

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Kurt Julich**  
**October 31, 2006**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Kurt Julich, conducted on October 31, 2006 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Delray Beach and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## **KURT JULICH**

### **October 31, 2006**

#### Beginning Tape One

Question: Good morning, Kurt.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: It's nice to be with you here in Delray Beach.

A: Pleasure.

Q: Kurt, when were you born?

A: August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1922.

Q: And what was your name then?

A: Kurt Julich.

Q: So it's the same name now?

A: Same name.

Q: Can you spell your last name?

A: Julich.

Q: And where were you born?

A: In Cologne, Germany.

Q: And let's talk a little bit about your -- your family and your brother. So tell me what did your father do?

A: My father had a business in Cologne, and --

Q: You know what kind?

A: Oh yeah, yeah. At that time -- we're talking in the 30's, it was very fashionable that lady used to wear lacy jabot and things like that.

Q: What is a lace jabot?

A: It's those --

Q: Jacket?

A: -- those things there that, you know, puffy lace, you know?

Q: Ah, ah, I see.

A: And then also lace for decoration of various dresses, gowns, whatever. And also buttons in mother of pearl, and basically that's what it was. He had an office across -- pretty much across the street in Cologne [indecipherable] where the eau de Cologne, which is called corniche eswassa, have their offices. 4711 is the name of the cologne, which will be on every bottle, so his office was across the street, you know? And a fairly large office with, of course, what you would call the storage area for the product and whatnot. And few employees and a partner. So he was on the road half of the time, selling, and then he switched with his partner and he stayed in the office and did the paperwork as it would be, and so on and so forth. And then of course when Hitler came, and it was before Hitler was sworn in, he couldn't make -- he wasn't allowed to make a living any more. You see, history has a way of being a little bit mistaken at times. He had to stop his business in '32, before Hitler was actually sworn in as the head man there, as it would be.

Q: Why did he have to stop?

A: Because Jews weren't allowed to have a business any more.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And so my grandfather, who lived a few -- you know, few miles out in a very lovely town called Siegburg. And he had the very large house there. And so my father, mother and my brother and I, we went to live there. And I lived there until 1933, August 17<sup>th</sup>, when I left for

France and I got some French tutoring lessons before I went there, but I had taken French in what you commonly call in Germany, gymnasium.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Which would be sort of like high school - college mixture because you can start with -- like you don't even have to go to a public school, you can start and finish pretty much, you know and graduate there. So I was in one of these and their main language was French. And obviously I had the heads up for French, you know?

Q: Right. Tell me something about what your father was like when you were growing up, before -- before you left and before you have to move from Cologne to your grandfather's and grandmother's house.

A: Well, he wa --

Q: Were you close with your father?

A: Oh yeah. He was -- he was really strict, but he was perfect, you know? No nonsense, but he loved us very much. And he was on the road the whole week and he came home Friday night, you know, for religious purposes, I guess, you know. And Saturday and Sunday and that allowed him to catch up on his accounting for what he did during the week, also. So I saw him Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Monday he was gone again. And actually, I would say -- how old was I? Maybe seven, eight -- six, seven, eight years old, I don't know for sure, he got sick and tired of traveling with those big sample cases, so he hired -- he bought a car and he hired a chauffeur, because he was not very adept at driving. That wasn't his forte. At that time obvi -- obviously he had to shift, so he had the chauffeur and in the morning it was very nice, the chauffeur took us around the block to the school. You know, I was in what you call grade school, you know, it was very nice. And oh, of course, that ceased after a little while, as -- it's quite obvious.

Q: What was your father's name, his first name?

A: Leo.

Q: Leo. And what about your mother? Your mother's name is what?

A: Martha.

Q: Mm-hm. And what was she like?

A: Perfect.

Q: She was perfect.

A: Angel. Wonderful. And she -- well, like I said, she was born in my grandfather's town, which was like oh, let's say 10 miles away. It was a small town called Siegburg, which was very, very picturesque. I mean, without seeing a picture, you can't believe it, but -- and so my grandfather had plenty of room there. She had three sisters who were, when I was born, maiden aunts, and I guess this is why I loved women, because I was always pampered, I was -- first of all, I was the first male grandchild around, so you know, it's -- left an impression on me, I had three lovely aunts, you know?

Q: And did your father have siblings, did your fa --

A: Yeah. My father had one sister and two brothers.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He happened to be a twin. My grandmother on my father's side had 12 children, of which eight died. You know, it wasn't like nowadays, you know. Didn't have the medications to keep you alive and what not. And so four -- four of them lived. His twin died, he survived. He had two brothers, and one sister. And they lived little bit further away in a beautiful town in the mountains, in the Eyffel. It was called Münster Eyffel. Münster is sort of like an abbey, and then Eyffel is the mountain, you know.

Q: Right.

A: And it was up in the mountains and it was a resort town for pulmonary problem people. And it was, I don't know, a thousand years old, and things [indecipherable] have pictures about all this, which words don't describe everything properly, a picture is worth a thousand words --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- we -- we all know that, you know. So -- and so we went a few times here. We were much closer to my mother's --

Q: Mm-hm, family.

A: -- family, obviously, it's always the way, you know. Children are closer to their mother than they are to the father, it's -- it's normal, the father is on the road, he's working, and then of course, his family, his father was sort of like I don't know what, religious in the synagogue, something or something. And my sister married a Christian man, wonderful fellow who had a furniture factory up in that particular place, refinishing antiques and all that, it was marvelous. He had two children, a daughter and a son. The reason I say daughter first is because she was the oldest, the son was second. And well, when we went -- went visiting once in awhile, he took us out early in the morning in the woods so we could see the deers. You know, and it was bu -- beautiful scenery, you know.

Q: And who is this, one of your mother's sister, who married this guy?

A: Beg pardon?

Q: Who -- who are you talking about now? The --

A: My -- my fa -- my father's sister.

Q: Your father's sister?

A: Yeah.

Q: I see. And what was your mother's name?

A: Martha Koppel, K-o-p-p-e-l.

Q: So did she -- did you have maids in the house, did she take care of you? You did have maids.

So you -- was --

A: Well -- well -- ha -- ha -- haf -- th-things were going quite well, we had a sleep-in maid, so when my parents wanted to go out, the maid stayed with us --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know, and things like that.

Q: Was your mother a cook?

A: Y-Yes, yes, as a matter of fact, when they left Germany and went to France, and after than when they came to the United States, she was a -- I wouldn't call it co -- you know, there's cooks -- cooks, and then there is chefs.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: No, she was a gourmet chef.

Q: Really?

A: Oh, the same way -- we are not talking about oh -- I wouldn't insult my wife by calling her a cook, she was a chef, because what she could do without fat, cooking and baking, was mind boggling.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Or let's say minimum of fat. My mother loved -- she made the most marvelous cakes and whatnot, but if a quarter pound of butter is good, half a pound of butter is better.

Q: Right.

A: And six eggs -- six eggs would just barely cut it. So obviously it had to be perfect.



Q: Right.

A: Taste-wise.

Q: Do you -- do you remember her food as a -- as a child?

A: Of course.

Q: So she cooked a lot when you were a kid?

A: Yes, yes, no, she -- she cooked. I mean, even when we had maids, I -- I di -- I was small when we had maids, you know, and I don't remember at that time what she was doing. But later on, I mean, in -- in Germany, I remember later on when she was cooking, when we didn't have a maid any more. And then in France, of course, and then of course when they came to the United States, mind boggl -- it's li -- France was very bad because starting in 1940 when the Germans overran France, until the end of the war, they plundered France with efficiency unparalleled in the history. There wasn't a thing to be had for the French [indecipherable]. And then the French - - I came here in '48, in '48 I still haven't seen white bread in France. And it was still rationed, there was nothing to eat.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I -- I wasn't exactly a heavyweight when I came over --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- you know [indecipherable]

Q: Tell me about your youngest brother, Harry.

A: Harry?

Q: What was it like for you when he was born? Was this a great thing for you, or wou -- did you feel invaded?

A: I -- I loved my brother because he was my brother. On the other hand, he was not as affectionate as I was. I'm a loving, touchy, feely type guy. He's not, you know? So everybody is different, you know? And he is more of a scientif -- scientist, you know? When he came over here, he went to college. He's a little younger, a year and a half, and he became a physicist, and with a lot of degrees and things like that. And he thinks like a physicist.

Q: What was he like when he was a kid, when -- when -- when you were growing up together?

A: Well --

Q: Before -- before France now, before --

A: Oh yeah, yeah, I remember that. He used to be, shall we say, a shade abrasive, and he wasn't all that tall, so I used to have to fight his fights for him. I didn't want anybody beating up my little brother, hm? Not that he remembers that, but I do.

Q: Was he more like your mother --

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: -- or your father? Was he more like your father, you think?

A: Not even.

Q: Not even that. So he --

A: Not even. He was -- he was his own person.

Q: Right.

A: You know. My mother was very loving, my father, in his own way was very loving, you know.

Q: Mm.

A: And warm. Of course I can't say anything that my brother isn't that way, but he doesn't sh -- show it --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- you know, physically.

Q: Right.

A: You know.

Q: Right.

A: So everybody's different.

Q: Yes. Did you like school?

A: I don't know. I went to school because I had to. I mean, it's as simple as all that. In Germany you do what you're told.

Q: Right.

A: End of discussion.

Q: But -- but di -- did you happen to like it? Or you don't even remember?

A: Oh, I went to school because that's something you had to do. I have no likes for it. As a matter of fact, when I was nine years old, my father send me to the local gymnasium, and you know, they have uniforms there, the caps, the whole mcgilly, you know, everything. And what was our language? I'm nine years old, remember that. Latin. Well no, try as I might, there was no way wa -- that I was going to go cut -- cut it in Latin. So after six months my father took me out, put me in another one where the language was French like I mentioned before, so that was piece of cake.

Q: Right. You were supposed to speak Latin? Or just read it?

A: No, the whole thing --

Q: You -- you're supposed to speak --

A: -- the whole thing.

Q: Really?

A: Not just reading, understanding, spelling and talking.

Q: And did Harry go to that school?

A: No, no, no.

Q: He didn't.

A: Harry was a year and a half younger.

Q: Right.

A: So henceforth, by that time -- you see, Hitler came into power and we went -- we had to leave -- you see, in Germany when I went to -- what do you call that, grammar school I would say?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Well, they didn't make a-any differentiation. There wasn't that much anti -- anti-Semitism in Germany in spite of what people will say. We went to school, school had catechism, so I sat in with the Christian children and I got catechism. No big deal. I got my Jewish education after school, you know? Several days a week we went and we had Jewish education in a different place.

Q: Were your parents religious in any way?

A: Well yes, I mean, for the holidays yes, but when I went to my grandfather, very religious, Friday night synagogue, Saturday morning synagogue, Saturday afternoon or evening synagogue, right? Of course holidays obviously. And I got so good in Hebrew that at the ripe old age of -- by 11 I left Germany, so I had to be 10, and I was living with them because I couldn't -- we weren't allowed in a Christian school any more, so we went to the Jewish school that the rabbi was running in my grandfather's town. I could conduct the service at 10 years old. There was some kids my age that were actually better than me yet.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They rattled it off like machine gun. But the world has a way of changing, and we change with it.

Q: So you went to a Jewish school when you were 10, in 1932, not 1933? And that was because you had to do that?

A: Jew -- Jewish children were not allowed to go to a regular school with Christian children.

Q: In 1932?

A: '32.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I mean, I don't know whatever the date is, April of '33 Hitler came to power, whatnot. Yeah, but that was just on paper. He owned the place from 1930 or '31 on.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: His goons were running everything. And believe me, the terror that they initiated in the population -- we're talking Jews, you -- you have to live through it to understand the total feeling of terror, with the brownshirts, which was called the SA, sturm abteilung. Forget the SS, the SS is something totally different. And they were marching, had parades every Sunday, flags. Of course, you locked up your place and what not, and hoped that nothing bad would happen. But it was frightening, I'm telling you.

Q: So you were very frightened as a child?

A: Well, as a child you take everything in stride. The one thing that the Germans were fabulous on, they created those what you would call Hitler type songs with the very marshall type music, and that appeals to the masses. You -- you have [indecipherable] every country has their own type of marshall music. The Germans are the best. The French are not bad. The United States is

so-so, because we're not really all that marshall. You know, we have a few songs. The Marines, you know. A-And -- and -- and [indecipherable] the Navy, Air Force, but it's not really -- but the Germans, I mean, they have th -- a song for every occasion, or a march. And I'm telling you, there was one song I remember, and it's [speaks German here]. Translation - when blood -- when the Jewish blood spurts from the knife, then things will be twice as good. So that's was a -- wa -- one of the lyrics in the songs. I don't know where people know these things. These are minor details.

Q: Do you remember hearing that song as a kid?

A: Of course. How -- why -- why would I remember it to this day?

Q: And who -- who sang it -- when -- do you remember when you heard it?

A: The -- the SA troops marching in the streets.

Q: And they sang?

A: And on the radio, and wherever you went that -- and they had more, you know, that's just one, that's the most bloody of them. Hate the Juden [speaks German]. I mean, hang the Jews, kill the bosses, or something like that, I mean like that's the most marvelous songs. I mean horrible, horrifying. If you were a Jew, and you understood this, the terror was unbelievable. And it didn't matter, because he appealed -- first of all, the mistake was made in the tret -- Treaty of Versailles, where they made Germany pay unbelievable reparations that they couldn't handle, and Germany was really in a bad way. So, lot of people out of work and things like that, people wound up in prison, Hitler saw his chance. He took the worst elements out of prison, the people out of work, hung a beautiful uniform on them, nice jack boots, nice cap. [indecipherable] and everything, had them marching. Tried to get them job, oh, whatever you take away from the Jews, you know, all right? So, th-th-these weren't the nicest people in the world that were

enrolled in those troops, I can't call them strup -- storm troops, even though it says sturm abteilung, right? Sturm means storm, you know, but that's not the -- the SS is like I said, something totally apart. But they weren't nice people. The head man was Mr. Worm, and he was also a very disreputable character, you know, out of prison, and all kinds of quirks shall we say. So, it was horrible.

Q: Did it surprise you that there was so much anti-Semitism? You say you didn't grow up with a lot of anti-Semitism.

A: No. Was --

Q: It didn't sur -- it didn't surprise you?

A: You see my father, the last free election, he volunteered for the election board.

Q: Mm.

A: You know, because there was other people running than Hitler. And already at that time it was a losing proposition because Hitler promised all kinds of things to the masses, which he actually implemented eventually, which the other people didn't have the nerve to come up with things like that. So, you know, that's why I say, hit -- Hitler ran the show way before he was elected.

Q: But let me ask you something, Kurt, you're a child.

A: Yeah.

Q: You're 10 years old in 1932.

A: Yeah.

Q: So there's a lot you don't know, or necessarily understand.

A: Exactly.

Q: What's -- what's happening between you and your friends? Do your Christian friends stop being friends with you? Do you live in a neighborhood where it's mixed? What's -- what goes on with you as a child?

A: Well, when I went to my -- wh-when I couldn't go to Christian school any more, regular school, and my next door neighbor, I used to be friends with the boy, he was a little bit older than me. I don't know whether he stopped being friends with me, I'm -- I really don't know for sure. But then I associated with all the children that went to the Jewish school that were in my grade, boys and girls, and things like that. So I did not associate with Christian children any more.

Q: So no one said something to you? No -- no -- somebody was [indecipherable]

A: No remarks were made, no.

Q: Right.

A: No, no.

Q: Right. Now, when was the decision made, and were you involved in a discussion about -- you were leaving to go to France? You were just told you were going to go? Did you not want to do it, or did you think that this was exciting?

A: Remember, in Germany you do what you're told, okay? As much as you're being loved, you feel that that is the right thing, if your parents -- if your parents, your father, your mother tell you, look, you're going to France to Uncle Pierre and Aunt Emma, you know, because things here -- well, I realized how f -- how bad things were. So my father was smart enough, the oldest son, he got se -- out of Germany first. It was on my 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, basically. And I got on the railroad, on -- my aunt must have picked me up in Paris and we lived in Rennes at the time.

Q: So this is August of 1933?

A: Yeah, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1933, I left Germany.



Q: So that --

A: Was a week after my 11<sup>th</sup> birthday. And then I went to live with my aunt and uncle. My -- my uncle was a French career officer.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was a doctor, right? And he met my Aunt Emma during the occupation of first -- of the first World War. After the first World War, he was sent -- French troops were occupying the Rhineland with the British. And he met my aunt in Germany, in her hometown, and they hit it off somehow. And then of course, an officer is called to duty wherever it's called, so then he went to the Middle East, and he went to the bak -- Balkans, and things like that. So they got married in 1930 in our -- in our apartment in Cologne, they have a very large house. I mean house, a very large apartment.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Actually, we had -- which was totally unheard of at the time, we had a bathroom like in the United States where the bath and the toilet and the sinks, everything is in one, and then we had a separate toilet. And we had two entrances, one for the servers and one for the regular people. So it was quite large, and I remember the wedding quite well. And they got married by us, you know, was [indecipherable] his family couldn't be there, was in Germany, his fra -- fa -- parents, his brother lived in France. So anyway, so they got married there, this I remember, henceforth -- and then she left with him to live wherever he was stationed, which was Rennes. And that's where I went.

Q: Okay, we have to stop the tape and change it.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Kurt, so you knew your aunt and uncle when you -- before you went to see them?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Were they older than your mother and father, much older, or --

A: My aunt was two to four years older than my mother. I think two years, maybe.

Q: But na -- so there wasn't a big difference?

A: No, no. She -- there -- she -- she looked pretty much -- they looked pretty much alike, my aunt -- the one that I went to, and my mother. And -- and my uncle was born in '89, so by that time it -- no -- yeah, '89 -- '89, it was '33, so what was he? 11 and 33 is 44 years old.

Q: Right, so he was a bit older. They didn't have children?

A: No, obviously that --

Q: Right.

A: -- helped a lot. And he was like a second father to me, he was wonderful.

Q: Really?

A: He just -- they took me to their heart. Now, my aunt of course, that's family. But he a stranger. That's very -- the most wonderful man I ever met.

Q: So he touched you a lot. He [indecipherable] you.

A: Oh [indecipherable] fantastic.

Q: Yes.

A: Fantastic, I mean, you know. And I lived with them for five years.

Q: Right. That's a long time.

A: Passed by very quickly.

Q: Right. But it was good for you there?

A: Oh, fantastic.

Q: And you went to school?

A: Yeah, there I went through what they call in France this -- are we taping?

Q: Yeah.

A: In France they call it lycée, in Germany it's gymnasium.

Q: Right.

