United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Fritz Schnaittacher
May 9, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Fritz Schnaittacher, conducted by Randy Goldman on May 9, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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FRITZ SCHNAITTACHER
May 9, 1995

01:01:09

A: My name is Fritz Schnaittacher. I was born in a small village near Nuremberg. The name of the village was Forth, F-O-R-T-H. It's a village that's about 23 kilometers from Nuremberg, about ten kilometers from Schnaittach, after which we are named, and it had a population of 1,100. At the time I was born it might have had ten or fifteen Jewish families. By the time I left, it had dwindled to eight.

Q: I need some dates here. What year were you born?

A: I was born in July of 1913 and left -- an interesting part of the development of young Jews at that particular time was that the village only provided elementary education. During the first three years of my life, I was in a one room school house which was staffed by a teacher who was Jewish who acted also as a cantor and an insurance agent on the side. Finally, the small community could no longer afford this teacher, and we were transferred at the third year of elementary school to the government school, which was largely a Protestant school, because the village also had a Catholic school. I lived in this village of Forth until it became necessary for the purpose of getting a better education to go to a so called Pensionat, a glorified boarding house in Nuremberg. My mother, who then had been a war widow, had to give me up just like she gave up her elder son, my brother Mike, who also went to this Pensionat in order to go from there to a Realschule, or in my case, ultimately to a commercial high school. It is interesting to note that because of coming from a village elementary school, I had to undergo an entrance examination into the then what we considered preferable the Realschule, a high school providing education in languages, math, etc. But anti-semitism back in 1923 in that particular school had risen to the extent where the director of the boarding house saw fit to transfer me from there to the commercial high school. Life continued as a student and the practice was to go home on vacation and holidays and of course that was a double holiday to be spent with my mother and spinster aunts who housed the family. After graduation, at the age of 17, I went to work in a wholesale establishment for the sale of household goods and toys. This would have brought us up to the year 1930. In these intervening years, Nazism grew, but it did attain the imminent danger of the overthrow of the Weimar Republic. The years 1932 indeed seemed to from my memory and as a youngster, seemed to reflect a decrease in the significance of the Nazi party. There was an election in Schleswig-Holstein which indicated for the first time a decrease in the electoral votes that the Nazis got. This presented the urgency to Hindenberg to appoint Hitler Chancellor on January 30, 1933. That changed the situation radically. Immediately after the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor, forms of oppression of terror began to ensue not as yet outwardly against the Jews, but most of all against social democrats and communists, anti-fascist forces. In order to give the appointment of Hitler's Chancellor the democratic appearance, the election of March 6, 1933 was called. The disunity on the left and the support of the Nazi movement by German nationalists brought about the so-called electoral

victory confirming Hitler in the position of Chancellor. Thereafter, really, the efforts began to denude Germany of human rights, of civil rights, of democratic rights. Now, shall I swing over the time of the arrest?

01:09:09

Q: Not yet. What I would like to ask you is prior to this period of time, did you have any trouble with people as a Jew? Did you come from a religious family? Did you mix well with your German neighbors? What was it like before Hitler?

A: What was social life in a community such as the little village or for that matter social life in the city of Nuremberg. Now, I can speak of it from only a very limited point of view. As far as the village was concerned, after we had left school we hardly -- we only would socialize and to a very limited scale with young people whom we knew to be anti-Nazis. The few -- I shouldn't say few, there were quite a few social democrats and those were the only people that we socialized with. Earlier on, during the years that I went to school in Forth, we would play soccer yet with everyone. That was until say 1930. From then on, the lines were beginning to be drawn much more severely. Now, the question could be raised why would it be called for that a young man who is working in Nuremberg and during the week lives in Nuremberg would go home over weekends. Well, obviously one was drawn first of all by the family and one didn't have the opportunity to one as a Jew to form broad social friendships. It was very difficult. My family was not a orthodox Jewish family. It practiced traditional Judaism. I at one time through my growing up period had developed a spirit of orthodoxy in deed until I became some sixteen, seventeen years old and I lost it. I became agnostic. Our social life in Nuremberg centered around a German Jewish Youth movement which believed in ideas of humanity and yet we were able to enjoy life, until truly the radical changes took place in the beginning of 1933.

01:13:17

Q: Did you experience any abuse or attacks verbal or otherwise?

A: I in the place of business where I worked, I never experienced any acts of anti-semitism. The place of business was owned by two Jewish families. As a matter of fact, particularly one non-Jewish family I was very friendly with. I considered him to be a devout anti-Nazi. On the street I wouldn't be recognized as a Jew. I'm not proud of that, so I did not experience any acts of anti-semitism only when I would become involved in street discussions and they were not infrequent. Then sides were being drawn occasionally with violence. Once, I do remember one little incident which happened in the moat of Nuremberg. Nuremberg, the medieval city is surrounded by moat which was used in those days to play soccer in. The kids from the boarding house, some ten or 13 or us went to the moat in order to play soccer when all of a sudden a bunch of rowdies, Nazis, came storming upon us trying to beat us up and I'll never forget one single guy with a hammer and cycle on his cap, I must mention it, a hammer and cycle on his cap he beat them off. These things stand out in one'e memory.

Q: When you talk about all of the street discussions, what was the mood? What was going on?

A: The street discussions were between right and left. The street discussions were prior to the appointment of Hitler as a Chancellor. Thereafter there were no more street discussions. They were in anticipation of the elections. There were several elections in Germany during the year of 1932. I did, now that I research my mind, I did experience another rather painful experience in our village -- it used to be a vacation home for Jewish children, and I was befriended by one of the young social workers in charge of this home, and there were maybe 30, 40 children, and they had taken a walk to a neighboring village and I followed them when all of a sudden I was being attacked by a guy from my village who was known as a criminal who was on the loose. I didn't want to become entangled with him. Finally I had to ask for police protection and we got home. The police visited us. That was in the summer of 1932. In order to ask whether we wanted to press charges and we decided not to. It was a rather potentially dangerous act. There were other occasions when Nazis pelted our house with stones, but then in the year 1932 one wasn't hesitant to go after them, but that again that ceased after January 1933.

01:18:23

Q: Were you at all friendly with Christian neighbors?

A: We had neighbors in a broad sense, yes. We had some friends in the village. Our family had lived in the village for many generations. I think you're going back possibly to the early part of the 18th centuries. Jews only received citizen names in the year 1729 and over the years because we were the family that tried to do well by the poor people, so we had many friends amongst them.

Q: While we're on this, can you tell us a little bit about your family. I know that you said your mother was widowed and you lived with her. What about the rest of your family?

