

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Solomon Fox
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PREFACE

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SOLOMON FOX

April 27, 1995

01:01:00 Question: Will you start by telling me your name, date of birth, and where you were born please?

Answer: My name Sol Fox. Now it's Sol Fox. It was in Polish, where we lived before, Shlomick Fuchs. I was born September 2, 1922 in Lodz, Poland to a very, very well to do family. We were seven children. We were seven children, one sister and six brothers. I was amongst the two youngest. The distance between me and my next brother was four years. Therefore they already were involved in the family business, while I and my younger brother were going to this very famous high school. If I might explain at this moment, what it meant to get a high school education where we come from. In this country it's compulsory to have a high school education. Where we come from in Poland, only seven classes of basic school, you call it Public school, was 01:02:00 compulsory. High School was either private or they also had governmental subsidized, taxpayers subsidized high schools. Those accepted only two percent of a small percentage of Jewish students, and they had to be the best. Therefore, to afford to go to high school, you had to had support of a family that could afford it. It was expensive. Almost all in my family did have education at high school education and me and my younger brother who went together, that was a big expense for my parents. In this way, I'm paying homage to my parents. A very bright future was in sight that my father, should he rest in peace, planned particularly for me. Not that I'm trying to point myself out that I was an exceptional son, which was not true at all, because my younger brother was the darling of the house. He was much smarter and better student, but my father had planned at least one of his sons to become an angromomist and go to Israel. That was supposed to be me. So, by that I'm trying to stress the fact how this Holocaust business broke lives from the Shores, in Hebrew it means from the root. I am glad I injected a Hebrew word. So, we had a normal, beautiful, very beautiful life. My parents, as I say, were well to do people. I might add at this point that my mother and my

grandfather, I come from a religious home. My father was dressed religiously, not any more the children. We started to get modernized. But my grandfather even owned his own synagogue. The synagogue that we were praying in, it was like a private synagogue. I'm not talking about a big building synagogue. It was like in his private home. He was a wealthy man, and he owned the building, so he allowed one room for prayers only on Saturdays. Himself, my parents, were going for like you go here to Sarasota, you know, to baths, will that be explainable? To Germany, Marienbad, Francisbad, Karlsbad, and when they came back they had the biggest praise. They were doing that for many years before Hitler, before Nazism. So, when this thing came on us, the shock was yet bigger, because my parents and my grandfather, and anybody who ever had contact with the German people, couldn't understand what happened. How could they turn into, and I must say it, and I promised myself on one of the notes, I would not be sarcastic and I will not be insulting to Germany as it is, not as I knew before. I don't know how they are now. I really don't. But, how could they have changed into --- oh, oh, see I lost my thought. Sometimes we say when somebody is bad you say he's vicious. He's worse than an animal. Whenever I get to this point, I say I cannot insult the kingdom of animals. I hate to see it, but it really comes out of me. Those Germans, if I would put it at the mildest, not wanted to insult today's Germans, though in doing me a lot of harm already for the last 50 years. I was in Germany only six months. I don't want to insult the kingdom of animals, because they were definitely absolutely worse. You cannot imagine how vicious they were. You cannot imagine the devotion that they had to that Fuehrer. Because I learned German in school, too. We learned Hebrew, German, Polish and Latin in our high school. It was multi-language. Polish was the main language. Hebrew was second, German was third. My German teacher was a lady who came from a very religious, Jewish home in our city of Lodz, Schneiersohn. Everybody knew the religious family of Schneiersohn. There was nothing wrong with the Schneiersohns to have a daughter speaking and teaching German to students with the deepest German dialect. So, when I have to say it, I know how to and it happened in Court. I had an incident when I said it in deep German and I'll maybe explain later what it was. The way the whole thing done in the most

murderous, vicious, sadistic, as my teacher said, that he couldn't find words in the world's lexicons, _ dictionaries to express the viciousness and the pain of the Holocaust experience. I went through high school. Our system had four classes and two which was called Lyceum. I made 01:09:00 it through the first of Lyceum because the Germans invaded on Friday morning, 5:00, 1939, September 1. On September 2, as you remember I was born on September 2, was my birthday, my 17th birthday. We did not yet realize the scope of the tragedy even if Nazism in Germany started in '33 or even before. We heard things, even if the media was not as developed as today, but we knew, because it was only a border away. So, when it came, we knew that a tragedy was coming. We didn't even use the word tragedy. We knew tough times were coming. Bad people are coming. The Germans are hurting us, even killing some, but little did we realize the scope of it. To get as I am saying, to try and tell it is to do injustice to it. It's impossible. Let me try to give you some small instances. My sister was married a year before the war, therefore her baby was born the 26th of August one week before the war. Being that my parents were able to afford, and she married also a very well to do husband, they got an apartment for her in a very fine neighborhood, and it was equipped to the tee. Why not? She was the only daughter.

Q. Was this a Jewish neighborhood?

A. This was not the very Jewish neighborhood where she moved to. She moved sort of like to the City. There were Ghetto neighborhood, what we called Ghetto neighborhood. I lived in a Ghetto neighborhood. I was born there. This was the center of Jewish life in the city. Then came the business section where we had our business, and my sister lived further down. It was a mixed neighborhood. As a matter of fact, it was diagonally across from my wife's high school. But then we didn't realize it. But, I'm aiming at something. The name, the landlords of that building, were German. The population of our city had a lot of Jews, Germans, and Poles. The population was about 900,000 of which 30 percent was Jewish and a lot of Germans. Now, these neighbors were Germans, the Richter family. Very wealthy in the steel industry. As soon as the Germans arrived and we noticed how bad it got and everybody started running in all directions, my father, my parents -- we were still intact, brought my sister and her baby to our house. That

she shouldn't be alone there, because her husband had to go to attend to his problems. Everybody had problems. When she came back to the apartment, it was empty. Mrs. Richter, the millionaire German landlady, emptied my sister's apartment, because it was all new. She was just married. I was chosen by my father because I learned German in school, so he helped himself with me rather than with the other children and not with my younger brother. You see my younger brother's picture there in the back? Because he was still too young. I was already like a man, and I knew the language. He says go ask Mr. Richter what happened. So, I went. I knocked at the door. It was one flight up, left door, and she opened the door and I said Frau Richter, "Wer hat meiner Schwester Moebel 'rausgenommen? " Sie sind doch tod" she said to me. " I was yesterday at the party meeting." How did I know that she belongs to the party. " We were told that you were all dead. Why do you need furniture so I took it out". Can you imagine anything like that. I was shocked. This was the first real shock that went through me. Because the next shock didn't take very long when they confiscated completely our business. Where we lived, as I said before, was the Jewish neighborhood where the Ghetto was then formed eventually. All the others were pushed in here, and we had to share the apartment with everybody. But to come to the story of how fast they liquidated our businesses. We had three stores, retail stores, besides wholesale shoes. On the main street like here you would say Fifth Avenue or 14th Street, call it anything you want, but the main business section. They drove up with trucks. Asked no questions. Broke in the doors, emptied everything and took it away. But they left a receipt with an address where to come for payment, but the way the whole thing was done was already scary besides we knew what's going on in Germany.

Q. When was this?

A. '39, immediately.

Q. In September, right away?

A. A week, two weeks later. Immediately. So, again, my father turned to me. Who would go? As I told you before my father was 01:14:)) Jewishly dressed. Had the beard and pyes, like a religious man. Naturally, he wouldn't go. He wouldn't send boys because we figured boys is

more dangerous. But we still underestimated -- rather overestimated the German character figuring that if a woman will go, they wouldn't beat them or do anything wrong to a woman. Men, it's more dangerous. So, it was decided that mother went. It was already curfew. 5:00 was curfew. Mother went with this receipt to the place where they were told to come, and curfew time came closer and mother didn't come back. She's not here. You know we're in trouble. We realized we're in trouble and started being very, very nervous about it, and again come close to curfew, Father chose me and says go there. We knew the address where she went. See where Mother is. There's not question that you went. I went there. We still didn't know the score that it was dangerous even to make a step on the street. I went there, into the animal's mouth, you know, into an office where my mother was already in jail. I came there it was already dark. It was getting dark. So, the lights were on in these offices, and I just started walking around. I could have been squeezed to death or shot to death or killed or taken right away. They didn't probably realize who I am immediately. I didn't see mother. Now, imagine that I came back without mother, because curfew was over, I was still able to take a tram. Still able to grab on and get home a little past curfew. We didn't know that you could have gotten killed for being out on curfew, but I come without Mother. We never seen her. That's when we escaped to Warsaw. After a few days or weeks, I don't remember exactly, Father decided because Litzmannstadt, Lodz was turned into the name Litzmannstadt and it was getting terrorized. The city was getting terrorized more and more every minute and we realized that being that they already have mother in, they'll lead to us. Meaning, mainly we talk of Father. The decision was that my father and his sons, all of my brothers, and my sister and her baby are escaping to Warsaw, which was only supposed to be only occupied territory. Not incorporated in the Reich, not the Holy Land.

Q. Let me ask you a question. When you say the City was becoming more terrorized, what was happening on the streets?

A. That's a good question. The Germans came in shortly before - that's a good question -- shortly before Rosh Hoshana. The Jewish New Year. Before the war started, already feeling that it was coming, we were digging on order of the government, we had to dig shelters in the

street against bomb attacks. Let me say something, yet better. Before they came in, big announcements were hung out, what do you call these announcements on walls?

Q. Posters?

A. Yes, yes. That it is not true the rumors that you're hearing about the atrocities about the German Army and the Germans is not true. Come out when you see the German Army when they come marching in, and greet them. You hear that? And everything was going fine and smooth. We have seen an Army that we didn't even imagine exists because the Polish Army was a thousand years behind with little horse and buggies. Here at once you see a motorized, not one horse, everything in tanks and on trucks. We went out in the main street and nothing happened. That lasted only a day or two. Then they started grabbing Jews and burying them in the shelters. That's what happened.

Q. They shot the Jews?

A. No, they didn't need to shoot you. If he wanted, he could shoot you. They didn't make a big tsimmes, a big deal about how you died. They wanted you to die the most miserable way. So, throwing you into a mass shelter like that and covering you up, to them that was a very befitting way to doing it to Jews. Anyway, we decided to escape to Warsaw. Escaping to Warsaw. How do you escape to Warsaw? Do you buy a ticket on the plane or on the train. Do you take your car from the garage? There was no such thing. Number one, we were immediately forbidden to use public transportation. Anyway, it was still the beginning and there was still some horse and buggies and imagine when I think of it now, that by horse and buggy and the winter got tough, like in spite, very cold and a baby also with us, and we made it finally to Warsaw. It's easier said than done. So, now to describe the terror that happened in these few weeks is as 01:21:00 impossible as to describe the whole thing, because when you're talking about terror, is not only that something happened. Say, somebody gets killed by a car. Somebody gets killed by a brick falling down. That's a tragedy, but that's not terror. That's why I don't call myself a survivor and I already was talking with our organization. I'm not big mixer, I don't push. We're not survivors, we are victims. Because a survivor is one who gets hurt by

any means and then he gets revived and if the other person or realtor has any type of insurance which they do, they will be made good for. They'll take him to a hospital, and if he's lucky he'll come back as a survived person. We are not survivors. We suffered day and night. Because why did my wife have to have a dream fifty years later that they take the children and it's cold outside and they don't have socks on. This is not one occasion. If it's a funeral, a bar mitzvah, a wedding, a card game a restaurant and we were this week twice, that this thing does not come up amongst us. I don't know if you did realize it. This is why my neighbor Mary once said to me, "Sol, why don't you start living a normal life? Get it out of your mind." Easy said. Get it out of your mind. I wish it could. There is not a day, if more than once a day, if we go to sleep, if we go to eat, if we meet for a game, if we go for a walk, always comes up. This was -- it cannot be told. It cannot be told. As my teacher said, he cannot find expression in the dictionaries of the languages. You can see that we can go on and on forever. If you need to go home to sleep, you will not. So, ask me questions which will lead me in, otherwise I get lost in it.