A: Okay? So they put me in this sixth degree. You come s -- like I say again, you start like in grammar school, and you wind up, you know, with your baccalaureate.

Q: Right.

A: So they put me back one year due to the language, but within three months I rattled off French, with the proper accent and things like that. Well, I was only 11, so you catch on real quick. And as a matter of fact, even if I didn't understand everything, I remember one day -- the education is a little different in France than it is here. It's mainly the arts and history and such, not how to make a dollar. Over here it's much more sensible. They teach you economics and things like that. In France, no. Ancient history and things like that. Some poetry. So I remember Aesop's Fables, they were all translated into French in a big book by Mr. LaFontaine and they were pretty strict in school, so we have to learn a fable per session, whatever it was. So I rehearse with my uncle. So I rattled off that whole fable, perfect intonation, stop, go, whatever. My en -- my uncle looked at me and he said, do you know what you say? I says no. It was so perfect, but I didn't know what I -- what I really was saying, you know? The thi -- that's when you're a child, you mimic anything, and I did fantastic. Of course, later on I have to [indecipherable] same thing with mathematics. They used to throw numbers at you, multipliclati -- multiplication, addition, subtraction, a teacher went like this, like that, picked you and you better be on the ball. There

was no missing. That's how come you didn't need a calculator at the time. You know what I'm saying?

Q: Right.

A: You really knew how to calculate in your head. That -- these are the things that were important there.

Q: Now your parents and brother came to Paris in 1934, a year after you?

A: After me.

Q: Right.

A: But it took that long for my father to get all the permits, and to -- he was still able at the time to take all the furniture and everything that they had out of Germany, plus his money.

Q: Still he could take his money?

A: Yeah. I don't know how he did that, that was a serious piece of change. And then he went to Paris, but of course, the French had accepted a lot of German Jewish refugees, also Polish for that matter. And -- but the only thing, there were restrictions. You could not start a job in a factory or anything like that. You had to start a business as it would be. So my father opened up a meat cutting -- meat packing business, you know?

Q: That's very different from what he was doing in Germany, yeah?

A: Absolutely. The thing was, some of my mother's relative's children, they were butchers. So he had two or three of them that did the work. My father was a businessman, he knew how to run a business, and he's the one with the money, so he bought or rented the building, he bought the trucks, he bought the machinery and he did the advertising. So it was hard -- you got to understand, France is a very culinary country. So to break in to the -- like what they call [indecipherable] which is the wurst, sausage business and ja -- ham and things like that, it's not

the easiest, so you have to really make a good product. But the Germans are fabulous when it comes to sausages and such. So the boys were good, they made inroads, slowly. The only thing wrong about the whole situation was there were young boys. In the early 30's in France, '34 - '35 - '36, everybody flocked to Paris. Americans, everybody, British, they loved it.

[indecipherable]. So the boys discovered the races, they discovered the women, and they discovered gambling. Now, they were drawing a fairly decent salary, but that wasn't enough for the lifestyle. So what they did, unbeknownst to my father, obviously, they looked at the delivery schedule for the -- today. So they filled the truck with all the stuff, and before the regular delivery boys could start, they went to the customers and sold the stuff at a little discount. So when the regular discount -- ah, the regular driver came along, sorry, you delivered this morning. So before my father found out, it was a little late. The business was shut there. So who was stuck with everything? My father had to pay off the machinery, had to pay off the trucks, have to pay off everything. So whatever money you have goes down the sewer. And the guys, couple of them, disappeared to the hospitality of countries such as Argentina. You know, a lot of these countries have been populated by people that weren't totally clean in their native country, okay?

Q: But this -- these were relatives?

A: No.

Q: Not these boys?

A: Only one of them was sort of like a relative.

Q: I see.

A: And he had nerve, what they call in Jewish chutzpah, unbelievable. He had his -- he had the nerve to come and had his clothes in my parent's apartment and he used to come and visit occasionally, and my father wanted to kill him. And he would have been able to do it, physically.

So my mother says, no [indecipherable]. So that's how come he survived. Now I jump a little bit forward. The war is over, the guy is alive, he went back to Paris -- he was hiding in the south of France, he was -- went back to Paris, opened up the same business, and he had the nerve to use my father's trade name for his own business. But being that nobody was cheating him, he went to be very, very successful. I met him after the war, also.

Q: Uh-huh. Did you -- when your -- your s -- you're still living with your aunt and uncle for --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- for five years. You don't go back to your parents until 1938.

A: Ah, well --

Q: But you s -- but you see them?

A: -- we visited, she -- my mother came, and -- or I visited Paris, I mean.

Q: Right.

A: As a matter of fact, I remember I was a young kid, I was 11 - 12 years old, and my father -- I tell you, Paris was unbelievable, he used to take me to nightclubs where the White Russians, who fled the revolutions were dancing, the Cossacks and things like that, and the -- in France, it's okay. Children 11 - 12 years old, it's not a problem. So I went to all these places, you know? That's when my father still was in business, you know?

Q: Right.

A: And then after the thing went, shall we say south, I have to use euphemisms, he had a magnificent apartment in Paris. I think it was -- I -- I don't remember the exact name, it doesn't matter. Fantastic, maybe seven rooms and things. Concierge, elevators, the whole bit. Couldn't carry that one any more.

Q: Right.

A: So we had to entrench somewhat. Not that it was bad, we still had a concierge, and instead of seven rooms, we had now five rooms of -- you know, and things like that. So it wasn't really all that bad, but then my father had to back to it -- to this -- his original business in Paris, you know.

Q: But he still made enough money so that you didn't have to live in a terrible circumstance, is that right?

A: Oh, no [indecipherable]. Things were pretty decent. My father worked very hard, and my mother took a little job.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, as a nanny to chi -- to -- to a child, you know?

Q: Right.

A: Very nice people. Jewish, of course. And so they made ends meet. And ma -- my mother, food-wise, was easy to get along with. If you give her a pound of chocolate today, that's all she needed. Skinny like that.

Q: Yes. Right.

A: It's genes. But sh-she knew si -- how to cook. I used to know how to cook, too. I remember when I went to Paris after, in 1937 to live with them, and my mother was working, my father was home, or came home. My brother was there. I used to make French fries. In French they have these special things, you know, like a container with a screen and the oil --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- and it bub -- and you know exactly when to throw the French fries -- the potatoes in, when they pop up to the surface, I remember, I -- I wasn't -- I wasn't exactly a -- you know [indecipherable] as it would be, so I --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- you know. So I -- and later on, as a matter of fact, I was but -- I went to school in Paris, and I used to iron. I was the -- I must have been a big 15 at the time, I used to iron my -- when my father came home, you know, we had this -- these two big suitcases where all the samples were in.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I used to refresh the -- like I say, the jabot, the lace creations, and I used to iron them. 15 years old. Think about that. Amaze.

Q: That's pretty complicated.

A: So that's -- I'm telling you, I -- I was quite talented.

Q: Right. When you moved back -- when -- when you moved back to your parent's place --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- rather than visiting, did your brother stay there, or did he go now to the aunt and uncles?

A: N-No, he -- he switched over, he went --

Q: He switched over.

A: -- he went with my aunt and uncle. Well, it's good for them to have a child, you know.

Q: Child, right, right.

A: Of course you --

Q: Was it easier for your parents also not to have two of you at home?

A: Yeah, yeah, well listen, he wasn't making the money he was used to.

Q: Right.

A: You know, and my mother had to, you know, have a little job, so it was easier for them. Of course I think they -- they sent some money, minimal amounts, even while I was there, to my aunt and uncle --



Q: Right, right.

A: -- you know, so that it wasn't total charity case, you know what I'm saying.

Q: Do you have any idea how much your parents missed having the two of you in the house?

Cause it's very different to have one child, rather than the two together.

A: No, no, no, it's totally different, it's totally different. I mean, my parents went through so much that they were very staunch and strong people of character. What is needed, has to be done. It's no beating your breast and -- and -- and -- and -- and running to the shrink or anything like that, uh-uh. They were far stronger than that, you know?

Q: What -- you're now a-at an age, by 1935, you're not a child any more. You're now --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- 13 years old.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you get Bar Mitzvahed, by the way?

A: Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: In France?

A: Oh that -- that -- that's the most amazing thing. I got Bar Mitvahs -- Bar Mitzvahed in Germany, my father's hometown, with the rabbi.

Q: How [indcipherable]

A: We went back -- we went back to Germany, 1935.

Q: Really?

A: Honest. We managed. Just things are -- you -- you were still abe -- my aunt, my youngest aunt was still living in Germany. So was my oldest aunt, okay? And my grandfather still had his house. My aunt sort of like hat -- she had haberdashery, beautiful, you know my -- see, when -- it

was customary when your daughters get married, to give them a dowry. Now, three of them were married. My youngest one -- aunt, was not. So instead of a dowry, he bought her a haberdashery. Really fine stuff. Really. And it was in the house, the bottom. Two show windows, central entrance, you know, the whole bit. She had decorators come and do the windows and whatnot. And I remember playing in there when I was a kid, I used to love it, you know, I -- on the holidays, you know, Christian holidays, people used to shop for shirts, hats, [indecipherable], ties. I used to lo -- pla -- love to play with the ties. I used to know how to present a tie, you know, with the knot and things like that. I was a kid, and the people loved to see me around there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So that part was okay. And so I went back, and of course I had to learn my Bar Mitzvah reading. I had at least a whole month to learn everything, not a year or two. And I went to the rabbi every day in the afternoon, when he had time.

Q: So you were in Germany for a month in 1935, or did you do this in --

A: Yeah. No, no, no, that was in Germany.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: We went to Germany a month before so that I could get the teaching to read the Torah. Which I had only one month, I mean, I tell you, I don't know, I'm not stupid now, but I was pretty bright as a young man, or child, you know.

Q: Now your mother stayed in France.

A: No.

Q: She came too?

A: My mother went with me, sure.

Q: I see. So what was that like to be in Germany three years after hit -- or two years after Hitler takes over. Is it -- was it terrible?

A: I don't remember, I didn't -- I didn't hang out too much. I went from my grandfather's place to the rabbi's place and back. And the synagogue was still standing and there was the Jewish school where we eventually went because there was a Jewish center, a magnificent gothic cathedral, I mean like -- a -- a synagogue, excuse me. I mean, whoa, fantastic. Of course it was Conservative with the mab -- women upstairs and the men downstairs, a separation, you know, with the pulpit, this, that, what, the Torah, it was magnificent. Oak -- oak things there for everybody who -- who bought a -- a seat there, you know, like put your stuff in, your tallis, your -- your -- your tefillis, you know, the whole thing. And the [indecipherable] it was beautiful. And then there was the Jewish center next door, and the bottom floor was the Jewish school where the rabbi taught the various grades of Jewish children, from the community, you know? I mean, it wasn't a hundred children, you know what I'm saying, but they were -- ranged in age, let's say, from -- from I -- argument-wise, from let's say seven to 14 -15 maybe? I don't know.

Q: Let me ask you something. You said earlier that your father had to give up his business in Germany --

A: Uh-huh.

Q: -- because Jews had to not have businesses. But you go back in 1935 and your aunt has a haberdashery and she's Jewish. So how is that?

A: I -- this I can't figure. I don't know whether she's -- I think she was still in business. It was different. My father had a different kind of business, I think. And they had signs -- I don't even think that they had signs on the stores that said Juden, meaning Jews. You know, you were s -- not supposed to buy there. Of course, the business must have fallen off drastically. But there

were some people that weren't so diehard, you know what I'm saying? In a small town everybody knows each other. It's different than in the big city. You know?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So henceforth -- the house was still -- my grandfather was still in the house. My grandmother had died in 19 -- no, I don't know when she died. I want to say in -- I wa -- I think I was in Paris when my grandmother died. And then my grandfather died later, around '39, and my aunt stayed with him, the single one, because she couldn't abandon him, it -- she felt obligated.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then she managed, at the last minute, to get shipped to England. Of course, whatever she had, went. I mean, she couldn't take a nickel along.

Q: But she survived.

A: The store, the house, they took everything.

Q: Right. But she survived.

A: But sh-she managed to go -- to get to England.

Q: Right.

A: From there, eventually she -- during the war actually, she transferred from England to the United States.

Q: Now, are you hearing about things that are going on in Germany? I mean, you're there for a month, and you say pretty much you don't know what's going on. When you go back to France, are -- are you reading the papers as a 13 - 14 year old kid, or you're not?

A: Yeah, sort of. You -- a-and then you hear on the radio, when we -- the one thing I remember was [indecipherable] Olympics, you know, with Jesse Owens.

Q: In '36?

A: '36.

Q: Right.

A: And Hitler occupying the Rhineland. And we thought for sure they gonna cut him off at the pass.

Q: Who was going to cut him off?

A: The French, they had the --

Q: I see.

A: -- they had the biggest army in the world. Two million people [indecipherable] arms. All they had to do is move. They moved out of the Rhineland, they weren't supposed to occupy the Rhineland, Hitler moved into the Rhine -- this I remember, and my uncle, who was a military man, couldn't understand that the politicians screw everything up, you know. Why they didn't move? Go figure.

Q: So what did -- what did you all -- what were people talking about? Were you talking with adults or were you talking with kids about what -- what's Germany going to do? Once they go into the Rhineland, do you now think they're going to go someplace else, you think they're going to stop?

A: No. No, no, no, no, that -- it was a shock, as it would be --

Q: Right.

A: -- already.

Q: Right.

A: So you know, you get shocked often enough, it doesn't shock you any more.

Q: Right. So does going into Austria shock you? The Germans.

A: No, no, that --

Q: No.

A: -- that was anschluss.

Q: Right.

A: They're German speaking people and they did [indecipherable] Austria and then a little bit tricky was Czechoslovak -- I think, was Czechoslovakia in 1938?

Q: It's before. It's before the anschluss.

A: 1938?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that was a bad one. And so by that time, he was getting stronger and stronger and stronger. He had Austria on his side, he owned all of Germany, now he had Czechoslovakia, hey, hey, hey, we're becoming a big power. And everybody loves it, nobody does anything to him. So Hitler gotta be the right man, right? If you're German.

Q: Were you afraid?

A: No.

Q: You weren't?

A: No.

Q: Because you didn't think he was going to come west? You didn't think --

A: Not with a two million dollar army. The -- the -- there was a big fallacy. Again, the Maginot Line was the most beautiful military construction ever conceived. Everything was underground, whole towns and whatnot, with elevators, [indecipherable] blah, blah, blah. What was wrong with the Maginot Line? It was supposed to go from the Swiss border to the ocean. So when they hit Belgium, the Belgian got bent out of shape. How can you do this to us? I mean, I don't invent this, this is fact. How can you do this to us? We fought for you in World War I, and we will fight

for you if World War II should happen. Belgium is gonna be -- is gonna be a big problem for the Panzer divisions? I don't think so. So the Germans left the -- the Maginot Line where it was, and came right through Germany like an open gate. You see? So what do you do? And th -- from that moment on things got real bad.

Q: Where y -- Harry stays with your aunt and uncle until when? He -- you come in 1938 to your parents -- or '37?

A: No, no, to my parents [indecipherable]

Q: You come to '37.

A: 1937, right.

Q: Right, and he goes to your aunt and uncle.

A: Right.

Q: Okay. Now, does he return in '38 - '39, or what?

A: Yeah.

Q: He does.

A: Yeah.

Q: Before the Germans take over France?

A: Yeah, yeah, '39 the Germans -- you see, from the declaration of war o -- by France and England was on September -- the ultimatum was acember -- December the third. That's '39, that's when the war was supposed to start in earnest, but nobody was shooting at anybody. The French mal -- French mobilized, the Germans obviously were mobilized, and they called it the funny war because nobody did anything. The Germans were behind the Siegfried Line, the French behind the Maginot Line. They figure ah, you know. Figure that goes on forever now. The British sent over Hindu troops to France. I remember, I was there. You know the ones with

the turban? The Sikhs, you know and all that? And the French had the colonial troops and whatnot, and -- but didn't cut the mustard. Once the Germans started rolling, that was it.

Q: What did you think in 1939 when they attacked Poland?

A: I didn't think

Q: You didn't think.

Q: I mean, I remember exactly when they walked into Poland. Across the street from where we were living, which was very large central area where all the avenues converged towards this area, and there was a beautiful park up there, and my boss and I, we were, you know, we went through the park, you know, we sat around and you know, and a guy comes by after lunch, and he's all bent out of shape, and I said to him -- so he said, the Germans just invaded Poland. Then we ran home, we knew that -- that wasn't good, you know?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that's when we hung up -- hu-hung on to the radio to hear the ultimatum, you know, in later afternoon that either you get out of Poland, or we going to start fighting you.

Q: Mm-hm. We have to s -- change the tape.

End of Tape Two



### Beginning Tape Three

Q: Okay. All right, so now you hear that the Germans have attacked Poland. Is this the start of World War II in your brain? This is it. Do you begin to hear about ghettos being formed in ger -- in Poland? Nothing? No.

A: The following morning at five o'clock, my father put my brother and me on the train to Brittany, out of Paris because everybody thought the Germans were going to bomb Paris, which they never did, obviously. And what was in Brittany, my aunt, while my uncle, being a soldier, was on the front. She was alone, so she took a vacation in Brittany on the coast, and rented a -- the bottom floor of a house. So my father called her, she was, send them over, so we went there, and stayed in Brittany for a f-few months, you know? It was still -- the weather was still nice.

Q: And your mother and father remain in Paris?

A: Yeah.

Q: And when do you meet up again? After the Germans come in and occupy France?

A: Yeah. I -- the first time I saw my parents was on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

Q: 1941? That means after you have been in at least one camp?

A: Oh yeah --

Q: Or two --

A: -- ha -- ha -- at least three camps.

Q: -- si -- at -- at least three camps. So from Brittany, after that, and your brother doesn't see parents either?

A: My brother went back to live with my parents.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: But he was younger than me, see, it's a matter of age, see?

Q: All right, so in '39, you're sent -- both of you were sent to Brittany. Within a few months he goes back to Paris and you stay in Brittany? Okay.

A: No.

Q: No?

A: I went to Le Mans. My aunt --

Q: Another aunt?

A: No, the same aunt.

Q: Okay.

A: That had rented the house in Brittany.

Q: Right.

A: Rented now a house in Le Mans. You know Le Mans? Car races 24 hours.

Q: Yes.

A: Also beautiful town. There's so many nice towns in France, I'll tell you. Anyway, and -- so for a little while, I used to hang around as the word goes, I didn't do anything.

Q: Right.

A: So eventually they had to put me back into school, around -- before Christmas, '39. My uncle, of course, was on the front and I was keeping my aunt company.

Q: Now this is the original aunt?

A: Yeah, from -- from -- from France.

