

URBACH, Solomon (also called Rumak and Schomek)

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Abstract

Solomon Urbach was born in Kalwaria-Zebrzydowska in Poland in 1926. His parents and their six children lived in Romania from 1928 until 1933, when the Romanian government expelled them as non-Romanian citizens. The family was imprisoned across the border in Poland until a Polish family got them released.

The Urbachs settled near Krakow in Borek Falecki. Due to anti-Semitism at the school across from their home, Sol and his siblings had to walk four kilometers to and from a Krakow school with only Jewish children. Polish Christian children threw rocks at them along the route they followed for six years. His family remained in Borek Falecki long after Germans invaded and ordered them to enter the Krakow ghetto. But in 1942, neighbors threatened to report them, so the family sneaked into the Krakow ghetto to avoid punishment for not reporting themselves.

Oskar Schindler entered the ghetto and selected Solomon and a friend out of 100 others to work at his factory making pots and pans. Schindler factory workers, who stayed there several nights in March 1943 when the Krakow ghetto was liquidated, were the only survivors of the ghetto, as well as the camp he and others were taken to, Krakow Plaszow. At Plaszow, he saw Amon Goeth and other SS men shoot or lynch inmates. Solomon continues to search for family members, but found none who survived, and found only one friend after the war.

He got to know Schindler "fairly well". Solomon was among 1,000 workers who moved into the concentration camp Schindler built near the business. "I was kind of happy to be there." In September 1944, Schindler was ordered to liquidate the concentration camp and ship inmates back to the Plaszow concentration camp. In October 1944, that camp was liquidated as Russian troops approached, and inmates were sent to Gross-Rosen. Soon they were sent on an eight-day train journey into Czechoslovakia, where Schindler had been given a textile factory. Solomon did woodworking there and in Schindler's villa. Solomon stole food from a mill and elsewhere, and distributed it to inmates.

Just after the Russians liberated the camp May 8, Shindler opened his warehouses of food and other material, and told the freed inmates to take whatever they wished. Solomon and 16 others headed toward Krakow, where he arrived three or four weeks later.

He felt staying in Poland was not safe, so he settled in Bomberg, Germany, until emigrating to the United States in 1949.

Solomon saw Schindler again in Munich, and years later in 1973 in Israel. Schindler greeted him warmly, and called him Rumak, the name Solomon had been known by. Solomon says the mystery of Schindler's list continues.

Tape I, Side A

Today is April 8, 1992. I am Anthony DiIorio and I am in Flemington, New Jersey. I am here on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington to interview Mr. Solomon Urbach about his experiences during the Holocaust. Good morning.

Good morning. I am facing a difficult task because I have to organize my thoughts and go back into a difficult period—bringing me back to pre-war, pre-World War II and the World War II experiences in different concentration camps. I'll do my best.

Where were you born?

I was born in Kalwaria-Zebrzydowska in Poland in October 25, 1926.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

We were—our family was four brothers, two sisters, father and mother. My oldest brother's name was Samuel, next to him was Rivka, then I would be the next in line, Sol Urbach. After that there was Chona, the sister younger than I am and my next younger brother was Haskel and the youngest brother was Szymon.

What was it like growing up in Kalvaria?

The time of Kalvaria, as a very young person, I don't remember other than later on returning on visits. I remember my youth when I spent some time in Romania, five years, where I was attending Talmud Torah and attending first grade of public school. Then I remember traveling back with my family to Krakow, Poland where we grew up outside of Krakow, an area known as Borek Falecki. Those were the years in Borek Falecki, I spent the years of 1933 to 1939. After 1939, when the Germans already marched in, we continued living in Borek Falecki and even went on living in Borek Falecki past the time when the Germans ordered us to report to a ghetto in Krakow which we managed to stay away from for one full year until the situation got very difficult where the Polish neighbors would tell us that they no longer would be able to keep quiet about us being outside of the ghetto and we better leave the town and report to the ghetto. So in 1942, early 1942, we—the whole family, as a unit, that means father and mother and six children, went on and reported to the ghetto; or smuggled ourselves into the ghetto because we were no longer legally able to turn ourselves into the ghetto.

You mentioned that your family moved to Romania when you were young. Was there any particular reason why?

It was because my mother's brother lived in Romania and was doing real well. Was able to support his family better than my parents were able to do in Poland. So they had influence my parents to move to Romania where things would be easier. Eventually what happened really is that we spent there from 1928 to 1933 in Romania and the Romanian government has expelled us as a family. We were not welcome in Romania, the Polish citizens not having a Romanian citizenship—they eventually got to us and expelled us. I remember vividly where the Romanian authorities brought us to the border of Poland and Romania and sent us across the border. Across the border in Poland, the Polish authorities immediately threw us into jail as a family and I remember vividly the jail on the Polish side where the family of eight of us, six young children and parents, were sitting in a jail cell with a high window above like any criminal. Actually what happened is, we returned to Poland where we were supposedly citizens. And it was through the good graces of some Polish residents in the area on the Polish side discovered that there was a Jewish family in jail, that they were able to influence and release us from jail.

So your first experience in prison and you were only seven years old. And you were imprisoned by Poles after being expelled by Romanians?

Right.

So you lived briefly in Romania and then, of course, you lived in Poland. How would you describe the ways in which Jews were treated in each country? Was it worse or better in one country versus the other?

I could not make a great comparison of the Jews and their conditions of living in different countries. But in my own country, in Poland, after returning from Romania, I remember that I had to walk—when I say I with my other brothers or sisters who already went to school at that time—we went from Borek Falecki to ... We walked four kilometers daily to a school in the center of Krakow which was known as Mikawaraya, (ph) (c. 78) No. 14 Public School. This was—I did that for six years, walking the four kilometers daily to that school. The reason for that was while there was a school directly across from my home in Borek Falecki, this was a non-Jewish school and I would have suffered greatly. Because at that time I didn't speak the language and generally there was an anti-Semitic feeling. So we couldn't attend that school, so we walked four kilometers to a school in the middle of Krakow which had a total Jewish student body. So this was a ...

So this was a Jewish school?

It had non-Jewish teachers and it was a regular public school but it was composed of only Jewish students, as far as I remember. The walking to that school had to be done rain or shine, good weather, bad weather, winter or summer. We would also have an encounter on a daily basis—rock throwing at us by Polish Christian kids who somehow knew that there were the Jewish kids walking. Or even if I was alone, they still would know it and we had to go through at times, a hail of rock-throwers to get to our school. But we did that for six years as far as I remember.

Were you the only one in your family who went to this school? Did any of your brothers or sisters?

One brother and one sister went to the same school with me. The others probably were too young to attend any school at that time.

This would be Rivka and Samuel?

Right.

You also attended one year of school in Romania?

I attended the first grade in Romania. After arriving in Poland, the Polish authorities, school authorities have told us that I would have to repeat the first grade in Poland. So as a result of it, I repeated the first grade in Krakow, Poland.

Did you have similar experiences when you went to school in Romania? That is rock throwing, or restrictions on Jewish ... ?

About the Romanian experiences as far as being Jewish, I could not say much. I don't remember what happened there about the rock throwers or not. But chances are they were not really as bad in Romania. Otherwise I would have been left with some memories of that time.

How would you describe your family's religious life?

We were an observant family, religiously speaking. My father was at times, a cantor, conducting services for others. I would at times be his helper but we were obviously not religious enough for our grandfather to be comfortable in our home and approve of our religious behavior.

Was this Grandfather Urbach?

This was Grandfather Baldinger.

Baldinger. Did you live with your grandparents in the same house?

At the earlier stage of our life—my mother came from Kalvaria and therefore we lived, at that time, with my grandfather in Kalvaria.

But after you moved to Romania, you no longer lived with him?

No, in Romania, we were not living with any other family member other than the eight of us. The same when we came back to Poland.

What kind of home did you live in when you lived in Borek?

In Borek Falecki we lived in a rundown home, actually, where the eight of us in the family lived in two rooms. We lived there for the duration of 1933 to 1942 under these living conditions, was two rooms. My father was a tailor and hardly made a living. Food was certainly greatly appreciated when it was there. Holidays were observed. We managed to go to public school as well as to religious schools but we all appreciated food all the time; it was not plentiful at all.

So times were tough economically.

Economically, times were tough as far back as I remember. We never had it very good where we could move out into different living quarters. We had to stay there. This was our life up to 1942.

Did your father work for someone else?

No, he was a tailor and he worked for himself.

At home?

At home. So the shop ...

He had a shop in the house?

Right in the house. The shop consisted of a sewing machine and lots of threads and needles and that was his shop.

Did your mother have time other than raising such a large family to also work?

No. My mother was not working outside of the home. She was totally preoccupied with the raising of the six children.

What languages did your family use?

When we returned from Romania, we all spoke Romanian—those children who were already old enough to speak the language, spoke Romanian. I spoke Romanian and I did not speak a word of Polish. When we came into Poland, our language at home was Yiddish but we also spoke Romanian. When we arrived in Poland, the school authorities advised us that the best thing would be if the language at home became Polish rather than Yiddish to help us get along a little faster and learn the language. By doing that, one year later, I remember myself speaking Polish and almost totally forgetting the Romanian language.

Your parents, though, they mainly spoke in Yiddish?

My parents spoke Yiddish amongst themselves and the whole family spoke Yiddish. Yiddish was the language.

Your father also knew Polish?

My father, mother spoke Polish but used the—the majority of times they were speaking Yiddish.

What about your father's customers? What kind of customers did he have?

The customers for the tailoring were coming from the Jewish community, from friends and neighbors.

What kind of schooling, would you know what kind of schooling your parents had?

I have no recollection, no knowledge of what schooling my parents had.

Do you recall whether or not your father's business was affected in the 1930s by any laws that were being passed by the Polish government?

My memories bring me back to the 1930s, '33, which coincides with the rise of Hitler in Germany. Also at that time, this was not too much on my mind, Hitler's rise to power. But the anti-Semitic situation just was getting stronger and stronger and life was a little more difficult as the years went by, up to the war and into the war. I remember vividly that my father who had a _____ (c. 175) beard, had to get outside into the wall to see customers or walk the streets, he would take him a pair of scissors and carry them in his pocket. That was not meant to be there for his need in the trade but it was in case of an attack by anti-Semites; he would have a way of defending himself. That remains in my memory that he took the scissors and put them away carefully, if he ever needed them.