Q. You made your way to Warsaw. Did you go directly there?

A. Oh, you got me back on track. So, we made our way to Warsaw. Father, six of his sons, no, five of his sons. One of our brothers died before the war. Five sons, his only grandchild which was the light in his eye. She was only a few weeks old, our first grandchild. My brother-in-law did not come along because he had a big business to take care of. He was a big businessman. I'll tell you how he died. He was thrown out of a hospital window by the Germans. We will get to that. Now, we are in Warsaw.

Q. You went directly there? You didn't stay --?

A. You don't go so directly by horse and buggy to Warsaw, you know. We stopped over in different places to sleep over and we slept on the street and we slept in Konushki(?) on city not so far. The rabbi of Konushki(?), his son rather, opened his house for the escapees, and we slept on the floor, masses of us. When I say we made it to Warsaw, it wasn't the same day. The locomotives didn't say, hey we're in Warsaw. No, so, we got to Warsaw, now we are homeless. A whole homeless family. There were no brokers or realtors to contact before or anybody

provide me a roof over my head. But somehow, Father had plenty of money, he got an apartment. It happened to be by coincidence the apartment was placed right across the street from the so called Pawiak. Pawiak was the most famous prison in Poland or in Warsaw where the first Marshal Pilsudski was imprisoned by the Russians. By coincidence the building was right across the street from there. So, we located ourselves. I'll tell you a little story about this as a side piece that happened in Hollywood between me and a Jew from Warsaw. Anyway, so my sister became the housekeeper. She never did that before. She was just married. She had housekeepers. She had everything. She didn't even know how to make a glass of tea, like any young woman. After a while my father says what did we achieve. Where is Mother? We escaped to save our skin and we don't even know where Mother is. And here again he appointed that my oldest brother, who passed away last year, and me to go back to Lodz to look for Mother.

Q. I just want to ask you a question. First of all, how long were you in Warsaw about?

A. A few weeks.

Q. Were the conditions any better there?

A. Just ask everything. Yes. You did not feel the Germans on top of you. It was still reigned by a Polish puppet government, because as I said before Lodz was the Reich. Hitler reigned already that while the other was protected, Protectorate they called it, occupied territory. The administration was so to say, not German. That would be wrong, not Polish, but not German. Not like in Lodz. We were able to go in the street and there was a curfew, that already didn't scare us, but we were not -- it was bad. We knew we were in trouble, but when you're homeless, you're already a displaced person in the worst way, and you are an illegal being. You don't belong to this world. God didn't mean you to be existing here. The sentence, we felt the sentence already. So, now me and my brother were delegated by Father. Now, in the meantime it gets cold. We are getting into the deep winter and Poland is very cold in the winter. The climate is different. It's a gorgeous climate, but it's very cold and lots of snow. How do you get back? You cannot go by train. You cannot go by public transportation. You're Jewish. Nothing is for you. We couldn't find the horse that brought us here. The guy who did it, but there was a

pole already available, you know these things develop like black marketing, who bought tickets. In other words he would go to the station and buy a train ticket, two train tickets for us. It seems that now we're fine. We have tickets, all right, but we are still Jewish. The tickets don't say that we're not Jewish, so we are taking a tremendous chance. At least we can get into the train now, but the train is only with Germans and Poles. Not only Germans, and a Jew to be in this, it's illegal. They don't have to sentence you, they can just shoot you or kick you out while the train runs. It was a long voyage, and we made it home, and to describe how it was, at one station they recognized us and they chased us, me and my brother, but I was then 17 and my brother was 23, no 27. He was ten years older than me, my oldest brother. So, we were younger, and I will never understand in Hebrew they say Yad Elokim in 01:30:00 Hebrew, that means God's hand must have been watching over us. The Germans were chasing us across the railroad tracks in deep snow with German Shepherds and they didn't catch us.

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

A. We were trying to make our way back to the city of Lodz in search of our mother. We still do not (know what) happen(ed) to her, where she is. One of our brothers which I probably did not inject before, remained behind. My father would not take everybody. He remained behind just in case to be with Mother or for Mother. So, we finally made it there, me and my older brother. It took days and nights. We came there so to say, finally, safely. Our other brother was there. By during that time he was able to find out for money through people like in that particular prison who would bring out information. You know, everything is money. Also, he was able then that he knew already to send in a little food to mother. He found out that mother was in prison without a sentence and was already three months and there she was, but at least we know that she is in prison. Remember I said before it's still cold winter. She had no set

sentence. We didn't know that she's coming home at a certain date where we can go there and receive her. So, again, me, being that I was the best German speaker in the house or learned German in school -- and also because of my age. We also had still that we lured ourselves with the impression that they wouldn't hurt a woman or they wouldn't hurt the young boy. They're just out for the real Jews. So, I was the one who every morning went in front of the prison across the street from the prison. The city was almost already clean of Jews. I stood there. I asked myself very often, I wore a coat, I wore a hat, maybe it was earmuffs or the earmuffs came from the hat, how I lasted a whole freezing day, day in and day out with my eyes glued on the main door, the gate of the prison hoping that Mother will come out. If we knew the sentence, we would only have to go there or wait until she comes. We didn't know that. This took maybe a month or six weeks. I really don't know, but day after day. Nothing to eat. God forbid, not a little warm coffee or water because the surroundings was already German. I didn't have a chance to go to a door and knock and say give me a drink of water or maybe hot coffee. How I survived it, just like most of the things are unexplainable and one day me standing there like an idiot watching if Mommy comes out, I come home Mommy is home. They let her out the back door. Half of her was left, maybe less. Three months. Now you remember why she was there. She went with the receipt to be paid for what they confiscated all our businesses. So instead of that, they stuck her in prison without a sentence. Finally, we had Mother. So now, the family is divided. Three of us, me, my brother and the one that was left behind to wait for mother and Mother are here. Father and the rest of the family are there. How do you bring this thing together now. Where is it better to be? Should we go there? Should they come here. The first decision was that we should try to get Father back to Mother. To go into detail how you accomplish a thing like that will be just -- I lack sometimes the expressions, getting into formalities. We got Father back, by horse and buggy somehow through payments, through monies, through smuggling. You had to smuggle from Warsaw to Lodz, because it was a border already. The border was in Kolushki. So, finally, the family is getting to be together. Father is back, but the other two brothers, the sister and the baby, remained in Warsaw. We're talking not

still about 1940. This is 1940 because Mother went with this receipt in 1939. She came out it was already 1940, the very beginning of it, the winter of 1940. So, part of the family remains stuck there and we are stuck here. We never heard of them again. The only thing that came through was this picture once in the mail, in 1941. So, we were lucky. That was the last sign of their life.

Q. This is a picture of your brother?

A. Of my brother, yes. This is my brother. We were like twins, because we were the two youngest in the family. Show it please. Show my brother. But let me tell you the story of the picture. See, if he can get the piece -- you see that. Should I tell the story of the picture?

Q. Well, I think you should continue on with the story?

A. So, now we are in Lodz. It was not yet a Ghetto. It was not yet a Ghetto, and the other part of the family is in Warsaw.

Q. Could you communicate?

A. In the beginning there was mail. No telephone, no thing like that. There was mail for a while, yes, that's how this arrived. For a very short time there was a normal mail connection. No other connection. Good question. As I said, I promised to tell the truth so instead of saying there was no mail, there was mail, quite a long time. Where are we now? What do you want to know?

Q. Your father and part of your family returned to Lodz?

A. So, now Lodz started developing and developing and setting in motion the Ghetto, in '41. In '40 it was closed. They started in '40, but when the fences were created and the Ghetto was locked that was '41. And if I'm a little off on the dates, you'll have to forgive me because I didn't have a calendar. I didn't like today do everything on a calendar and I didn't write a diary. So, dates might be -- not might be, will be, not correct. At the time we still had three of them there, and then one returned. His son, who is the lawyer now, through him I got to write this to the museum to begin with. Two lives start, there are there and we are here and somehow it was considered a plus rather than a minus because the family is divided. If one wouldn't survive, if Lodz will not survive, Warsaw will survive. Because we could have reunited ourselves by the

very primitive ways of communication as Father came as my other brother came. All of the rest could have come, too, but it was more logical to 02:09:00 have it divided. You remember in the Bible when Jacob divided his riches so if he's caught by his brother Esau they all shouldn't get lost. That's how we did it. Father decided to already have an apartment there. Sister was the house lady, the baby was growing. God knows how old the baby was when it disappeared. We don't know. That's how the situation is now, or established itself to that. We were here and they were there. Until the Ghetto started closing, and all the new chapter of living in a Ghetto, seeing the creation of it and all true to life in the Ghetto.

Q. Can you tell me how your daily life was. How things --?

A. Daily life in Ghetto depending on what the Germans had in store for us.

Q. I'm sorry, first of all tell me how you got to the Ghetto. Were you in the same neighborhood?

A. We happened to live -- and I answered it to you before, in the Jewish neighborhood. The very Jewish neighborhood. As a matter of fact, I have there a picture of the synagogue which was destroyed which was on our street. The Germans dynamited the synagogue. The night that I was sleeping in my sister's house when she still had her apartment, that's how early they did it. They laid around dynamite for days or weeks because a little before that, they dynamited the Polish heroes monument, you call it Kosciusko, and then they drove over with a tank and they put a chain on his neck and they pulled him down. Then they destroyed the synagogue, and why to hell they needed an excuse, they needed excuses for nothing, they said because the Jews destroyed the monument of Kosciusko, so the Poles dynamited in revenge the synagogue. Ridiculous. So, then they started forming the Ghetto. They just chased section by section into the territory, and you had to find yourself a place where to get into. In other words, we took in two families. Apartments at home weren't as big as here. Ours was a two bedroom apartment. By today's standard, it would be one bedroom and one big salon, what you called with beautiful furniture, in case like ours, because we were on the well to do side. Now, every room was a room for another family to live. So, we got all squeezed in. The Ghetto became an Arbeitslager

so to say. It's the best I can describe it. Not a complete concentration camp, which actually it is recognized as because it has fence. It was high fence all around with guards. The signs, where they had the few gates of entries, I don't know if anybody ever told you that what the sign said "Wohngebiet der Juden", (it) means that's where the Jews live, "Betreten verboten", _ it's forbidden to get in. "Seuchengefahr", it's danger of the plague. Those were the signs. So, we start forming factories of all kinds. My brother in law which I mentioned before, was one of the top millinery producers before the war. The whole family. So, he founded we called a resort, a factory, a place to work. We had 500 people working. We made 02:12:)) flour -- all for the Germans. In other words, everyday German trucks would come into the Ghetto and pick up productions of all kinds. Shoes, clothing, even uniforms, military uniforms -- and here I'll tell you right away with connection my brother-in-law. So, that's why I worked in a millinery shop which had 500 women and men working. We made the most beautiful things for the Germans. Trimmings and flowers and earrings and hats for the German population. Other people made shoes. My brother worked in a shoe factory because we were from shoes. Whatever anybody was able to contribute to a factory, did, because otherwise we didn't get soup. If you did not work you didn't get your ration to begin with, but if you worked, you also get a soup. The soup consisted of some water with some dirt in it, but it was very important to have it. Everybody worked because what else? You couldn't go on the street, they would shoot you. You had to work.

