hair was flying in the air he \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ one

too clear and goes to, he spoke I forgot what he was saying

and that was a, everybody came to listen, and so I remember

it.

SWB: What did it mean, was it very important to how

everyone felt?

BUD BRODECKI: Well it was important because a lot of us

didn't really have a desire to go back from the countries we

come from because it was a lot of anti-Semitism, it was bad

memories. So everybody was kind of looking toward Palestine

which was Israel. And a lot of people uh uh took off

illegally, mostly immigrants at the time going to Israel

were illegal, you might have maybe exodus, some of my

friends were on it. I was so sure I made a second attempt

to leave. But my wife was expecting a baby, and we went to

Munich and we had to also play Greeks or Italians because

that's the only people were allowed to go in that direction

you see so they give a false documents to justify where

you're going you know we should keep a march \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

And due to the conditions at the time, nothing ever went off

on schedule, like I went over there and they postponed it so

I, Munich wasn't too far from Landsberg so I came back, so

finally my neighbors attacked me, he said enough single boys

you're gonna leave your wife here, pregnant wife and you're

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gonna wander off somewhere, you can go together later. So,

I was left behind my friends went to Israel. Matter of

fact, we visit Israel in 78 and they made us a party the

same group which I was going to live with toured Israel. So

then I was left behind in Landsberg and to finish that story

we went to Munich and we register everywhere to immigrate to

Australia to Canada United States different places so we got

a letter from Richmond that we were accepted in the Richmond

community and that's how we came about [laughs] wind up in

Richmond.

SWB: Was the camp decorated for Ben-Gurion?

BUD BRODECKI: I don't think so.

SWB: Do you remember Colonel Heymont, the commander?

BUD BRODECKI: Well, yes and no. What happened with Colonel

Heymont, I wasn't aware of his existence, I think he was

really short time in Landsberg, but what happened, you know

what my son did last few years, he was the national campaign

director for the Holocaust museum, and he met him. He even

wrote a book, and that's where I find out about his

existence because in those days,

SWB: You didn't know.

BUD BRODECKI: I didn't know, I had no idea.

SWB: Tell me again the story of when you were in the public

baths after the liberation and when everyone sort of forgot

they were naked and started looking for people who knew

where their families were.

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BUD BRODECKI: Well you know the uh, the demand was greater

than the supply, so we had to wait for soup, wait for

clothes, like we went to that process of getting washed and

shaved or whatever and disinfected, and I think they was in

groups of 100 they took us upstairs to a big room to wait

till the supplies arrived to give us soup in the meantime.

All of a sudden a couple of women I guess they were nurses

or volunteers came and told us to, they were from

Czechoslovakia, they were not ex-prisoners, and they told us

to everybody turn their faces to the wall. We didn't know

why, but we were used to take orders [laughs] so we turned

to the wall. All of a sudden we heard voices and a bunch of

women came in, of course most of them had their heads shaved

and nobody was looking human in those days you know like you

look at a man he got like a triangle just \_\_\_\_\_\_ going down

to the camp, walking skeleton. And somehow somewhere some

boy recognized someone, you know, from which town I couldn't

tell you the detail. But then everybody start turning

around and looking, if you, you see all of us were

separated, from families, from sisters, from mothers, from

brothers, so we didn't know what was going on, I didn't know

what's on the other side of the wall during the war. All I

knew is we were getting some, some places the Germans had

big loudspeakers and they were playing military music and I

noticing that they just sunk another American submarine

somewhere in the Pacific or Atlantic. So, suddenly we all

start turning around from curiosity looking for familiar

faces. And some couples even recognize each other. Not

that they were related, or maybe they were neighbors and

they were hugging, and nobody gave it even a thought of

being naked, I mean there was, [laughs] you know today they

would make a X-rated movie here. But there was nobody uh,

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there was absolutely, nakedness didn't have nothing to do

with it. You were looking for familiar faces, you were

trying to find out what happened to your relatives. And you

know, after we were in DP camp, a lot of guys was playing

tricks on the women, you know, we see a nice looking girl

you come in and say, hi baby, oh I thought that was my

sister you know [laughs] You know, making jokes like that.

At that time it was absolutely serious. People... people

have worms and sick and all kind of mess, there wasn't a

pleasant picture at all.

SWB: I think we're just about out of film... Thank you.

BUD BRODECKI: I want to tell you one thing which is off

record. When the Russians came to Treressenstadt, they were

raping a lot of women, nobody talked about it, there was a

lot of rapes by soldiers. The liberators, okay, in case you

didn't know about it.

SWB: No I've heard about it a lot.

BUD BRODECKI: Oh there was a lot of things happening, but

oh, the embarrassing things people just don't talk about.

And if you put it publicly the Russian embassy gonna make a

protest...

[END]

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