

Arie Letzter

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Abstract

Arie Letzter was born Leib Letzter on May 18, 1925 in Kolbuszwa (?) in a family with two older brothers, Wolf and Hirsh, and an older sister, Gittel. His youngest sister, Mindel, was born in '29. The family spoke Yiddish at home, his parents knew German and he learned Polish at his Polish school. Arie and Hirsh helped with the merchandise for his father's business. The family held a meeting when the war started and decided that the women and younger children would remain at home and the men and older children should leave. Arie with his father, two brothers and two uncles headed for the Romanian border with a borrowed wagon and two horses from the Graf (Noble head of their area). German planes bombed them along the way. Their wagon and horses broke down so tried the Russian border at Schumz (?), Poland. They registered with the Russians and went to Lvov for 10 months before returning home. One uncle was picked up by the Russians and, later, the rest of them were picked up and placed in two trains. The newly married uncle killed himself by jumping off the train. The four of them were in another train that took seven weeks to get to Siberia where they arrived in October 1940, deep in the woods, in Severynkachuk (?). Their duties consisted of cutting down the trees. After 10 months, the war started June 21, 1941 and they were free to go. They took the train to Uzbekistan and got off in Geezak (?). Wolf had gangrene in his foot so entered the hospital where he died in a few days. Arie and his father worked the cotton fields and did some construction work on the highway. Soon Arie's father died and Arie entered the hospital for a few months to have his gangrenous foot treated. Meanwhile his brother, Hirsh, died and he was left alone at age 16. He barely supported himself by being a guard and trading on the Black Market. There was a Typhus epidemic and Arie caught it and was in the hospital again. He survived with the help of friendly Moslems and a female physician. The war ended May 1945 and in April '46 he received permission to go to Poland. He reached Krakow and learned that due to the Pogroms it would be dangerous for him to go home so he did not return until 2004. He learned that his family was gassed at Belzec in early '42. He went to a DP Camp in Milan, Italy, and worked in the furrier business before going to his relatives in the US in January 1950 where he continued in the furrier business. He married Sylvia Lederberger in 1952 and had children. After learning about the genocide he lost faith but later decided to enroll his children in Yeshiva.

Summary

- 00:00 Arie was born Leib Letzer and after the war changed his name to Arie. He was born May 18, 1925 in Kolbuszwa (?) near Zeszhof (?) near Krakow. Kolbuszwa (?) was a small town with no railroad, just buses. Sanzoshov (?), Merez, (?) and Meyden were nearby. The town of 2,000 people was 90% Jewish. Outside the town was the New Town, "Novenmeistow" (?). There were about 15% non-Jewish. His father was Hyman and he was born in Kolbuszwa in 1886 and his mother, Sheindel Tala, was also born there. His grandfather was Islavanich (?) and kept his name while his mother kept her name.
- 05:00 There was a pogrom in Austria in the 1920s. His parents went to Vienna during World War I as they ran from home. His father worked for the government making uniforms for the soldiers. He had a contract and after the war, he returned to Kolbuszwa (?) as his mother's parents lived there. His father's relatives were all in the US. There were three or four brothers from different mothers. His grandfather remarried and had other children. His father was the oldest and took care of the younger siblings. His father went to Warsaw and Tarnow to buy readymade goods and gave out cutting work in his town. He had a small store and went daily to markets in small cities. People came to the markets and he sold readymade goods for men including coats, suits and pants.
- 10:00 His father did not go to the US as he was married. He was young, in his 20s when he got married. His mother had four sisters and her parents took care of a big farm. His grandmother delivered fresh milk three times a day. His grandfather owned woods and sold land which belonged to the Graf (nobility). His grandfather died in 1937. War started with the Germans. His grandmother held a family meeting on September 1, 1939 but he was not invited as he was 14 nor did his sisters attend. His grandfather was honest and quiet. It was a Saturday and Arie was at a friend's whose parents spoke Hebrew as the father was a Hebrew teacher. Suddenly he was not welcome so he went home. Halfway home someone came up to him and told him that his grandfather died and he felt terrible. His grandfather was 77 or 78. Perhaps it was a heart attack as he was already sick and never complained.
- 15:00 He did not go to the funeral as children did not go. When his family returned, he asked his mother, "Why are people born to die?" and she replied, "We'll talk about it later" but she never did. His mother had seven siblings: three in Belgium and five in Poland. They spoke Yiddish at home and his parents knew German. He attended a Polish school so learned Polish. He finished seven grades when the war started and went to night school. He was in the middle of two sisters and two brothers.
- 20:00 The oldest was his sister, Gittel, then his brother, Wolf, then his brother, Hirsh, then him and last was his little sister, Mindel who was born in '29. Gittel was about 26 when the war started and she had a boyfriend. Wolf was 18 and Hirsh was 14. They were religious but did not wear payas (side burns). They were not Chasidic. His mother was less religious than his father. His parents never hit the children nor argued between