So anti-Semitism was getting stronger?

Antisemitism was getting stronger and stronger every year since 1933, which was about the time we arrived from Romania to Poland.

Did your family, your parents, mainly, did they ever talk about Hitler, the Nazis?

I have no memories of strong talk about the Nazis, about Hitler in my childhood. Also towards 1938, '39, I remember the great concern and reading papers. I did not read the papers but the adults did and listening to the radio where Poland was raving about its strong army and its ability to defend itself if attacked by the Germans.

So you were aware that there was a danger of war?

There was a danger of war—it was in the air as the years got closer to 1939 but I could not say that I had any great idea what it meant to me, myself. The Polish authorities kept on hammering away that they are able to withstand any attacks that would come from Germany and so there was no great concern really.

Did your parents ever talk about or consider the possibility of emigrating, of leaving?

No, we had no conversations in our house that I would have remembered about immigrating to any place. Of course, if we were going to do that when we were in Romania, this was the time to go towards Palestine as opposed to going to Poland. I don't know whether my parents had this option, whether they had the means to do these things. They simply returned from Romania to Poland.

Would you know why your parents chose to move to Borek? After the return? After you got out of prison?

Yeah. The reason we returned to Borek Falecki is because we could not afford any housing in the city of Krakow and in fact we needed assistance to be able to afford any housing in Borek Falecki.

Your parents had never lived there so the goal was to move to Krakow or as close to Krakow as possible?

Yes, the goal was to somehow get to Krakow and that's as close as we could get to it, Borek Falecki, only because the economical means were not there.

Now, what were you doing on the day that the war began?

September 1, 1939, the war broke out. As I recall it, it was in two or three days, the Germans were in Krakow. I remember going out with other children to greet the Germans, to get close to the tanks and to the trucks and shake hands and everybody was jovial. There was no fear because as the war approached, the conversation at home was that the Germans are a more civil people than the Poles and actually there wasn't much to fear. So from what I remember from my parents' conversation, we were just free to go and shake the hands of this more civil people, the Germans. They would occasionally hand out some food to us in those early days. Confusion was rampant. My parents, along with other people, did not even know whether those soldiers that are now arriving in the first days and now are stationed at the bridges—whether they were Germans in fact, or whether they were English soldiers. We heard so much about the English coming in and protecting us that we, on the day when they arrived and controlled the bridges and all this, we had to go out and take a look and find out whether those were Germans or English. We discovered they were Germans. Which at that time made no difference to us because we expected maybe better things as opposed to the catastrophes that were waiting for us.

So at first, they behaved decently?

In the very first days, the group of soldiers we ran into behaved decently and handed out food and talked to us and laughed and we all laughed.

And there was no destruction, no combat?

No, no destruction other than the war was affecting us because now the total civil population did not know what to do with themselves. Whether to remain home, the bombers were coming over Poland, over our area and we did not know because of total confusion in Polish authorities as to what is best to do—to stay home or not to stay home. Or go—where would you go and all that? So we actually, as a family, undertook to go towards the city of Krakow. What sense that made, I can't tell and it probably didn't make any sense but we walked towards the city of Krakow in the unit of eight members in our family along with many, many thousands of other families. While walking towards the city of Krakow, we walked in the hail of bombs that were falling on the roads and streets. We somehow managed to get to Krakow eventually. Then only to discover that that was not a safer place and then return back to Borek Falecki.

How about school? Was school open that year?

The school was totally interrupted. There was no longer—this was when the war broke out—was probably vacation time and the schools never accepted Jewish children after that. So my schooling was interrupted in 1939, the religious school was also closed so essentially there was no schooling at all from September of 1939.

So even your school which was mostly, entirely Jewish students, that was closed?

That was closed because there were Jewish students and there was no schooling at all. It was all interrupted, everything was in chaos. Jewish children did not have any schools to enter.

How long did the German behavior remain civil?

Very short. The civil behavior was disappearing as they settled down in the city and began to give orders on what Jews can and what Jews cannot do. It was not much later than entering into 1940 already where there were certain sections of the city off limits to Jews and we could not walk into it on certain streets. Later on, the orders came out again that all Jews walking anyplace would have to wear an armband. As the war went on, in 1941, possibly no Jews were allowed to walk anyplace unless they had business and they would be identified by some armband that would tell whether they work in an industry that is important. I remember that my older brother wore an armband with an R. I can't even remember where he worked, but evidently he did work in some important industry.

In Krakow?

In Krakow.

This would have been after the ghetto?

No, this was before the ghetto opened. This was in 1940 and '41. My father was limited in his ability to walk the streets from the earlier days because of his beard and his appearance and the neighbors' knowledge that he was Jewish. So he was sort of limited. My mother undertook the duties of providing for the family as soon as the war broke out. By appearing Christian, she was able to still travel on trains and to go into villages and return home with some provisions, eggs and flour and other things that would be necessary to survive. The children were also expected from the first day on, each child that was already grown up, maybe 12 to 13, to get into lines and

stand on lines, potentially a full night into the day and see if they could buy a bread or other provisions that we needed, coal, kerosene. So each child would have the duty of getting in line. I remember myself standing on many occasions on cold nights, winter nights, waiting for bread, and when finally the bakery opened and I got to the head of the line, the bread ran out and I returned home without it.

Was your brother, Samuel, the only one who worked in a factory during these times?

As far as I remember he had the only armband with an R on it. The rest of us were unemployed. My father was still able to do tailoring at home and got some paid for that but life was approaching the unbearable.

Were Germans present in Borek?

In Borek Falecki which was about four kilometers outside of the city, there were Germans but not in large groups. They were in the city offices and managing the affairs of everything but they were not in great masses there as soldiers.

So it was relatively safer to live in Borek?

It was relatively safer there and that is what led us to believe, that when the order finally came for us to report to the ghetto that we could survive somehow and maybe wait out the war by living in Borek Falecki without reporting to the ghetto. Always hoping that the war will be over any day.

Do you remember when this order came to report to the ghetto?

The order to report to the ghetto would have been in 1941, middle of 1941. We did not report until close to the middle of 1942.

You were in civil disobedience in the Urbach family?

We certainly were. In fact, when the—when my family finally made the decision to enter the ghetto, to smuggle ourselves in, a decision was also made that I could potentially stay away and not report to the ghetto, which I did temporarily. A Polish employer of mine at that time, where I began to work as a cabinet maker. Because I had lots of idle time, I began to observe the cabinet

maker's shop and I was there often enough to begin to learn the trade. I was finally employed by this Pole by the name of Kaminski (c. 3343).

Was this in Borek?

In Borek Falecki. That led me to an employment with him. So when my family decided to enter the ghetto, he promised that he could help me stay out of the ghetto and he allowed me to stay over in his shop and sleep in his shop. I can't say whether I asked for it or he volunteered, at this point, but I did stay over for a number of nights and days continuing work in this furniture-making shop and staying into the night and sleeping at night. But the situation got to be unbearable. I was dying of fear at night, sleeping in this shop of wood and tools, all alone in a large shop. Being the youngster I was, I was simply dying of fear. I saw shadows walking around, I saw people knocking, I heard people knocking on the doors which was all not true but the fear was so great that I could not survive there. Eventually I joined my family in the ghetto.

So you did not go with the entire family when they went to the ghetto? You went in after a few days?

A few days, yeah.

What were your brothers and sisters doing in Borek before they went to the ghetto—besides getting on lines and trying to get food and so forth?

The only one that was employed would have been my oldest brother, Samuel. All the other children simply tried to help out at home and do whatever they could in order to bring in some food to the house, bring in some coal, bring in some kerosene. I remember getting to the railroad station and how that was done is unbelievable to me at this point but we somehow managed with some neighbors potentially to get on railroad cars which were transporting coal from Poland to someplace all during the German occupation. We somehow managed to get on these coal trains and throw off enough coal and gather it up into burlap bags and bring it home so we would have some fuel. Odd as it sounds, that's how it was.

Do you remember what prompted your parents to go to the ghetto at that particular time?

The situation that made my family rethink their status outside of the ghetto came from neighbors we had known for years before the war that said the situation is getting real bad. That they no longer could keep quiet and not to report us because this was already a crime on their part, not report that any Jews lived outside of the ghetto. So they advised us, some of those that were friendly with our family, advised us to somehow get out of there before things get real bad.

So it's fear of your neighbors who themselves were afraid of the Germans?

That's correct. It was not any direct order or roundup by the Germans that made us go to the ghetto. It was fear and the stories that were told to us by the Polish neighbors.

Whereas the initial order, the year before, to go to the ghetto, that was from the Germans?

The initial to report to the ghetto was from the Germans and that would have been pasted— notices were pasted on the kiosks and on some walls. This was an official report that we simply take what we can carry with us and report to the ghetto. If we did that at that time, we would have to begin our march much earlier than we eventually did by hiding out.

Were there other Jewish families that ignored the order in 1941?

I am not aware of anyone—any other Jewish families in my area. Also it could very well have been but I don't remember that.

What do you remember taking with you when you went into the Krakow ghetto?

When we finally reported to the Krakow ghetto, what we were able to gather at home and I can't say that we had very much at home so we did not have very much to carry with us. We were not burdened by any extra large amounts of clothing or valuables and we simply had just a small bundle of things that we took with us.

Of course, the family had no idea where they would be staying when they went to Krakow? Did you have a particular address in mind?

When we went already, we went to the ghetto, when we finally reported to the ghetto. Then we became subject to what the authorities—that would potentially be the Jewish authorities inside the ghetto—would assign to us as our living quarters in the ghetto.

Do you remember how your father managed after smuggling the family into the ghetto, how he managed to explain to them that he needed accommodations? After all, he had to pretend that he had been there all along, right?

Well, I don't know whether he had to pretend that—whether he did not fall into a category of other people returning to the ghetto at a later date. There is a good chance that there were other similar situations. But the problem that we experienced at that time is that we would simply be at the end of the line in receiving housing. A room in a basement was assigned to us for all eight of us.