Q: From -- from [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, so that we --

Q: You [indecipherable]

A: -- don't change aunts --

Q: Okay, this is the same person?

A: -- this -- this -- always the same aunt.

Q: Okay. And you're now 15 years old?

A: No, no --

Q: You're 16 --

A: -- I'm 17.

Q: -- 17. Okay, so you're an old guy already.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, okay, so you're 17.

A: So --

Q: So you're with Emma?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Now, being that I went to school in Le Mans previous, before I went to Paris, right? From '35 when we left Rennes, we went to Le Mans until '37 --

Q: Right.

A: -- when my uncle got transferred from Le Mans to Veldun.

Q: Okay, so now you're back.

A: Then -- now I'm back and I had two real good friends who we went to school together, we were inseparable, right? So I used to meet them every evening, you know. One of them worked for a newspaper. The other one decided to become a salesman in a very high fashion female or ladies' shoe store.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was handsome, bi -- was tall, very handsome guy. He just was in the right business, if you know what I mean. And so we met every evening after they were finished working. We had a gay old time, I mean, the th -- the three of us together like nothing happened.

Q: In spite of the fact that your country is occupied?

A: No, it's not occupied yet.

Q: No, this i -- this is '39, this is not occupied yet.

A: Thirt -- no, no, si -- the Germans started running through the [indecipherable] countries in May 1940.

Q: Right.

A: And they hit France big time in -- you know, I'm not dead on the dates, but I would say around June 20<sup>th</sup> or so, the French signed the armistice. By that time the Germans had rolled up whatever was left of the French army, horse and buggy types. You know what I'm saying?

Q: But before that, so you're with your three friends having a -- a good old time?

A: They -- they -- they nailed me when the Germans started invading [indecipherable] countries in 1940, in May -- May 20-something or other. Towards the end of May, I think. And they rounded up everybody of German origin. Now, I was a German origin.

Q: Yeah.

A: Jewish didn't come into consideration. They didn't know. You know what I mean?

Q: They didn't know. They didn't know.

A: The French don't make you wear a star. That's Germans, you know. So --

Q: Did anybody ask you if you were Jewish?

A: No.

Q: It's not on the record anywhere?

A: No.

Q: No. Okay.

A: You were ec -- you're in France, you speak French like a Frenchman, you act like a Frenchman, you expected to be Catholic in a 99 percent Catholic country. Very simple. You know what I'm saying? So, they rounded us up, together with what I would call the real Germans, Aryans that were caught. It's called the fifth column. You heard about the fifth column in the Spanish civil war, where they put civilians to infiltrate a place, and then they take over the place. You know, so they had the same thing in France and the French actually did make German prisoners.

Q: Right.

A: And they happened to be -- we happened to be concentrated, or quartered in a military base in Le Mans. So we -- there we are, the Germans in the German uniform. The German Nazi type civilians, plus a whole bunch of Jews, too. So we're all together. I mean, the masses --

Q: This is --

A: -- soon found out we were Jewish, but the soldiers weren't up -- you see, there's a big difference between the Nazis and the German army. The German army isn't as bad as the Nazis.

Q: But how did they find out you're Jewish?

A: Listen, nothing stays secret for long, okay?

Q: Yeah, but who is te -- do you know how they find out?

A: Who knows? I have no idea. I don't even know. I -- I assume they found out we were Jewish.

Q: So at first you're taken because you're from Germany?

A: Yeah.

Q: So -- so the German refugees into France --

A: Uh-huh.

Q: -- get taken?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: My assumption is that most of these German refugees are Jewish --

A: Of course.

Q: -- because why are they leaving Germany?

A: Yeah.

Q: Right?

A: Yeah.

Q: So maybe that's the assumption.

A: Who knows? It's hard to tell. The German soldiers in German uniform, there were a lot of flyboys there, in German uniform, they were hanging out by themselves, with possibly the fifth column types, and the Jews were hanging out with themselves. They were all going to associate with shall we call it the enemy, right? So obviously there must have been a shift, or a sh-schism, whatever you call it. And --

Q: And where do they put you in Le Mans?

A: Well, I told you, we were s-stationed in a military base. The place was okay, we have beds and things like that, or cots.

Q: So it wasn't like a prison?

A: No, no, it's -- it's a military camp. And then what happened, across the street there was the British military camp, and you know, [indecipherable] had a lot of British soldiers in France, you know. And of course, we didn't know that. So one night, they told us to get up, pack our things and marched us out. That's how come we found out a little bit up the road was the British camp.

But the British were -- might have been gone by that time. And they marched us, and we were basically running away from the oncoming German army, surrounded by French soldiers. You know, and there was a lot of people [indecipherable] like the Germans, and the German Jews, and everybody. It was a column of people walking. How many? Don't ask me. Hundreds, maybe more, 200, I don't know.

Q: But you're surrounded by French?

A: Surrounded by French soldiers.

Q: Cause it's the French [indecipherable]. Okay. Kurt, I'm sorry, there was a bit of a technical difficulty. So where we stopped was, you began to speak about, you were marched out of the camp and you were surrounded by French soldiers.

A: French soldiers, yeah.

Q: And so, repeat what happens then.

A: Well, then we're walking down one of the main roads, and we're not alone, the French were running away, too, and the French army was running the same way with horse, carriages, and things like that, dragging maybe some cannons or something, I don't know for sure. And all of a sudden, aft -- I -- I'm talking this been going on, it's very hard walking, but few hours, you know, later, it's now daytime, we started at night. All of a sudden we get a visit from German fighter planes that come over and they start strafing us, you know, with bullets and things like that. And well, we scattered sideways and whatnot, and then when they're gone, we start all over again. Keep on marching, and then every once in a blue moon, we have a rest, you know, by the side of the road, you collapse on the grass over there for, you know. And didn't have really much food, or anything. I had the -- I had two suitcases, my aunt took good care of me. Two large suitcases, one with food, one with clothing. Well, that lasted about a mile or two, because 30 - 40

pounds on each side, I -- I couldn't walk like that for long. So I took a few things out of there, a couple of cans of food, took a pajama, turned it, tied a knot, inside out, put it over my shoulder. And I put that in front of a house we were passing by around midnight or two in the morning, I don't know, that was -- that was the end of my possessions.

Q: There are a lot of people leaving the north, right? Lot of people from --

A: Ev-Every -- everybody was running away because they knew the Germans were coming and they were getting away from the Germans.

Q: Right.

A: Now, the most amazing thing of it all, it was like the stranger than fiction. All of a sudden I hear my name being called, and I turned around. And who the heck is on the main drag, we were on the side? My aunt, my brother, my friend and his parents, they were all leaving at the same time. I meet them in the middle of nowhere, 12 hours after we left the camp. Do you believe that? Of course, I didn't have much of a chance to say hello and hug them --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- whatnot because the Germans, the French soldier says, that-a-way fellow, none of this.

Q: Right.

A: You know, they were afraid I was going to get lost in the masses.

Q: Right.

A: So, but that's the most amazing thing that -- think about it, the odds. There's hundreds of thousands of people and all of a sudden I'm at the same heights as my -- my aunt, my brother and my friends from the --

Q: Right.

A: -- they were -- they were leaving together, you know?



Q: So they were also going?

A: Yeah, they were going south, yeah.

Q: Were they -- were they walking, or they had a car? Do you remember?

A: Tell you the truth, I really don't know what. I don't think they have a car. Well, they -- they must have had something, you know.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Because they mo-moving faster than we were, so they must have had something, okay?

Q: You took out a couple of cans of food, you must have been still very hungry, cause you were marching for a long time.

A: Oh, but -- we marched for -- for several days. We marched approximately, I would say, a good -- I -- I mean 20 miles a day, at least.

Q: 20 miles a day?

A: Yeah, at least. So we walked for three days, must have been about 60 miles. Of course, at night we stayed someplace, you know, whatever horror place they could drum up. They couldn't throw us in a prison, no prison was big enough, you know. So they put us in a schoolyard, or a restaurant, or you know, whatever was handy, could accommodate us cramped together. I remember the worst part was one day -- one night, found some what yo -- I would call a beds -- bedstand. The frame, and wires strung across, you know, like a -- this. And I laid on that. I mean, like wasn't very comfortable, you know? Can you imagine how hard it is to lay? But you're young. Well the next thing I know, I wake up. Somebody is urinating on my feet. Wonderful, I'm telling you, the l-life was great. There wasn't -- he coul -- he couldn't even get out because we were so jammed together, so he stood up and he urinate on my feet, hey.

Q: And you thanked him, I'm sure.

A: Oh, I -- I gave a -- I -- I gave him a piece of my mind, but too late, I was wet. Of course, urine isn't the worst thing.

Q: What were your shoes like?

A: I don't remember.

Q: But did your feet hurt? Do you remember that? Walking that much?

A: My feet hurt, are you kidding? The whole sole of my foot was a callus. Then fortunately, after three days of walking, they found a truck and they put us on a truck. A --

Q: Oh, that was nice.

A: Oh, I tell you, and the countryside was beautiful. That doesn't change. I remember once we were resting, and I was against the wall, like about at least that high there, you know, sitting, resting against the wall. You know, I had a little lunch or something, a bite to eat, whatever. And the Germans were shelling us. And all of a sudden I hear this big explosion. And man, I don't know how I did it. In one flash I was over the wall, on the other side of the wall.

Q: Well, this must have been a nine foot wall.

A: Huh?

Q: Must have been a eight or nine feet wall --

A: Yeah, yeah --

Q: -- right? And you went -- and you --

A: -- yeah, that's what I'm saying. I -- I jumped over that like it was -- it wasn't even there.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Scares s -- does a wonderful thing for you. And of course I was young, and I had -- I hadn't suffered yet, you understand?

Q: Yes.

A: And so -- it gave me a good scare though, but th-that told me that things weren't exactly going well. So anyway, then, eventually we got the truck and the truck brought us to a railroad station, and then we got put into cattle cars, you know? Eight horses, 40 men, that's what's marked on the cattle cars. [speaks foreign language here]. That's what they did in World War I.

Q: Forty men or eight horses.

A: Or eight horses, right. And that's where they put us in these cattle cars, and of course we had a French -- two -- two French soldiers per car to guard us, you know. And being that things weren't going exactly a hundred percent, it was stop and go and stop and go. So we went from -- well, what would I call it? Brittany, sort of like France, Normandy, all the way down to southern France in -- in the train, and then they turned around and shunted the car, and the next thing we knew, we're in central France in the plateau region. You know, there's the mountainous region like 3,000 feet up. And that's -- we have to walk some more from the main town which was called Marvejols, to a little place in the mountains, which was a sh-sheep ranch. It was called Malavillers. And that's where we stopped, and that's where we were going to stay. And we had the greatest accommodation in the world. We were staying in a sheep barn, and we were sleeping on a small layer of straw over the sheep dung. It was just wonderful.

Q: Over dung?

A: Over the sheep dung. They didn't take the sh --

Q: Oh, sheep.

A: -- the sh -- the dung out, they left it there.

Q: I see.

A: They just put some straw over it, so that's where we stayed.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Wonderful accommodations.

Q: Did it stink?

A: Ah, who knows? Who knows? I can't remember that any more.

Q: Now this is -- this is the French, this is not the Germans still?

A: No, that's the fr --

Q: That's still the French.

A: -- that's still the French, oh yeah. And we got f-fed very well. We had quite a bit of freedom.

We were in the mountains, how far can you run? You see, even if you were -- if you were of a mind to run away, it was -- it wasn't going to work. Here's why.

Q: Still, it's interesting, isn't it, that you have the kind of freedom that i-it -- you were --

A: Yeah, w-w-way up in the mountains. And once in a blue moon on a Sunday, we went down to the nearest village, see what you could get, little something or something. Human contact, you know, French people. Strangest village I ever saw. All the houses were built without windows. You never saw a soul. A dog occasionally, and a nice little brook run -- river, small brook, whatever, run alongside, really picturesque. And the houses -- w-we went inside a few times because made friends with the locals. And they were heated like -- there's places like that I think in England, too, there's hot springs that run underneath the houses. It's the most amazing thing what you can learn. I mean, not because you're looking for it, because the circumstances bring it out. And the people were quite ugly. Must have been a lot of intermingling, you know?

Q: Is that why be -- because of the hot springs, is that why they didn't have windows? You don't know?

A: I didn't delve into this too much.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know, but the -- did -- nobody did nothing to us, so then we saw so -- went to some farms, the people were quite nice. Well, you see, we all spoke perfect French, no accent, no nothing. So obviously, some stranger comes, speaks in French, ah -- ah, the people up there in the mountain, you know. You know, we didn't look like dangerous criminals, so wha -- what? They treated us pretty good.

Q: So then you went back to --

A: Of course we went back. See, we're -- ex -- e -- allow me, where were you going to go without papers?

Q: I don't know.

A: Right. As a young man, you were supposed to be in the French army of sorts, or y -- if you were German, you were supposed to be in the German army. You had no business ha-hanging around at a young age gallivanting in the country, you see? That's -- that's why. And the French would nail everybody because you need papers. I have the papers yet. I mean, it's like an accordion, those papers, it's not like a nice little card like this, you know? I mean, even in Germany.

Q: So how --

A: So they had everything nailed down to a science, there was no place to go.

Q: How long were you in Malavive?

A: Malavillers --

Q: Malavillers.

A: -- I would say, okay, the war was over, it was June, right? July, August, yeah, maybe two months. Oh, by the way, at very -- at the very beginning, being that the German Germans, you know, soldiers and whatnot were with us --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- the German armistice commission, meaning colonels, majors, generals, SS, government people, came to check out who was in the camp. So immediately the Germans, like have a dogtag, whatever it is, they were put aside and sent back to the Fatherlands to fight another day or whatever, you know? And then all of a sudden we weren't German any more, now we were Jews. Now we were officially Jews. You gotta understand that. We were not with Germans any more, German nationals that fought for the Germans, we were Germans of German origin. So now that they took the Christian people away, all of a sudden I wasn't German any more, now I was a Jew, officially. So that the Germans made the French nail the Jews. That's how come we never got out from under. See, the French nailed us because we were of German origin. And they were eventually gonna screen us, and then they was -- was gonna let us go. Never got to this, the Germans got there first.

Q: But there is an anti-Jewish law in Vichy, and you're in Vichy.

A: No, that came later. That was all the way at the beginning. They're talking 1940, they -- -- they -- they barely have time to get themselves organized. You know, the Germans took over the e -- the end of June, a-and this was right then and there, so what, you know?

Q: So are you now under German rule?

A: No --yeah -- well, we are now under French rule, doing what the Germans tell them to do, keep the Jews, you know, locked up. So, after a little while, for some reason, they send us to a different camp. You know, again train, but this time we -- we picked up people from all over. We were hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of people. And they're winding up in the south of France, the eastern coast by the Mediterranean and we're walking from the railroad station through the town -- I don't know how far it was. And then we wind up on a camp that is built on

the boards on the sand of the beach. Was a very large, long beach. And there were dozen upon dozens of barracks. And things were pretty primitive at the time. There was no running water, no drinking water. They hadn't set up the food situation yet, and that wasn't very nice. That's the only time that I really fell apart, I collapsed. I went -- couldn't move any more, so I fell asleep. And when I woke up, I was alright again, you know, and I dealt with the situation, because I couldn't -- I couldn't handle it any more. That was too much. I went catatonic. S --

Q: Did anyone do anything to you when --

A: Oh, the other people have their own tsoris, you know. Enough problems of their own. So, then later on we get assigned to barracks. Now that was the final insult. The barracks are just built on the beach sand. Which, that in itself, sleeping on the beach is not the worst thing in the world. What made it so bad is that just before us, they had stationed a regiment of Senegalese soldiers, which is the black African contingent of the French army, in those barracks. Now they were not too keen on what you would call hygiene. They used --

Q: No, it's okay.

A: -- they used every area where you would sleep as a toilet. And you found bowel movements. And that's where they made you sleep. That really cuts it. Of course, on top of that, being to -- due to that situation, there were -- I -- of course, I have to say millions of fleas there, because I myself got bitten up so badly, it's frightening. From the upper thighs to the groin, my stomach, up to the hips, thousands of bites. I mean you can't just believe this, it was unbelievable. The most beautiful setting in the world, which was hell. Dante's Inferno doesn't even come close. And then, to make matters worse -- eventually we got food there, the French brought you know -  
-

Q: I'm going to -- I'm going to ha -- I'm going to have to stop you, I'm sorry, we have to change the tape.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Three



### Beginning Tape Four

Q: Okay. Where are you? What camp is this, on the beach?

A: This is called San Cyprian, which is right next to the town of Erne, on the Mediterranean, close to the Spanish border. And the reason that the camp was there was that the French had to accommodate all the Spaniards that ran away from Franco when the war was over, the Spanish Civil war was over in 1939, so the French, they came over by the hundreds of thousands, so they have to put them up someplace, so that they had to build barracks in a hurry. Now when I say barracks, which goes for any time that I mention a barrack, this is something like a wa -- one inch thick, you know, which is like three-quarters thick woods, and one layer, and covered with black tar paper, which is wonderful in the summertime, because the black reverberates the sun, and takes it in. So if it's 80 degrees inside, it's a hundred deg -- o-outside, it's a hundred degrees inside, it's wonderful. In the winter it doesn't do anything for you, it doesn't protect you from anything. So --

Q: So the situation there was pretty awful.

A: Y-Yeah, yeah. We still, even there, we still had quite a bit of freedom. If you asked for a pass, they gave you a pass to go to the near town, you know, and things like that. But the unfortunate thing is that being we were in such unsanitary condition, there was a epidemic of typhoid, diphtheria, and so on and so forth.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we fortunately -- this was at the beginning, the French still had stuff, we got vaccinated for these miseries. They da -- it took care of three shots, you know, we -- a week apart. The trouble was that they were administered by German trained doctors and I don't know what possessed the Germans, they put the vaccination in your pectoral, whether you're male or

female, okay? Not nice. Hurts a lot. So the first one, I took it. At that time I might also say that the needles were approximately a good five to 10 times larger than what they are now. And of course, there was no such thing as AIDS, so everybody got stuck with the same needle. So anyway, the first shot in, fine. A week later, second shot in. It hurts. And the third time, they -- the doctor was like this and I go like that, I jerk back. So the needle being half in, it zigzagged a lot. The doctor didn't bat an eyelash, pulls the needle out. Straightens it out with his hand and then he sticks me again. End of discussion. Of course, I didn't get any of the sicknesses.