themselves. Since his parents already knew each other in their small town, it was probably not an arranged marriage. His family was comfortable. They always had food and were not hungry. They rented an apartment in the center of the town with three rooms. The building was made of stone around 1890 with no plumbing or electricity. They used kerosene for their lamps and had a "Kafling" stove which was big. His mother baked bread and his sister started cooking and getting ready on Friday. They hired a girl to clean and make Shabbat. As they went out the door to Synagogue, his mother measured each child using the door for measurement.

25:00 Arie listened to the adults talking so he knew what was going on. There was friction between the Jews and non-Jews. Things changed when Pilsudski died. It was written in Polish not to enter his father's store but they did not lose customers. You don't have steady customers for suits like for groceries but went where it was cheaper. Arie helped in the store. They got their merchandise from Barstow and he and his middle brother put it away. They saw how it was marked and wrote down three times the price. His older brother was not interested in the store but learned English privately to prepare to go to the US and spent time with his friends. Arie and his middle brother were interested and would bet on the price. They were old items so the price was not exact like new items. His father tried his best for the customer so he would return.

30:00 His father did not make custom-made except, maybe, for pants. All the boys were dressed by the father. Pilsudski died in 1935. There were terrible feelings as he was good and not anti-Semitic so it was terrible for the Jews. The principal of his Polish school was anti-Semitic. In the morning, everyone stood up and said, "Good morning." In front of Arie sat a Jewish boy wearing payess and the principal took his ears and shook him and said, "You, Jew, smell from onions." At recess everyone stayed together and sometimes there were fights between the Jews and non-Jews. It was not a good feeling. His older sister was in an organization preparing to immigrate to Palestine. They could not go anywhere as could not get a passport and documents for permission to leave and no country wanted you so you were stuck.

35:00 He had a fight with Polish children. Sometimes they fought with stones. They played military games. There were about three or four synagogues and small synagogues with Rabbis and a big church as people came from outside the town. The children came five kilometers every day and got bread with lard and coffee. They had red cheeks as it was cold. School was less than 90% Jewish, more like 50/50 as the children came from outside the town. Arie was at his grandmother's on Kristallnacht. His mother, sister and grandfather were there. They talked and did not want him to hear so he made believe that he was sleeping. He could not understand it all. Jews got killed and businesses were taken away. Jews born in Poland were thrown out of Germany and came to town.