What was it like, living in the ghetto?

In the ghetto, was a total idleness on the part of all the family members other than on different days. Different member members of my family along with others, would be rounded up for—by the Germans. The Germans would come into the ghetto and round up people and take them away for a daily work outside of the ghetto. This would have been to clean streets, to unload coal under German supervision, to do any kind of jobs that suited the Germans and then returning to the ghetto. On many of those occasions, some of those people that were rounded up and taken out to work, people did not return. This was simply instilling greater fear in us that one of our family members might also be subject to the same thing. But my family members did manage to return whenever they worked outside of the ghetto, they came back to the ghetto. On one of those roundups that I was speaking about, I was outside of my building when two small trucks with Germans arrived in front of our building almost and simply grabbed anyone they could lay their hands on and pushed them into the two trucks. This would have been towards the end of 1942. They delivered us to what I later on found out to be the Schindler factory which was an enamel works factory, making pots and pans. They simply delivered us to that camp. I remember Oskar Schindler being there when the Germans delivered us to his yard, adjoining the factory. There we were lined up for Schindler's inspection. Schindler looked us over and we were there in a group of potentially 100 people and took two of us out of the line. That was myself and I remember another friend of mine by the name of Goodhurtz (ph) (c.496) who was pulled out of those 100. Schindler said to the Germans that he does not need any children. I still remember it in German, "Ish brout kine kinder" (ph) (c.500). The Germans in those days did not know much about Oskar Schindler. He wasn't very important at that time to them because I remember them snapping back to Schindler, you will keep what we delivered. They departed and

we became employees of the Oskar Schindler industrial complex which was at that time, making only pots and pans and peddling those to the Polish citizenry.

This was when, when did you first ... ?

End of 1942.

And you mentioned that the Germans would round up people to work on the streets. Did any of your brothers and sisters get ... ?

Yeah, my father, my older sister and brother all wound up working on occasion in different duties outside of the ghetto. And then returned to the ghetto at the end of the day. Similarly when I was rounded up and delivered to Oskar Schindler's factory outside of Krakow for a—the next few months we were simply marched out daily. The group of 100 was marched out daily under the supervision of SS guards, fixed bayonets. We were marched out of the ghetto in Krakow and walked towards the factory which was operated by Oskar Schindler. I don't know exactly the distance but it seems like a half hour to one hour walk from the ghetto. This was done daily, we were delivered there. In the evening we reported back. Later on, we also broke up into shifts, where some of us worked nights and some of us worked days. I happened to wind up on a shift working at night at Oskar Schindler's.

So you would sleep in the ghetto during the day?

I would try to sleep during the day which was next to impossible because we were in such living quarters that the noise level and the activities simply did not permit me. This was one room. What really was happening on many occasions, I was so tired and exhausted that I remember myself falling asleep while standing and working on a press in the factory of Oskar Schindler? Or falling asleep trying to feed the pots and pans into the ovens, out of total exhaustion, a lack of sleep.

What did you get in return for your work?

There was no pay involved. We were fed there, at Oskar Schindler's. There was no pay involved.

What kind of food did they give you?

There was a—as far as I remember, there was a soup during the day. All the other food we would receive in the ghetto when we returned home.

Would they give you a ration card?

There was some method of rationing. I don't remember exactly how the food was received in the ghetto but there was some food received by way of ration cards.

How did the rest of your family get food?

They lived on what was available in the ghetto. There was no other source. There was no availability [?]. The two older members and my father were possibly receiving some food outside of the ghetto. In earlier days, there was still some trading inside of the ghetto where you could do some work and receive food in return. So we managed to eat and survive in the ghetto for the next few months.

How long did this go on?

This existence in the ghetto, to me it appeared like a giant waiting room. I just, you know, everybody was waiting for something to happen. We didn't know exactly what was supposed to be happening but we always hoped that maybe the war will end and everything will turn out all right. But in March, potentially March 10 or 11, while working at Oskar Schindler's night shift, I was—I along with the rest of my group, were ordered to stay at the factory of Oskar Schindler and not to return to the ghetto. Because Schindler had discovered that there was an action going on at the ghetto, as the Germans would call it, an action (ph) (c. 605) whereby there was a _____ information by way of Oskar Schindler who brought this information back to us in the factory but he did not permit it ... (pause in tape).

Tape I, Side B

This is March 1943?

March 1943, it's the 10th, 11th, 12th. We stayed over at the factory, Oskar Schindler's factory being fully aware of it—that the ghetto is being liquidated. I personally being fully aware of it—that my whole family is in the ghetto and not knowing what is happening to them. The Krakow ghetto was stilled totally and after the three nights were over, where we stayed over at the Oskar Schindler factory, we were marched back into—no longer to the ghetto but we were marched into a concentration camp outside of Krakow known as Krakow Plaszow. A full-fledged concentration camp with barbed wires, watch towers, lots of busy SS people all over the place, totally fearsome place. I came into this camp as a youngster not knowing at all where the rest of my family is and being assigned to a barrack with lots of people, sleeping one next to the other on three rows high of berth or with some straw on it. During the next few days, I was assigned to work in a stone quarry. I worked there four days, received some soup during the day. At the same time, while I was in that concentration camp, my beginning in that concentration camp, trucks were still arriving from, what was then rumored in the camp, as those that were killed in the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto. Trucks were arriving with bodies into our concentration camp, into prepared open pits. The dump trucks were dumping the bodies and returning for more loads to clean up the ghetto. It did enter my mind that possibly my family, brothers, sisters, parents were among those that were buried in that camp but it was also rumored that some people survived by being shipped to other camps. So I was not fully aware of what could have possibly happened to my family. One of the—word got to me from one person that arrived back from the ghetto into the concentration camp that he saw my brother trying to run from one line that he was in to join his family and he was shot on the spot in the Krakow ghetto liquidation. But other than this word and whether this could have been relied totally upon, I don't know, but that was the only word I got from someone that supposedly saw my brother being shot, died right there. The rest of the family I had no knowledge at all.

Which brother would this have been?

Samuel was the one that would have been shot by trying to join the rest of his family. I remained in the Plaszow concentration camp for a number of weeks, observing hangings, standing on the appel plotz during inspection time which I recall as being every day during which time Goeth (Amon? c. 657) and some of his cohorts were marching through the potentially 30,000 people standing outdoors for inspection. You could actually hear a pin drop because no one dared breathe at that time when this inspection was going on. Was total silence, total fear. Everybody standing numb, totally numb, not being able to speak to one another. Because while we were standing on the appel plotz, we were fully aware of the fact that Amon Goeth (c. 664) who was the head of the concentration camp, the SS head of the concentration camp, was marching through those lines with his cohorts. For no apparent reason would shoot certain people and they would fall as he walked by. At other times, there were lynchings going on while we all stood there and observed. All this was done to instill more fear into us and it was certainly accomplished. We simply lived in daily fear.

Did you still wear your clothes that you had with you when you had first gone to Schindler or were you given prison garb?

Upon arrival at Krakow Plaszow Camp, we did not receive any prison garb, any clothing. I don't recall wearing any unusual clothing at that camp because as it turned out to be, I was not a long-term inmate of this concentration camp. After a few weeks' stay there and working at the stone quarry, the group of people that was once employed by Oskar Schindler was eventually marched out daily again from this concentration camp and we were returned to work at Oskar Schindler's factory, the enamel factory. So we would march out daily. Then again upon return, we would rejoin our people standing on the appel plotz, be subject to nightly attacks by Germans coming into our barracks to take out some people for some unusual work. But basically the work outside of the concentration camp at the factory was working on presses, steel presses, that is, to punch out the pots and pans. Eventually, I was shifted into some cabinet work, wood-working shop because of my previous experience of working in a furniture shop. This led me into some wood-working position in the Oskar Schindler factory. Eventually I began to be in charge of providing all the blackout shades for the offices of Oskar Schindler. It was in those duties I entered Oskar Schindler's office on many occasions with the purpose of seeing that the blackout shades were in proper order, working order, or replacing them. I would get to know Schindler fairly well and on occasion he would even speak to me and express some hope that this will maybe end one day. On those trips I would also observe, those trips to the office of Oskar Schindler, I would observe that one of our inmates, a fellow by the name of Banker, would be sitting in an office adjoining Oskar Schindler. Banker was the former owner of this factory and some place along the line, Oskar Schindler discovered that he could not conduct business with the Polish population. The only way to be able to sell the pots and pans which we were still manufacturing in great numbers, was to have this Banker sit in back of his office and conduct business with the Polish population. This is how the wares were sold.

So this is the former owner of the factory, now being asked to help the new owner of the factory make profit?

That's right. The former owner of the factory, the Jewish owner of the factory was brought back to—he was one of the earlier members that was brought back to work there because Oskar Schindler recognized that he needs him to run the business. There was potentially another owner in that wisk (ph) (c. 720), Anchor (c. 719) whose first name I don't remember any more. But I don't remember the other people involved, I only remember Banker.

Would you know when Banker lost his factory?

With the—as soon as the Germans got settled in Krakow, they took away this factory from all Jewish proprietors. They took his factory away from him. As far as I know, they took this factory and gave it to Oskar Schindler as a gift to him for his previous contributions to the Nazi party or to the Nazi effort. And Oskar Schindler got this gift but didn't know exactly what to do with it but to bring back the former owner or owners to help him run this factory and sell the wares that he was producing.

What was Mr. Schindler like?

Oskar Schindler was a very impressive young man, tall, handsome. In the earlier days, I remember Oskar Schindler actually still doing some work. I remember observing him one time when he was doing some woodwork on a machine. But then in later days, he became an industrialist and would travel in company of very important people from Berlin. Bringing in people from Berlin to show them what he is doing here and what the future plans are, developing this seemingly unimportant complex into a factory that would produce materials for the war effort. Many times there were very important engineers, with very important high ranking officers arriving and he would take them through inspections showing them what can be done in this place. Eventually it was materialized whereby he received monies from someplace to develop this factory. He built a big office building and eventually plans were developed to build a giant hangar-like building or a big factory building. In which rumors were that there were some parts of bullets, the ...