Q: Is -- i-is -- does it surprise you now that you would vaccinate you? I mean, why are they doing that if they're what -- if they're supposedly not caring about who you are, or what you --

A: Well, the French are very nice people. They are ha -- they are not at all like the Germans, they're not out to kill you. They're forced into a situation that was abhorrent to them. You see that -- that's what people don't understand. They didn't like to do that. There was anti-Semitism in France, too, mind you, 99 percent Catholic country, you know, that you gotta understand that the -- the Jews did all ba -- kinds of bad thing to Christ, which wasn't true, but that's the preaching as it went, you know? One of the popes in '96 says, hey, forget about that, but at that time it was still running. But the French really are not vicious.

Q: But what did you know la -- in this camp, if you didn't know? Anything about the Vichy government versus the occupied [indecipherable]. You didn't know anything?

A: We were -- we were -- we were -- we were so worried about ourselves that, you know, and trying to -- to make a life for ourselves -- I mean some guys even went swimming in the ocean. I mean, you could swim in the ocean over there, you know?

Q: Did you have to work at all?

A: No, nothing, no.

Q: Nothing?

A: As a matter of fact, come to think of that, I was friends with two -- I -- what I would call -- what I called at that time, elderly gentleman, around 50.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Now when you're 17, 50 is like getting there, right? So they decided, let's see if we can't get a little bit better treatment, let's volunteer to work in the office --

Q: Right.

A: -- French office, you know, do clerical work. There -- that was their profession. So he says, why don't you come with us, oh lo -- they liked me. Don't want to go into the reason why. But anyway -- so I tried it for a little bit, but I felt so lousy and it's so hot, and the offices weren't air conditioned any better than anything else. I says, so what am I doing here? I'm getting treated the same, I eat the same stuff. Why? So I stopped doing that, too, you know? But da -- that's the only kind that -- that was voluntary.

Q: Now, we --

A: I seen people die there, I remember one young, strapping fellow about 17, six foot, 180 pounds, got dysentery over there, right? He was dead in a week. That goes to show you what kind of fantastic genes I had.

Q: Did you think about escaping, since there was so much freedom?

A: Like I said to you, nobody escapes from anyplace. What do you do without papers? And there's police, civil servants, all over the place. You see, the French, if they didn't want to go and being drafted into Germany, they had to go into some sort of French service. Army, police, or some like that. So they had them all over the place. There was nowhere to go. It never even occurred to me because I had enough brains to realize a-and where you going? I tried the escape

business once with my brother in 1942, February 40 -- oh no, wait, you're not there yet, okay, so I won't -- we'll keep that for later.

Q: How long are you in San Cyprian, how are you -- long are you at the beach?

A: About two months.

Q: Two months again?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: About two months in s --

A: Give or take, towards winter.

Q: -- right, right.

A: Then they decided, oh this is not good for you, the winter. We got to bring you to a better place, more suited for the winter.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Okay, so back in the train and we wind up on the other side of France. Now we're on the Atlantic side, but still by the Pyrenees. The [indecipherable] was called Gurs. So we wind up there and they got the same kind of barracks, with barbed wire around it. Sections, they called them, elou. Each section was called an elou, which was an island, all right? So, had maybe 20 barracks per, and they had letters, A, B, C, D, you know, and so on, so forth. So I -- I believe my memory serves, I went in number H. Of course, the only trouble was that the barracks were of the same construction, even though we're facing winter now. Same thing, black tar, once inch ply -- one inch wood. Now the only thing is, no Senegalese left their deposits there. This was okay because who was there before us were the Spanish refugees. And a few Spanish refugees were still left there to do maintenance work, the nicest young men you ever met in your life.

Friendly, gregarious, helpful, God knows what. Now this time we were together with women.

Not together, but the camp held half women, half men.

Q: That was not true in San Cyprian?

A: In San -- San Cyprian, I don't -- I don't remember seeing women.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Right. So, we're in this camp, and by that time it's the winter of 1940 and the Germans were very busy already, plundering France for the homeland, you know, the Fatherland, you know, whatever you had there. So by that time the food situation wasn't that good. Very, very minimal. It consisted of cabbage at lunchtime, boiled cabbage at lunchtime and boiled cabbage for dinner.

Q: This is in Gurs, in the --

A: In Gurs.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Once in a -- in the morning you got a slice of bread. Now, if you excuse the expression bread, flour as we know it was in the minority in the mixture. Everything else was in there. Ground acorns, whatever you could find. And we got a slice a day. Coffee, nonexistent. Some sort of brew in the morning and that was it. Boiled cabbage at lunch, not the most nourishing food, and at dinner the same time. I think once a week we got about -- let me exaggerate, two ounces of meat. I'm exaggerating now, you know.

Q: Did you have attacks of diarrhea from the cabbage? No, you were okay?

A: No. No, no, I was okay. I'm basically constipated, so you know. All right? Even as a child.

Q: So that served you well then, in Gurs.

A: Whatever. So, the problem is that the latrines -- we're not talking bathrooms, we're talking latrines, you know what latrines are, right? Okay? In bil --

Q: Why don't you explain, what do they look like in -- in Gurs?

A: Okay. They take those big oil drums, right, and over each oil drum they put -- they build a wood frame, all right, they throw a roof over it so that you're not exposed to the rain from the top. From the s -- the back is covered, the front is open, and there's a walkway, and then you -- whatever one of the latrines, there might be 10 spots per, maybe more, I don't know. I doubt -- I didn't make a business of committing that to memory, it wasn't that pleasant. They weren't close by. Why was that bad? In San Cyprian they were God knows how far away on the -- on the border of the ocean. Over here, it started to rain and the soil, which was clay, turned to mud. Now we had to be very careful because you sank in up to here, because the mud has a tendency to suck your shoes right off your feet. I got pictures to prove all that, too. This is not something that I make up. So it was quite unpleasant. So sometimes -- they had made a little walkway, you know, threw some pieces of wood over there on some runners, you know? So that was already pretty good, but that wasn't all over, you know? So anyway, the food was horrible, and they didn't mistreat us. We never had to wor -- look, we were so damn weak, my stomach growling all the time, I was hungry all the time. Whenever I say hungry, I mean not hey, I would like to eat some, I mean hungry that you were starving, okay? And the stomach is growling, there's nothing in there. So once in a blue moon we scrounged through garbage cans to see whether we could find a piece of beet, or something like that, you know? Oh, it was very nice, very nice.

Q: Were there a lot of kids -- boys your age, or were they --

A: Nah, nah --

Q: -- were they mainly older?

A: -- nah, I was one of the few.

Q: You were one of the few?

A: Yeah. Most of them -- most of them were grown -- grown men. As a matter of fact, at one time, we got the survivor of the Saint Louis, I don't know whether you know the Saint Louis was that ship that left Germany, where al -- everybody had cub -- Cuban visas and when they hit Cuba, Batista said, sorry fellows, I got your money, but I don't want you. So they shipped them over to the United States, and the United States said the same thing, so what was left over, they send them right back to Germany, and the Germans said, you see, I told you nobody wants the Jews. So we happened to wind up with survivors from the Saint Louis. Now these were all top of the line people. I mean, we're talking the intelligentsia, you know? Lawyers, writers, movie producers, and whatnot. And they showed the stress of the trip there. I remember one movie producer, must have been in his heydays maybe 250 pounds. Well, the reason I can say that is because first of all, those barracks didn't have any yo -- windows. A door at one each -- a door at each end. And we had one bulb hanging from the ceiling in the middle, which went on for one hour at night, if it's a lot, okay? And so we -- at night we stripped to look for lice -- you know, lice? And tried to kill whatever you could find in your clothing. So I saw him stripped one day, and whatever his stomach was, was now a big flap hanging there. So I know the situation well -- too good. And then it gets to be winter.

Q: Wait -- let -- let me ask you something. How many people from the Saint Louis do you think were in Gurs?

A: All 900 of them.

Q: No, they went to different countries.

A: I don't know.

Q: So you're not sure?

A: They sent them back to Germany.

Q: No, some of them went to England and some went to Holland and some went -- they went to different places, they didn't all go back to Germany. They stopped off at different places. So you --

A: Yeah, well, good for them because I only know about the ones that wound up in my barrack.

Q: But do you know how many that you met, 10, 20, do you have any idea?

A: In my barrack maybe -- I'm not just talking my barrack, my --

Q: Right.

A: -- there were 20 barracks, I didn't know what was --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- in the next barrack. I would say about 20 of them.

Q: But you were assuming that all of the people from the Saint Louis were there.

A: I assumed.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: If -- if nobody wanted to accept them, well, they have to go -- the ship was a German ship, have to go back to Germany.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know. So anyway, they were very nice people, I -- I got friends later on with one of the younger lawyers, and that's a different story, you have to wait for later. But there were ---

Q: What was it -- what were your relationships like with the other people?

A: Very nice, very good --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- very friendly. Cause they were old, young, didn't matter, they were nice people. Peop --

Q: Were people afraid of what was going to happen if the Germans took over this --



A: I don't think so, I don't think so.

Q: You don't think so?

A: I'll tell you why, here's the story. Gets to be winter, right?

Q: Mm.

A: Now, I discussed the construction of the barracks. Every morning when you woke up -- there were stalactite hanging from the ceiling, I -- I mean a lot. The condensation of the breath. The breath goes up, form stalactites.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Right? And then, after awhile, from southern Germany, the Germans had a shipment of people from part of German -- it's about maybe 6,000 of them, they shipped them over to Gurs. Women, children, babies, old people. And I remember that because I was involved with them later on. And you know, the wintertime, the icicles from the ceiling, every morning the door opened up and one of the French workers came and he yelled, any stiff? Meaning, anybody's dead, frozen to death? Well, fortunately my barracks, we weren't that old. But the people from Germany, you had the old people, and you saw -- well, maybe -- no, not necessarily, there were some people, older people, because I remember looking at the truck and all you saw sticking out f-from the truck were the feet with the socks -- with the socks on. You didn't see the body, they were covered. And we have the cemetery at the end of the camp, was -- the camp was maybe a mile long. At the em -- end of the camp was a cemetery and they used to bury them there. And it's a situation -- I'm telling you, if -- if we have no -- no light at all in the barracks, nothing, one bulb hanging in the middle, maybe one hour at night, I'm telling you that's all, and that's where we quickly stripped, whether winter or summer, didn't matter, and looked for the lice, and [sound effect]

Q: Mm-hm. Where did you eat? In the barrack, or outside?

A: Well, they -- at lunchtime they rang the -- you know, the bell or something, and you went there with a whatever it was, and you got the ladle of soup.

Q: Where -- where -- where would you go? Was there --

A: To the kitchen.

Q: There was a kitchen?

A: Yeah, with the big cauldrons, you know?

Q: So --

A: I once volunteered to work there, too.

Q: Yeah?

A: [indecipherable] my reward was to get up at four in the morning, start the fire, and I could eat as much cabbage as I wanted. And that didn't cut it either.

Q: So, everybody in the camp went to one kitchen, or was there a kitchen --

A: No, no, no, every --

Q: -- every section has --

A: -- every section, every --

Q: Island?

A: -- island had its own kitchen.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Yeah. So that was it.

Q: Did you work there? Was there work indoors?

A: Later on, later on. I dis --

Q: But not this first time?

A: N-Not at -- not at the beginning. It ca -- really start to get to me, freezing and whatnot.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So the same guys that I mentioned before, volunteered to work in the office.

Q: Is this Charles, one of the people? Is that his name? Or is that not his real name?

A: No, one of them was George.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I can look it up to get the real name, and Abrams, I think his name was Mr. Abrams, they were bookkeepers.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: I said ah [indecipherable] let's go the office, at least it was heated. They had the same barracks mind you, but they were much better with doors and things like that, and it was heated.

So that was great. The food was the same. We still had to go back --

Q: Right.

A: -- and we had to go back to sleep.

Q: Right.

A: But during the day at least you got to eat.

Q: So that's good.

A: And you made friends.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know, the police inspectors that were there, they were very nice. They were very nice. Nobody mistreated you, I tell you. So after a little while, there was one plum job to be had. That was working for the director of the camp in the head barrack. So the guy was one of the Spanish Civil War refugees, and he had the [indecipherable]. Very nice fellow, but he got a little greedy.

He got into problems, so they dumped him. And I heard about that, I says, that's my job. So I went and [indecipherable] he didn't speak French as perfectly as I did. I went there, I impressed them no a -- no end, you know. Was him and the -- his assistant. I was hired on the spot. So now I'm living in splendor. There is -- you -- look at the barrack, the -- they have the same barrack. The only difference is, picture a railroad car, and offices to either side with doors. And he has the whole back end of the barrack, the director, right? He lived on camp, as it would be, or on campus, what -- however you want to put it. He had a beautiful house a little away from everything else, big villa, you know, with his wife, two kids. And so we had also what you would call a reception room. The reception room had a little window, people ask questions, then the door, and then part of the reception room was partitioned off about -- I'd say about three feet. A wall, with a curtain. There was a bed in there. Luxury unlimited as far as I'm concerned. I didn't have a bed before. Like a regular cot, you know? And I -- whatever I had, th-th-the three pieces of clothing I could hang up, whatever. Was three feet by maybe eight feet. Luxury unlimited, and it was separated from the reception area. And I dealt with the inspectors, I dealt with the radio operator, I dealt with the boss, I del -- I dealt with his assistant. So they made me do jobs, you know, like little jobs and things like that. But it paid off in the end, I tell you, big time. So the most amazing thing is that -- of course there was no gasoline to be had in France, so the French invented cars that -- the regular cars were converted to run on charcoal gas. They had those big cylinders mounted in the back of their car, and you threw charcoal in there and you lit it and that created gas and that went through a tubing to some sort of fuel indi -- gas injector. And you weren't ri -- winning any races with it, but you could at least do 25 miles an hour with that, flat of course, you know. So th-the -- th-the Germans were even smarter than that, they invent -- they were so -- so brilliant, they invented something, they had two cylinders on the

trucks, one on this side, one on that side. And then they had bags of chopped green wood, mind you. You took a bag of green wood, threw it in that cylinder, that transform it into charcoal, send it over to that cylinder, and that's how the trucks worked. I mean, you -- you gotta give them credit. You don't have to like them, but you gotta give them credit.

Q: Did it go faster than 25 miles an hour? The same.

A: Like I said, you were -- y-you won't win races, okay?

Q: How long were you in Gurs at this time, the first time?

A: Okay. Tell you, I got out of there on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1941. I got there maybe October '40.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So the first time was what, seven months? No, six months.

Q: Now does your father have something to do with your leaving somehow?

A: Yeah. Now, my parents were in Paris, so when situation went bad, the Fr-French rounded them up too, in the [indecipherable], which was a big stadium in Paris. The women were sent to one camp. My mother happened to be, coincidently be sent to Gurs.

Q: But you didn't know.

A: No.

Q: But you were there the same time?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: And my father was sent to another camp, and I don't remember exactly the name. So, after they get screened, with references and things like that, they saw they were totally harmless, they let them go. But, they were assigned residents, forced residents.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And the forced residents was in some minor, small village in southern France, you know? So that's where my mother and my f-father wound up. And my mother heard on the rumor mill that I was coming from San Cyprian, so for weeks she didn't eat her bread and was keeping it for me, so that I should have enough food.

Q: She heard that you were coming to Gurs?

A: Uh-huh. The rumor mill is fabulous.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And she was saving the bread for me, you know, the rest, I mean the -- the cabbage she can't save, you know? My mother didn't look too heavy, either.

Q: So, did you get this bread?

A: No.

Q: So you didn't -- you had no idea that she was there.

A: I found out --

Q: Much later, uh-huh.

A: -- once -- once I joined them in Castelno --

Q: Right.

A: -- you know.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

End of Tape Four

### Beginning Tape Five

Q: Kurt, can you explain what forced residence is? You said that your parents --

A: Right. Well, the same applied for me and my brother. When you are released from the camp with all the proper papers and whatnot, you're assigned to live in a certain area. Now, first thing you do, you present yourself at the police station, and the police station ho -- tells you at the police, whoever it is, tells you how often they want to see you a week.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You have to check in with them to make sure that you're still there. You see they usually -- villages don't have a -- you know, even -- even in towns doesn't matter, they cannot be with you 24 hours a day. They want to make sure that you don't escape or run away, or do something that you're not allowed to. So anytime you want to go, or you have to go to let's say the nearby town, you have to go up to police department and ask them for a pass. So that's what forced residence is, that you check in with them all the time. Can't move from there.

Q: Now, was your father in Vernet? Is that where he was?

A: Le Vernai.

Q: Vernai?

A: I think that's what it was.

Q: So both he and your mother, who had been taken to two different places --

A: Right.

Q: -- were -- were released?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And they went to the small, little village called?

A: Castelnou Rivierbas.

Q: Right. Now, they were both sent there on purpose cause they knew they were husband and wife, or no?

A: Oh yeah, no, no. Somehow my father, who is a very bright man, might have gotten in touch, through some organization or whatnot, to find out where my mother was.

Q: Mm.

A: And that's how they got together and wound up in Castelnat at the same time. I never questioned it because we had other worries at the time --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- you know, how. I know where and when, but not exactly, you know, how they got together.

Q: Got together, right. Now, how do you end up there?

A: Where? In Castelnat? Oh, when it came time for me to be released -- this was the strangest thing, my father, who is an alien resident -- alien resident, actually, whatever you call it, is now pretty much an unwanted person, right? Went to see the mayor, the governor, whatnot. Got an audience and pleaded my release with them. And then they gave him a pass to come and see the commandant of the camp where I was, showed him the goods, and that's how come I got released. Can you imagine my father, who -- who -- who had -- who had no standing whatsoever, managed to do all that? Of course, when they released me, we are to Castelnat Rivieras. Why? My father, mother lived there, simple.

Q: Now where is Harry at this time?

A: Harry was already in ca -- in Castelnat Rivieras.

Q: Had he been put into a camp also?

A: No, no.

Q: No.



A: He was too young.

Q: So it was only people over 17, or Germans over se -- was -- cause you -- you were the sort of the line --

A: I -- I just lucked out, what can I tell you?

Q: Right. So when you go back, when you go there, you're with your father and your mother and your brother, and your aunt is where? Where's Emma?

A: My aunt came to live, after a little while, came to live with us.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because she couldn't stay where she was, was the occupied zone, remember?

Q: Right. So she couldn't stay.

A: When the Germans decided that they're going -- I -- I mean, before they decided to take all over France, at -- at beginning she -- she got along pretty good with the Germans, because the Germans respect each others Army officers, things like that. So being she was the wife was -- of an Army officer, you know --

Q: And where was her husband, do you know?

A: Yeah.

Q: Or -- your uncle?

A: When the war was over, he was prisoner of war in Germany.

Q: So that's where he was the whole time, so --

A: No, not the whole time. After -- after about a year or so they released him.

Q: And he came to where you -- you were? Do you -- or you don't know, because by then you were gone?