- 40:00 His father's cousins came. They talked about events of all over the world. Three times a day, they got newspapers from Zeshof (? Staszow). They did not have a radio. His brother belonged to the sister's organization which had a radio. There was only one car in town for the person who dealt with livestock. It was a poor city but no one died from hunger. It was organized that if someone did not have, it was taken care of. The grownups talked of war and he listened. The war started Friday morning. There was an alarm at 6 AM and he went outside and heard German planes and, perhaps, some Polish planes. At the cinema he saw Polish and Jewish movies. His oldest sister took him with her friend and he would go alone with cigarettes for the ticket taker for admission. One day the ticket taker said if he brought two or three pants, he would let him in forever. Arie felt that he could not do that so only attended the movies with his sister.
- 45:00 Sometimes he saw newsreels. He attended school from 8 to 1 and came home for lunch and went to Jewish School and came home at 6 or 7. Then he had to do his Polish homework and his mother helped him. He was an average student. He got hit once because he did not know the answer. He sat with his mother until 10 PM to do his homework. He saw Polish soldiers with horses near his grandmothers. He did not understand what was going on. It was not a city and there were no factories. They were protecting the city, trying to make a front. The family met to decide what to do. They decided that the women should remain at home and the men should leave as it is safer for women. The men would return when the Polish soldiers push the Germans out. His grandmother had a connection with the Graf (Nobility head of the area).
- 50:00 Arie was 14 and the uncle said that he is a child and should remain. His mother said he is tall and should leave so he left with the other family members: father, three brothers, uncle with his son and the recently married uncle. He was the youngest of the eight members. It started on Friday. His grandmother could not go to the Graf on Saturday or Sunday. She went on Monday and got a pair of horses and they left on Tuesday. They were trying to get to the Romanian border with their wagon and 2 horses. As soon as they got out of the city, they found there was so much traffic. One wheel broke right away and people fixed it up. Many people put their valises on the wagon and, except for 2 or 3, they all walked. The horses were not very strong. They could have escaped if the horses were stronger. People did not bother them because they saw they had bad horses so, perhaps, the Graf gave them bad horses on purpose. Sometimes German planes came and threw down bombs and there was panic due to the fire. People ran away from other cities. The Poles were not running. They went to a small nearby city and a policeman tried to shoot a German plane. Arie thought to himself that things are not good if that is the way they are handling the war.
- 55:00 They went to LeJanks (?) and were afraid to cross the bridge as it might be bombed but they crossed successfully. Later they mostly walked at night when there was less traffic. They wanted to go to the Romanian border but it closed so went to the Russian border.

They were about 200 kilometers from home and the horses could not make it. They went to Shumz (?), Poland to cross the Soviet border. They had been walking for two weeks. They saw German planes but no German soldiers. They were alone on the road when two German planes were shooting at them and he ran under the wagon. Someone shot at the plane and they stopped shooting. Russia had made a pact with Germany to divide Poland in two. One Sunday Arie wanted to be in the middle of the activity and his uncle told him to take it easy. He saw two Russian soldiers with machine guns coming toward him and went to the Polish government office in Shumz. No one knew them.

60:00 Then tanks came. The airplane flew to Poland. Christians were calling for a Pogrom and the Russian government said they don't make Pogroms. They wanted to take everything out of the stores. The Russians went to Lvov and went past his city about 50 kilometers away. Arie's family waited as nothing seemed to work. His father decided to go to Lvov which was located closer to home. They had to register with the Russians for permission to go home but were forced to go to Siberia. His father knew people in Lvov: a married woman with four daughters with an extra room on the side. Every Friday night the woman invited them for dinner. The husband was very good. They seemed rich and the father-in-law did not want them to come. The children were nice. They were there for ten months. People came.

65:00 The recently married uncle returned home as his wife was pregnant. He smuggled himself in and helped Arie's mother and the two sisters. One night Arie was sleeping in the apartment with his two uncles, cousin and his father as the two brothers were sleeping elsewhere. Russian soldiers came at 2 AM to see the single uncle and told him to get dressed. The uncle hated them so tried to jump from the third floor window but was caught and taken. Later he committed suicide by jumping off a train. The family was concerned about the two brothers. His uncle read a lot and learned about Pogroms from the First World War and told them not to go near the Russians. The recently married uncle never made a living before and now did the Black Market.