Casings?

Casings to bullets of different types would be pressed out there and this would be his contribution again to the war effort. This work at the factory continued, for how long, I could no longer be sure of, but we were marched out daily, as I said before, from the concentration camp. On those daily marches from the concentration camps, most of the times we were ordered by the SS guards in the concentration camp to pick up a rock near our barracks and carry it until we got to the gate. Then upon return from work, we would take the same rocks and bring it back from the gate of the concentration camp to a pile near the barracks. This was simply to load us up and make us feel like inmates rather than free people. But we did not carry any rocks, we were simply guarded by SS people on the march from the gate to the factory. This went on for a long time potentially into the end of 1943. This type of work and daily marching out until one day at the end of 1943 or maybe beginning of 1944, already, an English spy plane—I have to back off here. I skipped a part and that is the part where at one point in time, Schindler was given permission to build his own concentration camp. Somehow received permission from Berlin to build his own concentration camp on the grounds of the factory. Towards the end of 1943, he actually established barracks, built barracks and also was told that he can no longer employ 100 people.

That the concentration camps that would be permitted on his grounds would have a minimum of 1,000 people. In that connection, as I mentioned before, his grandiose plans to build this armament-producing factory was already on the drawing boards and some buildings began to be constructed. Eventually, Oskar Schindler pulled off the shipment of 1,000 inmates including ourselves, the original 100 people in the group. We were housed now in a concentration camp adjoining the enamel factory ran and operated by Oskar Schindler. These camps—these barracks as I remember were in two rows, potentially six barracks on a very small site were our housing accommodations and life became much more bearable. Oskar Schindler would be amongst us. In fact, I recall when these barracks were being built, the barbed wire going around the camp, watchtowers being constructed, I remember one conversation with a group of inmates and Oskar Schindler in which Oskar Schindler described to us the need for the barbed wires and the watchtowers because it was going to be so good in this camp that some people from the outside would try to come into this camp. Nevertheless, the watchtowers went up and barbed wires because he obviously had to meet specifications to operate or to have the privilege of having the 1,000 slave laborers working for his effort that he was going to put on for the Third Reich. We were housed there and worked there so it was no big deal walking out of the concentration camp through a gate and walking into the factory which was totally adjoining. Worked as many hours as the factory operated, as needed and then returned back to our concentration camp, which was a bearable place really because there was no one dying there anymore. Nobody was being killed in that concentration camp. I recall many ordinary illnesses afflicting people potentially dying but not because of any hangings or lynchings or abuse by the Germans. The Oskar Schindler influence was all over the lot and the SS guards watching us could not abuse us as much as they did in the Krakow Plaszow camp or in the ghetto.

How were the 1,000 selected, the 1,000 inmates?

I have absolutely no knowledge on how they were selected but they came in different transports. At that time, they were still outlying small ghettos like Skarzysko and Wieliczka, small ghettos of people where the ghettos were liquidated. Some of those shipments from the people surviving those liquidations came into our camp and potentially some of them came from the Krakow Plaszow concentration camp. I could not record it for sure. Also I had some friends that arrived from other camps and from other ghettos. But the total count of people, where they came from, I would not be aware of.

You're still wearing the same clothes that you had on?

I still recall wearing the same clothes. Also sometime during the time when we were inmates at the concentration camp in the—now known as Anka F and Amalia (ph) (c. 835) somehow two

factories combining and using the people, the 1,000 inmates as their workers. Sometimes during that time, our clothes were changed into stripes, striped outfits so that we could not escape.

During any of this time, when you first began working for Oskar Schindler, were you still required to wear the yellow star? Remember when you were back in the ghetto, you had to wear an armband of some sort?

No, during this stay in Oskar Schindler's concentration camp and factory, we were not wearing any armbands. That was the time when the clothes was changed into stripes and we're wearing inmates outfits _____. (c. 848) Sometimes, during that time when this concentration camp came into being under Oskar Schindler's influence and the SS guards guarding us, there was a time when we underwent, all of the inmates underwent a tattooing process whereby the tattoo of a large KL was tattooed on our, if I recall, left wrist. The K stood for concentration, the L for lager. This was done so that we could no longer escape. It was rather large letters, maybe one inch or larger letters tattooed on the wrist. I received the same as everybody else but I also traveled in a circle of friends who still had some hopes of escaping and we talked a great deal about it. We could never do anything about it but we always talked about the possibility. In that connection, somebody informed me at least that if I sucked out the tattooing right after it was done, when it was still fresh, it would disappear. Thereby, I would still have a chance of escaping. Being a young person, naively hoping that this could happen one day, I did it. Surprisingly enough, this came out and I never had a tattoo and to this day, I don't have a tattoo and yet the friends with whom I survived together in this camp eventually, have this large KL on their wrists. I don't have it but I know I received it and I sucked it out and it worked so well that there is no sign left of the KL on my wrist. Of course, escape never came, escape never was possible and somehow I managed to get by without ever having to prove that I belonged there without the KL.

Did Schindler know you by then?

Schindler would know me a little better than he knew a lot of other inmates, other than maybe Banker and some of the other officials. He knew me by sight because of the exposure that I had to him in that work in his offices. It was the blackout shades and also worked many nights there in a building when the construction was going on. It was going on during the winter and I recall my responsibilities also as feeding the big drums with some wood so that there was heat provided from those burning drums. So I had to keep the fire going so the place—so they would be able to work, lay bricks and all that during the day.

Did he remember you as the Jewish boy that he said was too young to work there?

We never talked about it. I never brought this up to him again. I was kind of happy to be there. I already began to recognize that this is a better place than someplace else so I wasn't going to bring up the fact that he didn't want me as a child in his factory. But I somehow left an impression on him because when I met after the war, he greeted me warmly as if he knew me forever. So somehow, he did know me as one of the earlier inmates in his camp.

How long did you work there?

This existence of the 1,000 inmates in that camp adjoining the enamel works factory continued up to a time of very late 1943 or 1944, early 1944 when an English spy plane traveling over Krakow was shot down. Of all the places in the city of Krakow, it landed in our small concentration camp which I was at this point size up as maybe a one-acre site, with six buildings, housing the 1,000 inmates. It landed in our concentration camp, right on top of a building. Miraculously, this happened, as far as I remember, during the night and those barracks were vacant. So there was no one of the inmates was killed. I lived in an upper barrack which was a little removed from the site of that plane crash, or the plane that was brought down. But this brought on a new situation because in that plane that came down in our camp ... I, of course, witnessed one or two bodies that were burned in that plane and the ammunition was popping for a long time out of the plane. When we finally got a chance to see it, we saw either one body that was totally burned down, the only thing that was left was his upper torso. Either one or two of the Englishmen strapped down and still the rest of the body being burned. But the first result from that crash burned — out of the six buildings that were potentially there, there were only two left. So Schindler was ordered to return to the Krakow Plaszow concentration camp, 700 of these inmates and only 300 would remain. Of course, all these numbers I did not know at that time when this was going on. But this was from stories and talking to different inmates later on. The 700 people that were supposed to be returned to Krakow Plaszow arrived at a segregation or selection that the Germans conducted on the site. Oskar Schindler was there but the actual selection of people unless he has instructed them different or made different requests which I was unaware of, the selection was done by the Germans. During the selection time, I somehow sensed and I can't say that I knew anything else, but I somehow sensed that I am in a group of people that would be returned to Krakow Plaszow and somehow my sense also was telling me that this was a wrong place to go. To this day, I don't know what made me think that, I did not have any previous knowledge but somehow something was telling me that I'm in the wrong place. I have to do something. My immediate reaction was to step out of my line with the group of people I was with, step forward, run towards Oskar Schindler who was, at this point, close to me. What you got to remember is the SS guards were very strict, very business-like, with dogs, doing the selection. I somehow was without any fear, stepping out forward, stepping up to Schindler, practically shouting to Schindler, Herr Schindler _____ (c. 970). What put these words into my mouth, why this was going to be so important to Oskar Schindler, I have absolutely no idea. I was just a youngster doing what seemed to me like very unimportant work. But nevertheless, I did that and Oskar Schindler, lo and behold, instructed the SS guards to place me in the other group. That's

how I remained with the 300 people in the camp that was now two-thirds burned down. Two-thirds of the people down to Krakow Plaszow, I remained with the people in the—in my work concentration camp and continued to work at the factory. This probably would have been better placed in early 1944.

Still wintertime?

Still wintertime, also the weather I recall as being mild. Once the plane crashed, I remember that as being mild. So this was later into the springtime or early in fall, I could not be 100 percent sure. But I would rather place it into the earlier spring of 1944. This arrangement with the 300 people only limping along, working shortage of materials for producing the pots and pans; the buildings which were undertaken for the larger complex which was going to produce armaments or some parts of armaments was no longer being completed. Things began to come to a standstill, just marking time. Of course, at the time, we did not know what was happening but pretty—after a few months, by October or September of 1944; September 1944, Schindler was ordered to liquidate this concentration camp and ship us all back to the Krakow Plaszow concentration camp. So once again I'm with the 300 people who are delivered to the Krakow Plaszow camp and the factory, in fact, was closed and we remained for a while in the Krakow Plaszow concentration camp. This was an extremely busy place now. When we arrived there cattle cars were being loaded daily, simultaneously the appel plotz was still active like before. We were there daily. Hangings were at a much brisker pace now and during those hangings, we all had to—the inmates that were at the concentration camp—had to stand and watch the hangings in progress. Some of my friends who were hung at that time and I witnessed and observed the hanging at that time, Filledvich (ph) (c. 027) which was the Jewish leader of the concentration camp or the assistant to the German was also hung at that time when I was there in that concentration camp.

Why were they hanged?