A: You know, this is a little hazy in my mind. I remember my aunt living with us. You gotta realize, my parents had rented a small, little house. It had a kitchen, and two rooms. A living room and a bedroom, so the living room was transformed into a three people bedroom, my -- my aunt, my brother and me -- when she came. That was -- they were small rooms anyway. And so eventually my uncle was released and then -- by that time they made him a general because the job asked for it. The -- he was in charge of the medical military, I guess, otherwise too, I don't know, of the hospital, or hospital with an s in Vichy, Vichy, France, you know, where the government was?

Q: Right.

A: And he managed to -- to do in his position, to do a lot of good to save some French soldiers from, you know, unpleasantnesses.

Q: Right.

A: You know.

Q: So ho -- what do you do when you go to this little village?

A: Huh?

Q: What do you do when you go to this little village?

A: Well, originally I couldn't work. So the only job open was as a farm hand. So, I got a job as a farm hand. But the funniest thing is, for the first -- it sounds strange -- 40 days, I couldn't go to work. Why? The Bible repeated itself, we had 40 days of rain. I'm not kidding you. The only difference was, sometimes it rains heavy, and sometimes it rains slower. Now, how come not everything was flooded? Because -- I happen to appreciate the French, very brilliant, they had ditches alongside the road on either side. That's where the water went, and then the water went into the big river. Of course, they also have a person with a scythe, you know what a scythe is,

right, to move this. This was a county job. He was in charge of moving the grass from the -- from the ditches.

Q: So he took out the grass that -- that flowed in, so it wouldn't --

A: N-No.

Q: No.

A: It can't overgrow. They wanted to keep the ditches as drainage.

Q: I see, right.

A: In perfect condition, not to impede the water, with grasses growing all over.

Q: So for the first 40 days you can't work?

A: Yeah, it's so funny, 40 days of rain.

Q: Did you sleep a lot? Were you exhausted from being in Gurs, or you were okay?

A: I was mainly s -- mainly [indecipherable] what I did, I did a lot. I don't know where I got it from. I mended my father's jeans, he would be very fashionable now, had patches all over. I made my mother --

Q: Your father was wearing jeans then?

A: Oh, the jeans are invented in France.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The Nimes. Da Nimes. Nimes being southern France. That's where the name comes from. And these were working pants for -- for when you work. You couldn't wear a suit. And all the way at the beginning too, I did something else. I -- my father got into a deal with some of the farmers, to cut their hedges and some of the trees. So my father was at the time [indecipherable] 57 years old. And so we went there, and in exchange of what he did, he got half the wood that we

cut down, because we had the wood stove, and that's the only thing that worked, my mother cooked on the wood stove. So we had heat in the winter. I did that at the beginning, right.

Q: So let me ask you something, you're now 20 years old, right? 19 -- you're born in --

A: Not yet, not yet, I'm only 19.

Q: I thought we were --

A: '22

Q: -- we're in 19 --

A: '22 - '41.

Q: All right, we're in '41, okay.

A: I'm not going to be -- I'm not even going to be 21, because right now we're in April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

Q: We have to wait til August.

A: You have to wait four months.

Q: Right, okay, forget [indecipherable] forget my question. So how long do you do the farm work?

A: Well, farm work from let's say, yeah it was the summer. June '41 til geez, when did they lock -- lock us up again? August '42. Yeah, August '42, when they round -- they -- they round -- the police rounded us up again, put us on truck and back to Gurs for deportation purposes.

Q: Right, right. Now, you have one or two relationships with young girls?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You have some dates?

A: Hm?

Q: You have some dates, or you have --

A: Oh, we -- well, I -- the one that I -- that's a very strange story. Like again, I said like truth is stranger than fiction. Did you hear of Lourdes in your life, Lourdes, holy place, the Virgin, da da? Anyway, the train from [indecipherable] Sainte Marie was close by Gurs to my parents, goes from -- to Pau and then Tarbes. Tarbes is the big center, and the local train from my parent's place, Castelnau and further up, comes there twice a day, once in the morning and once at night. Remember, it's war time. So I'm sitting in this big -- you -- you know what the European rail station look like? They're like all glass, you know, tremendous ceilings and whatnot, you know? And I'm sitting there, you have to wait for my train, I -- I got there li -- let's say 10 - 11 in the morning, or 12, and my train is at four or five in the afternoon, right? So I'm sitting on the bench, waiting, looking around, nothing is happening. Tr-Train pulls in, and down yonder [indecipherable] I see two ladies. I says, oh, it can't be, it's my mother and my aunt. I says no, you're hallucinating. And as they come closer, lo and behold it's my mother and my aunt. Now my father knew I was going to get released that day, it was a Sunday, Easter Sunday. My mother and aunt had left before the message got to them, and they decided [indecipherable] for my uncle, who was Christian decided, let's go to Pau, couldn't hurt. Everybody else goes there for a miracle. Ah, what else we got to do? So they took the train to Pau, and then to Lourdes. And they got off the train from Lourdes because they had to change it at Tarbes, same that I did, and man was that emotional. Totally -- I'm -- I'm telling you, truth is stranger than fiction, there's my mother and my aunt in the same station, the day I got released from the camp. Okay, fine. Now, how did I know -- get to know this little girl? We're waiting for the train, go into a compartment and then three people come in the compartment, a man around 50, woman around 28, and a real nice looking young lady around 17 - 18. Looks interesting, okay. The weirdest thing is they get up at the -- get off at the same station we did. My mother happened to know them, which she told

me later, blah, blah, blah. They were Belgian. The f -- the husband must have been very rich because he bought the local castle, chateau, okay? And they also sold some dairy products. So the following morning my mother says, look, why don't you go up the road there and see -- try to get a few eggs, maybe something else, cottage cheese, whatever. I don't remember what. So I go there, and there's a big gate and two Dobermans, black things. No -- was never too fond of dogs, ever since I was bitten at the ripe old age of 11 by a dog to whom I didn't do anything. So I was ah -- but fortunately they didn't do anything to me. So, you know, a castle, big driveway, you know, circular driveway. So I walk on to the side entrance there, and that's where they used to sell stuff from. Th-Th-They were cultivating the farm, they were using the farm. And who is there? This magnificent creature. So now, I never lose time beating a dead horse. No, I knew this was going to work. I ask her, would she like to have a date, you know, something like that. So she says, I have to ask my -- whoever it was. Couldn't have been her mother. At 28 you don't have an 18 year old kid, I don't care what age you start. Relative, somebody, [indecipherable] brother-in-law, so [indecipherable] so the lady says, you sure don't waste any time. You know, says [indecipherable] so I picked her up on Sunday, and we hit it off pretty good, but it didn't last too long because after awhile the man of the house, who was 50, realized hey, what's this foreigner doing with my whoever it is, shall we say protégée? Gets better. And I couldn't see her any more. So they locked the door, they locked the gates when I was supposed to pick her up. And his foreman was a big dude about six three or four. He says to me, you know, I like you, but if you know what's good for you, desist. Cease and desist. So I can take a hint. Funniest thing is one day while I was waiting for my -- let's say girlfriend to get ready, the lady of the house says, gee, would you like to see the place? Now you gotta understand one thing. This is not the United States. The United States I would have been shall we say a little more up to date and not as naïve

as I was, okay? I was -- you know, I was not necessarily shy, but -- I don't like to discuss things like that, but anyway. So she takes me up to her bed-bedroom. Carpeting that high, white. Now, what I didn't realize at the time is I [indecipherable] the spot, her for the little girl. She was going to get for -- go for me in a big way. But I was too dumb and young. I was afraid. The husband, big guy, look at the co -- position I'm in, I'm -- I'm -- I'm -- I'm like under the gun with the police. All anybody has to say, I'm dead meat. So she got very, shall we say depressed once they openly got together outside, the husband and the young lady. You always saw them together in the carriage, you know. You know, a s -- little horse carriage, you know, for two people. And she, from what the rumor had it, she jumped out of the first floor balcony, you know, trying to kill herself. Of course, she was -- she was going to make sure it wasn't deathly. So that was my story with that sweet thing.

Q: So it didn't work out.

A: Well --

Q: Exactly.

A: First of all, I didn't have -- had sex at my ripe old age because I spent most of my time in places like Gurs etcetera, etcetera. And the war got in between a lot of things and the reason I didn't have sex is because A, I didn't have sex. So I said to myself, what if you don't do it right, and the lady isn't happy with your efforts? You know, that was my thinking. I was always thinking about somebody else, never about myself. You know, most people think about themselves, hey, I want to get laid, amen. Sorry about the language, but you know, that wasn't me, I just --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- I did -- I did that twice, like a schmuck, but later on I caught on.

Q: So are you, before you are captured again and taken away --

A: I was [indecipherable]

Q: -- you're doing far -- you're doing this farm work the whole time?

A: Yeah, oh -- only 16 hours a day.

Q: That's all?

A: They actually want -- wanted me on Sunday too, but I says, uh-uh. I c -- I could barely move. The first thing I did for six weeks, they gave me a hoe and I hoe the vineyard. Now, you know, vineyard is not from here to the door. How many rows there are in a vineyard? I was -- my back bent to the sun, I had to take shirt off, didn't have -- I didn't even have money for a hat, wa -- had no money. You know what they paid me at -- let -- let's not exaggerate. I think they paid me at the current exchange rate, 25 cents a day. 1941, okay?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Even that wasn't a lot of money, even in 1941. The only thing is, they fed me. What they feed me morning, noon and lunch was, considering my gall bladder, not the right thing. Pure, white lard for breakfast. You know what that does to your in-intest -- gall bladder and liver? That was my breakfast, huh? Not bacon, bacon has -- got half -- half meat in there. Pure, white lard. Well, they didn't have that much to themselves because the Germans took all their cattle out, you know. So the only thing that left was pork and geese, you know, the geese that you fatten? So --

Q: What -- what do you hear now about what's going on in the east, because now Germany has attacked Russia, and they're starting to kill Jews, as well as some other people.

A: Who does?

Q: The Germans.

A: Oh --



Q: In 1941, do you hear anything?

A: No, not a word. We knew through the grapevine that there were camps and things like that, but we don't know exactly what. There was Dachau what -- that was in Germany, Buchenwald is Germany, and there was a couple other ones right in Germany.

Q: No, I'm talking about -- I'm talking about Poland now.

A: Yeah, I know. Well, Poland --

Q: But you don't hear.

A: -- we didn't know from yet. It's when they started trying to de-deport us in Gurs. That's when we knew it -- Auschwitz.

Q: Which is later, right?

A: Well, you see, we met with a lot of Jews from various areas --

Q: Who told you.

A: -- and they had good intelligence, you know.

Q: So how do you get captured, why do you get captured in '43, I believe? You've been --

A: Now '42 --

Q: -- two --

A: -- I got released after months. Being that I was -- I told you I worked for the chief of the camp --

Q: Mm.

A: -- and all his police inspectors were my buddies. So when we came there they were sitting at the table, and they, you know, took your name and everything like that, and my brother. So obviously I never showed up on the deportation list.

Q: Right.

A: My pals, right, I'll tell -- I've -- I'll tell you, it paid off, that one time I worked. And you know how good the French were, and how good the people were at that time over there? They let us keep our pocket knives. They weren't afraid that they [indecipherable]. Can you imagine you go to -- you put a prisoner in one of the prisons here, and you let him have a nice pocket knife? That's -- that wa -- just what they're looking -- I'm telling you, was different times and different people.

Q: Let me ask you something. Were you afraid about being deported?

A: Well, I wasn't exactly thrilled.

Q: All right, what did you think? Did you know anything at that point in '41? Wa [indecipherable]

A: Well ha -- I -- I knew I'm as good as dead if I get on the train, okay?

Q: That's what you knew?

A: Yeah, that much we knew.

Q: But you didn't know how or why or where.

A: No, Auschwitz we knew.

Q: No, forget why. You knew Auschwitz.

A: We knew Auschwitz, the train was for Auschwitz.

Q: What year do you think that is, '42?

A: The first year was '42 in August.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they needed 5,000 people.

Q: Right.

A: And the few Jews they had left, they -- they were so efficient, they collected them all, there were more than 5,000, because there were a few left over, including my brother and me, you know.

Q: So after that first month, you get released --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and then you're -- they you --

A: Go back to Castelnau --

Q: -- then you get -- right.

A: -- go back to work on the farm.

Q: Right. And then the police come to try to get you again, and you and Harry try to escape. And you make it until what?

A: Well, okay. We were prepared this time, we said --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- next time we jump out the window, the side window. We had a little suitcase, you know, each and every one of us, put some food in there, whatnot, and we'll try to make it to a different town and get on the railroad and try our luck going that-a-way, which is stupid, but when you're young, you're stupid.

Q: Which was that-a-way? Which way is -- which way were you going to go?

A: Towards central France.

Q: To central France.

A: Central central. Not just east or west, but halfway between north and south and the massive centrale, we had --

Q: But still in Vichy?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah, right, okay.

A: So we made it through a few fields, the farmers looked at us a little strange, and the next thing you know, who is waiting for us? One of the local cops. On bicycle, as we were crossing the road. So he said to us, how can you do this to me? I says, excuse me? He was insulted that we run away because that puts a bad -- it puts him in a bad light. And that's when my parents left Castelnat because they knew. They're down on us now, you know? Now, I had that one time, we had some friends by the name of Rothchild, which Rothchild also denotes serious deniros, you know? And they had the son, one and only son. They lived in the nearby village, also residents. And the son tried to make it to Spain. Well, he paid big money to some of the what do you call it, guides, and the guides --

Q: No, wait, let's stop for -- let's stop for a minute. Okay? Sorry, he's choking.

A: Okay, so they had a son, and he paid somebody big bucks to get him out of France over the mountains. Well the guy took it from both sides. Took his money, took the German's money and that was the last time you heard from him. So you know, money isn't the answer to everything. But, what they did for us, they managed to get authentic, blank false papers. Okay, blank. So like I said, I don't know, I saw in retrospect, I'm amazed at myself how talented I was. I managed to forge those papers so efficiently, I forged the mayor of the village's handwriting that he could have sworn he signed it. Couldn't do it today any more. So my parents had false paper making them French people, you know. And the right age, right everything, you know they were, you know.

Q: Where did you get the false papers from? From th --

A: From the Rothchilds.

Q: From the Rothchilds, I see.

A: See, they had -- they had -- they had more money than God, so they could buy anything they wanted, you know.

Q: And why were they willing to give you the false, blank --

A: We were friends.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My parents and them were friends.

Q: I see.

A: My parents had a lot of friends, I mean --

Q: Okay, so y --

A: -- very likable people, my parents.

Q: So you -- you got them these forged papers that you forged for them?

A: Mm-hm, and that's when they pssshhht. After they nailed us the second time.

Q: They took you away.

A: In August '43.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Now that time it didn't go too good because I wasn't released. Oh, I was released. I was released in the custody of the German slave labor. Organizatione Tote, working on the Atlantic wall. That was a lot of fun.

Q: And what camp are you in when you're doing this?

A: La -- Labenne. Labenne Oceane.

Q: Labenne?

A: Yeah, from Gurs, we di -- we were -- got on a train, and da da da da da, you know?

Q: Wait a minute, now. We did -- we didn't actually do this. In '43, after you've released for a month and you go back, they you're captured again and you go to Gurs.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: And from Gurs --

A: In '42 I was released, and then --

Q: Right.

A: -- re-released again in '43 --

Q: '43, right.

A: -- then we run away, then they put us on the truck in front of the house.

Q: Right. And you go to Gurs.

A: And then Gurs. There's a little side story, very interesting.

Q: All right, hold the side story for the next tape, cause there's not a --

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

Q: All right, so you're in Gurs, you're taken on the truck to Gurs. Harry is with you. Am I correct?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you go to Gurs, and you're there for?

A: Oh, as -- as long as it took to make a convoy, but they didn't put me on the convoy again, because like I said, when you get checked in, my pals were the ones that --

Q: Got you out.

A: Mm-hm. Or didn't put me on the list.

Q: So at that point they were deporting Jews to Auschwitz as far as you knew?

A: No, that was the second time, in '42 they deported them to Auschwitz. In '43, they fi -- the Germans figured there must be enough Jews left to make another convoy. So that was '43 in August.

Q: Right. But you don't get put on that and Harry doesn't get put on that.

A: No.

Q: But you and Harry do not stay together at that point.

A: No.

Q: They separate you.

A: Right. See, he was young yet, still younger.

Q: He's still younger, right.

A: But already of age of --

Q: Yeah, he's past 18 --

A: -- something.

Q: -- right? You're 40 -- you're 21.

A: Yeah, yeah, right, right.

Q: So he's past 18.

A: '43, I'm -- yeah, I -- I'm 21 right then on my birthday, right.

Q: Right, August.

A: So, what happened, after a little while they segregate us and they pick me and a few other guys, and they send them to the Germans on the Atlantic coast for slave labor.

Q: Right.

A: Now, we went with a truck from Gurs to Labenne Oceane, which is the name of the site, and strange as it seems, we pass right in front of the Lourdes Cathedral, you know, where all the miracles happen? And the truck stops dead. So we all have to get off the truck and push it up the hill until it starts cranking again. That was ver -- very strange things happen in life. And if you -- you can add meaning to it if you want to, or just add it to coincidences. So I -- personally I think it's coincidence you know, but whatever. So, but you can make things out of that, you know.

And then I wound up with the Germans, and the first thing I know -- they show us where we sleep, and then they march us out to the worksite. Now, 5,000 people swarming around there, okay? They weren't Jews. We were the only Jews, eight of us. At that time they didn't know it, too -- n-no -- no -- they've ra -- okay, let's put it that way, not everybody knew we were Jews, okay? So, they put us to work right there. I'm facing a mountain of gravel a little bit higher than the ceiling, you know, like this is 15 feet, let's say 20 feet and a good 150 feet long. And they give us shovels, and we have to shovel wa -- I don't remember where, most likely in wheelbarrows. And we have to shovel that throughout the night. And I said to the foreman, in German -- German foreman, I says, look, I'm exhausted, can't we get a little sleep? He says, a



war -- there's a war on, nobody sleeps. That took care of my complaint, okay? Later on, being that I spoke German, he made me sort of like in charge of translating from him to the rest of the world, okay? So was pretty good because once in awhile we traded something for some food, you know, e -- they -- they got fed. We -- we got -- the -- the -- it's not a repeat of Gurs, but it's pretty close. Boiled pasta for lunch and supper. Now that don't do much for your system either, you know, like beriberi?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know? Which happened to hit me after X amount of time. So I go to the nurse, I didn't know what it was. Could be measles, could be rubeola, I don't know. I says, look I got red spots all over myself, I don't know. Well, the re -- German nurse, of course. She didn't know what it was either, but just to be on the safe side, she was going to put me in insulation, right? So I don't affect --

Q: Isola -- isolation.