70:00 Arie's father decided they would all, including the two brothers, live in the woods. Russians only came at night but after five days the father decided it was not a good idea. Arie had a bottle of wine to sell to the Russian soldiers for three rubles. The wine might have been half water. The Russians were searching for beer. Bread was hard to get. They would stand in line and get nothing. The stores were out of everything. They returned to their apartment and the landlady found an officer on the street and pointed them out. They were all placed in the nearby jail. His father had a bottle of vodka which he found useful for infections but would not hand it over to the officers.

75:00 The head officer told his men to leave them alone. His father asked to go to the drug store to buy something and left his sons in jail and soon returned to them. At midnight they were placed on an open truck with a soldier on each side. They said that if someone

jumped, they should be killed. Then they were placed on trains. They had a toilet in the middle of the car of 40 or 50 men and women where he was the youngest. They would pick up Arie and he could look out of the small window. He saw small houses with lights and envied them. They did not know where they were going. They thought they might have been taken because they registered. They did not ask why they were taken. His uncle was single so was placed on another train and jumped down and killed himself. There was just the four of them: his two brothers, his father and himself. They were awoken at 2 AM and got a piece of bread, herring and hot water but nothing all day long.

80:00 It took six or seven weeks to reach their destination. When they arrived, there was a Polish office, a mixture of single people and it was October. They had left Kolbuszwa (?) four or five days after the war started. It took them two weeks to get to Schumz and they remained 10 months in Lvov until the Soviets took over the town. The uncle returned to Kolbuszwa. His mother wrote a card to them in Siberia. It took seven weeks to get to Siberia where they arrived in October 1940. Arie would cry when alone on the top barrack. They were deep in the woods, in Sevenykachuk (?), Siberia. The barracks were newly built for them.

85:00 A tall Russian man showed them how to cut down the trees and to clean them up. It took him a half hour. He was very strong. He said, "You will live but you won't want to have a woman in your life." In a crude way, he said that you will lose all your drive. A couple of horses were killed by wolves so people went to get the meat. The smell of fleish (meat) was so strong that you could not eat it. He got used to the bread. The barracks were new. There was sufficient wood for warmth so he felt colder when he went outside. Their work consisted of cutting down trees. They would examine each other's faces and if the nose or cheek were white, they would rub it with snow or it would fall off. There was no need for guards as they were surrounded by woods. The only authority was Dogo Poloff who had a wife and child. He was short and nice.

90:00 One day it was too cold to work and when he went to the outhouse, Dogo asked him why he was not working and he replied that he was 15 years old and the law said you don't have to work at 15 and it was cold. Dogo took a red pencil and made a mark. In the spring, it was dark as they were far north. Arie returned to work the next day though it was 40 below zero. Their clothes were not too good for the weather. The barracks was warm as the fire burned 24 hours. They were not given any clothes. They only got fish soup and bread. One woman died. They sold all their belongings and after a year had nothing left. In another year, there would have been more casualties. There were some former prisoners who lived there permanently as there was no transportation to leave. They had a small house and land where they grew potatoes and fruit and sold them.

95:00 From the end of the train, they went by horse and carriage. The carriage was for their valises and the people walked three or four hours. There were 400 people in the camp

filling up eight barracks. He was the youngest. Dogo Poloff was the only person in charge. Arie never saw an official. When the snow was deep, tractors came and removed the logs. They laid the smaller trees in order and a Tatar marked down how many. He was drunk and talked with the family about how much longer they would remain. One man who lived 15 kilometers away, lived alone and looked wild with a beard and carrying two guns. They had received one card in Lvov from his mother.

100:00 She said not to worry about her. They might have received a second card. Arie learned a little Russian. His older brother read the newspaper in Russian and translated it into Polish. The war started June 21, 1941 when Germany invaded Russia who were their Allies. In summer you could collect berries in the woods but large flies bit you and made you bleed so you could not easily pick the berries. They remained 10 months. They traveled there from August '40 to October '40. When the war began, they were told they were free to leave. They wanted to go to Uzbekistan where it was warm. They were given tickets and documents.