A: Well, my father died as a result of World War I, in 1919. When he was only 47 years old. He had not suffered bodily injury, but the service had caused had aggravated his heart condition and he died of a heart attack in 1919 when I was 6 years old and my mother was 31. My father had two spinster sisters and two or three single brothers no four single brothers who all were living in the two houses that we owned visa vie from each other. He had also a married sister living a few houses away in the village and after my father had died if it is of some interest we were --- the family had been in the textile business. Part of the house was devoted to a store where we sold piece goods but the men of the house pursued the hop business. This was the hop- growing section and we went around, my father and my uncles went around to the farming villages to buy the hops, and we sulfurized them, baled them and took them to the largest hop market in the world which was Nuremberg by horse and freight car. There were no automobiles in the village. In deed, my mother got the first car I think in 1923 or 24. This describes somewhat the cultural life and existence of Jews in the village.

01:22:30

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: I had one brother who passed away 23 years ago. Interesting is the fact that my mother, this very courageous woman, took over this textile business and during the years that she didn't have a car, drove out by horse and buggy to the farming village in order to sell from house to house the piece goods and invite the farmers from the village to the store in order to buy. She was an amazing vital and courageous woman.

Q: Your brother was he an older brother?

A: My brother was four years older than I am, but he died at a very young age. He had left for America four years prior than myself, not because of Nazi persecution at that time, but because an uncle of ours had come over in 1900 and had no children of his own, no family of his own, decided to have him join him to ultimately take over his business. It was this uncle who then four years later was helping me to come out of Germany.

Q: One other question about this period you had mentioned a Youth movement that you were involved in. Was this political at all or Zionist?

A: No, it was not Zionist. To be sure we were conscious Jews but rainbow colors of political opinions, largely however forward looking, progressive.

Q: Is there anything else you want to tell me about your boyhood in either Forth or Nuremberg or the mood of the times? Anything else you can remember? It sounds like you had a fairly comfortable existence?

01:25:35

A: Yes. My family lived in very comfortable circumstances. We weren't rich, but to be sure we were conscious of the very difficult conditions which existed in Germany economically where you could paper your walls with the money that was printed yesterday. The inflation didn't go unscathed by us and there was rationing of food and it is one of the few recollections that I have of being with my father after he had gotten back from the war and we were riding out in horse and buggy and opened freight car like in order to go to a neighboring village and buy from the farmer four geese. That was considered like black market. I know it, did my father know it? Probably. So, the farmer loaded the geese on the cart and covered them with straw, but it wasn't a half an hour later that we heard the shrill whistle of a policeman on a bicycle who could move faster than we did by bicycle, not motorcycle. As he drew abreast of us, he forced us to turn around and return the geese to the farmer. It was however, a week or two weeks later when the farmer drove up to our house and delivered the geese. Somehow he had escaped the attention of the authorities then, but

yes, there was hunger in the country. There was the large scale unemployment which led to the radicalization of the political life. Were the farmers friendly with us? Yes, in the main they were very friendly with us.

Q: You said that in 1933, everything started changing very quickly; like what?

A: The changes in 1933 that I indicated which came about were demonstrated immediately after the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor on January 30. The very following day there were demonstrations of stormtroopers along the street where I worked and the call went out close your windows or we shall shoot. On the same street there had been the editorial and printing offices of the social democratic newspaper which had been destroyed on this occasion. On top of that building on the fifth floor or fourth floor were the offices of people that the company that we had been doing business with. I forgot the name. They were wholesalers in textiles, and I took it upon myself to ask the stormtroopers who had been guarding the Social Democratic newspaper in order to visit the offices of this particular company which was owned by Jewish people, and I was greeted with a deep feeling of dismay and despair because their goods were stolen. Their goods were thrown out of the window to stormtroopers who were waiting downstairs. That was the beginning, only the very beginning of it and you could during the time of the announcement of elections to be held on March 6, 1933, during these short five weeks election rallies of the opposition were prohibited. So, it really began rapidly to spread fear and hopelessness in the circles of the anti-Nazi movement.

01:32:00

Q: What were you afraid of?

A: I was afraid of physical persecution, of being beaten up and the beatings that they rendered were severe. After the --if you were accused of anti-Nazi activities you were likely to be sent to prison and after all that didn't take long. On March the 26th, twenty days after the election, when I came home on my weekly weekend visit to my mother, I was settled down and we would have a cup of coffee. My mother had a bad cold, but we were happy to see each other. That happiness lasted but a few minutes, and there was a hard knock on the door of our living room and there was the gendarme, who said, "Herr Schnaittacher, come with me to the police station." I asked why to no avail; no answer. I had no alternative but to follow him. That was in what would have been the purpose of saying no I'm not going with you not without an arrest warrant. This is authority. I followed him to the police station, and as we arrived at the police station he said, "Herr Schnaittacher, you're under arrest." I said, "Why?" No answer. I said can I go home to say goodbye to my mother. He said no. I said can I call my mother? He said here use the telephone. It was probably one of the most difficult and painful telephone calls I've had to make in my life. "Mother, I'm under arrest." You could have heard her shriek to the police station. We lived quite a distance from it. She came storming out, protesting, but all to no avail. An hour later, after the policeman asked me whether I carried weapons on me, and I had a little knife and he said you better give it to me

so it couldn't be used as evidence. After an hour I was transported by train. The village didn't have a regular prison, and I was transported to the county seat of Erlangen, a university city and a county seat, and I was delivered to the prison. The warden received me, assigned me to a cell and dusk began to settle and the cell door opened and I was put in to a cell that consisted of a wooden board that we slept on, a bucket, and you can imagine what it was for, and three pitchers of water and water basins for drinking and washing. It was inhabited by two other men, one a communist, one a socialists. All of them were at least double my age. I wasn't twenty, yet. And, so here I was. It wasn't a incarceration that could be in the terms that we subsequently learned inhuman, it was deadening. There was very simple sometimes inedible food. The living conditions were very primitive. We then were assigned mattresses and a blanket. It wasn't without humor and I might relate these two little stories. The first morning and I didn't need sleeping pills then, which I do now, the first morning my cellmates very humanly gave me the easiest job and that was to fill the water buckets. There was one faucet with running water in the long hallway that opened up to the cells. And as a I stood there filling the pitchers with water and I turned around and who was sitting in the adjoining cell but my second cousin from the village. So what they had done was they had the humanity of only arresting the two young male Jews instead of all the others. The other little story is headed under humor. A few days after we had been brought in we saw on our daily walk in the courtyard of the prison which was important because we had no exercise otherwise, there was a young kid, even younger than I was who told us the story that he had been picked up in a certain village as a vagrant, for vagrancy, and one day as he came down he clapped his hands out of pure joy. Why? Because he saw the mayor of the village who had arrested him now also in prison. This is in Germany Schadenfreude, what is best English translation, "spiteful joy."