A: -- ins -- isolation.

Q: Right.

A: Or insulation, isolation --

Q: No, isolation.

A: -- same difference. I was in -- isolated from everybody, but insulated too, but okay, fine.

Q: Right.

A: So just at that time, our friendly camp commandant comes in, points to me, he says, "What's the matter with this bastard?" The nurse tells him, he blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Oh, he goes to his holster, unstraps the holster, takes off his gun and says, "I'm gonna shoot that bastard right here." So the nurse said to him, of course in German, "You are not going to do any such thing

Herr Commandant, in my office.” Well, he actually didn’t shoot me, but she put me someplace and I stayed there for a little while. And I got hold of some real type food, and after a little while I got better, and I got back to where I was. Now, after a little while --

Q: Why would she do that, do you think?

A: What?

Q: Why did she protect you? Or was she --

A: Well, first of all she might not have known I was Jewish. Secondly not all Germans were [indecipherable]. She was a nurse, she wasn't there to kill people, she was supposed to heal them. So she didn't want to -- I swear to you [indecipherable]. That's it.

Q: But he also could have taken you outside and shot you. If he was going to pay attention to her, right?

A: She took the wind out of his sail. Oh, not only that, wait. She said to me, yeah you're pretty sick, let me give you a pass so you can go on leave. Oh, I says, well, I got nobody. She [inaudible]. So that's when she put me in the isolation, you know. Was very funny, she was a -- a nice -- a nice human being. I mean, I ge -- that's all I can say.

Q: And this was in Labenne?

A: Labenne Oceane. And you know, I tell you, we were right on the ocean.

Q: Right.

A: Actually the bluffs overlooking the ocean, because you can't dig on the beach, because there you hit water, that's no good. So we used to dig for the emplacement for the bunkers. Oh, that's all by hand ha -- no machines, everything by shovel. We used to dig a hole that was maybe 30 feet deep and 40 feet square and then flaring up to about a hundred feet at the top so that the sand doesn't run down, you know what I mean? Was all done by shovel, can you imagine how many

people it took? Was like the Chinese coolies. And anyway -- and we worked until everything was finished. From -- from -- and we -- what I -- what my specialty was -- I didn't pick it, you know what rebars are? Rebars are those steel rods that they put in reinforced concrete. So the first thing before you pour the concrete, and I think we -- the walls must have been about 12 feet thick if they were an inch. We built the rebars from the bottom up like this, then straight across and then this way. And they gave us a bunch of wire, you know, wire, and we -- when rebars met, we tied them like that and a pair of pliers to -- to cut it off. And we were like -- like frigging monkeys hanging onto those rebars and the gale from the ocean was something unbelievable. Cold? Oy. And that was already March at the time, or what -- whatever time it was. No, first time was August, this was -- this was February, March.

Q: And this is when you're building the -- what's called the Atlantic wall?

A: Yeah.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, let me ask you something, be -- between Gurs and Labenne Oceane, did you go to Camp Albi?

A: No, no, that's later.

Q: That's later.

A: That comes after -- after Labenne Oceane.

Q: I see, okay.

A: So, anyway, we're still building the stuff there. Just to tell you how nice the Germans were, first of all they came by, they took the biggest guys they could find, of course, with the biggest German Shepherds you ever saw and they pat -- and they patrolled the work area. And s --

believe me, you didn't want to be reminded to work harder by them. They didn't do it kindly. One day -- I'm not inventing things -- they found a guy, they says, guy's not working hard enough, let's teach him a lesson. They grab him -- do you know what a grease gun is? For -- for automotives or machinery? They took the grease gun, inserted this in his rectum, filled it with grease, and that was the end of that particular episode, and man.

Q: And you saw that?

A: No. I was told firsthand, by firsthand. I mean, I didn't see it.

Q: So is this period of time the first time that you're in a situation where there's a lot of brutality? Because the other situations, they may have been uncomfortable and you didn't have enough food --

A: No, Gurs they die -- they -- they died too, in the winter, plenty of people died there.

Q: No, no, I'm not talking about dying. I'm talking about brut -- brutality.

A: Oh yeah, it's the first time I saw brutality, yeah. Oh, they were -- th-th-they used to cou -- ther -- you see, you're working 16 hours a day in hard labor, you get a little tired. So once in awhile it would be logical for you to sort of like rest on your shovel a little bit and so on. And if they caught you, they brought you back to life, you know. So anyway. So one day I'm coming back, the food still was horrible, and it's supertime, we're sitting at a table, and the next thing I know, our commandant -- there's a few more episodes in between there. They actually paid you. The organization paid you, not -- we happened to fall in there because we happened to be Jews, we don't really belong there, but we were there, okay? So one day he found out we were Jews, well that was the end of that. He came at night to scream at us while we were sleeping. And he happened to be a gay, and he had a retinue of young men with him, shall we say? And then, when he came time to get paid, well you know, they sit at the table there, with the paychecks and

whatnot, you know? And well, by the time -- by that time he knew who was Jewish -- well, every two weeks, I guess -- and what he did when he saw us come up, he took his gun, and he put it on the table right next to the pay envelope. And you knew better than to grab for the pay envelope, okay? That's how we managed nicely. So one day he realized [indecipherable] that's not enough, I gotta get those guys. He called the Gestapo and one night when we came home from work, the eight of us Jews were taken off and put on train, in a compartment that's enough for eight, with the head Gestapo dude, and a soldier at each end of the train, do you -- the -- the car, you know, whatever it is, you know, what you call that, a b -- the unit, a car unit, so that you couldn't run out, whatever. And -- and the guy was very nice, but what he really was, he was trying to con these yi -- they were all young men, into revealing where their relatives and parents were, just in case they were hiding. And they were so stupid, I'm tell -- no, the -- the young guys there, I'm telling you. That's when I realized the whole world is not exactly what you're supposed to have heard about it. People are mostly stupid. I'm telling you, how c -- you could fall in this trap? Write me a letter, I -- I'll make sure it gets mailed, give me the address. And they did. How stupid can you get? I mean honestly, they didn't have the brains they were born with. And they weren't stupid people, but they're stupid. You gotta be -- you gotta be up to every occasion that comes along.

Q: So what --

A: How the heck you going to survive?

Q: What did you do?

A: Huh?

Q: What did you do when they asked?

A: Oh, I have -- I have nobody, I'm all alone in this world.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Not only that, I spoke German, okay? The other one might have been Polish --

Q: So where did they -- where did they take you?

A: Well, to the nearest fortress, which was Bayonne, an old French fortress that the Germans had taken over for a regiment of whatever it was, and they threw us in a prison cell, was very narrow, and there was a steel door, with a little flap that you could open to look out. I mean, not from the inside, from the outside. So I think only four people fitted in a cell. And I remember the -- the German officer corps came and looked at what Jews look like. You know, I mean what the heck? He comes in there, hey -- hey Jews, we'll pick them up tomorrow morning, but I just wanted to keep them overnight. And the place was run by the German army, which wasn't really bad. And I remember in the morning they let us out to go and wash up. And whether it was courage or stupidity, so you heard the phrase that you hear a lot in the funny German sitcoms, mach schnell, mach schnell, right? That means hurry up. So I had this orderly there, the German orderly was watching us while we were washing, or something. And he saying this mach schnell, mach schnell. I got so mad and I start tearing him to pieces in German. I mean, really ripping into him in German, you know. Told him, what the heck you think you're doing? Who the heck do you think you're dealing with and whatnot. You know, not a peep, not one repurs -- reparation -- repercussion, it was the most amazing thing. I could have gotten shot [indecipherable] on the spot. Once in awhile you're -- you know, it -- it pays to get mad. So anyway, so the fellow --

Q: This -- this was in Bayonne?

A: Bayonne.

Q: Bayonne.

A: Bayonne. There's a fortress there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I'm sure it's still there. Only because it's 60 years later, doesn't mean anything. Must have been built 60 years prior to that too. So anyway, they put us on a train, and up north we go.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we stop at Albi.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That's the name of the railroad station and town. And the Gestapo man must have called ahead to the militia and said, I want a contingent of militia men, I'm coming with some criminals, whatever he must -- I don't know what he said, I just saw the result. There's eight of us, we're coming, get them out of the train, there's 40 black-clad, helmeted, armed, militia men for eight guys. They didn't know it, that was that -- how many we were. So they send him 40 militias. So -- and they told them -- and they only kept maybe a half a dozen to guard us. Put us in the truck and we wound up in this camp. And this camp was not for Jews or foreigners, this camp was for the French resistance fighters that were caught by the Germans, or by the French sympathizers. You know, either -- either or, right? And they were going to get deported to Germany to do slave labor. The Germans use any kind of slave labor they could get their hands on, and they were all young people, obviously. But this was a very upscale camp, as far as camps go. Clean, neat, beds. They actually had some decent food. I was shocked. But I know that this couldn't last, so after a few days -- now, it -- you gotta remember, I lived for five years with my uncle who was an officer in the French army, high ranking officer, and I used to hang out with all his cronies all the time, you know, the colonels and the majors and their wives, and all the -- because they used to take me over for tea. In France there's a big thing, you have tea in the afternoon, you know, little cake, whatever. So I was young, they used to schlep me, my aunt

used to schlep me along, all the ladies liked me, you know, I didn't make the nuisance of myself, so I knew how to, you know, behave. And I had the nerve, I asked for an audience with the camp commandant. I had -- his name I remember. His name was [indecipherable]. He was a Corsican. Yeah, I didn't think he was that bad because after the war they had -- they h-hu-hung him as a -- as a war criminal, but I didn't think he was that bad [indecipherable]. Not for me, it's for the French people that he did in, you know? Anyway, so I said to him in my best military upper class voice, I says, mon commandant, I know we are miscast here, we don't belong here, and if you permit me, I would tell you who to contact to get rid of us. Lo and behold, think that I sound one of his kind, picks up the phone, calls the commandant of Gurs. Now I know the guy loved me, I worked for him for you know -- and he says, I got this guy here, blah, blah, blah, you know, I understand you are -- you're -- you're in charge, would you take him? Oh, s-sure, send him over. So again, in handcuffs, on the railroad, you know [indecipherable] such a wonderful with the -- wi-with the regular people, you gotta understand. So they looked at us, man, some criminals, I don't know. Was very embarrassing, you know -- tell you. And so we got --

Q: All eight of you were sent?

A: Huh?

Q: All eight of you were sent?

A: Yeah, well I take the ra -- take the eight with me, what are we going to do, just me?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: When I was young I saved a lot of people, I got a flash for you. I really mean that, not a joke. We'll get to that later, maybe. So, we get there, put us on a truck, drive us to Gurs. Now Gurs had a big gate there, and be -- you know, the gate, it says Gurs and blah, blah, blah, big portal that. And you know, the most touching scene I've ever seen in my life, the whole administration



of the camp was there to welcome us, on account of me. Now, that is touching. You know? The most -- the police inspectors that I knew. The boss, his assistant and whoever else, was a whole bunch of people. Really very touching. And at that time, the camp that used to hold on the average, 13,000 inmate, male, female or whatever, was down to 16 people. Germans worked very good. From 13,000 to 16, it's not bad. And the reason that the French were able to save them, they said we need maintenance personnel for the camp. Now, who did they keep is the -- the top of the line, of course. The doctors, the dentist, the lawyers, you know. A musician, I remember him. His sister was the nurse, and so on, so forth. So they were -- they were there, you know? And then the -- the eight of us. And now all of a sudden we have 24, it was great. We also -- we s -- still lived in the barracks, but not in the barracks barracks. We lived in the barracks that the police inspector -- oh yeah, they also didn't need all the police inspectors any more because it was only 24 people, right? They only needed administrative people. So they put us up, again I luck out. I got my own room, a real bed, a stove, you know? The only -- the only, the -- oh, i-it gets better, even. The only drawback is, in order to justify us, we all had to become lumberjacks. So they took us out in one of those famous cars. Was a Chevy as a matter of fact, station wagon.

Q: What, that was run on coal?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: I mean on charcoal?

A: A 1936 Chevy station wagon. And they drove us up in the woods, you know, like the mountains, the beginning of the mountains is woods. And the foresters had marked up the trees that needed to be cut. Now, they were all dead oak. Now, oak by itself is very hard. If it's dead, it's like trying to cut steel. Not only that, you had to clear away the underbrush, you know? So first you had to clear the underbrush, I had -- well, I had the -- the other guys with me, eight guys

and me. Teams of two there with the saws. You know those long saws that slightly curve [indecipherable]. So I was the hatchet man, the axe man because I have experience in Castelnau as a lumberjack. I did that for quite a long time in the winter over there. They send me in the woods, they told me which trees to cut down all by myself. Anyway, so I have plenty experience, I was the axe man. So I was the one that had to clear the underbrush. And if you notice, if you look at the tree, the roots grow up like this. The roots don't grow underneath, they grow outside. And when they're oaks and when they're like a hundred years old, I mean we're talking. So you had to chop that up before you could get at the basic tree trunk, and the prerequisite was not like the lumberjacks over here with the power saw at arm's height like this, cutting the thing, no. You had to cut it right flush with the ground. Wonderful, wonderful exercise. And I have to decide which way the tree would fall, so I had to notch it in various ways, and then the saw team came and they went opposite of the notch, and -- and then we had to cut it in three foot lengths, you know, stack the wood, cords of wood, and split it. I mean, can you imagine splitting trees that big around? Oh, such fun. And then at night they took us back. The reward was, we ate in the noncommissioned officer's mess, and we wore civilian clothes. And that saved our life, because after a little while, the Germans in Pau, in the commandanture must have heard that there's some Jews around there someplace in Gurs. Will never do. So one night we're eating in the mess, and all of a sudden I see a pair of my favorite black suited militia come in. French. Okay. Get nervous already. Then I see another pair coming in. And another pair. So I said to the guys, we're all eating at the same table, I says, look fellows, let's not make it obvious. Let's just go out here one or two at a time like we're finished eating. We weren't finished eating but that was no time to stick around, right? So we got out and [indecipherable] out and we saw -- see, there's the main route, what they call route nationale was running alongside the camp. I told you, the camp

was like a mile long. Would you believe they had truckloads of these militia men that surrounded the camp every 50 or a hundred feet, so that nobody could escape? So, what to do, you know? The guy's already in the camp, but I happened to be very good friends with one of the -- it was one of the older police inspectors in his -- must have been 40's or some like that. And he was married and he was still living in the camp, across the street in Quonset huts. Very civilized though, and he had two kids. So I have one guy with me also, big guy, but he was a real baby. He says, what are you gonna do, what are you g -- I says, what, I'm going to try to sneak through the wire and run across to in -- it was night, and see whether this inspector would put me up overnight until they have left and done their dirty deed, right? He's like, please take me along, take me along. I says, hey man, what are you crazy, nobody knows you. Well, he made such a pest of mys -- of himself, I took him along. So -- you -- you remember, it was the war, so there's blackout, there's no lights anyplace. Knock on the door and either he or his wife open up the door, I says, blah, blah, blah --

Q: Kurt, excuse me, I have to stop, cause we need to stop the tape.

End of Tape Six

### Beginning Tape Seven

Q: All right, so you're now in the process of escaping with this other guy, and you've knocked on the commandant's door and the wife answered.

A: No, not the commandant, one of the inspectors.

Q: Oh, I mean one -- one of the inspectors, I'm sorry, right.

A: Yeah. And I says -- explained my situation whether we could come in and you know, I have a problem. Oh, she pulls us in, and explained to them. Oh, she says, sure. Now you gotta understand how good the French are. I listen to them being torn apart all the time, and I don't listen to this. She had two children. First thing she did, she took the kids out of bed, where did she put them to sleep, I don't know. Then, I haven't slept in a bed in how long, I don't know how long. She goes ahead and changes the sheet. I said, lady, you don't have to change the sheet. She changed the sheet. Now, you know why I say that. You couldn't get soap in France, or stuff you use to do a wash. I mean a -- I'm telling you, it -- it -- it was a horror show. So she insisted on giving us fresh sheets. So we spent the night there, we slept together in the bed, of course, and then the following morning we went back and we saw how much damage the German did. Couple of guys managed to get lucky, but they got a few, you know. And then that was a signal for me that it's getting towards the end, you can not hang out here any more. So I took a gamble. I was -- I told you, when I was the orderly there at this little room, the recepti -- reception room, and next to me was the radio operator, you know, in touch with who knows what. So his name was Otis. So I go and see him, I says, Otis, gotta ask you something. Do you by any chance know anybody on the underground that's a guy that takes people over the Pyrenees? Took a gamble. Could have handed me over to the police, too, right, or the Germans? Says, let me see, come back in a little while. He set up an appointment with me -- for me with some mountain type

guy, and we met, supposedly some sort of bridge, I -- I could get out, you know. I me -- I worked for the assistant and he -- he had the gate right behind his house, so I knew how to get out of the place without getting through the barbed wire. So I met him, and meanwhile it became known for some reason that I was gonna get out of the camp. And the next think I know, I got four guys bugging the bejeebers out of me to take them with m -- with me, along. There was only one drawback. After I saw the guide, he says it's -- argument-wise, 5,000 whatever it is per person. I says okay. I had -- I always had some money, I worked. Even in the camp when I was the orderly I made money, fine. Always had money. But the other dudes didn't have any money. So what are we gonna do? I have to rustle up a fortune of money. So in the middle of the night we used to sneak out of the camp and sell everything we could get rid of, we didn't need. So eventually -- and then I went to some guy I know who had a lot of money, and I says, look, blah, blah, blah, I'm shy so much money, how about it? So he gave it to me. So finally I have got all the money and when we went out the camp at night, was the winter anyway, it was January the 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944 -- so I gave him the money and the money wasn't for him. He -- during the day they had to hide us in a farmhouse and the farmer had to feed us. In order to buy food they needed money, that's what the money was for. And you know the Pyrenees fooled me a lot. I had no idea, I'm telling you, I'm naïve in every re-respect. Only once though, you don't do it twice with me. But the first time around, anything goes. I saw the mountain, I says, oh, you climb that mountain, on the other side is Spain, no big deal. Imagine my disappointment when we get on top of the mountain, what's across the s -- from me as far as I can see, another mountain, just as high. Well, there were six of them. I'll make it short because w-we don't have a week. The last week -- the last day, we hit the glacier, we were that high up already, you know, past the snow line, glacier. Now, we weren't exactly dressed. Remember this is between January 21<sup>st</sup>, and January 27<sup>th</sup>,

alright? And in the mountains that's not exactly summertime weather. And especially without the proper equipment. So we hitting this glacier -- oh, by the way, those guides were all volunteer. They walked the whole night, and then they c -- they -- they could walk much better than us, then the following -- well, the following morning, they ran back to the -- their day job. Some of them were e-engineers on a -- on a train. Some did ta -- they -- th-they did that -- they didn't get any sleep for 24 hours. They did that without a nickel of remuneration. The money was strictly for the farmers so they could buy food for us. Logical situation, which we didn't know but we found out. So we climbed during the night. The reason that it took so long -- there's a perfectly good road that goes along in the valley, the only trouble is that it's patrolled by Germans, because that's the road between Spain and France. So we went over every mountain without any roads whatsoever. Was horror show. I once fell down the side of a mountain cliff just like that. And it's just like in the movies, th-the only thing that stopped me between heaven and earth, there was this shrub sticking out from that cliff. And I get ahold of it. So now I'm looking up and I see the guys on top and I look down below. And the guides came, he was like s -- more of a mountaineer, right? You see, there was -- the pass was that wide, there was no light. And it had eroded, there was a hole like that and I didn't see, and I stepped right in that hole. The way we could see is -- you know what a musette is? That's like a bread bag that they have in France for the soldiers or for anything, a -- a bag, and they're usually in light canvas. So, was flung over the back from the guy, so that's what you were focusing on because him you couldn't see, you know? Phew. So he came and got me back up again. Oy. That was scary. I didn't scream, either. Not a peep out of me, I wasn't giving anybody away.