Only rumors what we could rely on. Why people were hung. In the case of a friend of mine that went to the same cheder, a religious school that I went to before the war, rumor was that he tried to escape. But these were all rumors. Don't imagine how anyone could escape from this concentration camp. This was all surrounded by electrified barbed wires, with watchtowers. We were, at that time, underfed, undernourished, just unimaginable, but nevertheless that was the rumor, that he was trying to escape. In Filledvich's (c. 047) case, the story was that he was a helper to Amon Goeth and Amon Goeth had a long history of destroying those people that were too close to him. So he was one of the victims that was too close to him and he was hung. But there were many other people hung, many other people that were brought in from the outside of the concentration camp, were brought in because they found them hiding out or otherwise. At the

same time, while the hangings were going on, there were also shootings going on. Ukrainian guard serving the Germans at that time was doing—contributing his killing by shooting people and torturing people inside the camp. There was a place where this fellow by the name of Huyar (ph) (c.060), a Ukrainian and his cohorts would shoot people on that particular hill. This was the existence in that camp for the next few weeks until October of 1944. In one of those transports that were going out of the camp because this camp was being liquidated because of the advancing Russian army as we would only hear from rumors. We were too close to the Russian front and the concentration camp of Krakow Plaszow had to be liquidated. Transports and killings were going on, as I said. One of those transports, I was loaded into cattle cars together with other inmates which I had no idea who the others were. Somehow, we had an idea that maybe Oskar Schindler is still alive someplace and will be building some concentration camp and maybe that's where we would be going. That's what some of us, in my group at least, thought. But we were thrown into these cattle cars, the SS guards pushing us, kicking us into these cars. Our railroad car or the transport we were on would travel a few days and food was very meager. There was no way of getting any food from the outside. I don't recall the railroad cars being opened at any time. Also I recall them being stopped and pushed into different sidings on that trip. We could only surmise that some important transport of Germans was going through and needed the main lines so we were pushed off the track. But I really don't remember the railroad car being opened until we arrived in Gross-Rosen. Gross-Rosen was a concentration camp, quite a gruesome concentration camp. We arrived there in October, cold. We were received by the SS guards there. I recall standing on the appel plotz again counting and inspections going on. I remember a latrine that was big enough for possibly 100 people. Open-air latrines. We stood there for what seemed a very long time. I believe we were eventually ordered to strip totally and in the nude march to a delousing showering facility, a cleaning facility. The guards would kick, if I recall correctly, these were Ukrainians that were on the inside of that concentration camp. Ukrainian guards in black uniforms would kick inmates and their habit was to kick inmates until they curled up on the ground or were too ill to respond. I don't know how many people died under these kicking outbursts but I know that they injured many people in that process. When we arrived at the showering process and delousing as they would call it, we went through a room whereby our heads were—we were given a crew cut and the Germans or the Ukrainian guards at that time would spit on our heads to give them the ability to shave a stripe from front to back so it would wind up like a one to two inch stripe running through an otherwise crew cut, there would be a shaved strip. I suppose that this was done so that we would not be able to escape. So in the Gross-Rosen camp, we received this crew cut and a shaved strip through the middle, running from front to back of the head. The situation inside the Gross-Rosen camp, as I described before, whenever there was a chance for the Ukrainian guards to kick anyone, they enjoyed that. I don't recall any killings or hangings inside that camp. The whole group that I arrived with was in a barrack that potentially could have held a couple of hundred people. It seemed like all the seven hundred of us were held in this one barrack. One other thing I recall is in front of the—the entry of the barrack, there was a meticulous room where the SS guards or the Ukrainian guards would be standing by watching us in the rest of the room. Everything in that entry room was meticulous, was pots and cooking ware and all this. It just looked like a little showplace until you got to the rest of the barrack where we were housed. There was not enough place for people to be housed.

All those 700 and the only way we could be in that room would be by sitting on the floor and sitting in one another's lap. The clothes we received now at that delousing was simply one shirt and somehow I don't recall any other clothing that we received. We simply received one shirt and we were walking around in that one shirt, sitting in one another's lap in that Gross-Rosen barrack. This lasted a few days, possibly a week. The only food I remember being given in that Gross-Rosen camp—number one, some of us were awakened at some hour like four o'clock in the morning. This was winter approaching so it seemed like a deep...

Tape II

Were you required to perform work at Gross-Rosen?

I don't recall any work being required of us, maybe, not all of us. I personally don't recall doing any work. It was kind of idleness, sitting and the situation began to look very desperate. We forgot about Oskar Schindler. Or at least I was unaware of anything of what's happening with Oskar Schindler, which was still in the back of our minds when we traveled in the cars. But at this point, desperate...Also one other thing that I noticed was that the 700 of us that were in this barrack were no longer the same group of people with whom I worked back in Poland at the enamel works. It looked like a total stranger group. Some of the people that I knew were still there but most of the people were missing from this original group. In fact, some of the friends that were with me in that time, in Krakow, were no longer here in Gross-Rosen. So somehow, it looked like a different mix of people except for a smaller group of us that worked for Schindler and were still here. So that I did not know of what is happening to us and I did not know what the future is bringing. One occasion, I recall, I could not find myself a place, somehow arrived late in the barrack and everybody was already sitting in one another's lap. Walking in I just couldn't find a place so the guard, the Ukrainian guard, with a nightstick in his hand, went after me to find myself a place. I couldn't because everybody was sitting tight. So I recall jumping over people, running to escape from him and him running with that nightstick and just hitting whatever came along. On the way of chasing me, he probably hit many people. I eventually found a place to collapse into and the chase was over. After a number of nights and days of this terror-ridden concentration camp, we were sitting assembled as I described before in one another's lap. Somehow, the guards came in with a list and began to read names. Where this was leading to I didn't know but everybody was hoping to somehow be on that list. Whatever this was turning out to be, it seemed like getting out of here someplace or doing something else was a relief so everybody was extremely anxious to hear his name. I recall being extremely anxious because my name starts with a U and so this reading of names seemed like a whole night process and my name just was not coming up. Eventually it did get to my name and after all the names were called out ... Up to this point in time, that is 1992 in Flemington, I have absolutely no idea where these names came from. Now the only thing I can suspect is that somehow when we left the Krakow Plaszow concentration camp, somebody submitted a list of names to some German

authorities and the pin leisheit[?] (ph) (c. 52) of the German authorities somehow led them to forward this list of people that are evidently destined to go into Oskar Schindler's factory again. I don't know, I can't tell it for sure but I do know that in Gross-Rosen there was a list from which the Ukrainian guards were reading. As I said before, probably, since 1941 or even since the beginning of the war, I don't ever recall having to give anybody my name. I don't recall, maybe in the ghetto, when we arrived in the ghetto, we would have given names but other than that, we became totally nameless people. I don't recall anybody ever requiring of me to give him my name. But nevertheless, in Gross-Rosen, in the concentration camp there, that particular night all the names were called, As I said before, most of the names were not familiar to me. They were people simply that came from the Krakow Plaszow ghetto and were no longer the same people that were working with me in the enamel works at Oskar Schindler in Krakow. My name was eventually called. Eventually all the names were called and we were loaded into carloads, railway cars again, and shipped to somewhere.

Of the few people that you remembered from the enamel factory that were still with you, were they also on this list?

Yes. Those few people that I recognized, that I knew, were from the list of—or were from those people that worked for Oskar Schindler before. But the bulk of them was not. The bulk of them simply came to this Gross-Rosen camp by some knowledge that this was going to be a shipment to Oskar Schindler's concentration camp where the survival chances were the greatest. I was totally unaware of it, being the youngster. I was simply probably amongst this group because of my stepping forward at one time in—to Oskar Schindler—where Oskar Schindler placed me in the group that would eventually survive.

When were you transferred out of Gross-Rosen?

Gross-Rosen, we were transferred after a week's stay. We were shipped out of—by railroad cars again. I think that this time the railroad cars again traveled seven, eight nights, eight days, into a place that—in Czechoslovakia, deep in Czechoslovakia. The name of the town was Brinlitz (ph) (c. 87). We were marched from the railroad cars to a factory someplace in the vicinity. I don't recall the distance of that march. But at this time, we were 700 of us that left Gross-Rosen. And 700 of us, males only. I don't recall any women in Gross-Rosen. Also, they could have been there in a different barracks. But in our situation, I only recall males. We were—when we arrived, 700 of us were marched into this factory which looked like an old factory that what's that called _____?

You mean a warehouse?

No, where they make materials. Linen ...

Oh, okay, textiles?

Which looked like a textile factory. We were marched into that thing and if I recall correctly, we were greeted by Schindler when we arrived on that site. It didn't look like a concentration camp. It simply looked like a textile factory. The building was textile machinery but it was fairly obvious at that time that Oskar Schindler received this factory again as a gift and he was going to convert this textile factory into some kind of an armament factory. How this was to be done, I don't know. None of us had any training, none of us was skilled workers, at least that I was aware of, in that area. But Oskar Schindler evidently received permission to build a concentration camp. Barbed wires went up, watchtowers went up and the German contingent of SS guards to watch us was in place. If I recall, this was not an extremely large group of SS guards. If I had to place a number on them, it would have been 50 or 60 SS guards being housed in one barrack. We were being housed in the upper floor of this textile factory.

Were all the SS Germans?

It looked at that time like all the SS were Germans and also, one additional factor that I noticed at that time were that these SS Germans were older people. They were no longer the younger, full of spic and span and polished. They were tired old people that were in the SS uniforms watching us. This factory began to take shape and some work was being done, disassembling the old textile factory. Shortly after we arrived in this camp, a group of 300 women that evidently underwent exactly the same thing in Auschwitz when we were being transported from Krakow Plaszow to Gross-Rosen, evidently these women were shipped to Auschwitz. It was fairly obvious that this group of people was somehow—also arrived in Auschwitz was a list. Somehow by name, were called out by name from Auschwitz and set on a march from Auschwitz to Brimletz [?] (c. 130). So 300 women arrived in Brimletz in a much worse situation than we did because this was—could have been October, November of 1944. They were set on a march, marching from Auschwitz to Brimletz and being guarded by Polish-Ukrainian convicts that were set in charge of those women to march them towards the camp, these official guards were brutal during the route to those women on the march from Auschwitz to Brimletz. But eventually they arrived in Brimletz and a small section of this housing or the textile factory was surrounded by barbed wire. The 300 women lived in the same complex with us but being separated from the men by barbed wire. The productivity in this particular camp was not of great value as it appeared to me because dismantling, shifting around, building of offices for Oskar Schindler and his staff that evidently was meant to appear as if he was going to do great things for the German effort.