Q: Did they ever tell you why you were arrested?

A: Okay, the charges for my arrested and I insisted and finally they were given to me. I was accused of agitation against the National Socialist Government, knowledge of secret ammunition dumps, and liaison man of secret anti-Nazi organizations. I remotely could have been accused of agitation against the National Socialist Government well it was perfectly legal. Thereafter I desisted of any political activity. I had been an anti-fascist throughout. My conscience dictated it to me. From the moment that I had been arrested, my mother did not rest for a moment, until she succeeded in setting us free. That came about through her contact with the Sturmbahnführer and the higher officer of the S.A. who three weeks after we had been in prison came to the prison to look me over and after he saw me in my stocking feet, pants and shirt, he said you don't look too dangerous to me. A week later, the head of the prison, the prison warden, gave us my cousin and myself the joyful news that we were to be released the following day. And who was there to release us but my mother. She really had given me two lives. When the news spread by wall Morse code, we had figured out a way of communicating that we were to be released and the answer came back from the two sides of the adjoining south well good for you. Leave all the uneaten food behind you. So, I was released from prison. However, with the understanding that I was to report to police station every other day. And as I returned to the place of work where I had been

working it had become apparent that rumors had been spreading which only furthered endangered my continued peaceful existence in Nuremberg in the area where I had been living and working then. So, then in consultation with my mother and an uncle of mine who lived in Munich and had his place of business in Munich, we decided that I was to move to Munich. So, I remember the date, May 1, May 1, 1933 I moved to Munich and started to work in my uncle's business which was a business selling wholesale glassware and chinaware. I reported in this capacity to his brokerist, brokerist means general manager. He had the power of signature. His name was Hermannn, and I would like you to remember that name, Hermannn, and I worked there in the offices before I started to travel, but I had filed an application to be able to travel and for that purpose I needed to be relieved of having to report to police stations every other day. So, I was in the office and I received a call from my aunt who was in her apartment in Munich and she said there is somebody here who wants to see you. As I came to the apartment, there was a man who stuttered unfortunately. He was a criminal inspector. A criminalist. Until, with the stuttering, he brought out the fact that I had filed an application to be released of parole and he was here to grant it to me. I died a thousand deaths, because I saw now the concentration camp of Dachau looming for me. So thereafter I travelled for my uncle. I never returned to the village I was born because it became apparent that it would be very unsafe. Indeed, after he visited with my mother she was called by the village council and was told Mrs. Schnaittacher if you had been here yesterday, we would have arrested you. That was the summer of 1933. My mother courageous as she was said well, if you want to let out your ire on a poor war widow then do so. Arrest me now because tomorrow I shall be leaving to visit and stay with my mother who lived then near Frankfurt. I continued to live and work with my uncle until the late fall of 1933 and then probably in the month of September or so I filed for an application for a visitors visa to come to the United States under the subterfuge to sell German products. So, this visitor's visa and the exit visa from Germany was granted and I came to America in the late fall of 1933.

01:49:18

Q: I just want to ask you a couple of questions.

A: My living and working in Munich was very interesting because Munich was a beautiful city. I had wonderful family contact but also working within my uncle's company gave me the opportunity to meet not only Jews but non-Jews. I went mountain climbing with one particular man who was an extremely commraderie and friendly and if anything he saved my life when I was about to slip and he helped me back. He was by no means singular. Later on, I started to travel and I made no secret of the fact that I was Jewish. I was not greeted by hostility and indeed I came back with a feeling or came to America later on with a feeling that the laden anti-semitism in Germany was not as significant as I experienced in my first few weeks of the United States of America. Now, that sounds like an illusion and a terrible accusation, but I experienced here in my early days more direct Jew calling than I did in Germany. I do remember several indecents along a railroad station where young men made remarks which were veiled anti-Nazi remarks. Of course it didn't last.

01:52:16

Q: When you were in Munich, was it starting to get more difficult for Jews even though you had some friends who were not? Was there a change that affected you?

A: In the 30s and you probably could extend it to the late 30s almost until the Kristallnacht, even though I can't authoritatively speak for it because I wasn't there. I left Germany in the fall of '33, but there was the hope on the part of Jewish business people that it was a transient affair, that it was a passing affair and business was good. On the other hand, I witnessed, and I will never forget it, young kids being trained in the throwing of hand grenades. These were the future soldiers that invaded Europe, the world. And yet, my uncles were very intelligent, very capable businessman. He took, and I'm going ahead of myself, he took the Kristallnacht and the incarceration in Dachau to convince him in spite of my letters to come to America.

Q: In 1933, there weren't yet any restrictions that impacted your movement of your activities?

A: Until I left in the fall of 1933, the only restriction as far as my movements were concerned was not to go back to the village. The village was a virulent sort of active anti--semitism and my mother and her sisters-in-law and another uncle of mine and his wife and daughters left for Nuremberg. The few other Jews remained in the village to be picked up after the Kristallnacht never to return.

01:55:16

Q: You've mentioned Dachau. What did you know about it at this point in time. It was new?

A: I failed to mention that when I was released on about April 18 or 19th, 1933, there may have been a general amnesty because of Hitler's birthday, but primarily I was released because of the endeavors of my mother. Had I remained in prison for some time longer, I would most likely had been transferred to the concentration camp of Dachau which was open just around that time, and whereas it was not an extermination camp at that time, but it was a camp of terror and torture and this is where the term was first being formed in German of the "auf der Flucht erschossen": Shot while trying to escape. This only got worse with every month and my mother's chauffeur who was an unusually decent guy and a friend of the family was taken to the concentration camp. When he got out, after two months, he said, don't ever go provoke or do anything that would get you back.

Q: Other people you know being sent there were you hearing about it?

A: Yes. Wherever two friends whom I didn't know personally but I knew the brother or sister. One, by the name of Goldmann, and the other one, by the name of Minardio, were shot and killed during the month of March. It was not unusual to find an item in the newspaper shot while attempting to escape.

Tape #2

02:01:03

Q: Let's pick up with your travels to the United States.

A: Right.

Q: How did that come about?

A: In the late fall of 1933, my application for visits to the United States and selling German merchandise in the United was approved of and I was accompanied by my mother and the uncle for whom I had worked. We traveled to Bremen in order to take the Europa, one of the two great German steamers to the United States. I arrived in New York passing the Statue of Liberty never to be forgotten and received by my brother an an uncle and an aunt who had lived here before.