105:00 They took horses to the train and waited as there were many wounded from the war. The family tried to stay together. It took them weeks to reach Uzbekistan. They did not realize that when winter comes, there is no work. They left in July and it took several weeks to reach their destination. Wolf got gangrene in his foot. They were in Geezak (?) which was between Tashkent and Samarkand. Wolf died in the hospital as there was no treatment. Only his father and older brother visited him as everything was kept from Arie. His father took Arie to a small office and said he would go away and return shortly.

110:00 They thought it would be too much for Arie. The father and older brother attended Wolf's funeral and buried him. When they returned, Arie looked at their faces, he knew what had happened. His father inquired whether Arie could stay in the hospital for a week. The nurse wanted Arie's father to also remain in the hospital as he did not look well but he refused to cut his beard. He was taken anyway and hidden for three days while Arie remained a week. Wolf had been in the hospital for a couple of days before he died.

115:00 They had stopped at Geezak because Wolf had gangrene. The father and two remaining sons were given a place to stay about eight miles from the hospital and worked with cotton. Their documents indicated permission to live in Uzbekistan. It was terrible work as they did not have gloves and the cotton had thorns so their hands got swollen. They received a piece of bread for their work. Their room had sand and small windows. There was no water nor wood. They had to boil the water. It was worse than the camp. They had no money. They were given pita bread. When cotton picking season was over, they worked on the highway and then it started snowing. There was no work and no food and they did not know anyone. The people spoke Turkish and hated the Russians as years ago the Russians came and killed many of them.

- 120:00 They hated the Russian language. His father felt that he could not go home after losing his older son. They had straw to lie on the floor and in-between the straw, they found 10 pita breads. They had food for three days and urged it on Arie. Arie was in the hospital and in the evening he saw Hirsh at the window and he was happy to see him. He gave Arie four balls. They looked like dirty baseballs and found out it was cheese. He never saw Hirsh again and went home. Hirsh was sick and was registered in the hospital. Arie got home. Saturday night Arie awoke and found his father laying on the floor with a torn up shirt and was dead. It was winter and Arie cried so hard that the Arab woman heard him.
- 125:00 Earlier the foreman had come to kill Arie and the woman shouted and the foreman left. The lady took Arie into her home and gave him something to drink. Arie wanted to go to the hospital to see his brother. He went at night and saw the lady doctor who shouted for Arie's father. At first she did not hear Arie say that he was dead. He asked to see his brother and no one responded for days and Arie realized the brother was dead and he was alone.
- 130:00 He was 16 and had gangrene in his foot. The doctor cut off the bone and all the toes on his left foot. He was there for three or four months and asked for his brother but no one responded. He was alone with no money and no luggage and it was wartime. The doctor did not know what to do with him. He picked fruit off the trees and got cucumber peels from the garbage. She called him into her office and said he must leave. An old nurse on the premises permitted him to stay with her for ten days. She gave him a note to see the Polish doctor in the city who gave him a place to stay. There were 300 to 400 single Poles who took him in and gave him a place to lie on the floor. There was a sick man in the corner who saw Arie was Jewish and said he would kill him. Arie was the only Jew there so slept outside as it was warm. The water was contaminated and there was no food.
- 135:00 Two or three days later they all disappeared during the night. They were in their 30s and 40s and went with the Polish Army to Iran. He was left with the sick man who died and Arie buried him. He got a job in a house on the premises as a guard. For this, he got a pound of bread daily but it consisted of straw and water and he got 75 rubles monthly. He thought he would save money and buy a kilo of bread on the Black Market. He told some women that he would give them 75 rubles for their bread. A man standing nearby grabbed it and ran away and everyone laughed. Arie decided the Black Market was the best for him. He had many diseases – malaria, dysentery- and there was no medicine or food. He was still in Geezac. He had eight rubles when he left the hospital and went to the bazaar. He bought a pound of tomatoes for seven or eight rubles and found his money was gone as someone had pickpocketed it.