Q. What age people worked? What age range were the workers?

A. Good question. You led me into this horrible scene. What did I leave out before, what I always leave out. Starting from 12 years, in May of '42, I don't know if you ever heard this one, I'm jumping over a lot now because you led me into it. Announcements came out -- it was a beautiful sunny day and I was on my way home from work, because we had a home and a place to work. If the home had ten people instead of two people, or if the home was cold or without water or without facilities, but that was the place where you went to sleep over. On the way home there was announcement. What do you call what you call when you put announcements

on the walls. There's an English word for it. Mother's should prepare children up to ten years old in front of the building to be picked up by trucks because they are unproductive. This answers your question, and they don't earn their ration. I always tell the way I was tortured, but I never leave out in conjunction with this, this scene. I think of all the atrocities, and everybody knows that there is piles of shoes in Auschwitz and everywhere else, but to be present when this announcement came up, when I walked into the garden of my building where we live and I seen mother's tearing the skin off their flesh. They had to prepare their children for next day to be given away. Now, what could be a bigger crime than that? All the crimes I will tell you about, or I will not tell you about, all of them together in my judgment and I always feel it that way, if I would be able to come in front of the United Nations and I would tell this story only. The following day, trucks were coming down the street. Me and my brother, the father of Mark, the lawyer, were on the roof top. We made it to the roof top for two reasons. One, we wanted to see what was going on better, but mainly because we were afraid to be in the building because the mother's just didn't deliver the children on a silver platter. The Germans had to break in doors, and they did. These "Herrenvolkz", these proud bastards, sorry if I have to call them that, were going door to door breaking in the doors with the carabins, grabbed the children and throw them on trucks. We seen it from the roof top with my brother. Isn't that heartbreaking. 02:18:00 Can this ever come out of your mind? Can this be forgiven? Moses was taken out from the water, right? But she put him on at least something to swim. Here, they threw them on the trucks and many times they tear them in half. Never heard it? Everybody knows where these children went? They went to death. So, usually I tell my own torture that I went through once. I know that we're leaving out a lot. We're skipping a lot or we'd have to be here forever. 1942 again. I'm 19 years old. My father was summoned to the Kripo. Kripo is the acronym for Criminal Police because we were big criminals. As a matter of fact, when I was in Germany 16 months ago, about my case, and I at once opened the paper and it says Kripo, I thought I'm going to faint there sitting there because I didn't see this word since then. The Kripo was the place in the chancellory of the nicest church in the neighborhood and this church fell into the neighborhood

of the Ghetto. So, there was no use for the church as a religious place, so the Germans made their warehouse out of the gorgeous church. A block big magnificent church. I'll never forget that because it was only a block, two blocks from me where I live, where I went everyday passed. They made this into a warehouse for the Schmattes, for the belongings of the poor, already worn down Jews. So, the church became a warehouse with that stinking stuff. The chancellory which was across the street turned into a torture house, and that's where we were tortured ten days, and I will describe you only the tortures. Father was called the 16th of April. See how I remember. You asked before if we had money. They went by that. They went by the status of the person, figuring that Father was a businessman, he must have hidden money and what they wanted was very simply, money, diamonds, brilliants and dollars. The list was like this. So, Father was in the day before, summoned. Now, you know when you prepared yourself to go there that you're going to be tortured and you don't know how long. So, what we did we dressed ourselves in a lot of underwear, a lot of upperwear that when they beat you, it should help. It doesn't help, but you do your best. Mother sent her husband and now she sends her sons. The next day, the 17th, we were summoned, the three of us. We had to stand like walked up three flights, stand in the little foyer, the balcony when they called down the first one, there was more people than us. First they searched us and took everything out from us, you know, because now we are legal prisoners. By coincidence a small little pencil, and I don't know why I had it there. It was there, and they didn't find it. I used it then to mark on the bunk in the cell when I came down, the dates and the day, otherwise I wouldn't even know what it is. We had to listen to the screams of the other ones so my older brother was done 02:21:00 first. The screams were terrible. Then they threw him down the stairs like a ball, and they put him into a cell. We didn't know where he was going. Next came the other one. They took it by age, and then came me. When I came into the other room, there was a German sitting on kitty-cornered desk, and he had laying strings(straps?)_on the counter. The other German was sitting behind -- I am there now. He was having a breakfast. It turned my Kishkes, because we didn't smell an egg for two years now. And there he sits behind the typewriter consuming an egg breakfast and smells up

the whole house with it. The first one behind the desk, he was the first one talking to me, he says you are the youngest so you better be the smartest. You heard what happened to the others, so if you want to be smart, talk. We didn't talk, because by then there wasn't anything to talk about. Because the answer to that is if you already went to Warsaw, the money already became worthless. That's just God forbid something happens here the dollar loses its value, everything became black marketing, and if there was anything little left, how could you give it to him. Anyway, this is only besides the point, and as I didn't talk, now this I considered the only heroic thing that I did through the war because my father and the three of us made up not to talk. So, the fact that we lasted and I didn't talk, I considered this was the only heroic thing, if anything. Anyway, with a wink of his head, he was a hunch back, you must have heard of him in your interviews. Suter was his name, a Volksdeutsch, called the other guy whose name was Schmitt. This guy was a real German, full Aryan, tall and blonde. Told me to lay down on the floor belly down, ass high. He showed me exactly how to do it, but he had canes hanging on the wall or on the closet side. I had to pick my cane and he started measuring out. He tells me you're going to get 50. You remember the Singapore story with Michaels. He was getting six but the President intervened for four and a hospital room was prepared for him. He said you're going to get 50 and he starts measuring out and I scream. He politely stands and talks down to me, he says, would you please not scream. I can't hear you screaming. I can't take it. Go down again. He gives it to me again, and I scream. He says, see I forgot to tell you. Bite your fingers so you wouldn't scream. I go down again, he measures out and I scream. Again, he gives me advice. He says, you know you're hurting yourself, because every time you go down again, you have to start counting from the beginning so don't scream. Go down, bite your fingers, count. 02:25:30 How do you count while you bite your fingers? The sadism of it is what I'm trying to point out. I don't know how many I counted. I don't know how many I received. Enough to find myself in a dark alley in the chancellory on the top floor in a flood of blood. If you want to touch here you'll feel where the blood is coming out. I had them touch it in court last year. Last week it was bleeding a little bit. I said to my wife, it's bleeding. How could a nation become so murderous?

My father died only a few months later, November 27, which was -- he never recovered. When we got out of there after ten days, -- I'll tell you one more thing. We couldn't sit, we couldn't walk, we couldn't lay down. Remember I said I had a little pencil. When I got down to the cell then they put me to a cell. One of my cousins was already there too, and an uncle of mine was there too.

Q. In the same cell?

A. My cousin was in the same cell, my uncle was not. I heard one of my brothers cry in the next cell. They broke his arm, and there was a doctor, I remember his name, Doctor Gilbert, who was also in prison there and he tried to help him. The guard opened the door and shoot him for trying to help my brother. This scene is also of sadism. I was laying on the top bunk. I just crawled up there. There was no facilities in the thing, just a pail, but no water no nothing. They gave us one little bowl of something like soup, once a day.

Q. Was it crowded?

A. Depending on how many Jews they got in that day. They didn't go by reservation. One time I was listening through the bars. There was small window with bars. They made a prison out of it. Out of the church they made a prison. We could have recognized the hearse, because the hearse those days didn't have at home, have air balloons, air wheels but steel wheels, and at home, the streets were not yet paved, not all of them. The main street was, but most of the city still had cobblestones. At once I hear the hearse coming in. So, I figured it possibly could be one of my brothers or my father so I looked out, laying looking down and they schlepped down a body, a corpse, and they put him into the casket and then a few Germans came out from the 02:29:00 chancellor. Before they closed the casket they want to take pictures with the body for souvenirs. Now, being on the team of hearse. Hearses did not pick up one body. When my father passed away, and we put him in the casket, they put another body on top of him and then more on top, and on top of the roof too, and you couldn't go to the cemetery, because it was during the day you're supposed to be at work. We, the three of us smuggled ourselves, we made

our way to the cemetery. Luckily there was a neighbor in the next building from before the Ghetto, who was a grave digger.

End of Tape 2

Tape 3

By coincidence a neighbor from the next building from where we lived all those years, because we lived in the Ghetto territory all our life. So, we knew more people than those that came in. So, this person next door, he was out of profession, a grave digger. So, when we came out of the cemetery and he already knew that Father died in the house, so he kept an eye on it. When they started piling up the corpses, he watched for us our father. So, when we came there he showed us he was laying already on a pile of bodies. But somehow he was able to manage that he should be the outside corpse and he helped us pull him out, pulled(?) the body(?) and brought it to the grave. He had a grave dug and we helped him finish it. When my wife was once in Poland, I couldn't go, '46 from Sweden she went there --- oh I have here the monuments -- she was able to put up monuments for her father and for my father. Her father was killed in the Krypto too because his name was Grinspan. You've heard of the Grinspan story. They called all the Grinspans one day. Her father -- the same year. Her father and her oldest brother died within a week. Families, whole families were dying within a day because everybody was so worn physically and mentally that if one died, out of grief, the others just fell in line the same day and died, too. It happened. It's not as a rule, but it happened. You're screaming somebody died and then you heard the husband died, the daughter died, everybody the same day. So, life in the Ghetto. It was a work camp. You went to work. You got a ration of food which was very, very, very little because people were dying from hunger. If you worked you got soup, and if you worked better they would reward you with another little soup. They were out more to get the last breath out of you. They fed you enough that they should get the production out of you, but for sure you should die. You should not survive.

Q. Was there any way to get extra food or different kinds of food?

A. Absolutely not. There was a black market developed which is a human thing, everywhere, if it's Russia or even the United States. A black market. I earned -- they paid us with Ghetto money. See, I have some of it here. They printed Ghetto money. It was like a little

government, police, everything was a self ruled thing. So, I earned for my work 15 marks a week. Bread on the black market was 500 marks. It was ridiculous.

Q. Was anybody able to steal outside of the Ghetto and bring stuff in?

A. There was maybe small incidents like that but it shouldn't even be mentioned as a fact because no, no, absolutely not. There was stealing going on from one another. Let's say if somebody worked in a bakery. He would definitely be able to help himself to a bread. If somebody worked at the vegetable place. Home vegetables were kept outside. Now, that's very interesting, too. At once we would see on the main road, like here, let's say 95. The main road to Warsaw through Lodz was cut through the Ghetto. You see it on last week's movie. It was fenced off. So, what was I saying? Oh, yes. So, at once you'd be able to see something wonderful is happening to the main road, loads of wagons, loads of vegetables are coming into Ghetto so we'll get a ration. You know where they kept them? On the outside in the winter and when we got them they were all smelled already. They were frozen when we brought them home most of the time. Some times we were lucky to get potatoes that were useable. Now, potato shells was a very big thing, because in the kitchens where they cooked soup for the workers, mass soup, they shelled, and they had the shells, the potato shells. You needed a doctor's prescription for a pound or half of pound of that stuff to have potato. Now, when you say a doctor, you might ask yourself were there doctors? Yes, there were doctors. There was no medicine. The doctors were there prisoners like ourselves. Coming back to my brother-in-law. He suffered on hemorrhoids and at that time this place was still a hospital not far from where we lived. Once the Germans decided that it was a very new big building that this hospital they want to change into a factory for uniforms for the army. So, they had a very simple way of getting rid of the sick. They drove up with open trucks on the sidewalks. They threw the sick out through the windows, and they knew how many they needed to have. The Germans are very orderly. They had a famous saying "In Ordnung muss die Welt zugunde gehen", that if they'll bring down the world to ashes, but it will be done orderly. If anybody escaped through a side door or a side stairway, they counted everybody who they got on the trucks half dead already or broken bones.

If the number didn't match to what they expected, how many sick will be in the hospital, the "Aelteste der Juden", which means the oldest of the Jews who was in charge, had to produce other Jews to fill in the numbers. It is == how can anybody invent a thing like that. If I would invent it, you should go and throw me out the balcony.

Q. Who was in charge of everything?

A. In Ghetto?

Q. Yes.

A. There was a committee with an Aeltesterr. His name was Rumkowsky. You must have heard of this name already. He was killed, too, at the end in Auschwitz. They created a committee. We had police. We had firemen. We had this hospital, maybe one more. We had doctors because there were doctors, but they were not officially doctors. They tried to help you, but they had no medications for you. There was no such thing.

Q. But all these, the committee and the police were all Jewish?

A. Only Jewish.

Q. Were those good jobs?

A. If this was a better job, yes, it definitely was a better job because they were out the whole night. They were able to steal. I call it by the name steal. Actually we didn't call it steal but organize something for themselves. Yes, it was a better job. You could help yourself a little better. It also had its bad sides to it, because you had to do things that the Germans wanted you to do like to round up people. You had to do that. I wouldn't call this a better job, because when it came to being, they only took into the police boys that had high school education. So, I was one of them that would be eligible. My father should rest in peace, not my son. You will not. I wanted to go there. You get an extra piece of bread. You can even bring home and extra piece of bread to the house. But my father was too honorable. He said not my son. That's afact.

Q. What was the general attitude towards the police and the Jewish council. Were they corrupt. Did the take advantage of their situation?