I wound up working in one of the buildings that was renovated into a—offices for Oskar Schindler. I remember doing pine paneling and since there was a shortage of materials we used a torch to sort of burn lightly the pine materials so that it would appear like a finished material. But actually, it was simply scorched from the flame of the torch and we eventually wound up constructing some offices for Schindler that was very impressive looking. The factory—I don't ever remember doing any work that would have been close to what the Germans were hoping for but we were kept busy. Some woodworking shop was in existence. Everything on the inside looked rather peaceful. The SS guards were somehow led to believe and understand that their duty is only to keep us from escaping. I don't recall any torture or anything that these SS guards would inflict on us. There were occasional shipments that were arriving in the camp, of Jews that were evidently rounded up as escapees someplace or potentially from liquidating small groups of inmates. Those were arriving at our doors or in our camp in horrible desperate situation. We occasionally had to go to the railroad cars and open them up; pry them open to get to the people on the inside. We would occasionally find dead people, people with frozen bodies to the railroad cars, torn pieces of flesh from them from the frostbites. There were not great numbers that were arriving but those that were arriving from some other sources were in desperate situation. Many of the people were buried there on the inside of the camps—of that camp that I was in now. I, along with another friend of mine who was also a woodworker like myself, we were assigned now to renovate a villa that was given to Oskar Schindler at his residence. The villa was outside of the camp or maybe some distance away, maybe a 15, 20 minute walk to that villa. The villa was located on the inside of a mill. I recall also it was behind a canal, water and a bridge leading up to his villa. But from this villa, you could walk out to the mill and be inside the mill. It was obvious that this villa once belonged to the owner of the mill, a rather large complex. In the mill, there was flour and oatmeal and stuff like that. Schindler's villa appeared like an unoccupied building also. Once in a great while, we would notice Mrs. Schindler being there. I don't ever recall him being there but our assignment was to polish his furniture, clean up the villa, do whatever we thought, the two of us inmates from the concentration camp, thought can be done to improve Mr. Schindler's residence. The two of us were marched daily out of the concentration camp on the textile grounds—the textile factory grounds—were marched out daily by two SS guards to that villa. On occasion, so one SS guard would lead us out and things were—seemed rather normal. There was no great fear of escaping and the SS guards, as I mentioned were older people. Somehow, it just began to feel like something is coming to an end. It is no longer that fearsome kind of concentration camps that I was in before. It somehow had the appearance of a more relaxed situation. In fact, the SS guard or the two SS guards would come into the villa and would sit down on a sofa and the two of us were pretty much free to do whatever we thought we should do, polishing, making believe that we're polishing. Occasionally working on some radio where we would turn it on and hear BBC talking about the tremendous losses that the Germans are undergoing. We would be able to bring that news back to the camp. The reason we were able to hear this occasionally, listen to the radio occasionally, was that the SS guards who came in to watch us, either one or two of them, would sit down on the sofa with their carbine or bayonet between their legs and they would doze off and went into deep sleep. We were able to simply roam around that building and do what we thought should be done. On numerous occasions, I

would even be able to jump out of the window of that villa. As I described it was located inside of a mill and somehow make my way into one of the mill buildings where lots of stuff was being—was laying around. I was able to go in these buildings, these warehouses, and by that time I learned the trick of tying my pants at the bottom, whatever pants I had at that time and filling up my pants—

Pant leg.

Pant leg—with some stuff like oatmeal, cornmeal or something like that. With that I came back into the villa, acted as if I was nowhere, did not get out of the building and the SS guard didn't even know the difference. That material that I stole from the mill, I, on occasion, I would walk with those pant legs tied at the bottom with stuff in them. Or by that time, I had a toolbox which I managed to build a fake top whereby on the top I had some tools laid out. The inside of the box, was a rather large box, would hold all that material I stole from the mill. With that I was able to pass through the guards in the—when we were marched back to the campsite. In the campsite, I was able to give out all that stuff that I stole. I became quite good at it. I was able to hand this out and there were many occasions where people would, the inmates that is, some of the inmates became aware of it, that I am in this enviable position. I was having all this foodstuff and some people would approach me because of an illness of a particular inmate or a relative and I became a person much in demand by giving out that food to other inmates. On many occasions, I also stole other things. It somehow appears that I was—became an important inmate because of my employment in Oskar Schindler's villa. So I was somehow treated and was able to, on occasions, steal things from carloads that were passing by or arriving. I would also be able to hand out these things, as I said, to friends. But on many occasions, I was able to sneak these food materials, foodstuffs, into the women's barracks which was simply a way ... The way I got that into the women's barracks is by throwing it over those barbed wires. I somehow had the freedom, so did my friend who worked with me at the villa, to do that. On one of those occasions, I was discovered that I am bringing in foodstuff from the outside and that I ... That somebody threw over some food into the women's barracks. I recall at the gathering, at the appel plotz in this case was held—the gathering of all the inmates for counting purposes and all that was held inside of this factory building. One of those inspections, the head of the SS guards, whose name I don't recall at the moment, came to the appel plotz and yelled out, “*vaw zin _____*” (c. 288). That means where are those people that were inside the women's barracks? Evidently a woman SS guard who watched the women's quarters noticed us and we were reported. The two of us were reported for being at one time inside the women's

quarters. As I said before, on many occasions I would do that—I would somehow make my way into the women's barracks, either throwing it over or getting in there and giving away all that foodstuff that I had. I have never received anything from anyone for the stuff that I gave out. It was simply a very enjoyable moment for me to be able to do it. I've never asked, never received,

never knew of anything I could have asked or could have received. So at this appel plotz, this SS guard, head of the SS unit, is yelling “*vaw* ____ ____ _____” (c. 305). Out of fear, I did not step out. At first, neither did my friend. But eventually, it appeared very serious. Somebody could pay for it if we didn’t step out. We did step out finally and we said we were the ones that were in the women’s barracks. As it turned out, he did not possess, this SS guard, did not possess enough authority to punish or hang us or punish us in any way. All he wanted to know was who permitted us—who let us into the women’s barracks. These were reactions that we had to rely on, both my friend and myself, and our reaction was to simply point at two SS guard women who were at the door and they saw us going in. At that point, if there was any punishment unleashed, it was on the two SS guard women opposed to us. We were permitted to re-join our ranks and we were not punished at all for violation.

Not even for stealing food?

No, we were not punished for anything. Now, as I said before, this was 1945 already. It was—somehow the air was filled with something going on. There were many demonstrations of that already. I recall one day when we were all told to stay in our barracks, not to step out. I remember looking out the barracks where Schindler was ordered to appear to some authorities, outside of the camp obviously, to some authorities in Prague or outside of Prague. We can only go by stories that were circulating amongst us—one story was that Schindler was called in to explain how it is that the inmates inside the camp received some food while the population outside is now being starved. The Czechoslovaks that were free supposedly did not have as much food arriving into their homes as we were getting into the camp. I recall distinctly being in the barracks, nobody went out to work anyplace and eventually after many hours, Schindler arrived back from that appearance before some authorities in a total drunk state. The engineer with him was—as I said we were inside the barracks looking out, looking for some signs of what is going on. Nobody bothering us inside the camp at all, the SS guards being outside. Schindler arrives with this engineer of his and we hear him distinctly pointing at the end of the camp, ordering this engineer to build a fence, a very high fence with corrugated metal solid so the outside residents would not be able to look inside to see that we have food in the camp while they don’t have any food. That fence actually went up. He ordered the engineer to do that and that fence eventually went up. Where in time this was, I don’t know, but weatherwise that I would remember, it could have been maybe already April of 1945, that this was happening. It appeared that the SS guards were totally under the control of Oskar Schindler. So the fence went up and there was peace. Also rumors were beginning to circulate that all this food and sometimes carloads of colorables (ph) (c. 376) or other foodstuff, bread would arrive in large numbers into the camp. The rumor had it that Oskar Schindler was stealing those at the railroad station and was able to commandeer things to bring them into the camp. There was total chaos among the Germans and he appeared as the highest ranking officer when he put on his SA uniform. He had a bunch of decorations on him that he obviously appeared like the man in charge. When he went to the railroad stations and ordered things to be loaded on cars and shipped to his camp or wherever he ordered them, he

somehow succeeded in that. It is also my understanding that, on occasion, he would unseal some railroad cars that had some armaments or parts of armaments. He was able to unseal those and put his own seal and his own name on them as if he produced those things and shipped them on to the German hierarchy. All this was going on. Inside the camp, things were bearable. I continued my work at the villa bringing back news that things for the Germans are turning bad. The BBC talking about the Americans, the English successes. Eventually on May 8, Schindler called together all his inmates. I have to correct that. On May 7, Schindler called all his inmates together into this, what used to be the appel plotz, inside the factory building. When we were all assembled, he pointed to his open door in his own office, inside the factory and he said I have assembled 30 revolvers in that—they were all on the table in his office. For those of you who know how to use them, you should distribute them amongst yourselves and begin protecting yourselves. Because all the SS guards from the camp are gone. Rumor later on had it that Schindler faked an order for them to leave the barracks and immediately report to the SS units in Prague. So that he announced to us that we are no longer being watched by SS guards but there is a potential of stray German units coming through this area that could still hurt us unless we begin to protect ourselves. Additionally, he said I have to leave this camp. I have to leave this factory immediately. Because if I stay here this is deep in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovaks would treat him as a German authority. He could potentially face trouble because since his original contributions to the Germans took place inside Czechoslovakia. So he was in danger of his life and he asked that some of our inmates volunteer to help him get across into some American or English zone. Some of our inmates, there were two or three that stepped forth to help him get him across into the English zone or American zone, did take place. Schindler left and we were left inside that concentration, inside that factory until the next day. On that appel plotz he also announced to us that the Germans will be signing a surrender tomorrow. This was the 7th and he told us that by tomorrow the Germans will be signing a surrender and that the war will be over. He announced those words to us. The cries, the laughs, the outbursts that went up from our people is still vivid in my memory until today. It was just a scene of unbelievable confusion, happiness, unhappiness, everything mixed together as this developed. The next day, as Schindler promised, we did not hear about any announcement of surrender but we did see a Russian soldier, a single Russian soldier that looked like he was 20-foot tall on a horse that was extremely small. At least that's how it appeared to me at that time, marched into our camp and declared that the Germans are no longer here, that the Russians have marched in here and that we are free people. We remained in there because we had no guidance from anyone inside the camp other than to protect ourselves. We really did not know what and when—some of our people were sick, weak. We did not know the next step immediately. Some of the older inmates knew that amongst us are some of those Ukrainian, Polish guards that brought the women from Auschwitz to our camp. These inmates of ours wanted to know from the Russians what we should do with them. Because now, evidently, they had an eye on them and took them as prisoners. They wanted to know from the Russians what we should do with them. The Russians evidently gave our inmates permission to deal with them as we see appropriate. So some of those inmates that were now held by the former prisoners were actually hung on the factory pipes right after the war. We eventually were freed and upon Schindler's leaving he also pointed to us, pointed out to us that he has warehouses full of stuff. As I spoke about this, he was able to organize those by going to the train stations