Q: Had you made that journey alone?

A: I made the journey by myself. Did I know any other people aboard ship? No. But I smiled at a pretty American girl and we took a nice picture but I was so young and innocent and there were two German Jewish girls aboard ship also from Nuremberg whom I got to know and the trip as such was a joyous affair for me because I was out of Germany and looking forward to a new vital and enormously exciting experience. To be sure I was very mindful of the important members of my family, most of all my mother whom I left behind. But we had an understanding that my mother would be visiting me the next year and now being in America and having the helpful support on the part of my uncle, I started to work in his factory, knitting fabric for the manufacture of sanitary napkins. My uncle was a bachelor who specialized in the manufacture of sanitary napkins and modern mother nursing brassieres. What could be more logical. And early on I became a salesman for him and I learned to speak English. Then another one of my father's brothers came to America to help set up a distillery for the manufacture of cordials, liqueurs, in Norwalk, Connecticut and I at the ripe old age of 22 became the first member of the Alcoholic Beverage Salesman's Union, an AFL union, and became the missionary man for this particular company. Then because it's important -- I'm sorry, I have to bring in another moment. I had come on a visitor's visa and it was obvious that it was of importance and most desirous to change the status, my status from a visitor to an aspiring citizen. At that time, you could not apply for permanent citizen status while living in the United States. You had to go abroad. The system which had developed at that time was either to go to Cuba or to Canada. I went to Canada, to Toronto. In Toronto I went to the American consulate and applied for a visa and it was necessary then to come in under the so called quota. They had to cable to the embassy, to the American Embassy in Berlin in order to receive a quota number and then within approximately 48 or 78 hours, the number arrived and then I emigrated into the United States as now a potential citizen. This was finally confirmed with receiving the citizenship papers in 1939.

[Break in Tape]

02:07:26

Q: Was it difficult when you first came over here? You had family I know that made it a lot easier?

A: How was the life of a young immigrant or refugee? Because there was so many of us, not necessarily as far as total number is concerned to proportion to the number of German Jews who wanted to get our of Germany and had difficulties getting affidavits, getting support, but it wasn't that long that an organization had been founded which concentrated then the influx of German Jewish refugees and provided an enormous emotional support system ultimately to be followed up even with support as far as employment facilities, advice, etc. was concerned. The organization which originally was called the German Jewish club, and then was named New World Club publishes the only German Jewish newspaper and it is still being published under the name of the Aufbau, which is a good paper, an interesting paper. We met socially. We had lectures. We went on hikes. It assisted the integration into the American life enormously primarily emotionally and really in every respect you weren't alone. You weren't an isolated being. One important point to me which I do wish to mention is then the visit of my mother in 1935. Now, she had been taking care of her mother who then was in her late 70s. She enjoyed her visit to America enormously. Began to dabble in English a little bit and she would have loved to stay but her conscience and sense of duty obviously overruled her own desires and she went back in order to take care of her own mother. This until the other critical, most critical date in the period of after January 30, the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor most critical date is the Kristallnacht. Here I would like to mention a few incidences, which I didn't experience personally but which most were authentically reported to me.

02:11:12

Q: By your mother?

A: By my mother and by my uncles. My mother's experience. She lived in a village, in a little town near Frankfurt which then had not been as virulently anti-semitic as my village near Nuremberg, yet during the Kristallnacht, stormtroopers came, smashed their windows invaded their home and she suffered a severe nervous breakdown. My uncles--one living in Munich, the one I had been working for, and the other uncle who lived in Mannheim--they were visited by the Gestapo and taken to the concentration camp of Dachau where they were released. They suffered enormous physical damage due to _____closing in the severe winter, severe circulatory problems. They were able to survive it and come to America the year of 1940. I'd like you to remember again the story of my uncle in Munich whose name was Hermann. The man I had reported to, who, on the morning after the Kristallnacht, stood in front of my uncle's place of business and as my uncle approached he said, "Jews are not allowed here." My uncle turned around and went home and within hours

was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to the concentration camp. These stories, these events were told to me after my uncles and my mother came to America.

Q: How much were you aware living in New York or in Connecticut what was going on in the 1930s in Germany? What information did you get either through newspapers or through letters?

A: I was considered myself politically aware. I was very much aware of the Spanish Civil War, of the war that Germany had played. The role that Italy, not fascist Italy, had played and the point that I had been trying to make that until 1938 there was still evidently hope on the part of the Jews in Germany that the storm could blow over. I did not think so. In ever so many letters I wrote to my uncles and aunts and finally succeeded first with my mother that there is no alternative but to get out. My living in America I lived during the years of the deep depression supported however always if need be by my uncle but I didn't need it for myself the income ranging from $13 to $35 to $40 a week was most adequate. We lived together with two or three other immigrants, refugees in relative luxury on Western Avenue in 96th Street or 96th Street and Riverside Drive between the four or five of us the joined income was probably $80 or $90 in a furnished apartment. We did largely our own cooking or ate in cafeterias and weekends we spent hiking was the social life in the organization of Refugees. It was a good life. Ultimately on the request of my uncle, I changed my position from the liquor salesman to become a member of another company which he controlled which was a company by the name of Acme Cotton Products Company manufacturing surgical dressings and I first worked in the factory and then as a salesman and ultimately I became President of the company in the post war period. That is where I met my wife. My colleague and next door occupier of a desk, Ariel Sankon, had a beautiful daughter whom I first saw at the age when she was about 14 and I was of the ripe old -- no she must have been 15 and I was over 22 and I saw her. It took some years later at a Christmas party when she attended she was a student at the University of Michigan and was home for vacation and after taking another girl home I said to my wife, today I met the girl I'm going to marry. The war clouds became darker, and Germany invaded Czechoslovakia and Poland, and the onslaught continued, but fortunately by then we had gotten the rest of my family either to this country or to England and finally from England to America.

02:20:24

Q: You were now a U.S. citizen?

A: Yes, I am now a U.S. citizen, 1939. I watched the grim developments in Europe with the faint hope that a United front could ultimately be shaped with the Russians in order to ward off the total occupation of Europe and to bring fascism to its knees. Should I talk about now my involvement in the Army?

Q: How did you get into the U.S. Army. Did you enlist, were you drafted, did you have thoughts of going back to Germany?