A. Well, it would be not natural if in a crisis like that some people wouldn't take advantage of their position. They were not saints. There was a crisis that had never been in history and they had a chance to maybe grab an extra piece of bread or help somebody in his family not being deported because he had the chance to do it. So, it was a bad taste, and here again my 03:10:00 father didn't want me to have the extra piece of bread or the extra better chance, and there were more like me who didn't go, but not all that went, were bad. They didn't go there because they wanted to be policemen or they wanted to be in this situation. They went there for the piece of extra bread or little different treatment. The end was the same anyway.

Q. So, the other people really didn't resent them?

A. No. No, a little bit yes, mostly not. I mean this was it. This was part of this life. There is resentments. Let's say 03:11:00 somebody did do something bad, transgress. It couldn't happen not. The situation was so tight and so bad. Now, I am not one of them and I am not sitting here to excuse them, because there were transgressions. There definitely were, but I blame it on the enemy. I said just enemy. We were not enemies of Germany. Jews were the best citizens of Germany for hundreds of God knows how many years. We didn't carry weapons against Germany. We didn't revolt. They just came on us, I still don't know why. It was just anti-semitic Nazistic hate. Now, how could 80 million people, and my teacher makes sure if you can read his writing to put the number of 80 million because he was afraid then that they'll try to have a white wash, good Germans and bad Germans. I would be too strict saying that there were none good ones. There must have been some. 80 million is a lot, but we have seen the German people in action. The devotion to sadism. The devotion to their Fuehrer was above everything. They committed the worst crimes in human history with devotion. It's 03:12:40 endless.

Q. Do the Germans come into the Ghetto or not?

A. No, remember I mentioned before headquarters. At one intersection they turned this in -- and also the entrances, there they had offices, barracks, I would think it was barracks. Officers with the Germans and there was the contact with the Germans and the Jewish body, you know. Also, all the transports and deliveries out and in same through there. When I said, I think I

mentioned before, this incident that my mother sent me -- no I described it there. We had to pass this headquarters and we could have gotten killed, but this was a separate incident. That's what it was. You see, it was one place. My wife had worked in an office which you call the registry, so to say, and I don't even know what purpose this had, but in a back room they were saving historic diaries of the days for later. It happened to be an ex-lawyer from the city of Lodz who was in charge of this. If anybody could have done something, he would, but it was very little chance to do anything.

Q. Was there any semblance of normal life going on in the Ghetto?

A. Normal life you probably mean family life, normal life, yes, if you can call this normal. You had an address and you had a room and you had a mattress or a bed. Most of the time, a few people were sleeping on one mattress because there was no mattress for everybody.

Definitely not. There were wife's and men's -- you're probably leading to sex. There were a few births happen, very, very few. That means they did have intercourse, but the funniest thing, if it is funny, when we came to Sachsenhausen or rather Koenigs Wusterhausen (deny?) the German proud uniformed officers would go through the night our bunks with lamps, with lanterns to see if we're not engaging in some kind of sex activities, so fresh they were. Let me tell you, it took months after liberation that I even knew that I'm still a living person.

Q. Back in the Ghetto was there any schools, was there cultural activities?

A. Yes, that's a good question. Let me see. Schools? For who? One thing was, I played the violin since I was 14 years old. As a matter of fact, my wife remembers it because we were school friends and she remembers. I played the violin. I had a girlfriend whose whole family, herself, her sister her brother and her other brother. The oldest brother led, conducted the orchestra. We had a concert each week on the weekends. On Sundays, the Germans left the Ghetto. They went from the Kripo, the criminal police like in hell. On Sabbath hell is not hell. The main body -- the Jews were only in their own charge one day a week. Saturday afternoon through Sunday. So, we did organize concerts and my girlfriend's older brother. You say you've been in Yad vaShem. In Yad va Shem there's an inscription on one wall Milly Konsky_ will

conduct a concert on this Saturday and _____. I attended every concert. Now, when the Germans came in, the order immediately went for Jews to turn in any playing instrument naturally radios included, and I had to deliver my violin to the city hall. I remember a cousin of mine I took along with me. I was afraid to go myself with my violin. While we walked up the steps to deliver it, I said to him, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to break it on the stairs. He says, you're crazy they're going to kill you. He's right. I was off my mind. Finally I brought it up to the top floor, the room was loaded with all kinds of instruments up to the ceiling. That was the end of music. So, how did we have the few -- now we had two conductors before the war in Ghetto, Professor Ridder and Bergesmann(?)_ who conducted one week and another week. This young fellow who was only 19 years old, Jastrowski, it is recorded in Yas vaShem. I'm telling you truth, my girlfriend's older brother. He was a beautiful conductor, and the Germans never found out. Or maybe they did because how is it possible that they didn't? Maybe I don't remember how long this thing was going on, but we did have it. I attended every rehearsal and every concert, but I did not have my own instrument. As a matter of fact we have a doctor in Haifa_ who also played in the orchestra. I'll tell you a little bit of a happy incident. I had a business in New York, a retail store, listen boys, and a lady once walked in there with another lady with two children. When I had children come into the store, you know, we had these metal racks in the stores, would you please watch the children shouldn't get hurt. Hold on to them. The lady, who was the grandmother turned around to the kids and spoke to them in Hebrew. Now, I still know a little Hebrew from what I learned, so I asked them where are you from? She said we live in Haifa. We have a friend in Haifa his name is Doctor Fuchs, she says, yes he delivered the mother and the children, but he was one of the violinists during the Ghetto.

Q. Did going to those concerts feel good? Was it a release?

A. For somebody who has a feel for music, for art, otherwise you wouldn't go. You wouldn't go even to a concert if you are as safe as you are in New York, if you had no interest for it. For me, even today, listening to music. You want to know how many tapes I have in the house? Hundreds.

Q. What I'm saying was it a special release in the Ghetto?

A. It was known to be, nobody squealed about it. I don't know how I myself should describe this incident that I am freely divulging even if it was something so good, because how could the Ghetto have had something so good. It's a miracle. It's such a miracle that it was recorded in Yad vaShem. It was Professor Ridder, what a wonderful leader and the other one and this young fellow. I cannot explain, no, how it went on.

Q. Were there other activities? Was there theater? You don't remember if there was school?

A. There was not supposed to be children so what for school. No, no. The answer is no, absolutely no. There were not supposed to be children. Now, when they took away children up to ten, you remember that, we tried in many cases to make false papers for children of 12, let's say make them 14, or even 10 and make them 12, but then you couldn't open a school. Wait, wait, wait. In the very beginning I attended school. When they chased us into the Ghettos already out, we ourselves just created a school because our professors came with us. They were mostly Jewish and we started attending the school. That was the building, the same building, but then became a hospital and from there when they threw the people out from the windows. So, it was a school for a while where all school like at once I was at the school with my wife because like at home, there was no coeducational schools. But it lasted only a few weeks or a few months. We tried to live, but we didn't know that we were forbidden to live. That is the answer. I think I phrased it well.

Q. What about religion? Were you able to observe?

A. Well, it wouldn't be a legal thing to do, but let's say if somebody died in a house where we have that sitting shiva thing, there would a few other people to help out, but was there a place where we prayed, Rosh Hoshana, Yom Kippur? I don't think so. I really cannot tell you.

Q. You worked on the Sabbath?

A. Yes, we worked six days.

Q. So you weren't aware of holidays?

A. Holidays, you mean observe holidays? You could observe holidays in your house. Nobody could tell you that you should know that today is Shavuoth or Passover or you didn't have matzos for Passover, you can be sure of that. If you had a little piece of bread it was a holiday. Now, you seen it on the Anne Frank movies that people were stealing bread from members of the family. I described a scene there, I want you boys to listen in, I described the scene how I wanted to bring a piece of bread to my Rabbi. First let me let me tell you what a rabbi meant at home. Here when you use the word rabbi you mean an official rabbi. A rabbi by us was a teacher because a teacher was a melamed, which is in Hebrew teacher, so a rabbi was only bestowed on a real rabbi. He had the top. He had to be sort of say in our language now, a licensed, an ordained rabbi. But we called our Hebrew teachers, those that taught us religion also a rabbi. And he did not have to be with a school, an official. He had a few kids that he taught. In our building was a rabbi like that, a very prized Jew to who almost every one of our sons, my Father's sons had to attend because that was higher learning, not only reading and writing and arithmetic, but higher learning. That was done like only one at a time or two at a time at the rabbi's quarters which was one room. That was his bedroom, that was his living room, that was his kitchen. A poor man, and he derived his livelihood out of some people could afford sent their sons like myself to him. When the war started, not yet the Ghetto, when the Germans came in, hunger_ came with them. Just 03:35:00 as whenever Americans, God bless America, came after the war, hunger disappeared. Plenty of food by the red cross and by the soldiers. You could drown yourself with food. When Germans came, everything dried up. And there were lines for bread. You could stay in line for a night. A person like my rabbi, nobody could visualize, and he himself he was just dying from hunger. And at once I realized that my rabbi on the top floor he was living in the same building, is dying from hunger. For all these years I was looking for a chance and this is why I probably appreciate this interview so much, because that was the first time in the 50 years that I had a chance to describe this scene that I was looking for an artist for a Chagall or for somebody like this organization now. I at once put my hands like 03:26:00 this(cupping) and I started walking the stairs up to my rabbi's apartment as

if I had something in my hand, a piece of bread for my rabbi. I had nothing there. I walked all the way to the rabbi's door which was in a dark hallway, because at home it wasn't like here. When I came to the door, I started asking myself a question. If I had here a piece of bread would I break it down to my father, to my family or would I eat it myself. Because as you see in the Anne Frank story, people were eating their family members food.. At once I had nothing, and I turned around I walked back and the rabbi died from hunger. All this that you are hearing today make up for the most cannibalistic 03:27:00 happening and we know history and we don't deny history and there's book recorded. There was plenty bad things happening and do happen at the time too. Like Elie Wiesel was the first one to run to the Balkans_ to say what are you doing here. Let me give you a little break down. Remember in the Balkans in Bosnia Herzegovina once a bomb recently a few months ago and it blew up and killed 60 people, and the world was outraged. You'll be surprised when I say rightfully so. 60 people to kill from a bomb. I'm not talking about all the other atrocities that are going on now today, but he was there Elie Wiesel to tell the world that he's getting sick from it. Why isn't something done about it. Now, let me give you a statistic now. Six million divided by 2,185 days comes to 3,000 a day, not 60. Three thousand each day, if you have a pencil or an adding machine you can add it up.

Q. I just want to get back to the Ghetto. Were there regular round ups in the Ghetto?

A. Oh absolutely. These were called "Aussiedlungen", liquidations until the final liquidation. Naturally that was 03:29:00 going on normal. They would grab you, they would announce that you should come to a certain place where you will be -- but they lied. They said we need people that say in another part of the country or the biggest lie and the most sarcastic lie was when they came in '44 to liquidate the Ghetto they told us being that the Russian front if coming nearer we want to save you and take you with us. So, they liquidated whole shops with the things and they really were -- because they were robbing. They were robbing, but under the pretext that something wrong is coming. The Russian front is coming near because our side only the Russians could have come because that was east. The Americans came to Normandy which was in the west.

End of Tape 3

Tape 4

A. How could they have undertook to fight helpless innocent people. All right, I will leave out the word innocent because according to them we are the most guilty in the world. But how can they have taken upon themselves to make the judgment and to carry on such atrocities.

Q. You were telling me that there were actions and deportations 04:01:00 all the time. Were there any rules? Who got sent away first?

A. Sick, anybody who was breaking down. Age, like at one time I almost went though somebody told me if you go you will not live. They told us that they need an amount of people at a certain age that they're a little stronger and healthier for work somewhere in Germany because at one time I worked on the Berlin autostrada, building the Berlin highway which was supposed to connect Berlin to Moscow. I worked there too. So, when they needed slave labor mainly the fact when let's say somebody in Germany was short of labor because after all they were conducting a war and their people were in. So, they would reach into these businesses of theirs, Ghettos and said at once we need a thousand young men. That's how it was. Now, who made the list had a terrible conscientious thing to do. He had to deliver a 1,000 people, so he had to sit down and pick, and whoever he picked he 04:02:00 had to. See, here again there is the big discussion amongst ourselves did they have to do it didn't they have to do it. Are they guilty are they not guilty. Well, they were made to do it. They had no choice, because if they had an arsenal of weapons to say well tomorrow morning we're going to give weapons to a thousand boys and we'll go out and have a little war with the Germans instead of sending them, there was no such thing. We were locked in absolutely helpless. That's how they did these liquidations. The liquidations were actually work things. So, if they didn't take him right away to death, not all the time, no. You heard of the selections, once they took a group out, they started selecting

who will fall to the wayside, systematically. Then they needed more, so they had plenty Ghettos so they reached into the Ghetto and got more. There is no other explanation of it.