and ordering things to be shipped wherever he desired. In this he had warehouses full of stuff. Full of liquor, full of foodstuffs, he had materials, he had clothing, he had house shoes as I recall and all those. He told us in his parting message that all this should be divided amongst the inmates and we should do it as fast as we can because the Russians are marching in here and there is a good chance that they would take this because they needed it probably almost as much as we did. So some of our inmates took charge immediately of those revolvers, of those—of the ammunition that was available and we were obviously protected. No one was harmed by stray German units. Schindler has left and we were now being dispensed all those materials that were in warehouses in that factory. I received—I recall receiving some shoes, some house shoes, some materials that I eventually could make a suit and some other stuff which I don't recall at the moment. But eventually we were free and it also appeared that everybody was totally on his own. There was no authority, no Russian authority directing us anyplace, no Czechoslovak authority directing us anyplace. We just had to follow what our own imaginations would guide us to do. I joined a group of 17 people that is 13 men, four women, that evidently selected Krakow as our destination and we would begin a march towards Krakow. We simply left the camp under no one's guidance, with lack of knowledge of what we're going to have to pass through, whether there was still some fighting going on anyplace. We nonetheless left the camp, 17 of us. We were able to round up a horse and wagon. The horses at that time were simply roaming the fields, some of them being injured from the war. Some of them simply left by fleeing German units. They were simply roaming the fields. We were able to take a horse or two and a wagon. Load up on this wagon whatever materials we just received from the warehouses of Oskar Schindler, take those with us. Those of us that were stronger would march behind the wagon. Those that were weaker were on the wagon. We would exchange those that were riding and those that were walking. We did that for the next seven days. The horses would not last that long because they were injured horses. So during that march of the seven or so days, we would have to exchange these injured horses for other injured horses to pull our wagon to help us get to our destination of Krakow. We never reached Krakow itself. We went as far as Vruzwuff (ph) (c. 588) which was a former city of Breslow, a German city. When we got to Breslow, there was some semblance of normality already existing there. There were already residents trying to rebuild the city. All the outskirts and railroad cars and the city itself of Breslow were totally destroyed during the war from bombardments. I recall buildings that were totally destroyed, with just one room still functioning or something. We were accommodated in those bombed-out buildings. Eventually from Breslow, (c. 605) I would have to think that I was able to eventually get on a train and go from there to Poland and eventually wind up in Krakow. Potentially, three or four weeks after May 8, the end of the war, I arrived in Krakow.

What did you find there?

Somehow within the next few days, we all went out on our own in search of families. Whether family members of ours—as I mentioned all of our group, all of the 17 people went out on their own. I traveled back to Borek Falecki immediately and inquired of neighbors, of my former

employer whether he has seen any one of my family members. No one was able to shed any light on that. The situation was very difficult for me to remain in Borek Falecki because it just seemed like it was unsafe yet because of the anti-Semitism which didn't somehow disappear with the war. From word that we got from other Jewish members who traveled to different locations of their homes and they felt extremely unsafe. Based on that, I also felt unsafe and returned back to Krakow. By that time, I discovered that some of the people from the 17 people that I returned with, had found some relatives either close ones or distant ones and in fact I discovered that I was the only one of that group of 17 that so far did not find anyone, distant relative or close relative. Eventually, one of the 17 people was able to find a place for me to stay with them in a one room situation where it seemed like maybe 20 or 30 people that had no place to go, were accommodated by this one person in Krakow. In Krakow, the organizations, Jewish organizations, UNRRA, other organizations became active and sent out calls for people to begin to look for lists at certain places of people who survived and returned. So that we will be able to look whether any of our relatives returned from the war. This was my daily function, to go to those places and look for lists up and down. I did not find names of my family on any of those lists. Eventually I was assigned some housing in Krakow itself where myself with three other people lived in one room which was formerly a students' building in Krakow. On one of those daily trips to these schools or gathering places where they were bringing in some inmates from some concentration camps like Mauthausen, other _____ (c.652), Auschwitz... By that time, I already gave up or did not have any hope any more that any one of my family members is alive. This was already going on a few weeks into post war and no one was appearing. I practically gave up hope. But on one of those trips I found a bunch of returnees from Mauthausen and I somehow had knowledge that one of my close friends, a fellow by the name of Adam Mondel (?) (c. 659) was in Mauthausen when we were separated once before in Krakow Plaszow. We were close friends and I somehow understood that he went to Mauthausen. So in this transport of people that arrived from Mauthausen, those that survived, and they were all very ill. When I arrived in this school building where those survivors arrived, they were all sitting or laying on the floors, very poor shape, very bad health wise. I already had eaten and I already had clothing by that time but those people were in horrible shape. Some of them not even remembering their names. So I along with another friend of mine began walking through those survivors of Mauthausen and shouting Adam Mondel (ph) (c. 670) loudly. Would this friend of ours be among those survivors? Because no one was recognizable, really. We couldn't recognize anyone. Poorly clothed, poorly fed and in real bad shape. So that the only way we could discover whether anyone we know was there, was to yell their name and maybe somebody would respond. Sure enough on one of those trips, I was there with a friend yelling Adam Mondel, and a fellow answered to that name. Stood up, unfolded from the floor and stood up. That was my friend, Adam Mondel. This was about the closest that I came to seeing any one of my friends. Relatives were not found by that time and no one was ever found from my relatives. But this was the closest friend that I found and the only close friend that I found that I knew from before, Adam Mondel. Took him with me out of this waiting room in the school and he began living together with us in that building, in that students' building in Krakow.

As far as you can tell, your family was killed during that liquidation of March, 1943.

Yes, as far as I can ascertain. At this point from reading different materials, from talking to former residents of the Krakow ghetto; very few people from there went from any place else but to Krakow Plaszow. Some few only went to Krakow Plaszow and only us, the ones that worked at the Oskar Schindler factory and held overnight, those were the only ones who survived—that survived that camp. To the best of my knowledge, at this point, no one left from there to any other camp. Simply was killed in the ghetto itself. All the shooting and all the killing was done inside the ghetto. Those transports never left any place at all. So I have never found anyone from my family, not even from distant relatives. To this point, I always look through books and lists. But at this point, in 1992, I still have not found any close relative of mine that survived the war. I am the only one that survived.

You're the only survivor of the Urbach--?

Of the Urbach or any Boldinger family from that area.

When did you realize that the Oskar Schindler episode would become famous?

After my settling in Krakow, the situation became clearer to me that no one survived. It also became clear to me that Poland was no place to remain. Number one because of my previous knowledge of anti-Semitism, number two, the Russians were there now and we already began to understand the Russians were not only the liberators but they also have a totalitarian state and certainly Poland was no place to remain. I began to look towards traveling out of Poland into the American or English zone, to somehow get away from communism. For a while, I traveled to Usti nad Orlici (Czech Republic) c.715) or the German name for it would have been Aussig (c. 716) and hoped to settle in Czechoslovakia because I was ... When the war ended and from my experience and knowledge of the Czechoslovakian people, they were the friendliest people I have ever come across. My own thinking led me to believe that maybe, somehow settling in Czechoslovakia would be the place and the three of us made that decision to somehow escape from Poland and travel to Czechoslovakia and settle in the city of Austic (c. 724). I don't remember at this moment how we happen to pick Austic but that's where we were heading for. But when we got to Austic and we already had some living quarters there, we were not in touch with any Jewish organizations that would provide us with more definite instructions or more definite help as to where and what. We were somehow on our own and we began to recognize that the Russians or the communists are there too and this was no place to stay. So we began to look, the three of us began to look to escaping from Czechoslovakia into the American or English zone. That's what we eventually did. But before we escaped from Czechoslovakia, we also discovered we acquired, all of a sudden, a skill of being able to cross the Polish Czechoslovak border fairly efficiently without being caught by the Russians or Poles or Czechoslovaks. So for

a while, I acted as a courier in trying to help some people that wanted to get out of Poland. I was able to smuggle at least two people out of Krakow to Czechoslovakia and eventually into West Germany. I helped smuggle them out of Poland into Czechoslovakia to help them get into the American zone and eventually wound up settling in Bomberg, Germany.

Oskar Schindler reentered into my knowledge that he, in fact, survived and he lived in Munich. I went to see him in Munich. He somehow had the knowledge to recognize me and he called me by the name of Rumak (ph) (c. 751). Rumak somehow was give to me—the name Rumak was given to me somehow in the process of the war because at one time I was called Schomek (c. 754) but that became an awkward name so somebody popped out Rumak. The name Rumak stuck and evidently Schindler remembered that name so he still remembered Rumak. Later on in years, I became aware of it that Schindler was, in fact, a recognized Christian for helping Jews and it became common knowledge that he was a guest of the Israeli government and that he frequently traveled to Israel where he was celebrated as a hero by the former inmates of the concentration camps, especially those that he helped survive. One of those trips, my trips that I went to Israel in 1973, I was aware that Schindler was in the country at that time and found the address of Oskar Schindler. I, together with my family at that time, my wife, my children went to visit Oskar Schindler in Tel Aviv. When I walked in, he was already a man after a slight stroke but he did recognize me. He yelled out Rumak. He called my name again, he still remembered my name at that time. We spoke briefly and we parted. He eventually died the same year and was buried on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem.