Q: So you were walking for six nights?

A: Mm-hm. And I mean, walking up the mountain is bad, you can't believe what it is to walk down the mountain. You can't walk down the mountain, you run, because there's no way -- anything to stop you. It's so steep, you run.

Q: Now one of these guys had a little dog with him, didn't he?

A: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah, tha -- tha -- that's nice. That -- I-I said to him -- that's the guy whose job I got through -- you know, who did some tricks, but he loved his dog. Okay, fine. A small German Shepherd, or young German Shepherd. I says, he is totally insane, I couldn't talk him out of it. All right. So the first step, the first night, we're on the -- off a cliff i-in a shepherd's hut, you know, trying to get a little warm, you know, and get a little rest. And it was on a cliff overlooking down below. After a little while, whatever it was, we're walking out of there and I'm the last guy out and I happen to look down there. Down there's a German patrol with a Shepherd, and the Shepherd is barking to beat the band. Why? He smelled the other dog. Not us so much as the dog. Man, did we have to run, and the guy didn't even have any pepper or anything like that he could have sprinkled around on the track. That was a good one.

Q: But the dog he had never barked?

A: No [indecipherable]

Q: That's quite amazing, right?

A: Look, I don't analyze things, not at that time. Later on you have time to analyze. While it's happening there's no psychoanalysis, you know? So after six days we're now faced -- oh yeah, excuse me. On the six days we met two more groups. One group was people that were very well heeled, with the proper equipment, you know, mountain equipment you know, and -- and the shoes with spikes, and then the right kind of rucksack, you know, and the nice warm clothes, you know, filthy rich people. They didn't like it any more either. I don't know whether they were

Jewish or not, most -- more likely they're not. And lo and behold I inherit five allied flyboys. Four Americans and a British. They have -- have been channeled by the French underground all the way back to where our meeting point was. You know, the French used to hide them at night. You know, maybe they came all the way -- I don't know from where, but they were shot down over, you know, German territory. So for some reason they -- the rich people went their own way -- they elected me as their leader. Okay? I'm not a soldier or anything like that, I'm their leader, hallelujah. Same way I was the leader of the other dudes. They all were older than me. So we're facing this glacier there, sheer wall. So the mountain man, he has this pick, you know this -- they got these things, they're those picks, and he's hacking a step into the ice, one step at a time. So here -- it's like a bunch of monkeys, we're all hanging on for dear life, one hand in this -- in -- in the step and the other one was standing there, and the guy in front of you is standing there. Finally you make it to the top. And the top is one sheer field of ice, going down like this. Anyway you want to look at, sheer ice. Well, we get to the top and guide says to me, well okay, this is th -- that -- this is one for the ages. You follow that river, and that will lead you to civilization. I said to him, river? What -- what the heck are you talking about? I don't see any river. I have 20/20 vision, didn't see any river. I says, you're in -- you're not going to leave me here. You take me where that river allegedly is. Comes with me and it was ice, I'm telling you, it's like I said, it's a sheer glacier. So -- and underneath, all of a sudden, there's a slight discoloration underneath the ice, it's grayish. He says, you see that? That's the river. You follow that, okay? That's how a river starts someplace, I guess. I can vouch for it because it turned into a river. So like good pedestrians, we walk on the right side of nothing, underneath the ice. And slowly, slowly -- if you ha-have ever been to New Hampshire, you see in those rapids over there, splashing over the stone. Scary. Not very deep, but scary when you don't know that. So all of a



sudden, we're on the right side and there's no place to walk any more because there's a sheer cliff like that, the -- the river must have gouged it out. But the opposite side is perfectly nice and flat. There's only one thing wrong. By now that quote, no river, was maybe, let me see, I want to keep it within the framework of reality. Maybe 40 - 50 feet wide. And it's [indecipherable]. So we took off our shoes and then we looked whether there was a stone to step on, and we made it to the other side. Now the other side was mud, but was plenty room to walk, and it was like the Grand Canyon. It was completely gouged out like this, yo -- you know? It -- like a cover. And we kept on walking and walking and walking and walking, there's hours, you know. And the only sound that you heard once in awhile was the axe of a lumberjack, someplace, you know, that carries very far in the -- in an icy neighborhood and in the woods with no other noise, you know? And once in a blue moon we saw a Spaniard. Now, two of the guys were Spanish Civil War veterans, so they spoke Spanish, so [indecipherable] you know, whatever, so a -- ah -- they thought we were Spaniards. Here goes. We come around the corner, and we froze. What's in front of us like -- hard to say accurately, let's say 500 feet. A platoon of Germans with trucks and everything. I says, oh boy, oh boy, oh boy. And you know who was the most scared? Hate to tell you. The soldier boys. They were going to hightail it. I says, boys -- I spoke English -- as -- not as well as now, but spoke some English enough to get by. I says, hold it. If these are Germans they're going to shoot you the minute you start running. Let's take it easy, they don't seem to be all that dangerous. They keep on staring at the Germans there. German helmet, German boots, German uniforms, German everything. Something -- and all of a sudden I saw what was different. The belt and the bandoliers were bright yellow. Well, the Germans are either brown or black. So then I knew they were Germans. So we had no choice but to walk up to them. So the allied sold --

Q: The soldiers were not German.

A: Of course not, not with a b -- yellow bandolier, you know, and a yellow belt. With -- the Germans have black and -- or brown. You know, that's what -- that's what stopped me, I knew there was something different. And so we walk up to them, and the other guys identified themselves as allied soldiers, showed their dogtag, whatnot. They put them on the truck, drove them to the nearby embassy in -- it must be Bilbao or some town there, I don't remember. Okay? They were home free. Us, we don't deserve, because we weren't the only guys that came across, we don't deserve no trucks. We haven't walked enough, only six days, or six nights. So we're walking, and we're schlepping, we're schlepping. The next thing we know, they threw us into a one cell dungeon, the filthiest place I ever seen in my life. Window up there, no place to sleep or nothing. So the following day we wind up -- I don't know whether we got on a truck, I don't remember. I can't swear, I ga -- what I can't swear to, I'm not saying. We wind up in Bilbao. Where did they take us? To Spanish Gestapo headquarters. Pure marble everything. I don't mean the outside, I don't mean the wall, I don't mean the floor. I mean the benches you sat on, all marble. This is after Franco [indecipherable], I don't know, it's -- this is 1941 -- '44, and the war is over in '39, and they were poor as church mice, proverbial. So each and every one go -- gets interviewed. Now, obviously we didn't come along with papers. Now being that I'm as good as any Frenchman ever was, all of a sudden I'm French. Took my France -- French name, birthplace, the whole thing. The only thing that I did, I lied. The only time in my life actually -- you don't have to believe me, but it's true. I fudged my age. All of a sudden I was 17 years old. I looked very young, I was emaciated, haven't eaten in four years. So, you know, I looked very young. They bought it. Saved my life.

Q: How?

A: Well, if you were of army age, right? Meaning 18 - 19 - 20 - 21 or older, you wound up in Miranda. Miranda was a death camp like Andersonville from the Civil War. Just as bad as the German concentration camps. Just as bad. So I wound up with the old people and the children. Fantastic. Wound up in a little rest -- no, first in town they put us up in a real nice restaurant, the first decent meal I had had in five years -- four years, okay? Of course I was with the French, you know, I was French. No paper, but I was French. And nobody was going to say I'm not French. Nobody would believe me if I would have told them, which at one time I did, and nobody believed me anyway. Couldn't be. Couldn't be that I'm not French. Okay, fine. So the following day they take us and we wind up in a small -- let's say town, way up in the mountain and in a nice, little hotel. Now I'm living, together with older people, you know. I don't know how many, let's say 15 -17 or so. And we were plenty of food. The Spaniard for some reason had food, and I want to tell you how that came about. The -- they -- they tho -- spanic -- spa -- Spain is very arid and poor, and all they grew was olive and o-oranges. Well, how come they had food? Well, for every allied prisoner that they turned in to the allies, the United States gave them a 75 kilo bag of grain, or 175 pound bag of grain. Wheat. And they paid them X amount of dollars per prisoner. So they had a marvelous business to -- even though they were leaning towards Hitler -- you know, Franco, well, you can't pass up a good deal like that. The allies were smart. So they bought all of their prisoners and th-that's how come the Spaniards had food. And at for -- they got strangest eating ours, but that's not here nor there. At four or five o'clock in the afternoon they made chocolate, you know, hot chocolate? But they don't make it like powder, they take chocolate bars, and you know when the chocolate is finished, you can put a spoon in and it stays upright, that's how thick that chocolate is. But we had a lot of nice food there. That didn't last too long. Then they threw me again in another camp with hundreds upon hundreds of hundreds and

hundreds of French people, young people, also refugees from France, also in the mountains, and they put us in a -- well, that must have been the spa in peacetime, you know, like a big hotel, and with plenty of rooms, and -- and -- and dining room and things like that. So we stayed there for a little while and then they transferred us to another one that was actually even nicer, but by that time it's already going on towards spring. Now anybody that tells you that Spain is warm is mistaken, he has never hang -- hung around northern Spain, it is freezing. It is freezing. And we always had to get out there for the colors, you know, like -- you know, when they raise the flag and things like? One night we -- we had to stand there. One of their things, what can I tell you? And then we wound up -- oh yeah, and I -- I was under the misconception that oh, I'll get out of here in no time flat, you know, wound up in North Africa. So I never bothered learning Spanish. So one month goes by, I'm still there. Two months goes by, I'm still there. After three months a light goes on, I says, fella, you were vastly mistaken, you're not gotten -- you're not getting out of here so fast, better learn Spanish. Not bragging, stating facts. I learned perfect Spanish in three weeks. I was so good in Spanish that I used to write love letters for the -- for the fellas to write -- to send to the girls.

Q: Before you learned Spanish, where did you think you would go? Why did you --

A: North Africa, of course.

Q: Why?

A: That's where the French were, free French.

Q: I see, so you thought the Spanish would send you there?

A: No, no.

Q: What [indcipherable]

A: Not the Spanish, the Spanish hand me over to the free French who'd take care of me.

Q: No, that's what I meant, that's what you expected them to do.

A: Yeah, and they eventually did. The only problem was the French had the marvelous system. You could tell them any kind of fairy tale like I found out in the Foreign Legion, not for myself, but for other people, and by the time they had you screened, which took a few weeks, you gotta realize -- realize that French was occupied territory, they knew exactly who you were. They knew your police record if you had one. They knew where you were born, you knew -- they knew your real name. That -- they let you tell them anything you wanted, but they wanted to investigate and they could find out. So naturally I didn't have any papers, I have to come clean. So what was my choice? The Foreign Legion. I wanted the French army, right? Couldn't do it. I wasn't French, you know, and they didn't -- you know. So I wound up in the Foreign Legion. And the Foreign Legion, eventually we were sent to Casablanca, you know, from[indecipherable] which is Gibraltar, to Casablanca, you know, these -- take the ship there. It's across the Straits, it's very -- you know, the two oceans collide, the Mediterranean and the Pacific -- and the -- and the Atlantic, and let me tell you, it's not a peaceful meeting.

Q: Right.

A: Whew, my God, unbelievable. That was my second sea storm, but anyway -- well that one was the first one, anyway. And so we wound up in a big army base in Casablanca and they interrogate me and the British were there that were doing the interrogation and they were very thrilled with all the information I could give them about the Atlantic Wall. You see, what, where, how much, how fast, how big, how deep, what was the weaponry, what -- I had all that information and [indecipherable] to get a guy firsthand information, okay? So we were together with French Colonial troops and there also were Americans on the base. Now I said to myself, the Foreign Legion, I'm not that crazy about it. From what I hear, it's not a place to be. So I saw

two army officers, American, coming by. Being that I spoke a little English, I went up to them, I says, "Gentlemen, excuse me, I would really like to join the American army." Oh, obviously they were from the quartermaster depot. They were uninterested, you know? That was my chance of serving in the American Army. I knew that the Foreign Legion was going to be the absolute pits of the world, which it was, but that's a -- you know. So -- and I saw the strangest things there. The Moroccans were the nicest of all Arabs, I tell you. The further east you go, the worst they get. The Moroccans are the nicest. The Algerians already, forget it. The Tunisian, no good. Libya, after that, forget, it's the end of the world. But the Moroccans aren't bad. They were real nice. That's the first time I saw pot. I didn't know what it was.

Q: Saw what?

A: Pot. Marijuana. And [indecipherable] in the bags just sitting outside, and there's this Moroccan dude, some older gent. He pulls a tiny little s -- white ceramic pipe, with a thimble type bowl. And he's stuffing the thing. And I said to him, in French obviously, I says, what's that? He said, kief. You want a shot? Do you want to try it? I said, oh, no thank you. So kief is the first time I met with marijuana. He was smoking kief.

Q: Right. You -- you were fighting, am I -- am I correct?

A: Huh?

Q: You were -- you were actually fighting at some point, at the end of the war?

A: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Oh, yeah.

Q: In France and Germany?

A: Yeah, yeah. You know, after they screened us and blah, blah, blah, and I was attached to this French legion division, and to that one and this, that, eventually we wound up in the desert as an assembly point, then we took the LST's, you know, the big landing craft, you put the doors open

in the front? And we went from [indecipherable] to Marseille. Marseille was a French port, we could -- right into the town, you know, because the -- like, what they call the [indecipherable]. It was like the -- a wall, you know, a -- what you would call a seawall, you know, you could -- and you just dropped the doors and it went over, it was very -- actually it was be -- between me and my lieutenant we were the first one off the ship, you know? And so --

Q: Let -- I think I have to stop the tape.

End of Tape Seven

### Beginning Tape Eight

Q: Okay. So you're on a -- some sort of a vessel, right, that goes into Marseille and --

A: Oh yeah, yeah. We're landing in Marseille, and then we follow up the Rhone river valley, because it had been clear already by previous troops, Americans possibly, you know, I don't know. And what amazed me the most and what most people don't realize was how rich a country France was. The Germans had to abandon all the cars that they took from the French trying to get home with them. On each side of the road -- this is hard to believe -- for, let's say a minimum of three - 400 miles, were abandoned cars, three rows of abandoned cars. Now, can you picture how well the French were doing?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: That's for hundreds of miles, three beside. Anyway, we went -- we wound up at the triangle -- the triangle of [indecipherable], Vivier, and I forget the other town, and there we have a little stopped, and then we hit -- oh what's -- what's the town called there? Belfort. And you know, that's -- you know, little fighting, little this and we are stuck in mud again. The halftracks are stuck, the trucks are stuck. I mean, it's unbelievable the mud, and it's like where the Ardennes are, the Vosges come together, you know, the mountains where all the World War I battles were fought. S-Same story all over the world, never changes. And then we slowly, when it really gets cold, we advance into Germany. Actually, we stayed in Alsace-Lorraine near Strasbourg for a little bit, and then, sometime later, must have been April or something, we crossed the Rhine at -- I don't know, a -- a -- a -- where. The Americans had built a pontoon bridge, you know, and one cami -- one -- one truck at a time, you know, boom, boom, and then we're rolling into Germany, and things like that. And then we went from one village to the next, from one town to the next. And then eventually we wound up in this lovely, lovely little town, shortly before the end of the



war, and the people were very nice. Got myself a girlfriend obviously, and that's first thing I did. Had p -- I had plenty of freedom, I was -- I don't know whether -- I didn't mention it, I won't think so. As a private first class, that's as h -- far as I got, I was running the motor pool. Can you imagine that, all by myself? No stripes, no nothing. I had more clout than any officer ever had. I ran the whole motor pool. Jeep, GMC trucks, Dodge trucks, halftracks. You name it, I ran it all. I ordered the parts, wa -- I used to be -- I-I told you, I spoke some English. So all the orders have to be written or filled out in English, because requisitions were in English.

Q: Why were they in English?

A: Well, the Americans were supplying us.

Q: I see.

A: We got supplied by the Americans. Food, weapons, uniforms. Everything was American, you know? And that was great because -- as long as the war lasted. After that it wasn't so good. So anyway --

Q: So at this point, how much do you know about what the Nazis have done in --

A: At that time we weren't talking Nazis any more, we were just talking fighting the Germans.

Q: I know you -- I know you weren't necessarily talking about it, I want to know what you knew. Did you know anything?

A: Wa --

Q: Did you know [indecipherable]

A: -- I knew from before, I knew that there were Auschwitz, and that people didn't come out of it. That's what I knew from --

Q: Did you know there were gas chambers? Did you know that people were being gassed?

A: I -- I -- I -- I -- I might have known, I can't swear to you -- to it, because this was very removed from the stress of hour to hour living. We're not talking day to day, you know? Even while I was in Castelnat, it was never a relaxing thing.

Q: Right.

A: Either I was totally exhausted from work. There was -- for weeks I couldn't straighten out my hands after six weeks of hoeing the vineyards.

Q: Right.

A: They were cramped like that.

Q: No, the only reason I'm asking you Kurt, is not to be critical or anything, it's a question of trying to figure out what people knew when, and what difference did it make, that's all.

A: For -- for -- for -- for -- '42, it was a -- was a known fact. In '42 --

Q: But you really didn't know what it meant at that point. But that's --

A: No, it just meant death. That's the only thing that we knew, that the German were killing the Jews in Auschwitz, you know.

Q: Did you know there were other camps?

