

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Sol (Shaya) Lurie
July 8, 1994
RG-50.030*0141**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Sol (Shaya) Lurie, conducted by Joan Ringelheim on July 8, 1994 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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SOL (SHAYA) LURIE

July 8, 1994

Q: Could you please tell me your name, where you were born, and when you were born?

A: My name is Sol Shaya Lurie. I was born in Kovno, Lithuania, 1930, April 11.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family, what your father did, what your mother did, your brothers?

A: Do you want to know before the war?

Q: Yes.

A: My father had his own business. We used to be in the lumber business. There were four brothers that were partners and my grandfather. My mother was a housewife, take care of the children and also to cook. I had three more brothers beside me. One was Menda (ph), Hiram (ph), Slima (ph). All boys, no girls.

Q: Were you the youngest?

A: Yes, I was the baby. My mother always wanted to have a girl. My father told me, but it didn't work out. What happened after the occupation in Germany, when the Germans came in the Ghetto, my mother became pregnant, and it was a girl but it aborted. She didn't want to have no children.

Q: So, you were fairly wealthy?

A: Yes, well off considering. We had everything we needed. Life was good. The Jews and the Gentiles got along excellent, and we had workers by us and used to come to our house. They loved our family, and my grandfather, rest in peace, he was my idol. I worshipped that man.

Q: Tell us about him?

A: He lived with us. He didn't want to stay with anybody -- he had twelve children, and the only one he wanted to stay with was my mother. He loved my mother. I used to worship him. When he passed away he was 100 years old, and if you saw the man you thought he looked 60. He used to like to make _____. He used to drink with his workers, and he used to call them _____, that's a nick name. In Lithuanian _____ means you're a real nice person. That was his nickname. He was a fantastic human being. I used to go to the synagogue with him on Friday. We weren't religious, but we're observant, but not very religious. Life was good.

Q: Did you do other things with your grandfather other than go to synagogue?

A: I used to go walking in the park with him. I didn't drink with him. That's one thing I didn't do. Wherever he went, I was like a little dog that followed him. Wherever he went, until before the war when he passed away. Once, he was going to visit his children in America. He had three sons and two daughters in America, and I wanted to go with him. He said I can't take you alone. I got so mad with him that I didn't want to talk to him. But when he came back, I still loved him. Even to this day, the most thing I remember is my grandfather more than my mother and father. I have so many beautiful boyhood memories of him. I think he pulled me through the war. Whatever happened he just -- I think he watched over me.

Q: When did he die?

A: He died in 1939, just before the war broke out. I think he's still watching over me.

Q: Were you close with your brothers?

A: Yes. The whole family was close, oh yeah. We used to go all over together. We used to go in the summer time, we used to go to the beach and we used to go on picnics. We had a nice summer home about seven kilometers away from Kovno. It was beautiful, a real beautiful life. Everything was so peaceful and quiet. There was no hatred between the Gentiles and the Jews, not that I noticed. I used to have Gentile friends. My brothers used to have Gentile friends. We used to play together. We used to ice skate together. We used to go swimming together, fishing, whatever. Life was beautiful.

Q: You went to school?

A: Yes. I went to _____ for about two years so when I start with the Jewish school I didn't learn much. I tell you forget everything after the years I went I forgot.

Q: Did you hear about the Nazis? You were born in 1930, so you were a baby?

A: There were no wars going on, but nobody realized -- you had no Hitler. I used to listen to him on the radio, you know, when he used to make the speeches and everything, and I thought that man was a phenomenal speaker. The way he used to speak was unbelievable. He would electrify you. Nobody knew what was going on.

Q: Do you remember the first time you heard him on the radio?

A: Yes, in 1936, I remember we were listening to the radio. We had a short wave radio, and we'd listen to his speeches and I thought he was phenomenal. I couldn't believe it. He electrified you. Those days, they didn't know how bad it was. Then later on you found out differently.

Q: What happened in 1939?

A: In 1939 we heard that the war broke out in Poland and the Germans went into Poland and the Russians came into Lithuania took over the Baltic states. We were so happy the Russians came in because the Russian soldiers used to be stationed in the woods where we had our summer home there and we used to go there. We used to go over there and they used to give us they _____ to a child was a big thing. We used to mingle with them in the woods. It was a beautiful life. The only thing they started taking the richer people who had money. The wealthy people used to send them away, confiscate everything and send them to Siberia. My father, thank God, they didn't bother him, the whole family.

Q: Why do you think that was so?

A: I think -- I don't know. I don't know what happened, but they took everything away from us. The only thing they left was each one got one horse, in those days a horse and wagon to make a living. That was it. No more workers.

Q: There was no more lumber business?

A: Yes, still working in the lumber, but they only gave us like we were the haulers from the forest to the mills to cut the lumber, and they just took everything away. The only thing they gave each brother got one horse and one wagon, and you had to work yourself.

Q: So, when the Russians took over you were not frightened and your life didn't change radically?

A: No, no, just the luxury that we had changed a little bit, but life in general didn't change at all.

Q: Now, between 1939 and 1941 when the war started in Russia, did you hear what the Nazis were doing in Poland?