He didn't know your last name then? So the mystery of the list _____?

The mystery of the list continues, right. There was only as I speculated already that was one chance that some German official in the Krakow Plaszow ghetto was handed a list of who is going to Schindler. It is unbeknown to me but there is a good chance that there are some people who would have known how this list was created. It certainly was not born in Gross-Rosen.

As you know, there has been literature grown regarding his factory and his lists. I'm sure you're familiar with some of them. What can you tell us regarding how the system really operated and how were people saved by Schindler?

Schindler managed to befriend the head of the SS guards of Krakow Plaszow, Amon Goeth. He somehow managed to befriend him, and from what it appeared at that time, and was confirmed later on, this brutal murderer, Amon Goeth looked to Schindler and believed that Schindler was a capable individual and that he would somehow help him accumulate wealth and well-being. So somehow an extreme friendship developed with those two people. There is also the slight chance

that Schindler was able to hand a list later on also. I have no knowledge of this because some place along the line at that particular time of confusion when we were being transferred from one camp to another Oskar Schindler as well as Amon Goeth wound up in German jail. This was not the first time that they wound up in German jail or Oskar Schindler would up in German jail and he wound up in German jail, as rumor would have it at that time, because German authorities became aware of his ability to accumulate wealth and having warehouses of materials even back in Poland. That something was fishy but Oskar Schindler never stayed long enough in jail because some of his cohorts and good friends from Berlin would set him free again and he went back to doing exactly what he was doing before, after he came out from jail. I recall that Oskar Schindler just came out of jail not long before we came to Brunnitz (Brnenec, Czech Republic). When we already were in Brunnitz, this Amon Goeth who conducted all these hangings and shootings and murderous acts in Krakow Plaszow also appeared in Brunnitz. At one time, I remember seeing him but this Amon Goeth was no longer the Amon Goeth of the SS guard with the almighty power but somehow they stripped him of all his ranks while he was in jail. Because he was in jail at that time, as rumor would have it, for stealing the transports of foods that would arrive into the concentration camp from some Jewish organizations abroad or Red Cross or something. That he was stealing those and he was turning them into gold and diamonds and other things. So when he appeared in Brunnitz, he looked like a former inmate. The clothes that he once wore and looked so tall and big and fat, was not the same man any more. He looked like he went through hell in the German jail. This Amon Goeth eventually traveled back to Poland because evidently that's where he was assigned. He came to Brunnitz only because of his friendship with Oskar Schindler so he evidently came to visit Oskar Schindler but it also appears that Oskar Schindler didn't return the friendship and did not help him stay with him in Czechoslovakia. But from what I discovered later on, Amon Goeth returned to Poland, to Krakow. In fact, when the Russians marched in, Amon Goeth was captured by the Poles in that city of Krakow where he conducted this horribly brutal camp and eventually was sentenced to death by hanging. He was hung in Krakow by the Polish authorities. Oskar Schindler also had great influence from what I have observed. While the criminal acts of Amon Goeth were going on inside the camp, hangings, lynchings, shootings, beatings, the whole catastrophe; it was also known to us at that time that if Oskar Schindler entered the Krakow Plaszow camp on a visit to Amon Goeth, Amon Goeth would suspend all the activities of hangings and killings because he sometimes didn't want Schindler to know that he is conducting such affairs. So in that way, many of the Jews that were spared from hangings and killings and beatings were simply spared by Oskar Schindler appearing in this killing camp.

How did people get on list? I imagine that over a period of time, it was obviously that it was not a bad place to be, working for Mr. Schindler. I suspect that there were people who were trying to get put on these lists. Did you have any insight or knowledge about this, either during the time you were there or after the fact, after the war?

Yes, as I stated before probably towards the end of the war, it became fairly obvious that if anyone will survive this nightmare, it would be through the help somehow of this character, Oskar S. That being with him, he would somehow protect us. Whether we knew it fully or not, I personally can't say that I knew it but instinct would lead me to believe me all the time that that was a better place than any place else. In Krakow Plaszow, when we returned to Krakow Plaszow because Oskar Schindler's camp was closed, it became common knowledge that Oskar Schindler is still searching for a place, someplace that he would be able to move his people to that place, maybe further away from the front. It some became common knowledge. Also at this particular time, being maybe one of the younger members of the inmates, being one of the lesser known inmates, I did not personally know that. But it was fairly obvious that some of the Jewish leaders in connection with some of the Germans, the SS guards were aware of this in Krakow Plaszow, that Oskar Schindler is out there someplace deeper into the country of Czechoslovakia maybe or Germany, escaping further away from the Russians. And that he would create again a concentration camp and it would be desirable for anyone from the Krakow Plaszow camp to get to Oskar Schindler. Somehow, some of the Jewish authorities knew all that and some of the—in the process some of the former inmates or workers for Oskar Schindler would be shipped out to Mauthausen and ... So as I explained before but to clarify, it would appear that the 1,000 people that survived in Oskar Schindler's camp in Brunnlitz (Brnenec, Czech Republic), which was composed of 700 men and 300 women approximately, were no longer the same 1000 people that were at one time in the Krakow concentration camp near Oskar Schindler's factory but, in fact, were those that were replaced in the process of shipments leaving Krakow Plaszow into uncertain destinies and camps like Mauthausen. Those former workers of that factory were shipped out to those camps and replaced by other people from the Krakow Plaszow camp. Those people essentially spent with—in Brimlitz the last six months of the war and survived that way.

So you would say that some people were bumped from the original list and that other names were added?

It would appear at this point that some people that were originally destined to go into Oskar Schindler's camp were bumped in the process at Krakow Plaszow and were replaced by others.

Now Mr. Schindler, apparently he made a lot of money during these years. On the other hand, he saved people, he saved lives. In your opinion, based on your knowledge of the man, which was the more important for him?

It would appear to me that Oskar Schindler of the earlier days of the war was an opportunist looking upon the war as a great opportunity to enrich himself. Certainly being given that Jewish factory in Poland led him to believe that the future is his and that he was going to make a lot of money. But someplace along the line, he began to feel that his ideas of making money, being an industrialist in Poland and accumulating wealth were not exactly what the German Reich would eventually lead into. That is that the Jews would eventually be killed and he would have to either

stand on the side of Germans or else he would have problems. So he probably some place along that line began to figure out things that unless he appears as an extremely loyal German, he will not be able to conduct his business and he will not be able to save anyone. There is no doubt in my mind that he began to look upon the potential of ending the war and unless he had friends on both sides, he wasn't going to make it. The rest of the war, he spent appearing extremely loyal to the Germans and at the same time appearing as —acting as a friend of the Jews and inmates of the concentration camp.

Now, your story, we left you in Bomberg in 1945. How did you get to America?

I arrived in Bomberg, Germany on March 13, which happens to coincide with the date of the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto in 1943. I arrived in Bomberg in March 13, 1949 [?].

In Bomberg?

In Bomberg. Where I settled and began to continue my education which I interrupted in 1939. The way I have done that is by private tutoring from a German professor of a university who undertook to meet with me and continue my education. This continued education eventually led me to apply to an engineering school in Neurenberg where I was eventually rejected as not either being well-prepared enough or not having enough room to accommodate everyone. I also at the same time had to support myself and I began work at the UNRRA, for UNRRA in warehouses where we were distributing food to other DPs. In 1946, Ada Birnbaum with her family of Edith, Fred, Ann Birnbaum and Joe Birnbaum arrived in Bomberg, Germany. At that time, I met Ada and her family and we established a friendship, a courtship. I established the friendship and courtship with Ada Birnbaum. I continued my education and working for the UNRRA in German and I also began working in a radio-phonograph repair shop where I learned the trade of repairing small appliances. All through this time, I kept company with Ada Birnbaum. In 1949, I left Germany for the United States. I traveled by a former troop transport ship, United States Jumper, arrived in United States in 1949. Ada Birnbaum and her family arrived in the United States about three months later in June of 1949. In 1950, we were married in New York and lived until 1951 in New York City. I continued working in woodworking shops and furniture shops and Ada began work as a seamstress in the garment center in New York. Eventually in 1951, Ada's parents bought a farm in Flemington, New Jersey where they moved to. Since our roots were not very deep in New York, making a living was difficult, in fact. Both Ada and myself decided to move to Flemington, New Jersey where her parents were already settled at a chicken farm. I began work as a carpenter in the Flemington area. I became a union member, a carpenters' union member and was able, in fact, to make a decent living in Flemington. Our first child was born in 1952, that is David; our second child was born in 1955, that is Barbara, and the third child was born, also in Flemington in 1963 and that is Henry. I continued my work as a

carpenter for a while. In 1953, I established a construction business which began operating as the firm of Reemer (?) and Urbach. That business—that partnership lasted until 1959. From 1959 on, I began operating the business, the same building construction business as Urbach and Urbach in Flemington. My oldest son is married to Zeborak Kohane (c. 040) and they have three children, Rebecca, Simon, Jonathan. They now reside in Cape Cod, _____ (c. 045) Cape Cod where David is a cardiologist at the hospital and has a private practice of a group of five. Barbara is married to Michael Listner (ph. c. 046) now residing in Crescent, New Jersey. Barbara is an attorney, graduated from _____ (c. 048) University and her husband is also an attorney. They have two children, one is Samuel and the daughter is Elise. They both practice law in New Jersey and New York. The youngest one, Henry, is single. He is a graduate of Princeton University, went on to Columbia Law School where he finished a successful first year of law school. Decided that he did not like law, transferred into architecture, graduated with honors from the School of Architecture in Columbia and at present, in 1992, is entering a Ph.D. program in architecture at Princeton University.

Sounds like congratulations are in order. I certainly can add that you are a very young-looking grandfather.

Thank you very much. It was a little bit of a trip again, to do that, but it had to be done.

I thank you on behalf of the Museum for your time and for your story.