A: America got into the war on Pearl Harbor day and from then on it was merely a matter of time until I would be drafted. I was working then in a position of some significance as far as wartime supplies were concerned but that certainly did not outweigh the importance of military service. I was drafted shortly after we had gotten married in February of 1942 and I was drafted and sent to Ft. Dix and from there to basic training at Cancroft, South Carolina and by the way, with the exception of the camp at Fort Dix, Dottie followed me from camp to camp until we finally had to say our goodbyes when we were shipped abroad. From basic training I was sent to a radar training center in Steward, Florida. From Steward, Florida, I applied for OCS and went through OCS in Virginia. At that particular time there was a surplus of officers and so I was sent to cooks and bakers school because the Army travels on its stomach and from there back to Virginia and from Virginia to an ordinance training center on the racetrack in Santadena, California, and from there to depot in Oakland, California. Then near Washington D.C. there was an intelligence school for topography. From there I was sent as a base sensor to Camp Miles Standish and finally to the intelligence training center at Camp Richey, Maryland.

02:25:55

Q: Was that something you volunteered for?

A: Yes. That's where I was trained in various disciplines of military intelligence from the interrogation of the prisoners of war to further interpretation and various other forms of the type of intelligence information gathered for tacticle purposes at the front.

Q: Was it assumed that because you were German that this was a good fit for you?

A: I would be inclined to think that that is the very reason that we were selected. Having been Jewish we were presumed to be beyond any doubt anti-Nazi and a large percentage, I don't know as far as total numbers are concerned, but I'm inclined to believe that a large percentage of I.P.W.[1] graduates from the school of Richey were of German Jewish background. Then they seemed to need me in a hurry. I graduated from Camp Richey and the second front second to the Omaha Beach landing was being prepared for the landing in Southern France on August the 15, 1944. So, we were flown across. We landed first an unplanned landing on the Azores because we were hit by a lightening bolt, and after that was prepared, we flew on to Morocco, to Casa Blanca. The following day or two days later we were flown to Naples. In Naples where the European headquarters were for M.I.S. we were now being reassigned to the divisions that were preparing for the landing into Southern France.

02:28:47

[1]Interrogation of Prisoners of War.

Q: Before you continue, I want to get a couple facts straight. Can you tell me what division and regiment and your rank and all that sort of military --?

A: Well, as far as my rank was concerned, when you become a commissioned officer it's called great. I was a Second Lieutenant at the time that I joined the 157th Infantry Regiment of the 45th National Guard Division of Oklahoma. The 45th Division was the Oklahoma National Guard Division, one of the most battle tested outfits in the war. It had a 400 percent, if that is claim to fame 400 percent casualty turnover. It was one of three divisions that was used in the attack. The 36th and the 3rd and the 45th. A division consisted at that time of roughly 20,000 men consisting of three regiments each regiment had three battalion and each battalion had four companies. Whether that is different now, I do not know. Our specific purposes, and I say our, the I.P.W. specific purpose was to receive prisoners as early as possible out of the chaos of battle in order to get the truth of whatever information they were able to give and it was up to us to discern and as we began to accumulate information from the many, many prisoners that we were able to learn truth from fiction because we knew a lot of the information that they had had and could balance it off and very few because of the tactics we had learned would refuse to provide us with the information we were seeking.

Q: How did you do that? What kind of tactics?

02:31:55

A: Rule number one--and you're testing my memory--rule number one was never to ask a question that you could answer with yes or no. Revealing information that we have had and formulating a question accordingly. Speaking to them in the dialect that they were accustomed to because we had sensitive ears and we knew the dialects all over Germany and if we were able to speak we were able to locate them and thereby develop a relationship that created a degree of confidence and willingness to give. The morale of the German Army began to be sure once we entered German proper, began to deteriorate rapidly.

Q: One other question and then I want you tell me where you went. Did you go over there with any trepidation or great eagerness to take this assignment on. Do you remember what you were feeling at the time when you were just not another American soldier.

A: I to the best of my recollection I went with a degree of eagerness because it was one way that I truly could contribute to the effort of destroying Hitler. To be sure I needed to learn. I never forget a first attempt, my first attempt to interrogate prisoners and then to report the results of my interrogation to the general in charge of our regiment, who had been accustomed to the battle wise master sergeant, who had furnished him information through many campaigns, from Africa or Sicily up to _____, and here he now turns to the brand new chickenshit second lieutenant, he says well Lieutenant what did you learn? I told him fanciful stories that there of enormous strategic importance and with dismay he turned away from me and says my buddy's name master sergeant was Fritz, he says, "Fritz, what do you know?" But it changed rapidly and with due modesty I became an expert. Yet, the most

successful interrogation that I had was when I couldn't ask questions. On March 15, 1945, we had a company of ours had broken through the Siegfried Line into one of the deep enormously strong fortifications. My regimental intelligence officer came to me and said, "Lieutenant, this is beyond the call of duty, but if you care to, and Fritz we would like you to go up and the company has occupied the bunker and they hear voices on the telephone system but they can't make them out." So, we did and it was a very active night. There was a lot of firing going on, but we made it. The moment I picked up the received and then relayed the information to my buddy, one sergeant from a German outfit who identified himself and his outfit reported to an officer of another outfit identifying the outfit indicating the route of withdrawal, the next day's ammunition dump, the location of the ammunition dump, the refueling dump, any question that I could have possibly asked that was of material tactical information was revealed and the following day we were able, not only because of our information but other information that came in to slice totally through the Siegfried Line and advance by some 30 miles. That was a proud day. From then on, we moved very rapidly and we moved along a line that could hardly have been designed any better had I volunteered or had I been asked because of my personal knowledge of areas. The first such town that we occupied that we conquered, was Aschaffenburg, where an aunt of mine had left prior to the war and had married my favorite uncle, and I was to their wedding in 1924. Indeed, my buddy and I took on our jeep -- no let me clarify something. Under the command my buddy and I under the command of Colonel O'Brien we accepted as interpreters the surrender of Aschaffenburg. We then took the commander of Aschaffenburg, who the day before had strung up several officers who had wanted to surrender. We put them on the front of our Jeep and he drove with us into areas that had not been occupied yet by our troops, and then we were stopped. He said, put your arms down and they had one American prisoner to whom he gave a gun, and we disarmed. They disarmed voluntarily. A platoon of at least 30 or 40 men and this one American soldier, G.I. with a German rifle marched this unit back to the American P.W. cage. We moved quickly and other points of interest were only days later when I had a group of six prisoners in front of me. One of them stepped out and said, "Lieutenant, didn't we go to school together?" I picked up his helmet and I said "By God, Leslach, we did." I have a picture still here in America a class picture of 1929 or 1928 with a picture of Leslach. He had been a decent guy and he said, "Couldn't you let me go home? I love my wife so much." I said, "I love mine too, but I can't let you go home." The next day, we took Bamberg. Bamberg a beautiful medieval town with a magnificent cathedral had suffered little damage and in the church yard we had some 800 prisoners. It would have been a vain effort to interrogate anybody specifically because militarily speaking we had more information than they did. It was a pure coincidence that one out of these 800 stepped up to me and said, "Couldn't you let me go home?" I come from a village not far from here. And I said, "My, where are you from?" and he said, "Forth, F-O-R-T-H." This is the village where I was born, where I knew every house and house number and every street. And it seemed to me that I had known every person. So, I said to him, "But you weren't born in Forth?" He said, "No, I wasn't." I said "How come that you lived in Forth." "Because I married a girl from Forth." "Whom did you marry?" "Gunta Haas." Gunta Haas was a year or two years younger than I was. I had known her. I said, "Gunta Haas, she lived in House number 35." We lived in House number 52. He said yes, house number 35 is two houses removed from