Q. So, when they sent people away, they still needed workers.

A. In Ghetto. They needed somebody somewhere maybe better or like Schindler himself or my guy, where we were. We also were owned by a slave owner like that. Maybe he needed to enlarge his business. Schindler had a factory and he needed more. So, let's say this guy of mine or another one. He didn't give a damn for anything else probably than his own business, but he was able to get instead of going to the labor organization for workers, they were at the front lines. So that's how they used us, they used us up until death. In other words, they didn't waste a bit of us. They used us until we died.

Q. Did they bring more people in when they were sending people out?

A. They only brought in people when they had the full pull of it in the beginning. Then they didn't bring in no more. Where would they take them from. There was no more.

Q. Maybe from other Ghettos or other towns?

A. We had people to begin with from all the surrounding towns. In other words, not every little town did they make a Ghetto. It would be bothersome for them. They incorporated all the small towns around Warsaw, all the small towns around Lodz, so the Ghettos were mainly in the big towns. There was some small Ghettos, too. It all depended on this strategic productive need that they had. They did what they wanted. They didn't have to ask anybody.

Q. Right. So, there were people in the Lodz Ghetto from around other places?

A. Yeah, sure. We still have some that we know now that survived just like ourselves who were brought in from the outside. We know a few of them.

Q. Then they just got distributed amongst the rest of you?

A. Yes, they were just thrown in there and the leadership had to place them. And placing people was an easy thing. You're going to live in this apartment. You're going to say no, and he's going to say -- there was no choices. You did what you were made to do.

Q. Did people get along?

A. I wouldn't say not all the time probably. There wasn't too much antagonism, and then on the other hand, it was yes, because under circumstances like that where some helped themselves better to a piece of bread. Bread was the key word. You could have -- 04:05:00 I didn't come across myself any frictions or even that I should be able to tell of. I did know people that worked in the same place as me that were getting an extra soup. The biggest envy was an extra soup. What else did you know? You didn't care about your pants. You didn't care about your jacket. You didn't care about your tie. You didn't care about your car. The main thing was survival, a piece of bread or another soup.

Q. Were women treated any differently than men?

A. Were women treated different than men? I don't think so. I don't think so. Absolutely, no.

Q. How did you manage to avoid deportations all this time, for these three or four years in the Ghetto?

A. That's a good question because I answered a minute ago that at one time I wanted to report for the deportation. Now, let me explain what that means. Let's say that an announcement comes out that the Germans need a hundred strong men or young men. So, the first thing that came to your mind is that it will be good there where you're going. You'll get an extra piece of bread. You'll get an extra soup so some reported "freiwillig",_ voluntarily. That's what you can call it. So, how one avoided all the deportations. Some questions are very proper that you put forward and not easy to give an answer to. Because they say if they needed 100 out of a thousand, only a hundred went. Who it was -- sometimes you needed to know somebody up there not to be sent out. Another time you needed somebody in the higher echelons because we had a committee that should help you go.

Q. Did you know people on the committee who helped you?

A. No, we knew who they were every one of them because they were visible every day. I personally didn't have any personal contact with anybody in higher places. If I might call it

higher places. It was like a prison. A big, big prison with some people being a little bit more in charge of things than others.

Q. So, you and most of your family were there until the final liquidation?

A. No, we lost two brothers, a sister and her baby in Warsaw. We don't know what happened.

Q. But the people in Lodz, your father?

A. No, my father died after the beating in Kripo in '42, but 04:09:00 the three of us, me and my other two brothers, my oldest brother passed away two years ago, and my other brother, the father of this lawyer passed away 14 years ago. We, by unexplainable miracle, and you have a few cases where there are sisters or brothers, we were together all the time.

Q. So, you and your two brothers and your mother were still in the Ghetto at the final liquidation?

A. At the final liquidation, yes.

Q. Tell me what happened?

A. What happened. Then they announced the final liquidation.

Q. This was when?

A. The Ghetto got liquidated between August, September, October of 1944, but they needed a group of workers that will clean up so to say. They called it clean the Ghetto after the people are gone. What was it to clean of? Nobody had a new suit or a new diamond or a new living room wall piece. For them everything was good. Anyway, that's what they called this. We loaded that on trains. So, there were 500 of us, women and men. We became kind of chosen because we were there longer than the others. The Ghetto was empty. We went out every day to work. On trucks they took us to work from building to building to pick up the stuff. It's ridiculous, what was there? Broken up things, the Ghetto was already five years old. Then finally came our turn where this Beboff(?) who owned us, he already owned us there, so what he was doing was already as a businessman or rather as a function to guard himself or hide himself from going to the Russian front because he makes himself useful for the fatherland.

Q. For the record, why don't you tell me who Beboff is?

A. Beboff was a German, a German who was the Gauleiter, it was called. Gauleiter means like Schindler was in his business. Schindler was actually like a gauleiter. So was Boboff. Beboff was the head of our Ghetto, the German head of our Ghetto because we had a Jewish head. You've heard of him, Chaim Rumkowski, but Beboff was the German representative, the German delegate, the German appointee for this business of this Ghetto. Then he took us with him and he opened this business, established this business of building cement four by eights it would be today flats in Koenigs Wusterhausen. So we belonged, our headquarters were Sachsenhausen, the concentration camp was Sachsenhausen. They took us to Sachsenhausen. From there he got his group further after delousing and after being there a few weeks --.

Q. Wait you're skipping too many steps here. I want to hear about the trip when you left the Ghetto, how all of that came about?

A. They loaded us into cattle trains. I have to mention only a little thing, a few weeks or a few days before they loaded us, the engineer of the cattle of the train was a Pollack. Because you remember there was movie Shoah on television for nine hours and it showed how the Poles this was their job. He was the engineer of the train. When we were loading these products that we were making on those trains he told us in Polish Jidski, Jews don't go, they're frying you in frying pans. Now this is the end of '44, and we said to ourselves is he off his mind? Frying us on frying pans? What's he talking about. He's stupid. He knew what he was saying because he came from here to there and from there back. So, he had to be careful telling us because the Germans were around but he did anyway. So, finally the liquidation came. We were loaded into cattle trains, and they took off. No openings of any kind like you see on Schindler's List. I really cannot tell you how many nights and how many days because we didn't know the difference between day and night. They pushed us back and back until we arrived at the very big railroad crossing and I assume that it was Ravensbruck because they took out the women. The doors opened and outside Germans running around with dogs, with German shepherds, yelling aloud "Frauen 'raus",_ women get out. And that's how we were separated from our mother. Then the

doors locked again and the train went forward. I don't know how long it took and we wound up in another place. Now we knew we were in Sachsenhausen.

Q. What was the train ride like?

A. A cattle train filled with people like sardines. Not a place to turn. No facilities of any kind, not even a pail. Now, you can imagine after a while how this things smelled, and people were just dying, falling down, sick or dead. That's how it was. It was hell, hell couldn't be that way. This was worse than hell. How long was it? It could have been a week. I don't know because we didn't know when it was day and when it was night. We just heard trains going by and passing by and they pushed us from one line to the other and at once the door opened, we didn't know where we were. We didn't know where we were. That was the only stop to get all the women out. And when they meant out, they meant out. Then they continued on after a while and not long after we wound up at another station and that was our place, Sachsenburg-Oranienburg.

Q. Describe to me what was happening when you arrived there?

A. When we arrived at Oranienburg, the doors opened and a few guys were dead and a few others got heart attacks and died in front of us. One of them two sons survived and came to America afterwards, Jakobowski_ was their name, and he was one of the leaders of the Ghetto, too, and his father just fell dead while the door was opened and we carried him with us and he was cremated because they had crematoriums there too. Then we came into the camp and there was big sign "Arbeit macht Frei", Work Makes You Free. So, we realized that we were in a concentration camp. There were barracks, full of barracks, and we all got -- 04:16:00 _this was an established concentration camp. As a matter of fact, the guy in charge of our barrack was a German. George was his name. He was incarcerated yet from the beginning of Hitler's times. He was not bad with us. The next barrack from us they had Russian prisoners. Every morning they would march them. These prisoners were used for breaking in new military shoes for the German Army. You never heard of that. That was their job. In the morning, every morning they got a new pair of shoes because they were heavy and hard. They wanted to have them for

the soldiers to have them broken in. SO, they would march a whole day and in the evening they came back and they gave back these shoes and they got other shoes the next morning. They were our neighbors. Us they were taking out to 04:17:00 work, and I remember at one time we worked at the Autobahn, means the highway from Moscow. We built that. At one time they took us to like work in the fields. At one time they took us out to pick potatoes. I remember the SS man who was in charge of the group just for fun pushed one of our boys. I knew the boy well, when the truck moved, behind the wheel and squashed him. In the evening he had to report to Mr. Beboff. Beboff was waiting at the gate when we came back, marching us back, and he reported " Herr Gauleiter, Ich habe herausgenommen 125", I took out 125 and I brought back 120, and the reaction would be "gut gemacht", well done. So, when we went out to work, we didn't know if we were going to come back. All this was already so part of our being that we didn't think of the liberation. We didn't know it would come until finally as this our commander told us that the spring song wind is blowing in front of you, you will not live but probably orders came in that we had to brought back to Sachsenhausen.

Q. When you were in Sachsenhausen initially, how long were you there?

A. Initially, we stayed in Sachsenhausen a very short time, just like a passing through to the real camp, maybe two or three or four weeks, no longer.

Q. Was there a registration there?

A. That's how I got my number.

Q. Yes, but the tape doesn't know that's your number so tell me what really happened in those two weeks?

A. We got incorporated into the camp as prisoners of the camp. We were taught all the rules of what goes on and while we were there we had to witness hangings. If there was a hanging, we all had to go to witness it. You know, that was the duty of us.

Q. What were you thinking?

A. What we were thinking? I don't think we were thinking. What could you think? We had hangings in Ghetto too. In other words, why was somebody hung in Ghetto? I was stealing too,

and I'll explain you why. Let's say my brother, should he rest in peace, he worked in a shoe factory, so he would bring home a sole for a shoe. For that he could have been hung. So, if they caught anybody touching somebody, taking it, stealing it, he was sentenced. There was no sentence, there was no court, they didn't have him in court like we have the thing now. He was just hung. They had places where to hang him. So, and when they hung somebody to show the others how to behave, we had to go and be present at hangings.

Q. What were the rules they taught you?

A. I really don't...The rules were to keep yourself clean, or 04:28:30 to make the bunk every day. There was no rules of any particular kind that I can remember. I wouldn't even want to remember if there were, but I'm sure that there were rules to obey. They were all more like for I don't want to say animals because I think I mentioned once today I don't want to insult the kingdom of animals.

Q. But you said they taught you -- they told you how it was going to work when you got in, I'm just wondering what they told you?

A. They didn't give us any future. They didn't tell us if you'll be good, you'll go home or you will go to the theater tomorrow or you'll have a piece of cake tomorrow. We were worms as you walk and you step over worms. Do you ask then the worm if he had rules. There was rules that they made up, that they obeyed. Okay, it (be)came very interesting in Koenigs Wusterhausen. You remember I mentioned we had no facilities. If we needed to go out in the field, the only way to go out was into the field. So, in the night, let's say if I remember it vividly, if I needed to go out in the night, to make a physical need, to piss or whatever else, I had first to report to the Wacht (guard), the Heftlig (prisoner) #...., that I need to go out. 04:22:00 You know what he did to me. He made me run around the barracks three time, not run around three times but "auf, auf, hinlegen", I'll never forget that. He played with me. He didn't get orders to do that. He just wanted to have fun. He made me fall down and get up. I needed to go out, so he made me run around three times the barracks and he had fun in the night to make me fall down and get up. Exercise. Another case, it was a big privilege in camp, because they had their

quarters there, the commanders, those who watched us. I don't know now many of them, eight or ten, so they had a separate nicer house where they lived and where they ate, but they had to go for their food to headquarters, to the nearby headquarters. It was a tremendous break or privilege rather a break if you were picked. He would just go, come on here. He picked one of the guys to go with him so they put you into a wagon like a horse with two wheels and there was a part on it to go to their kitchen to bring food for them. On the way there, to the headquarters every German officer who passed by like that had the pleasure of spitting at you, kicking you, pushing you and the one who was in charge of us didn't mind. But this was a break. Why was this a break? When they finished eating they gave you to wash the pots so you were able to lick a little bit. So you would agree to be kicked around going one way and the other for this big break.