140:00 He saw some older boys on the Black Market buy 300 matches and made packages of 10. He watched the boys to learn how to sell them. They were in their 30s and he was 17. He thought that if he could sell something, then he could exchange it for something such as an apple. He wanted to reach his mother and two sisters and tell them what happened. He saw people sewing Arab slippers with material and two needles and learned by watching them. He saw bad Jews make tricks with the Arabs. They counted the money twice instead of once but he felt that he could not do that. To fix people's sandals, he asked for food rather than money. There was a weekly market in the old city with thousands of people. Everyone moved away from him and he did not know why. The Russian Police was behind him, a lady policewoman on a white horse. She told him to stop selling on the Black Market.

145:00 He replied that he would stop but he could only walk slowly away and returned later. He was surprised that there were so many witnesses to his selling but the Police did not arrest him. When he turned 19, he was sick. He could not see at night as had no vitamins. The old people put matches together into packets and made cigarettes so he learned from them. He was on crutches and bloody and had to go to the hospital as he was infected. He survived as he owned a photo of his mother and two sisters and knew people from the Black Market.

150:00 He had a high temperature so saw the doctor who said he had Typhus. She said to go to the hospital but they said there was no room so he returned to her. She took him to the hospital and they suddenly found room for him. His temperature got very high at night. Many people were dying both in and out of the hospital from Typhus. A doctor with a patch on one eye looked at his chart and walked away. He asked the doctor if he will die and at first, he gave no response but later said, "You will make it." He was in the hospital for 10 to 12 days where he was given Turtle Soup which was very good, like chicken. He walked two miles home. Every couple of steps, he sat down as was weak and cried. It took him all day to get home. He slowly got well. He was told there was material for women's kaftans in Samarkand. He thought he would buy goods and a truck with soldiers took him.

155:00 They laughed at his idea. He got the material but did not do well. The fruit was good in September as there were large grapes that cooled him. The Moslems on both sides of his home knew him. A clean, older man went every morning for a walk and greeted him, "Salaam Aleichem." He asked how he was and how was his family. There was a rich man in the bazaar who made sweets from eggs and pita bread that he sold in the morning. Arie asked to buy flour from him and he was given 15 pounds. Arie went to a garden where he saw a table with eight Moslems and the man he knew. They were polite and said, "Salaam Aleichem" and told him to take a seat. They talked against the Russians and he told them that they will get killed if they talk like that and they bought the flour.

160:00 Arie's neighbor's son was skilled and earned medals and they made him a party. They had rice pilaf with lamb that they ate with their hands. It was the best thing that he ever ate. His neighbor wanted him to sleep outside while her husband was away. In May 1945 the war was over and there was a celebration in the city. Someone who knew his father earlier in Geezak had an apartment with a woman he was not married to. He wanted protection so asked Arie to live with him. He made him breakfast in the morning. He felt different as he had someone to talk to. The woman's sister wanted to marry Arie so she could leave Russia but the man said Arie was too young to get married. A friend married the sister. Arie and two others were invited to the end of war celebration. Arie cried and said the war is over but he lost everyone. They told him to calm down. Three months later the store sold bread for the first time.

165:00 Arie never saw a bakery that makes bread before. He saw so much bread, some made from a vegetable, so walked out of the bakery as he was shocked. He never saw so much bread in his life and bought one. It was early '46. In April he got permission to go to Poland. He got new papers which came from Moscow that permitted him to go to Poland. Poland had elections and the Russians wanted him to go as few Poles were Communists and they wanted him to help with the elections. He took the bus from Yeshuf (?) to Kondochom (?). Later he found out about the genocide. He took a valise in Yeshuf (?) and said he was going to Kolbuszwa (?) as his mother and two sisters were there. A man from his hometown told him not to go as the people will kill him. He went to Krakow and went to the Immigration Office and found three people from his hometown and told him that everyone was killed there and there is no one left.