the Protestant ministers house from the Protestant church, two houses from the little fire house and his pupils grew wider and wider and he said "If American Intelligence has all this information, how can we win the war?" So, now you know how we won the war. A few days later, and I'll never forget that date, Roosevelt died. We were outside of Bamberg and on our way to Schnaittach. The town after which my family is named. Schnaittach had no more Jews of course. It was the seat of the only Jewish cemetery in a large area of central Franconia. It's oldest Jewish cemetery went back, so I'm told went back to the 14th century. My father and uncles and grandfathers, etc, grandmothers, are buried there in the new cemetery. While we were still receiving German artillery directed towards us, the occupiers of Schnaittach I visited my father's grave and I never forget as I was standing there in deep deep thought and sorrow, somebody came up to me and said what are you doing there and I said, "My name is Schnaittacher." That little story seemed to have traveled to my village. We didn't conquer my village. It was occupied by a sister regiment. From there we went to the conquered Nuremberg, the town I went to school. I interrogated the fortress commander of Nuremberg. I had known him. I had no particular coincidences relating to my past having lived in Nuremberg while occupying Nuremberg. We moved on across the Danube and approached Dachau.

02:47:30

Q: What information, you knew of Dachau from when you lived in Germany, but how much did you know of the camps in Germany at this point?

A: At this point we had very little information about concentration camps generally. We had liberated, but I forgot the name of a small camp which was neither extermination or torture camp where we saw emaciated human beings suffering from all kinds of sicknesses, stacked up in beds with little care. That was no preparation. We had no information on Auschwitz, on Theresienstadt, on Mauthausen, etc. But I knew from past knowledge of Dachau as a camp of torture and destruction. We arrived in Dachau my regimental headquarters in the late afternoon, or afternoon and I was asked to go to the camp headquarters. Approaching the camp in front of the gate was one of these infamous freight trains. The likes of which I had never seen. The freight train was filled with corpses. Men and women who according to what we were told possibly might have been transported from the east to the west as the juggernaut. And, with no food, little clothing, most of them died of hunger. Those who tried to climb over the trains -- cars were shot by the SS. Yet, I couldn't resist a feeling that when a few minutes later, I saw the living cadavers the dead ones were more peaceful than the living ones. The living skeletons their beaming ravaging eyes, the torment that was obvious that they had suffered. The endless torment. I didn't get into the camp otherwise to visit the barracks. I passed an oven but I had no time for any personal inspection because I had to interrogate an SS Brigadeführer, an SS brigadier general who I first had been introduced to him or it was mentioned to me that he was someone to give us information and he was friendly and I think I shook hands with him, and later on I felt that my hand would shrivel up. Now, he claimed that he had been in Dachau on an arrest and recuperation leave. That he had become a member of the SS against his wishes, yet he was grateful for it because he

could give personal testimony personal witness as to the crimes that had been committed. One thing which I never forget was you should not be enraged as to what you see here. Here you see little heaps in Auschwitz in Kattowice, you would have seen mountains of dead people.

02:54:00

Q: This is what he said to you?

A: This is what he said to me. According to my buddy Fritzie who was involved much longer than I was in the War Crimes Trial, I believe he was hung as well. I had asked you to remember the date of May 1. It is the end of my story of Dachau. I went back to regimental headquarters and the very next day or morning we moved on. We then began to experience some hopeful signs. The underground anti-Nazis tried to make contact with us. I come back again to May 1. I had moved to Munich on May 1, 1933. My division conquered Munich on May 1, 1945. I do think that it might be interesting to mention a few personal experiences. As soon as I did not have a regimental obligations I tried to clear up or redeem one event. I had asked you to remember the name Hermann. I had worked for him. He was my immediate boss and he was the one who prevented my uncle from entering his place of business and ultimately to be sent to Dachau. As soon as I was able to, I went to my uncle's place of business, which had been bombed out, and I asked about Hermann and I was able to locate where he was living there. Having the ability to use a Jeep, not to drive it, I had a driver. By then I was a first lieutenant. I drove out to this little town and I asked people and at that time gleefully as long as they weren't involved the Germans pointed at others, and so I arrived at the house where Hermannn was living. He was dressed in his stocking feet and pants and underwear and long johns and I said, in very harsh German, "Go and get dressed, and come with me to Munich." He didn't recognize me. His wife wailed and so did his daughter, but I could be heartless, and I loaded him on my Jeep and we went to Munich where I took advantage of the friendly offer that was made by the counterintelligence and interrogated Hermann. As I mentioned or didn't mention, in accordance pursuant to army instructions and regulations would have been to go through channels, but I had no time for it. Fortunately for me, in the course of the interrogation, he revealed that he was a guard at a concentration camp, which made him subject to automatic arrest. After I concluded my interrogation, I introduced myself to him. I told him who I was and he said "But you, Herr Schnaittacher, should know how good I was to your uncle." And I said "Yes, I certainly do."