Q. You did this?

A. I had once the privilege, only once, otherwise I wouldn't be able to tell you how these proud clean, tall uniformed like this he kicked, he spit, he threw his cigarette on you. He pushed you over the sidewalk. I was doing a duty and the guy stood there with the commander and just had fun both of them. Where did you ever hear a thing like that in history?

Q. What about people's health at this point?

A. Health, health what is that? Who thought of health. You mean if you sneezed? If you died, you died.

Q. Was there disease? Were people taken care of?

A. Well, disease they would be afraid themselves. Well, they always had "entlausung" deloused us because we didn't take showers or wash so they threw powder on us, "entlausung", and if somebody would be a little bit sick, they would shoot them. There was no problem healing him.

Q. You had lice? Did you have lice on you?

A. I just told you, yes, lice. Sure I had lice on me. I did have lice on me, so what they did, they would powder you only. You didn't take a shower.

Q. Did you ever get typhus or anything?

A. I got typhus in the Ghetto, right after crypo. I had very mild case of typhus, yes. That was also in another horrible, horrible horrible thing. I feel so horrible about it, that I am even ashamed, I feel bad to tell it with all three of you particularly those two.

Q. Forget us.

A. My uncle, this is why I don't want this to come to the public because maybe I have a chance now, maybe they'll give me something. My uncle was also taken in at the same time as us, a little later, maybe a week later because we were there ten days. When we came out, I was laying in bed sick, my wife, my father was laying in bed sick, and at once my oldest brother handed me a little note. Uncle Solomon, my name, is dead. How did he die? He was taken into the Kripa too, and they tortured him. I'm even ashamed to tell you what they did to him because it isn't _____. They tied his testicles with a rope. Remember I told you it was only cobblestones at home. They put him on a wagon. They had a wagon with horses. They didn't have a car. If we heard that little horse running on the street, we didn't know who was next. This little horse was like the devil for us. The crypo was if you remember before, I said, only a block, two blocks, or one and a half blocks from where we lived, my uncle, too. They put him on the wagon, and until he came threw the half of block, he was dead. Blue and dead. This you never heard yet.

Q. Who saw this?

A. Who saw this? When they took him off when he came in the front of the building, they threw him out, and whoever was there, my aunt, my other people, he was dead. He was blue and dead and his testicles were tied with a rope.

Q. Let's go back to where we were which was Sachsenhausen.

A. We were talking about Koenigs Wusterhausen now all the time. From Sachsenhausen we were sent to work camp because Sachsenhausen was not a work camp. It was a concentration camp and this was supposed to be a work camp. So, there we were not long, from October to April 21, when the war started getting bad for them and then I said before Potsdam was burning and we were able to see Potsdam burning, so they returned us to SACHSENHAUSEN. When we

arrived at Sachsenhausen we were going to Berlin. Koenigs Wusterhausen was on one side of Berlin and Sachsenhausen on the other side. So, we were seeing Berlin also in flames and pretty ruined. We have seen the bombers day and night going that way because we were in the middle, rather Berlin was in the middle.

Q. How far were these --?

A. We were about ten or fifteen miles from one side of Berlin and the camp Sachsenhausen was also ten or fifteen miles the other side of Berlin. When we came back to Sachsenhausen, it was a mad house. Papers were flying. They were burning papers, you know, they were disposing of it. There was anarchy because when the camps were there was an order. You know the famous German saying "In Ordnung muss die Welt zugrunde gehen", we will bring the world down in order. So when we came there to Sachsenhausen_ we didn't know where we belonged. There was no barracks for us. Nothing. They just led us into the gutter, but at the gate, we had to line up constantly and march out into the death march. We didn't know what it was. So, that's how the death march started or became.

End of Tape 4

Tape 5

Q. Tell me about this work camp, what was it like?

A. The work camp was exactly if somebody would open a business of his own. We were building one item. In other words, this Biboff, in order to get themselves involved with something that is almost military and need for war, because Berlin was bombarded by then and there was a lot of homeless. There was no more monkey business. He came up with this -- not the idea-- but he opened the business of building four by eight cement plates which then he sent or sold to Berliners to make themselves shacks to live in. They were already "auf Tsures" themselves. That's what he did. In other words, he took advantage of the situation or if you want to say it was a business of his. It had nothing to do with the German government anymore. But we did belong to the German government. We did belong to Sachsenhausen. The Shupos, or the soldiers that were watching us were belonging their command came from Sachsenhausen. So, that's how it worked. It was a whole set up. As a camp how it was, we did not have hangings in this camp. We did not have much beating in this camp. Once in a while the commander here would kick you. He could have split you in half. We worked from sunrise to sundown. There was no hours. I remember like now, at that time, it was placed on a railroad intersection. So, we loaded the railroad with the stuff and then by then already as we were there a little few weeks because that already was towards the end of the war, we started receiving German soldiers from the Russian front without noses without ears, frozen hands. They couldn't even eat a piece of bread that was laying to them. So, we already have seen how they were getting in their behind. Yes, yes, they were getting it.

Q. What were you thinking when you saw that?

A. We were thinking -- I think you said before if we ever thought -- this time we were thinking, oh, it was so good. It was good. It didn't last long because then they took us to the march, and it became hell again.

Q. Did it give you hope?

A. Yes. That was the first time when the hope was me or not me but that's their end. Where did we get news from? That should be a question to answer. How did we know what date it is or what day it is? We didn't have calendars. We didn't have watches. We had nothing. When the SS was having a paper and the wind blew it away, that's how we caught up with the times. It's interesting, yes.

Q. Please tell me more about what the camp looked like, who was in charge?

A. It was a field, a big field on the outskirts or on the side of this big railroad station because what we produced was supposed to be shipped and received again raw material. That was going on for these few weeks or these few months, but we were there. That's all it was, a big field. Now, you wanted to know if the Germans knew about us. Let me describe you. We were hungry, no question about it. We have seen German women -- because this was in the midst of them-- German women driving bicycles, not cars. In the back they had loaves of bread. It turned our insides. They were having big full breads to eat besides other items probably that she took home to her family. We seen them. They did see us, and they did see the way we looked. They knew that we were prisoners, that we were prisoners--prisoners is too fancy a name because we were not prisoners, slaves. Not even that. There is no word to describe what we were. So, that describes to you what it was. It was a few barracks that we built ourselves. When we came there there was only one barrack and it wasn't finished. So, first we built our own barrack and this Biboff couldn't give a damn how much production went out from there or what we built. All for him was important that he was covered because he was in charge. It was his business and he is helping the government, the war effort. He was helping the war effort and he enslaved us. So, probably he must have been a big guy that even could get a thing like that. Do you understand his position? His position was to cover himself. If he made profit or not on it that I don't care and I don't know, but I'm trying to describe you what it was a big empty field which was fenced in then, and when we came there was one barrack unfinished. We had to finish it ourselves. It was already winter coming. There was one water well outside, a pump. That's where we in the morning we able to wash our faces. We stood in line half naked in the

cold and splashed our faces. You couldn't do more than that with a little pump when you had 500 people to go through and here you had to go out to commandos, it's called, work commandos.

Q. The entire working camp was you 500 people from the Lodz Ghetto?

A. Yes, that group, that group. And we had women amongst us too, but not together with us. Also, now, if somebody died, it was another privilege to get a piece of bread if you carried them out. They had the wagon on two wheels only and you put yourself in the front like a horse and I know a person who lives now in Europe who was good at it because I couldn't do it. Not everybody could. He got an extra piece of bread to do that job, to carry out the dead. The way he disposed of them nobody knows.

Q. So, they sent you back to Sachsenhausen and you saw Berlin burning, that must have been hopeful?

A. Because we had to go to Berlin to the underground bahn-- to the subway. As a matter of fact there were rumors that Hitler had ordered the underground to be flooded. It was flooded, but right after we passed it. So, through the autobahn we came to Sachsenhausen, but we did have the privilege of seeing Berlin burning.

Q. Did you see a lot of German people on your way?

A. We did some, yes, we did see some, but they could not have any contact with us. That mood was already hell for everybody. That was hell came to be. Then at once when we came into Sachsenhausen, the whole thing was like anarchy. As orderly as the camps were, not it's an anarchy.

Q. What does that mean?

05:09:00 A. Everybody on his own. Papers flying, burning papers. They're burning everything. But they directed everybody into the main gate out and we got lined up into what became the death march. That was the death march which lasted from the 25th of April when we left Koenigs Wusterhausen. In include this into the 2nd of May, the day of Liberation. So, we marched for about two weeks without any provisions, without any facilities. Just marching,

marching, marching, and after a while people were tipping over to the sideways with the SS on the sides of us. They did inform us, like some of them that they are marching us towards Hamburg because -- and it was on television this week-- if the Russians reach us, they will call us all. They, the Germans will kill us. If the Americans reach us, we will be their -- they will turn us over to Americans as a good gesture to save their lives. So, we walked like that and we walked and people were tipping over and that's how this picture got soiled because we were sleeping in the mud.

Q. The picture of your brother?

A. This picture of my brother, yes. I didn't know. If I knew I would stow it away because if any German would notice he would kill me. Then after a while I couldn't take it no more and I realized that when people lay down they give him a shot in the head to make sure he's dead, finished, over. So, we kept on marching, we kept on marching, and people were laying down. At once I started negotiating with my brothers. Now, this is really something that I'll never ever be able to explain how the three of us were together all the time. That is unexplainable. But there is a few other cases like that too, in amongst such a big mass of people. I started negotiating with my two brothers that I've had enough, I'm going to lay down. I'll tell you why else. It was May, April May. When we came to Sachsenhausen originally in October they bathed us, just like they did for gas chambers and then they threw us clothing. We had undressed, and a big guy would get a small piece of clothing and I got a coat it must have been from a dead woman of 400 pounds. So, it became very useful in the camp during the winter, but to carry it on yourself in May. Europe has a mild climate. It was killing me. It was hot, and it was so big. So, at once I said I'll throw it away, but if you throw it away they'll shoot you. You're not supposed -- this is not your road, you cannot throw -- and the coat doesn't belong to you, a coat, a shmatte. It had not buttons. I remember when the commander once in the morning said to me "Sie haben keine Knoepfe", that I have no buttons. He was worried that I have no Knoepfe. Tomorrow you will have Knoepfe. I'll go to Macy's and buy Knoepfe. So when I was outside working I thought what will I do now. Tomorrow I will be on count down and I have no