170:00 All the Jews were killed as thought to be Communists. They also killed Russians. The Jewish organization in Krakow gave him food, a place to sleep and he was taught how to shoot. The Polish government gave him rifles, grenades and machine guns. The Ketza (?) Pogrom killed 53 people so Arie wanted to leave. He did not return home until 2004. It was terrible to watch three-year-olds so they would not get killed. '46 was a terrible time. He remained for two months. He bought a large box of tobacco and sold it for zlotys on the train. He knew the three people from Kolbuszwa (?). They said his family was gassed at Belzec in early '42. Some people took their life at such a time and he gave it some thought, too. He thought of suicide when he was in Italy and Cyprus.

175:00 His uncles in American wrote him to come. He had no one left and had food. He was in the DP camp in Milano, Italy and saw a man walk out of the barracks with a brown bag under his arm. He was a tiny man and every day at 8 walked out so he spoke to him. He asked where he was going. He had a wife and children. He was 44 or 45 years old and worked as a furrier. Arie knew a bit about the business as his father made a few things with fur. He asked the man to teach him the business for no pay to give himself a chance to be hired. The next day he went to Milan and met two Jewish partners who were furriers before the war. One had a wife and two children who were killed and he

remarried and the other had hid. There were six workers and lots of people outside. They accepted him. His task was to stretch poles. Italy was the best place to make furs and sell them.

180:00 Arie did not want pay so he would be accepted. He told them his life story and learned stretching the fur for which he had a good eye. He worked three months and told the boss he will quit as he does not just want to make poles and stretch as he wants to learn the trade. Though he did not ask for pay, they paid him anyway. He learned matching and sewing. The sold plates and brought them to the furrier. Arie's camp moved South and he went with them and saw a man who could register him. He wanted to be registered at the DP Camp and still go to Milano for work. He wanted a home to belong to as he did not have documents so registered. It took 22 hours to return to Milan.

185:00 He looked for a place to sleep and his boss found him a cellar where he could sleep. He did not want to be registered in Milan. The landlord had a daughter and a son (a lawyer) and she agreed and Arie returned to work. People saw Arie washing outside with cold water so he had to find another place to live. It was not legal to work if you are not registered. After the war, the Italians would surround a café and ask everyone for documents. DPs were not allowed to work. He found another place to stay and returned to work. His boss was good at making small pieces of curling fur and made bags but not sleeves. Arie was the only one who could cut. He offered to make sleeves. If he was not good, the boss could repair it so they agreed on the tasks. Arie thought this is his chance if he was able to make good sleeves. He had to match the pieces correctly and someone else would sew it.

190:00 His boss, Rumolt (?), was not an Italian citizen but had permission to work and told Arie to become a citizen if he worked for him three more weeks. Later his boss said that he will come with Arie o America. When Arie got to Poland, he changed his name from Leib to Arie so it was Hebrew instead of Yiddish. The business was year-round and had many workers. Arie was hungry for family and had relatives in America. He was 20 or 21. Someone came to sell gods and said if he came to America, they would give him a job. On January 26, 1950 Arie dressed elegantly as you could not buy a suit in a store but it was made by hand.

195:00 He bought material and it took five or six weeks to make the suit. He could not sleep all night and dressed for winter though it was 70 degrees so he was sweating. There were 30 people in a room. He arrived in NY and the relatives took him to Macy's and to see the stock market and registered him at HIAS (Hebrew Aid Society). On the first Friday night he was invited to Brooklyn and all the family came to see him. He had a gold watch and they asked him if he needed money but he did not. They suggested he go to school. He did not have the patience for it. In Italy they had parties with the English Army where the men were 10 to 15 years older than him. He had a new suit every day. Rumolt had

followed Arie to America. He gave Arie food and a \$250 ticket for the boat and took him to Germany for two or three weeks. Arie could not look at a German as he hated them. Since then he has changed his feelings towards them though they gassed so many people including his mother and two sisters. All his life, it is in his mind. Six weeks later he was alone. Work was different. After six months, Arie became a dealer to make a living with Persians.