Tape #3

03:01:05

A: My stay in Munich gave me the opportunity also to meet the friend of the family, and that was a very joyous occasion. She had been working as the housekeeper for my aunt and she was overjoyed to see me and overjoyed about the end of the oppressive system. Another somewhat humorous experience reflecting upon some key reporters was the following. My division commander had learned that I lived in Munich prior to the war, and so I was ordered to come to him and he said Schnaittacher I understand you had lived here before. We are expecting a bunch of newspaper men, congressmen senators, all kinds of bigwigs that want to see the birthplace of Nazism and I want you to be their guide. So I took this group on the trip and I started with the Odeonsplatz, which is the square where the Putsch had taken place in 1923 which had failed, and the legend went that courageous Hitler as firing started quickly left his troops and hid behind one of two statues and one of these key reporters profoundly thought so nothing more important to ask behind which one. The other little story goes to the beer hall where the Putsch had started in 1923 and in the basement of the beer hall there was an air raid shelter which was filled to some degree with stuff which had been stolen from Jewish homes. Amongst them was a statue of a storm trooper standing on a swastika with a German eagle and the other key reporter raised the statue and said, "Did this come from a Jewish home, too?" This I could only laugh at. My stay in Munich was then a brief one. I participated in the surrender of the Hungarian Army and I do remember at the behest of my general and I do remember that the Hungarian general was really only interested in his men but in his two horses. Memories. Thereafter, I was assigned to a camp in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart which was an American P.W. camp of so called automatic arrests. This was a very wise law that Eisenhower had released early after combat. Classifications of people would be subject to automatic arrest. Nothing noteworthy happened other than one general who revealed something that I had had no idea of that they were working on the ultimate secret weapon but I didn't know what it was. Then after a brief rest in a rest area, I was transferred to the War Crimes Commission.

Q: When was this, what month?

03:06:13

A: I would say that should have been, could have been in July of 1945, and I was in charge of a detail that was screening the archives of the German army high command in pursuing the case of Hjalmar Schacht, the economic czar of Hitler's. I must say that we did not find any important evidence of his involvement in war crimes. Not of any national significance but a totally inhuman story was contained in a letter that I came across from a youngster who very proudly reports to someone in his family that on his 13th or 14th birthday his father gave him a rifle and three Jewish prisoners to be shot. Inhumanity beyond description. We could not make use of it as evidence in pursuing this case.

Q: Why couldn't you use that?

A: Because we were not able to identify the people involved. This period where I had a good deal of free time, and possibly I skipped a few months, I should go back to the month of June when I had the first opportunity to visit my village. Again, I had the privilege of a Jeep and a buddy of mine, because my driving left much to be desired. I learned how to drive a truck on some desert exercises where we had no roads. As dusk began to settle we reached the village, and I can still see shutters opened and I hear the sound "Fritz is back, Fritz is back, Fritz is back." I come to my house, the house where I was born in, and we drive up to it. The house hadn't changed. Downstairs had been converted into the mayor's office of the party's office, but the upstairs were living quarters. I knock on the door and fearfully a young woman looks out of the window of the bedroom where my mother used to sleep and I could hear her knees shaking because those were the days when an American knock caused fear. I didn't recognize her. She was too young, and I asked her to send her father down. Her father came, and I recognized him at once and he fell around me because he recognized me inspite of my uniform. He had been an old Social Democrat, a very decent human being, a decent anti-Nazi and I said you can stay in my house but tonight we want to sleep here. But now I want to visit the driver of my mother who in my memory had taken on the role of a hero. He protected my mother wherever possible. He suffered the concentration camp of Dachau and I wanted to know whether he had come back from the war and whether there is anything I could do for him. We drive up to his house but he hadn't returned yet. He had I believe still a prisoner of war, but we left some gifts with his wife, who was deliriously happy to see us. As we drove back to our house and now again I close a cycle who was there to greet me? The very gendarme who had arrested me in 1933, plus another man. Both of them wanted to shake my hands but their hands are still sticking in the darkness of the night. But I ordered the gendarme to report to me the following morning that I needed him for certain steps that I wanted to take. In one of our back rooms of my house, I then asked him to bring to me the mayor and again I went beyond army authority and that was being held against me and I had him. We had town criers in the village and I ordered him to tell the town crier to return to the mayor's office all stolen Jewish property. Thereafter, I told the gendarme I want him back in about three or four hours because I wanted to drive to Schnaittach in order to set things straight there because grave stones had been thrown over, destroyed, etc. I went to the mayor's office, who at first was reluctant to cooperate but when I touched my sidearm, he said yes I will do it, I will do it. In order to restore to whatever extent possible the Jewish cemetery. Then I drove back to the village. This is Fritz's war, and I ordered the apprehension of the guy who had been responsible for sending the remaining Jews after the Kristallnacht. I think his name was Britting (ph), and ordered him to be brought to me and I took him again without authority to Nuremberg and turned him over to the C.I.C. Subsequently some months later I was ordered to come to Heidelberg because I received a decoration and after that I passed an office where the friend of mine who had become a major I believe and he took me into his office and he said you've got to watch your step, you went out of channel. Where did I go out of channel? By ordering the mayor to do things and by apprehending whom I considered to be a criminal and by ordering the mayor of Schnaittach to restore the Jewish cemetery. So, I said, "Who's complaining about it?" "The

town major of Erlangen." Erlangen, where I had been in prison, so I said, "On my next trip, I will see the town major." and indeed I did and I said Major this isn't the first time I was in prison in Erlangen. I had been in prisoner here in 1933 but if you wish to imprison me feel free to do so. Well, he was embarrassed and then he tried to get information from me, but I used this opportunity to then go to the prison and knock on the door and the same warden was still alive and he said, Herr Schnaittacher, now the ones who imprisoned you are imprisoned here." Well, another cycle is closed. Now, back to the War Crimes Commission. The greatest satisfaction I had was when I was called in to act as interpreter for an integration carried out by I think a Colonel Gershon (ph) of Field Marshall Keitel, the chief of staff of all of the German armies. I certainly felt a great deal of satisfaction when I entered the office that he stood up and stood at attention and saluted me. Can I think for a minute? I don't know if there was anything else worth mentioning of my tour of duty with the War Crimes Commission.

03:18:19

Q: What else were you doing with them?

A: We were going through the archives document by document, and I had a group of translators that was in pursuit of it was located in Nuremberg. The War Crimes Trials took place in Nuremberg but it took place outside of Frankfurt in Fechenheim.

Q: And you were looking mostly for Schacht evidence --?

A: Only that.

Q: Did you come up with anything else that became useful?

A: No, not that I can remember.

Q: How many months did you work with the War Crimes Commission?

A: Let me think now. At most it was probably not more than two. I'm trying to think, maybe three because in October the return trip started.

Q: To the United States?

A: Right. I guess I could close with that.

Q: I have a few questions for you if you feel that you have covered the war crimes?

A: Yes, it's disappointing little because I don't have any recollection of any documents due to the specialization of our search.

Q: Were there certain difficulties or obstacles you faced in trying to --?

A: No, no because in the archives if anything it was lack of experience.

Q: Well, I want to go back to the liberation of Dachau a little bit. I know that that 45th did in fact go into Dachau. Were you part of the first group that went in?