Knoepfe. So, I found a piece of wire on the floor and I made holes and I tied it up. This was my coat, which because of this coat I wanted to give up in May because I couldn't carry it, it was too hot. So, anyway, my brother, who was the father of this lawyer, said to me, my name at home was Schlomik, in Polish, "I have a feeling that we're going to freedom. Don't do it. Please don't lay down." But by then if you lay down they didn't shoot you, but they kicked you. They didn't want to waste ammunition on you, so they made you, they forced you to walk. In the nights, they dispersed us into the woods. If you want me to tell you the last day of this march which is liberation so my brother again, he was terrific. Once we were sleeping near a farm, in the night and they had some bags with little corn. My brother with his fingers managed to pull out a few pieces of corn because we didn't eat. When we marched it was five of us. Me and my two brothers, one friend that went with me to school together and his father. He then became a doctor in America and he died of cancer. Anyway, my brother was feeding us. Everytime he gave each one of us one piece to chew to exist. So, one day it was the 2nd of May--better yet the first of May we notice the SS reading a newspapers. "The Fuehrer ist tot. It was worth living. Do you know what it means? Hitler is dead. Better news we couldn't ask for. He was reading, but they were starting losing themselves. Without the Fuhrer how can they exist. The Fuhrer is tot. Now, another story, airplanes started flying on top over us one day before liberation. Leaflets came down signed by Truman, Stalin and Churchill. Stop the killing, we will keep you responsible. Why did they wait so long. Why did they wait why couldn't they do that months or years before the last day? You know how the Germans reacted to that? They have an intuition of sadism like nobody else. They threw a can of bloodwurst-- meat into the masses thousands of people got killed because amongst them was mainly the Russian prisoners who were a little stronger than us. All these people had to grab that can. Imagine their idea that they'll throw in one can of meat there many people will get killed. That was the first of May. So, now liberation day. That's a beautiful day. At once we reached a little overpass as we were marching and the sun shined so good. On the overpass we couldn't believe ourselves there were red cross busses and red cross representatives and German officers and they were negotiating and talking and we

feel that this must be a put on because this is the end of us. They didn't let us cross. It must have been 11:00 or 12:00, we didn't know. We didn't have watches, and I remember I was laying on the ground and I put my feet against a tree just to relax a little bit and I was picking grass and I ate and we were sitting there and they were negotiating back and forth and we didn't believe that this is it. At once, march again, the busses get away and we marched across this overpass. So, the hours in the meantime we went forward until we reached an intersection and there was a German again like this showing us that we can't go any further than into the woods again. Same thing as every day. Dispersed into the woods for the night. My brother, this one, he was a hero, really. He had a little can on him all the time, and as we were marching at the risk of being shot he would run over if there was mud, and he would grab a can of this and that would be our supper in the evening, with the worms and everything in it. He did it every day. So, they moved us in there. Yes, I must give credits to the Czechoslovakians. We were marching geographically as Poles, and the Poles even then were anti-semitic, but at once geographically we were able to blend ourselves into Czechoslovakia which is next on the map geographically, and these Czech's took care of us. They watched over us. They knew we were Jewish that we are in bigger trouble than them. In the evening, in the night, they helped us get leaves together to make a place to lay down. I'm talking now about liberation day. So, we did all that, and my brother had managed to grab a piece of supper for us, in the can of worms with everything in it, with the grubs, and I lay down on the ground like that and I pushed it over, my can, with my foot. There went our dinner. My brother got himself again -- now it's a dispersement. Everybody lays there, all kinds of nationalities. God knows how far and he went to find another pan, and he didn't see it. He went. After a 05:18:00 long time, me and my brother standing there we lost him. At once we see a bundle is moving forward like a pile of something is moving towards us. We notice that our brother is coming and he brought a can of food. He said we don't need it no more, we are free. Free, will you stop saying that, we're going to get killed. Where do you get _____ what do you mean we are free. Don't you see everybody is here. And a little while later a green Opel car, those days with the step on the side, drove in, and a Russian officer said zdrastvjete, he

was Russian because there were many Russians, so we started believing that we were free. The rain started drizzling a little bit. The day came to an end and we say to ourselves, if it's true and everybody starts going out to the main road and we say to ourselves, we're Jews. Let's wait a little longer. If it's true, we waited that long, let's wait a little longer, but the woods were getting empty and also we noticed that Germans were kind of coming and mixing amongst us and tearing off their epaulets and throwing their uniforms away, the big heroes. At once they're not anymore heroes. Something -- we couldn't add it up. Also we decided also to go out. So as we went out towards the main road because we knew where we came in, the corn was already that high on the side of the road. At once we notice a German on a horse with a column of horses like this. He didn't know that it's over, so we could have gotten killed. We laid down on the side of the corn and they passed and we went forward. We came to the main road. Americans with the pistols like that, like about every 20 or 30 feet. We couldn't believe it. The Germans like this, their tanks taken and we're free. I was hospitalized right after this. Let me get to it. We didn't know English. In other words, the Russians and the Americans(?) came together. So, we went -- we came out to the road where the American side was which was good. The American boys showed like this. We didn't know what they meant. The Red Cross is waiting for us there. Until we understood what, so we were going there and in the middle of the road the Germans were already like this, prisoners, with the tanks with all the machinery and we couldn't walk no more. We didn't know how far it was so we got in in a tank. The soldiers helped us on the tanks and the Germans were leading the tanks. I came up on this tank, in front where the driver was, was lying a bacon, a big piece of bacon. It was green and I ate it. I wound up in the hospital, because I got poisoned from it. Anyway after a short while of -- I didn't know right away that I was sick. I didn't eat -- I mean I knew I ate raw bacon and after I went off that tank the whole thing -- the whole world is how will I use an expression, in Hebrew it's Tohu va Bohu, like in the beginning God (when) created the world. We walked, me and my two brothers, and at once we noticed that on the left hand side was a white beautiful house and three American soldiers standing there. So, we went over to them. The Germans were just walking passed like this with

their hands on their heads, prisoners. We went over to them and we started talking but we don't speak English. But they were Jewish boys, so we were able to communicate. They were wild. The first Jew since Normandy, which was a year later. The invasion of Normandy was a year before. They took us into that house. This was a German house. They took us into that house. They fed us, which they shouldn't have. Then they put us to sleep and we couldn't sleep in a bed. It was awful, it was so clean and it was so soft. The following day I got sick, and they had to take me to the hospital. The soldiers took care of us all the time. They were stationed there. So, they brought a woman German doctor for me, and she prescribed red wine for me. Where would they get red wine. It's a war zone. The boys went out and told us don't you open the door to nobody. When we come back we will knock with the carabines on the door a certain amount of times then you'll know it's us. We're going to look for red wine. They came back in the middle of the night. You're not going to drink red wine. We're going to bath you in it. We found a tug boat full of it. That's the end. That is the end of the hell, but then you are a displaced person and you have to go through a lot. It took until July '45 when we went to Sweden. We went to Sweden because you remember when I told you my brother, they broke his arm, and they shot the doctor. Because of my brother's state of health, the Red Cross picked sick ones to go to Sweden. Very few, as we wondered all his time how is that three of us survived? Very few were more than us alone, so anybody who had family like two brothers, the Swedes took us alone. That's how we got to Sweden July 7, 1945, after liberation.

Q. So the Red Cross took you to Sweden?

A. The Red Cross took us to Sweden, yes.

Q. What happened in Sweden.

A. In Sweden my brother was put in a hospital and we were camped. It wasn't only us. They took over a lot of people, and they had camps provided, like military barracks outside of Stockholm, all over Sweden. This is a separate chapter. The Swedes did us absolutely magnificent. That's a separate in our lives is Sweden.

Q. It must have been quite an adjustment?

A. If you want to know about Sweden, it was quite an adjustment but it was so wonderful. They were so nice. All right. We arrived in Sweden the 7th of July in the city of Helsingborg. People were on the roof tops on the _____ hanging. People were every where to receive us. Then, naturally we were sent around -- oh, it was July so the schools it was vacation so the schools were turned over for our use. They brought us to the town which is called Landskroner, and they put us in a school. Naturally, they had to put fences around. Now, before we left Germany, the port of Luebeck, the Swedes took us over already. We got undressed and all we got -- we got sanitized because we were in bad shape, and they gave us underwear only. We lived in that underwear for two or three weeks in that school, because they were quarantining us. They fenced around that school. Swedes were only allowed to go to see us or to talk to us through the fence because they were afraid of sickness. After we were through the quarantine, busses came. They took us to warehouses. By warehouses I mean stores, like Macy's, like Gimbel's, you know. The stores were not available for civilians for that particular day. We had a list of what we need to wear. That was after the quarantine. The quarantine took two weeks, three weeks. The sick ones were taken to other sanatariums and first they gave us three changes of clothing including work clothing. Everything that a person needs that's what the Swedes did. I'm very fond of all of Scandinavians. You know the stories of Denmark or Norway. So, that's what they did. Even Finland. That's how we wound up in Sweden and there we were camped for a certain while. They taught us trades. We were free people. We were able to travel free. Everything free.

Q. Did you eventually get your own places to live there?

A. Yes, when we started working we had an apartment. We lived as subtenants, because while we were in Germany liberated the military, the American Military were registering those that want to go to America. So, we were on the list. So, we were not eager to have our own apartment, but we rented an apartment from a wonderful lady in a private house. Her son was a classmate of Ingrid Bergman's first husband Aaron Lindstrom.

End of Tape 5

Tape 6

Q. Before you made it to Sweden, did you --?

A. I see what you mean. I was hospitalized in a city called Hagenau. A small city in Germany, in the vicinity. But Hagenau was also a prisoner's camp. I mean, we were camped there just like others. As I mentioned before at one point, we were considered geographically Poles so they put us to this district, the Polish district of the camp. The Poles started showing anti-semitism immediately. We couldn't take it. We didn't have to take it no more. We knew this is the end. We would not accept that. We wouldn't stay here or we'll do something about it. One of our boys, who happens to be now a lawyer in Tel Aviv, spoke, knew English a little bit, like I learn languages in his school, instead of German, they learned English. So, he knew enough English to communicate. He went to the American headquarters and by coincidence the captain there in charge happened to be a Jewish boy from New York. We told him what happened. He immediately ordered a truck. It was an open truck or a bus I don't remember and he arranged to bring us to Bergen-Belsen. The Poles looked what happened. Where are you going Jews Jidji, where are you going? We didn't give a damn for them. We were out. That's how we wound up with all the others in the big camp of Bergen-Belsen. That's where we stayed.

Q. How long were you in the hospital?

A. In Bergen-Belsen I was since liberation which was May. It was still May until July 7. From there we went to Sweden.

Q. Can you tell me about Bergen-Belsen?

A. Well, the camps in Bergen-Belsen where we were kept used to be a German air force academy. That's where they camped us. We slept on beds and on floors. The hallways were full of people, and Americans were stationed across from us. We never knew pancakes, but we wanted to eat something better because what they gave us was still not the best, but the Americans were getting delicious food, so we would stay there with our cans. When the

Americans threw food away, the English couldn't afford to do that. We grabbed it, and that's how we were introduced to pancakes. Every one of us would sleep on a dozen pancakes. That's true. You know we were sleeping in the hallways, lined up. We got some kind of mattresses, but everybody was grabbing pancakes. It was so good. It became like an item to us. Whoever had more of them. So we put them -- where could we have kept them all day? We kept them in our beds, and that's where we slept. And little by little, we started to develop and we were able to see a doctor and the fact that my brother was injured, the Red Cross, the Swedes were already very active there helping out, so that's how they took us to Sweden.

Q. Was it crowded? Were the conditions okay there?

A. That question should be answered it was crowded but wonderful. We were free. We were free and little by little people were coming out of there. Those that remained in Germany many remained started working. Started doing business, started going to school. I wish I went to school. I should have gone to school because I had the background, but if we would have remained there, I would have gone to school and I would have been today an educated person. But my brother had to go to Sweden.

Q. Were the schools organized by the camp itself?

A. No, no, no. They went to regular German schools, not schools for us. You were able to attend -- you became a normal person and anybody could have done whatever he was able to do. People were out to help themselves. For a long time we lived on the mercy of the donations, on the mercy of the UNRRA. You heard of the UNRRA, on the mercy of the American Red Cross or the European Red Cross. There was no more problem of not being fed. Even dressed, even housed. So if at once we were housed and slept in a corridor, to us it didn't mean anything. It was wonderful. We were free.

Q. How long did this euphoria over your freedom last? Did people all of a sudden have to come to terms with their families?

A. Well, it was a very horrible time because at once we had to see who do we have. Where are they? Where are the others? That became the main concern. Where are they? What

happened? How can we find them? Some picked themselves up and went home, if that's what you call it. They found nothing. We knew that it's no good. A few did discover themselves and that's how the whole new era of life started with zionism, with Israel, with American, with Canada. For once we were free to do things with ourselves and again, step into normal living. Those things don't happen overnight. It's not easy particularly we are displaced persons. D.P. We were stamped D.P.. We were D.P.'s, displaced persons.