A: In terez -- yeah, Theresienstadt, whatever, you know? Bergen-Belsen and d-d -- Dachau was well known because that's in Germany. You know, Dachau and the -- and a couple of more there which escape me right now. So that we knew, because we knew that they didn't treat the Jews nicely when they picked them up.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They were very, very cruel and gruesome. I mean, they did it to their own people. Hitler used to hang his own bodies from meathooks, you know, when he was unhappy with them, so you can imagine how well they treated the Jews.

Q: Did your mother and father lose family?

A: Yeah. My mother lost a sister.

Q: Is that the sister who stayed with her grandmother?

A: No. No, no.

Q: I mean, the grandfather.

A: The oldest one, the oldest one.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The oldest one that didn't want to send my namesake boy --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- to live with my aunt in France. They stayed there, they died. That's her side of the family. My father's family, everybody, his father, 85, his two brothers, his sister that married a Catholic, and the nuns hid her and her daughter, because you see, because you're married to a Catholic, and Jewish, doesn't count. It even makes the guy that married you a prime target for retribution, you know? So she swore that if she ever got out of that alive, that she'll convert to Christianity - or Christianity or whatever. So -- and then her two children were obviously -- well, not obviously, they were born Jewish. You know what I'm saying? But, you know, they were half and half, so it's very hard to say. So my father was the most people, because he had -- my -- my g -- grandfather died before. My grandm-mother died before him on my mother's side. My mother got out, my aunt in France got out, my aunt in England got out. It's only the sister that insisted, oh, they're not going to touch us.

Q: One of the sisters stayed with your grandfather.

A: Yeah, that's the youngest one.

Q: And did she get out?

A: Yeah --

Q: She got out, uh-huh.

A: -- in '39 she got out to England, it only cost everything.

Q: Right.

A: The house, the store, every kind of last nickel that she had.

Q: When you met up with your parents after you -- I know you were very sick at the end of the war, you had amoebic dysentery, yeah?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you came back to be with your parents and you were still quite ill. Did you -- did your parents then know what had happened to other members of the family, by then, or not? You don't -- or you don't know. Maybe you were too sick.

A: Well, I can tell you, the business of living and staying alive was unbelievable. Let me tell you how sick I was. There was nothing to eat in France, so my mother went around, she was very good friends with the baker lady. She went over to the baker lady, trying v -- v -- everybody was on ration, I mean the French, everybody, so -- trying to get a slice of bread for me or something like that. Now, couldn't get a slice of bread, couldn't get nothing. Vegetables, yes. There were vegetables, you could get some eggs, chicken once in a blue moon, but no meat. Once in a blue moon you got a -- a -- on your ration cards you got like a pound of meat for the month, or something like that. Maybe. Not sure yet. I rem -- I don't remember. I know one [indecipherable] was over, you know. Or anyway. So she's sitting there with the baker lady, goes to show you what shape I was in, says, Monsieur Claude -- and my name was Claude in France, not Kurt. Kurt and the French and the Germans, so Claude was a little safer. Ah, Monsieur Claude is such a nice young man. What a shame he has to die. That's the shape I was in.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: See, the farmers, this was a farm community, are far more at ease with life and death than city people.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: All right, we're not talking now, but you know, in [indecipherable]

Q: So how long were you sick?

A: God almighty. I'd sa -- I got back to North Africa from Germany, must have been June 1945.

I must -- must have taken -- yeah, that was the second time I had maybe dysentery when we left for France, you know, for the invasion. But that was the first time and that was quite -- quite a long time, and the -- when I went back to France and I got some decent food, at midnight I used to go over to the farm ladies and says, could you maybe bake me a little apple pie or something? So they did and I took care of myself, all right? I mean, the Americans supplied us too, but you know, k-rations and such, it's not -- you know. But anyway, so I beat it eventually.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The second time, being that I had still the germ in me, obviously, it took two weeks before I was flat on my back again. But being a soldier you have no choice. The Foreign Legion is not too much into people. The Foreign Legion is much more into equipment. They would sacrifice 20 men to save a truck, easy, no problem. Oh, we'll get 20 more tomorrow, no problem.

Q: When you went back to s -- when you went f --

A: So anyway, just to answer the question --

Q: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah.

A: -- from July, all the way to the end of November.

Q: That's a long time.

A: Augu -- July, August, September, October, November, five months. And I looked it, I have pictures to prove it.

Q: Did your parents think you were alive? Did they -- did they have any idea where you were?

So when -- how did -- did you write to them first, or did you just walk up to the door, sick as you were?

A: But at that time -- at that time, from North Africa, which was French, I was able to communicate with my aunt and uncle.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I really didn't know at that time where my --

Q: Where your parents were, right.

A: -- parents were, but my aunt and uncle, or my aunt at least, was in touch with my parents, so henceforth they knew I was okay.

Q: Right.

A: But for quite a few years my parents didn't know --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- where I was, or whether I was alive, you know, that --

Q: Right. And where were your parents when you finally saw them?

A: In Castelnor Rivierbas, yeah.

Q: They -- oh, they went there again, I see.

A: Well, I don't know what -- well, that's the place that they knew --

Q: Right.

A: -- and they were well known there, and by that time they must have had some remorse, you know, the police department and they treated them rather well, you -- if you know what I mean.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: And --

Q: Did you and your brother go to Grenoble?

A: Yeah, my brother, from Castelnat -- I stayed a long time, I wasn't well, I couldn't walk let's say from that end to that end. I mean, I couldn't, I was so weak. Anyway, my father got the doctor. We had one doctor in the village, and he was very good diagnostician, and he prescribed little ampules. You know what ampules are? Glass vials and they're filled with cultures. So my father t-take the train to the big city, have the prescription filled, come back with the prescription and then I a -- I drank this twice a day in some water. And eventually -- the doctor had it right on the money, slowly, slowly, slowly. But the strength was slow in coming because there was no food for me --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- to get strong on, or with. So --

Q: So Harry goes first?

A: Harry knew that in Castelnat there's only farm work, that's no future. So Grenoble was a wonderful college city -- university city actually, and in the house actually, little bit, you know. Very pretty, beautiful buildings. And he start -- he found a job there. And then, when I was strong enough, well, I couldn't stay in Castelnat, again there was nothing there for me, so I went, and we both lived in the same sm-small room, furnished room that I had rented, and in the small, itsy-bitsy s -- bed with the sagging mattress until I started working and made a living and could afford my own furnished room, in the same place, of course.

Q: Right. Now I understand that your parents and Harry left for the United States in 1947?

A: Yes.

Q: And why did they come to the United States if things were starting to go okay in France, do you know?

A: What my father going to do at that age?

Q: He was over 60.

A: He can't -- he can't make -- he can't make a -- in France he can't make the living, you -- it's not like the United States, you come, you apply for a job, if the guy likes you, you get it. Uh-uh. Over there the papers, you gotta see. I got papers that you wouldn't -- you wouldn't believe what it takes in France to get a job, you know? So my aunt from Germany, the single one that stayed with my grandfather, got to England, was in the United States and had married an American fellow, I think, and he had an extended family, wonderful people, and they put up the bail for me to come to the United States and for my parents. You know how much you have to put up for me when I came a year later? 10,000 dollars so I would -- shouldn't fall, you know, th-that the state would have to take care of me.

Q: Right.

A: That's when you immigrate illegally -- or emigrate. That's the difference between then and now. And not only that, had to go to the embassy in Paris and the doctor screened me like I was a -- a Michelangelo there. You know, checked me for being defect free.

Q: Did you want to come to the United States?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: Why not?



A: I was doing very well in France, I had a marvelous job. Had a lot of respect, had 25 people working for me. Imagine, I was a big 24 - 25 years old at the time. And -- and t -- they treated me wonderful. The only thing is that my parents and my brothers used to hound me with letters. How can you stay there, you're all alone, you're all single, whatever -- first of all, I wasn't all alone. Number two, I had my aunt and my uncle in Vichys that I used to go and visit every once in awhile, my second set of parents, you know? And I had a girlfriend that took real good care of me.

Q: So why --

A: So what the problem, you know?

Q: So why did you leave?

A: They kept on hounding me to death.

Q: I see.

A: You can't stay there, da da da. I came over here -- of course, it was an experience, an eye-opener, because the United States, even though it was originally populated by white people from Europe, is so different from Europe, like night and day. There's no -- there's not even -- you can't even compare. The closest you could conceivably come to compare one with the other is Germany and the United States. But even that is really a stretch. The attitude, the mentality, the - it's totally different here. Look, I want to just explain to you how -- let's forget Hitler which was the worst thing in the world. Happened to the world, not just the Jews. Germany had social security under Bismarck, we're going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, okay, okay? They were pretty advanced, right? You work in France [indecipherable] twice, doesn't matter who your boss is, you can change jobs five times a year. As long as you work a four months, you get credit for that four months. For every month you work -- I'm going back to 1948 -- '46 -- '47, you get one and

a half days vacation, right? Which means 18 days a year, working days. Plus a bonus, not your salary, but a little extra, so you should actually be able to enjoy a vacation. I think that's very progressive. You're not at the mercy of a boss. This is state mandated. You retire at the ripe old age of 60 with 80 percent of your earning. Over here you get Social Security, if you make 20 percent you're doing real good. You -- you -- you know what I'm saying? So there -- there are differences, and these are the large difference that you don't even know when you come here.

Q: But did you like it when you came here?

A: No.

Q: No. Do you like it now?

A: Oh, I -- I -- let me put it to you this way. I just loved and admired the United States okay?

Q: Mm.

A: Now, the way that things were set up and the way I was abused at the beginning, work-wise, I wasn't exactly my cup of tea.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: See, the first job that I had, took a long time to find, the minute they found out I was not an American citizen, they cut my salary, that's for openers. Then they cheated me out of overtime, until I found out and of course, as much as my English wasn't as fluent as it is now, I eventually got my overtime. But that's the attitude -- you know, how can you -- in France I never had to ask for a raise. They came around to ask the supervisor, foreman, management, whatever, and says, who do you have that merits raise this month? You never had to ask for a raise, if you were worth it. And we're working on merit there, not on bullshit. That's the big difference. So it takes a little while to get used to this. No, the best thing that ever happened to me here was meeting my wife, and obviously I had the good sense and the perseverance to marry her.

Q: This is Barbara?

A: Beg pardon?

Q: What's her name, Barbara?

A: Barbara.

Q: Right.

A: I -- I mean, there's one philosophy I always had. Wherever you are, you marry a girl of this particular country, you know. Like in France I had a French girlfriend. In Germany, I had German girlfriends, you know. So, no sh -- she was wonderful, it's -- I miss her big time, but --

Q: Right.

A: -- I have to keep on -- my d -- my -- my daughter wants me to keep on living forever. You know, my -- my -- my oldest daughter wants the house, you know, when she retires. So I don't know how long I can accommodate her. See, as long as I'm self sufficient, it's not much of a problem.

Q: Right.

A: But I can see myself, I guess, in some of the people around here. Especially, you go to doctors, I mean, I have to see doctors, whether I'm sick or not, I mean you have to go and see doctors, blah blabber of all stripes. So you see people and you says, oh God almighty. You know, they -- they're really -- they're really in a bad way, I mean, and they're still clinging to life with everything they got. I just don't understand it.

Q: Tell me, when you look at the war years, do you think you missed out on a lot because of it?

A: Oh yes. I never had a youth.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: From the time I was 17 until I was -- well, okay, I had a girlfriend in France, I tried to catch up a little bit. But for six years, forget it.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I mean, not only was I in horrible places, you know, see I -- we can't discuss all the horrors in detail, we just have to gloss over the whole thing. But when I think about all the things or places, whatever happened to me, and the only way that I was able to handle it is because I was young. You have no concept of anything. That's why whoever you send to fight a war is a young person. You don't see 40 - 50 year old people going in the front line, getting themselves shot up. You find 18 - 20 year old getting -- getting themselves killed. So it's the same thing with me. I didn't know any better. That's the way it is, that's the way it is. But I felt bad when I had time to reflect, especially now, I says, gosh, I c -- I -- I couldn't have survived six months under the conditions that I had to live. I mean, we discussed a lot of things but we omitted an awful lot of horror shows, you know. And that's basically all I can say. But of course my [indecipherable] see, the nice thing is when I married Barbara, I had a ready made family. Her mother, her father, her brother, relatives, grandmother, you know, things like that. So then I felt like I sort of like, belonged.

Q: Right.

A: It's important, that feeling. You know, all by yourself you're floundering around, I mean, okay you're alive, you eat, you do this, you do that and whatnot. But it's not -- it's the feeling -- belonging is very important to me, you know. And so sh-she was just plain wonderful, you know. Great. On top of that, she was over nine years younger than me, which was a good thing in retrospect, because she died. She was 70 or 71. So think about it, you know? If she wouldn't have been younger, what -- what kind of a nightmare that would have -- and I could take care of

her, wha -- you know, I took care of her all the rest of -- ever since the roof started caving in, you know? She had the first open heart surgery in May of 1992, and the second one in December seventh, 19 -- yeah, 1993, in Houston by the biggest butcher known to mankind, Dr. Denton Cooley. Wh-Why do I say that? Because he works on an assembly line, he doesn't take one patient at a time, he's got five or six or seven scheduled for the day. So, if he has to do a little more that he didn't si -- foresee, that's too bad for the patient, sew 'em up.

Q: Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you think we must talk about?

A: Do you remember anything that needs to be said? I don't know. I mean, I -- what I can talk about is I have the most wonderful daughters and grandchildren. My two daughters, one is 49 and one is 44. They haven't given me, not as of late either, one minute of aggravation their whole lives. Now, who has a parent can say something like that? And I was a very straight father.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know, what's that, tough love?

Q: That's what [indecipherable]

A: Paid -- but the kids love me. And my grandchildren, I walk on water. If Christ wouldn't have invented it, they would have invented it. I have a granddaughter and a grandson, they think I walk on water. And I -- and my youngest daughter, at the ripe old age of 40 - 41, just after my wife died, sh -- fortunately my wife was able, at great, great, great stress, to come to the wedding, which I asked my daughter to have here in Florida, you know, at the western country club. Small, because my wife can't -- you know. And so a -- but sh -- sh -- at least she saw her getting married. She didn't know she was pregnant, you know? I -- I mean, nobody knew at the time, and it's amazing, the minute she went off the pill, she conceived, and she was 40 years old,

which is -- all her friends from college, they all with artificial insemination, this that, whatnot. Couldn't have a baby to st -- you know. Most of them anyway. First time she tries -- not only that, she comes up with something real gorgeous. I mean bu -- and she didn't have any problem. I said to her, Leslie, if you take anything like money -- Mommy -- after Mommy, you'll pop the kid out like hotcakes out of the stove. Because my wife never had any -- she had a lot of problems, you know, health-wise, due to what her mother did to her when she was a baby. But giving birth she was a champion. Just like that, both kids. And Leslie did it. Went into the hospital at 1:10 at night, 6:10 in the morning, there was that gorgeous baby.

Q: That's great. Kurt, let me thank you very much for being willing to take all this time, and [indecipherable]

A: No, it's my pleasure, believe me. I mean, you don't have to thank me, it should -- basically should be the other way around, that you went to all this trouble with those nice gentleman there, and you know. I mean, what the hell is left to do?

Q: Thank you.

A: Do you know what I'm saying?

Q: Yeah.

A: It was my pleasure. I hope it comes out --

End of Tape Eight

Beginning Tape Nine

Q: Okay, what are -- what are we looking at, Kurt?

A: Well, that's when I was young, possibly two and a half, and that's my brother, who's 17 months younger than I am. And s-same two people, me on the right, and that must have been maybe five years old.

Q: Okay, tell us about this.

A: Well, that happens to be my father, my mother, my -- me on the left, and my brother in the middle. And also around five or thereabouts, or six.

Q: And that's in Cologne?

A: Yes, that's all in Cologne. Up til the ripe old age of 11, everything you see will be in Cologne. Cologne or Ziegboik, where we had to leave due to Hitler's --

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Oh well, that is my Aunt Emma, with whom I went to live in France, after I left Germany, which of course was taken in the 20's, due to the cust -- or the dress or something, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: She was like a second mother to me, perfect in every way.

Q: Okay.

A: Oh, my brother on the right, me on the left, give or take a year, it would be eight or nine.

Q: Okay.

A: Well, on my right is my ga -- my mother's father, my brother, myself at -- and that's my oldest aunt that stayed in Germany against everybody else's wishes and got killed. I just turned 17. That was just before the beginning of the war, in '39.

Q: And you're in Le Mans?

A: Le -- la -- it says Le Mans?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, it still must be what? 1939, right?

Q: It says 1940.

A: '40? Well, I wasn't in Le Mans, I -- yeah, in -- I was in Le Mans in 1940, but that picture was taken a little bit before that.

Q: Uh-huh. Okay. Okay.

A: Well, that's me in Gurs. The date is anywhere's between '41 and '42. It's just amazing how well dressed one was.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, you didn't have work clothes, you know what I'm saying? I still have them -- very patri  
--

Q: Okay.

A: Well, this happens to be my brother in 1943.

Q: This is Harry.

A: My brother, yeah, brother Harry.

Q: Oh yeah. Okay.

A: That is me in North Africa after the war -- after -- somewhere around June, July, 1945, in a small African, North African village. That's why everything is so dried up.

Q: Can you point to them? And who are the other guys?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Who?

A: Friends of mine.



Q: Ah.

A: Lemanu and Vernasia. Wouldn't help you much. I never remember names. He was very nice, very nice fellows. Lemanu was Belgian on the right, and Vernasia -- Vernasia in the -- he was a ladies man.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: Well, that's the picture that I took on my first leave after leaving Germany, and I went to see my parents. Obviously my brother was there, too, so I had a couple of weeks leave after the war.

Q: And this is who?

A: My brother Harry.

Q: And this is who?

A: That's me.

Q: Uh-huh, okay. And this?

A: That's me again, solo.

Q: Okay, tell us about this.

A: Well, these are just a few months after the pictures that we just saw, when the amoebic dysentery really kicked in big time, and I had lost quite a few pounds. I was still in North Africa at the time, they never released me when they should have.

Q: Okay.

A: My wife Barbara and I on our wedding day, on the way to the ceremony.

Q: And what year was that?

A: 1951, July 15<sup>th</sup>.

Q: Kurt?

A: Yeah?

Q: Come in here for one second, please. Is this still on? Yes, it is, ready to go. Oh, okay, just -- just -- okay, Kurt.

A: Well, that is the passport for when I came to the United States. The French have a different way of making identity and passport papers. Instead of a little booklet, they make an accordion type situation out of it. Took quite a few stamps to be validated, visa and such. ... I mean like, I was 20 years old.

Q: What did you do, you went on a -- I can't believe you wasted --

End of Tape Nine

Conclusion of Interview