200:00 A friend asked him to become his partner after six months but he took someone else as a partner. Arie dealt with beavers, Persians, raccoons. His aunt, his father's sister, was at a Friday night meeting. His uncle says he will take Arie home and his aunt says she wants him. Arie married in '52 to a Belgium refugee whose father spoke English and was a diamond cutter and someone in Canada wanted him in his factory. The father was in Portugal and he went to Canada until '45 and then came to America. Arie's wife was Sylvia Lederberger. In 2004 Arie visited Kolbuszwa (?)'s special place with writing and buried bones.

205:00 800,000 people died in Belzec and Arie visited but only saw stones. All the cities where the people came from were noted. There was a Pope, Israeli soldiers with a Torah, Polish and German soldiers and an Ambassador. They said Kaddish and Mourner's Prayer. They took a bus there. The children had never seen a Jew. It was hard in America to work and make money. Arie lost his faith here. He worked on Saturday and saw people going to Synagogue. He took a bus as there was nothing to believe. G-d is everywhere and saw this going on for six years. Where was he? Arie was in business and knew he was doing wrong. A man from a Russian family asked him to lend him \$5,000 and he did not know his name. He told him to go to a bank as he was not in this business. The man sat down on 34th Street and his father was nearby with a moustache and held his hand out for \$500 or \$700. Arie said he would not give him money if he does not say what he needs it for.

210:00 The man was 32 years old and needed money for an auction of old machinery. Arie thought him a dreamer. They only take cash, no checks. Arie agreed that he will lend him the money with no interest. They met at noon at Arie's store and the man returns \$2,500 and says he will return the rest in 30 days. Arie agreed to that and the money is returned. Arie got a call from a big company in Newark to sell material for Beaver hats. Arie got picked it up and they show him a sample of Beaver skins. They are bleached hair and not leather. They have 20 or 30 pounds of it. Arie needs a thousand pounds a week. He needs someone to bleach the hair and could not find anyone for five weeks. He sees the Russian and gives him samples. One is good so gives him six. Two are not so good. He calls the factory and they say to give him 20 pounds and they come out good. He gives 100 pounds and they come out good.

220:00 He worked two years and made money by accident. He got the job by giving the stranger \$5,000. Normally, it would be a mistake but it came out good. It was bashert (meant to be). He brought up his children with religion. Something happened. He walked a mile to the subway and the school was up a hill. He thought it would be a disaster to go there. It was a Yeshiva and he told them he had little money and they should take his children. He said he would return the loan and they accepted them. The older daughter said she did not understand and needs an explanation and went to Yeshiva. On Saturday they went to the uncle and asked why they went to Yeshiva. Arie moved into a house and went to shul and did not go to work on Saturday. Somehow, inside his mind is one thing and outside is something else. He saw himself. People killed with gas for no reason for years so don't talk about it as he can't understand it. He told his children about his experiences. Lately he told other people. At night he thinks of those things and cries for his dead relatives.

225:00 He could have become a gangster as no one knew him but he could not as he was different. Thank you for asking the right things. He shows a family photo. Hirsh is on the left, then Gittel, his mother (Sheindel), Arie, Mindel (sister killed at 12) and Wolf. He had a photo of his mother and two sisters when he lived in the Soviet Union. His father's sister was married and sick in her 90s and asked him for help. Why him? There are so many nieces who know her a lot. She said her sister, before she died, said if you need help go to Arie.

230:00 He helped her and gave her food. At the end, she would not take a shower. He thought she needed a home and took her to a hotel in Long Beach. Told her to see if she likes it. He got people to help her when she did not want to take a shower. She had to give up her apartment. He gave people money to clean it. He asked for her pictures and she gave him one of Hirsh and he attached it to this photo. He does not have a picture of his father.