Q. Did you have any thoughts about going back to Poland?

A. No, no. I wouldn't be able to face it. My wife went once from Sweden in 1946 because we knew -- she wanted to go to put up monuments on her father and her brother and my father. She went for that purpose and we had already people there that did return so she had where to stay. So, for that purpose she went. But I could never have gone back. I would never, no. I was once in Belgium, in the outskirts of one of the city of Liege_or where(ever?) that also had concentration camp. That's the only concentration camp I tried to go into after liberation because we were in Belgium one year 1947 from Sweden. It was a horrible thing to see.

Q. When you were at Belsem were there efforts made to help people get information about their families?

A. Oh, definitely, the UJA. That's how I found my wife. That's how my brother found his wife. They were only girlfriend and boyfriend then. That was in Sweden.

Q. How about Belsenm?

A. There too, in Bergen-Belsen too. But we first discovered our things in Stockholm where the UGA had every day new lists. And my brother found his girlfriend, and she was at the other end of Sweden. Sweden is long and narrow. It takes a night to come from Stockholm to Southern Sweden. So, I went with my brother o find his girlfriend. She was only then a girlfriend and there was a girls camp. Camps for girls and boys. This is a very famous story. One of the girls was showing pictures that were taken after the war of the girls and at one picture I see this is Grinspan. She says how do you know. I said this is my fiancée. This is my girlfriend. I love her. She was -- but I had to go back up to Uppsala, the old city. She was

adopted by a non-Jewish family, a Christian family who is a very aristocratic family whose son was the president of the bar of Sweden, and the daughter was the president of the Library of Stockholm. She was adopted there and they sent her to become a nurse. She was working as a nurse in a hospital. Anyway, it was before Rosh Hoshana. I sent a New Years card. But what kind of New Years card? Sweden didn't have Rosh Hoshana cards. So, it was a Swedish small good new year. I have the card until today in my house. So, she was adopted there. She was 60 miles above Stockholm. She thought that nobody remained. So, when I found her on the list, I sent her this card and at once she knew I was there. By then she was going out with this Swedish captain of the Air Force. She was in a beautiful family, the Culvert family. They were a very aristocratic family. But when Mrs. Culvert received this card and then I started writing letters she said to her what is this correspondence you're having. We want to know who you're corresponding with. So, she said this is a friend from home. They said we want to meet him. They invited me to their house and Mr. Culvert went out to the woods and killed a deer that's the only time in my life that I ate deer meat. They made a dinner for us and by desert time Mr. Culvert took me into his library. All the Swedes have libraries and particularly an aristocratic family like that, very wealthy, but he was kind enough to test me on the Bible, otherwise I would be lost, and I passed. Then they started intervening with this girl that you see today. Mrs. Culvert told her no it's not good. It's an attraction with this Swedish captain, you never met somebody else. You thought everybody is dead. Somebody showed up, cool it a little bit. Let us get to know this boy, and they came to my wedding. We were married in Malmoe.

Q. You started dating in the Lodz Ghetto?

A. We knew from school, not the Lodz Ghetto, school days. We lived in the country together a few season, one villa next to the other. I knew her brother. Here is a picture of her family. She received it from an aunt in Newark after the war. You will recognize the cute little thing. I knew her since probably she was ten years old. Last week was our 49th anniversary. The 24th of March.

Q. How come you decided to come to the United States?

A. If you remember we were registered. In those days, I don't know if you'll remember do you remember the Berlin blockade in history, when Truman was President and then again it looked like movements from the Russians. It looked like a new war is shaping up and we decided enough is enough and somehow we were registered and at once we were called by the American consulate that if we want to it's our turn. So, we decided to go. So, just like this, we came with \$500 in my pocket and a pregnant wife. So, you want to know how easy it was here? When I came here that was in 1949, Truman was President and I learned a trade in Sweden as a furrier, but there was a big crises and it was already past season and I couldn't find a job. I came in on 29th street to one person and he told me look you cannot find a job now. Listen to me and I'll help you. I know the chief of personnel at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx. She's a friend of mine. Seven million unemployment in the country. There are lines for this job as a dishwasher. Go there. I washed dishes for three months. Nice story. Later years, I was always in business. We lived in the country where my second son was already born and young mothers always go to more experienced mothers if they have a problem with their child like coughing or sneezing. Talking about little babies you know. So, it was on a Friday, by Friday evening I would come to the country already. My week was over. By that time I was still washing dishes at Montefiore Hospital. So, a lady another lady came over to my wife to ask her some advice about the child. My David, my youngest son, says Ma, tell her to wait later Daddy is coming he works in a hospital." He didn't say that I worked as a dishwasher. He thought I'm a doctor. He was a kid only.

Q. Let me just ask you a couple general questions. What do you think got you through all this? How were you able to survive all this?

A. Absolutely impossible to explain. This question is nagging us constantly. What did I have better, or what abilities did I have better than my other brothers, and I remember each and one of them extremely well. They were better than me. My younger brother was a much better student than me. My older brother was the most wonderful mechanically and business like. The whole family, they were all working the business. It haunts us. This was the strongest question

that you asked today. I was only talking about it a few days ago. It haunts us. We don't know. If you're going to tell me God did it, I don't buy it. Because if I would buy it, I would agree with the fate of them, no. I don't understand. We don't understand how the three of us were together all the time. Because you know why we went through like that, because we were shaved. They didn't know we were brothers. We were standing one next to the other, but the minute they would know those were three brothers, they would shoot either three or two of us.

Q. Were there times other than on the death march where you wanted to give up?

A. I don't remember such things. No. No, because a person doesn't live only for himself. I lived because I had a mother and she didn't have a husband now. I lived because we had brothers. I lived because I was stealing a little bit to support the family. You might want to know what I was stealing. I told you I could have been hung. I was in charge of the supply room in this particular factory and at once trucks came in. You know heads(?) are sized by sizing, by Starch and once a delivery came in from the Germans with the big bag of some kind of a flour, white flour, and I was in charge of it. I didn't care if this is chemical or edible or not. What's the difference. If it will be poison, we'll die. And every day I brought home in my pocket in paper a little bit of it and my mother mixed it with pototoe skin and made it something tangible to eat. How could I have thought of dying. There was a lot of suicides. There were suidices, but somehow we were managing a little bit, this brother, like I said before, he would bring home something stolen from the factory so we were able to sell it on the black market. Talking about the governement, the Germans can arrest me now for stealing from them. At that time that's what it was. I didn't consider myself a thief, not a bit. I did something to save the family.

Q. Throughout this period was religion important at all to you?

A. I knew it was going to get to that. I am raised in a religious home, strictly religious. As a matter of fact I'm sure you know what it means and I'll tell you something. I was reading the Torah myself one week, my younger brother one week, and a cousin of mine the third week in my grandfather's synagogue. I taught here in America, a guy, he was just here in Florida

recently, to read the Torah because he was nine years old when the war broke out. Then he became my neighbor businesswise if Suffolk, New York, so he was not bar mitzvahed. By coincidence he was quarantined in Sweden with me together, but we didn't know one another. But he told me you know I was quarantined in Urkis(?) skola, in Swedish (it) means a tradeschool in Nauskrona(?). I said I was there, but there were so many of us. So we started revealing one another and telling what we know what we don't know. Once his daughter came into my store and says Sol, would you help my father become bar mitzvahed. I said yes. I have another story in Warsaw. Anyhow, I did it and then he told me after that that he wants to become a real reader. So, I said if you want to do it it's very tough, but if you want to, and he take me and anyways we accomplished it and he is -- my pupil is reading the Torah every shabat in Suffolk Synagogue. But something else, when we were in Sweden, remember when I told you about it was Rosh Hoshana and I sent a card to my wife, but the chief rabbi of Sweden Rabbi Jacobson was coming to the camps to organize religious services for new years, Rosh Hoshana. One of the boys who is from Montreal and now he lives in Florida. One of the boys told he you know we have a guy here from my city, Rabbi who reads the Torah. So, Rabbi Jacobson says we have a _____ here. He came to me he says you know we're organizing services for the holiday you're going to read. I said Rabbi I will not. I cannot emotionally do it. He was desperate. He said I found a _____, and I can't use it. Anyway, Rabbi, it's impossible because when I do it, I see my home, I see my father, how proud he was. I can't do it. One day me and my wife ran into Rabbi Jacobson at the Central Station in Stockholm. He had returned from Oslo, Norway. He buried 70 Jewish bodies. He comes over again to me. My wife was with me. He says, Sol, whatever he called me then. Will you maybe do me a favor and come to read in Oslo. I said Rabbi, it doesn't matter where I cannot do it. He was desperate. So, he walked past in the station waiting for the train and at once he came back, I have an idea. Will you teach somebody if I find somebody who wants to. I said yes. But we were camped outside of Stockholm. Every morning -- but our transportation, everything was free. Every morning we came to Rabbi Jacobson's house. We had breakfast there and I taught the guy how to read for the

holidays. I never yet read on my own. Only recently this pupil of mine had his 40th anniversary and we were invited and we were up north and he called me over to show his rabbi he said see this is my teacher.

Q. Today is religion important to you?

A. I am not observant. When it comes yishkor, you know what yishkor is? On certain holidays we have remembrance of the dead. The list is so long that I stay in bed and do my own remembering of whoever I remember including my wife's family. I am afraid to say it while other religion is present. To me it's a little bit hypocritical. How could God have done -- as a matter of fact my teacher, you gentlemen didn't know, I have books of my teacher the poet. He was a son of a rabbi from the very famous city of Wilno (near), Lithuania. At one point he says: "we served you all our lives, where are you?" How could I be a believer. If you ask me if I'm a disbeliever I wouldn't say so. It's so tough to be a believer. My father and my grandfather and we were from a religious home. Six million Jews of which 90 percent were religiously obedient and something like that could be lashed out on them. When I say something like that you haven't heard nothing yet. You will never hear the whole thing. The whole thing is a tragedy. You questioned this to me is a tragic question. If I have to stay here and not being able to say yes or no, that's a tragedy. That's a personal tragedy. I cannot say no because there lays my father. That is why I cannot read, because I see him. I see him how proud he was. He ran back and forth to that synagogue being proud his son I was only 13 when I started bar mitzva and then up to 17 and then his younger son, every three weeks. This is why sometimes I say our life is a very painful life. We hurt, so to call us survivors, is wrong. We are victims, because a survivor doesn't suffer anymore, but we do, we do. But go through for these many hours, go through every day in our mind, every day. There is no such move. If we go to bed, if we go to wash, if we go to eat, if what we eat if it's Sunday, if it's Saturday. There is no such thing, and when I told my dear friend, neighbor Mary, let all the names of all your dear children your family your preachers, your clergy, your teachers and you Italian people, very family minded people, how can you just ask me to start living a normal life. When you lose one person, we lost one brother

before the war, he was 21 years old. Life in our house, in our home was never the same. My father was a finished person and my mother got sick forever. So, now you asking somebody who lost the world of every thing. Forget about material. Would you believe that the Germans have a nerve now to accuse me that I have material reasons for wanting to be paid. Number one I don't want to be paid, because if they want to call this "Wiedergutmachung", many of us didn't want to accept it from the beginning, because that's too high priced. "Wiedergutmachung" means made good. How do you make good for that. I don't know who allowed them to use this name. They could have found in the dictionary of the German language many easier words to describe what it is than "Wiedergutmachung". There are many cataclysms through history. There is only one thing that I'm kind of grateful for, that they used the strongest word in the dictionary which is Holocaust. You know how many people try to call their own things lately when something is going on downtown where the Spanish people wanted to call their faith Holocaust. That means that they don't grasp the scope of what this Holocaust was. Because if this has to be the strongest expresseion is only because they didn't find a stronger one. That's exactly what my teacher said and I told you before I cannot find when he got melancholy and he stopped writing and his friends said Yitzkhak you must write for history. He says I can't find words in the dictionary words to write.

Q. You're teacher's name?

A. Yitzkhak Katznelson. There are streets named after him in Israel. Then you have the museum. One more thing. I'm glad that I reminded myself. When I talk about Katznelson, I am paying homage to my parents. Because to send two boys to his school was a big expense, a big effort. So when I talk very much of him, all my friends know that and they'll know about it. If you boys ever go to Israel, there is a museum built and the name it's called Lokhamei ha Ghetto-oth (tape ends.)

Conclusion of Interview