03:20:47

A: I was part of the -- I can say that I was in --I must explain a little bit about the order of battle so to speak, the system of battle. You have the advance unit of infantry men commanded by lieutenants or captains. Usually there is a lieutenant in charge of a platoon and a captain in charge of a company. They are the real heros in my opinion because they day by day are exposed to not only artillery fire but small arms fire and the physical danger which we were exposed to a much less degree. I was with regimental headquarters. My buddy Fritzie had gone somewhat earlier because I was ordered to stay back at regimental headquarters and I think he interrogated the wife of General Paulus, the general who was in command of the German army in Stalingrad I was ordered to come into the camp, camp headquarters which was in the afternoon. I still heard firing but it was no longer an intense firing that we saw in the resistance. I'm inclined to believe anyhow with the approach of our units that the SS took off as fast as they could.

Q: Who was doing the firing?

A: I could not identify, but I would be inclined to think that it was our men who did the firing. Any German being killed because of the rage that was in our troops I wouldn't doubt it for one moment because one could only feel the deepest of rage and hatred for what human beings could do to each other.

Q: You didn't see it?

A: I didn't witness it.

Q: What about retaliation by the prisoners?

03:24:10

A: I saw one incident as I was in the process of entering which I interpreted to be the headquarters or one of the headquarters of the camp and a large group of prisoners seemed to want to tear a guy to pieces. My false humanity showed itself. I tried to stop but I didn't persist. It was not a very pleasant sight. It was an obviously disturbing and in retrospect and even then I could understand how valid and justified for what these people had gone through for years and years.

Q: What were they doing?

A: Trying to tear him to pieces.

Q: Was he a guard a Kapo?

A: I had no idea what he had been whether he was a guard a Kapo. I had no idea what he had been. By the time I got through with the interrogation of this SS brigadier general night had set in and it was dark and I headed right back to regimental headquarters and early the following morning we left.

Q: Were there a number of SS guards still there that you saw?

A: No, I didn't see anymore guards.

Q: What can you estimate when you saw those boxcars coming in how many of them there were or how many people you saw only corpses?

A: The figure that sticks in my memory is anywhere between six to eight hundred. I didn't count the boxcars. I went along side them and I saw the horrible sights. Some of them were trying to eat each other. There was such terrible terrible hunger and then primarily what I seem to be impressed with was that then suddenly life ebbed out the precision of the corpses seemed to tell this as a story. They succumbed in so many different positions. They succumbed to weakness. They succumbed to the end of life.

Q: But at the time you were walking by there was still some sort of alive?

A: No. I didn't see any more that there was movement.

Q: I thought you said something about they're eating each other?

A: There was evidence of it. The only ones that had reached the outside of the boxcars were people who had some strength left and they were shot and there was evidence of them having been shot by the SS. I had had pictures but over the years someone took them. Now if it is of interest the history of the 45th Dvision which was written up, I don't have a copy of it, but they have a brochure.

03:28:49

Q: The prisoners, you said when you entered, what was going on? Were they coming up to you? Were they trying to walk out of the camp? What was happening?

A: They didn't come up to me. There seemed to be traffic all around. My memory doesn't justify me to say that there was overwhelming joy in the air. I can't say that. I was much too short a

time in the prison -- in the camp. I think there is one little story which pertains to a young kid, age 13, 14 years. And it was yet I do believe before we had reached Dachau that I came across him, and he wore the concentration camp garb. I asked him where are you from? He said, I don't know. Where are your parents? I don't know. Where were you? In Dachau. Where are you going? I don't know. I tried to persuade a woman in whose house we were to take care of the kid, but she refused. Now memory tells me that I came across a group of anti-Nazi and they promised to pick up the kid and take care of him. It was one story out of hundreds of thousands. It was so deeply, deeply depressing.

Q: When you entered, were there men and women and children?

A: I don't know. Primarily, see because I drove up to the camp headquarters and the only contact I had was in the group of prisoners around the guy that they wanted to tear to pieces. There was others in the vicinity but my memory fails me.

Q: Any other impressions of entering that camp?

A: No.

Q: In terms of the layout, the conditions, the facilities, the people?

A: No, not even a knowledge of it due to the fact that we liberated and we moved on. We didn't spend a night in a camp. We spent the night in the village of Dachau. People in Dachau of course disclaimed the knowledge of what was going on. That is of some significance.

Q: How close did these people live to the camp?

03:33:23

A: A matter of minutes. A matter of minutes.

Q: So, it doesn't make much sense does it?

A: Hardly.

Q: Any other experiences in the town that you're remembering?
A: No.

Q: What out of all of this when you reflect back haunts you the most? What were the strongest images for you?

A: Had you asked hurts me the most?

Q: Haunt. What images really stand out in your mind the most?

A: Of Dachau?

Q: Or just your experiences of going back as a soldier? You had a very unique perspective I think.

03:34:34

A: Thinking back fulfilled me with a degree of pride and satisfaction was that I did believe I contributed to the best of my ability to the ultimate victory. The relatively little that I was involved in the actual liberation of Dachau the fact that I was part of the unit that liberated was one of my proudest days. I wish I could have done more. The personal revenge that I got against the man such as Hermann was of great, great satisfaction. The recognition of the silent interrogation having been of enormous value in the further prosecution of the war was great. All in all, from the moment that I set foot on first French soil, and throughout the campaign through Germany, I never had a boring moment, never.

Q: What ever happened to Hermann after you arrested him?

A: Hermann only got a few months of prison out of it.

Q: How significant was or is your religion in all of this?

A: It had not been of significance. I was a conscious Jew but not religious.

Q: But you didn't feel any special desire to get back?

03:37:57

A: No, I did not have that desire, to be sure it's a highly controversial question. I all depends on how you define God and as Elie Wiesel said the God's been on vacation. What disturbs me in a way most is that so little has been learned. When we look at the world today from Rwanda to Bosnia-Hercegovina, Chechnya, to dictatorships in other parts of the world, we have learned so little from the Holocaust and the killings that had taken place.

Q: After the war you came back and had a family and got back to normal life?

A: After the war I came back and rejoined my wife and then between 1947 and 1951 we had three sons, wonderful sons who are a source of strength to me today. Dottie and I had a most wonderful life together for 53 years. Unfortunately my deepest sorrow was that she left me with a sudden heart attack on April 15th of this year.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

A: No, I appreciate the opportunity and I should like to hope and that is what our hope -- Dottie and my hope had been that whatever I could contribute to the remembrance of this history, I hope I have achieved and that it would help to destroy the idea that there was no Holocaust.

End of Tape #3
Conclusion of Interview