A: No, we didn't know anything. We heard that they were in Germany, treating the Jews -- they were treating them a little rough, but nobody knew what was going on. I remember it was Sunday, I knew the exact day, I remember it was Sunday, and they gave an order the Russians gave it's hard to understand anyway -- he came from Moscow to dismantle the planes, to clean the planes, to put in all the equipment there and the Sabbath was Saturday, and Sunday that's when the Germans attacked -- bombarded the airports, and we know that the war broke out. My father took us all together, went in the horse and wagon, with all his brothers and sisters, the whole family we started towards the Russian border. We traveled all day Sunday. Meanwhile, while we were traveling on the road, the German planes were diving and bombing the civilians and the soldiers. They didn't

discriminate who they bombing. You see people -- as soon as you saw the planes coming, you jumped off the wagon went in the woods in the ditches. They came by and when you got up the person right next to me, shot dead. Some people were just blown apart from the bombs. After the planes left we got back on wagon and we kept on going.

Q: Did you cry?

A: No, I never cried. And we came to a small town for the night to rest. We figure tomorrow morning, we'll continue. Meanwhile, we lost -- my father lost his brothers. We got separated when the planes were attacking, and we stopped in this little town. We slept over one of the synagogues there. When we got up the next morning, the Germans were passed us already. So, they said all the Jews have to stay here. They put guards in front of the synagogues. Nobody could walk out from synagogues. Even if you had to go to the bathroom, you know because those days there was no bathroom inside so most of them were outside so we had to make in pots and they wanted to get rid of it, and they just took whatever you made and just threw it right back into the synagogue. We were there for a couple of days, and then they said everybody has to go back where they came from.

Q: What was that like?

A: It wasn't pleasant because food we had in the wagon what we took, but we couldn't get out of the synagogue and you made human waste and everything was inside. We smelled terrible.

Q: Were people frightened? You weren't alone?

A: I was with my parents, I didn't have no fear. Some people were afraid. Maybe I didn't understand that much. When you're younger you don't understand as much as when you're older, I guess. I understand now differently.

Q: Did you notice other people being afraid or screaming or crying or were people getting together?

A: Some people were getting beat up. First of all, it wasn't from the Germans, a lot of Lithuanians, the Gentiles started. They were doing the beating up. They were taking away the things that you owned, and we knew something wasn't good already because the way they were treating us.

Q: Did that surprise you because you said you got along very well with your neighbor?

A: Sure we were surprised. You figured you didn't see the racism when the Germans weren't there. But as soon as the Germans came they changed completely. I wouldn't say all of them. I would say 95 percent changed. Some of them were beautiful. I mean, some were very nice. Even in the Ghetto they used to come over the fences and bring you food and

everything. So, I cannot use everybody, but most of them changed.

Q: So, you were in the synagogue for two days. then what happened?

A: Then they told us we go back to where we came from. So, we packed up and they gave us a horse and wagon back and we were going back to Kovno. The way we were going to go one way on this road and the Germans stopped us and he said don't go this way, he says. Go where the troops are going and nobody is going to bother you. If you go this way, they're killing all the Jews and taking away everything you've got. So, my father listened, and we went to the German _____ back to Kovno and we got there. We went back to our apartment. The apartment was broken in. Whatever was left was taken away, but we stayed there and then they told us that all Jews have to put up the Star of David. We couldn't walk on the sidewalk, we had to walk on the gutter. Then we heard that anybody went away where we wanted to go, everybody was killed. So, the German that told us that we should go with the _____ saved our lives right there.

Q: This was one soldier, an isolated soldier? He wasn't with anybody else?

A: One soldier, no. Just one soldier. He was standing in the road.

Q: Did he also threaten you if you went one way he'd shoot you, and if you --?

A: No, no, he didn't threaten us at all. He just said if you want to live you go this way. A human being. Then when we get in Kovno, a couple of weeks -- I don't know exactly, I don't remember and they said all Jews have to go to Slobotka. That's where they made the Ghetto.

Q: Go back a little bit to when you had to put the Jewish star on for the first time.

A: Well, everybody had to wear the Jewish star, and the order was that no Jew was allowed to walk on the sidewalk. All Jews had to walk in the gutter. If you're caught walking on the sidewalk, they gave you a beating that you never walked no more.

Q: Did you ever get beaten?

A: Not in Kovno. I got beaten when I was in Birkenau, but not in Kovno.

Q: Were you angry when you had to put on the Jewish star?

A: Angry? I didn't understand that much. You didn't have any choice. You just took it the way it was and that's it. If you want to survive, you did what you had to to survive, but those days it wasn't so serious. Nobody understood but it was. The killing and everything -- I had a cousin he was always getting beat up. This guy must have gotten beat up 20 times. Every time he looked at a German, he got a beating.

- Q: Before the Ghetto was formed, you were in Kovno for a couple of weeks?
- A: Yes, something like that. I don't know exactly, but a couple weeks until we went into Slobotka.
- Q: Were you able to get food?
- A: Well, we had the maid, and also one of the workers who used to work for us, used to bring us some food and one of the maids that used to take care of us, her name was Naja. She used to bring us some food.
- Q: She was Gentile?
- A: Yes. Also, one of the workers. I remember he was a tall, big husky man, also used to love to drink. He loved our family, and he used to bring us food.
- Q: Did you see people being killed during this period of time?
- A: You saw a lot of people getting shot, but most of the shooting wasn't done by the Germans. Most of the shooting, the killing was done by the Gentiles, by the Lithuanians themselves, because they could confiscate everything you owned took away your property, took away your apartments, whatever you owned.
- Q: And you saw that happen?
- A: Oh yes. Especially in the Ghetto, I saw a lot of it. _____ one of the Germans and this was my cousin's friend, he said something to him, one of the Germans. He took the back of the rifle and he hit him right in the face and splattered his whole face.
- Q: How were you notified about going from Kovno to Slobotka to the Ghetto?
- A: The proclamation came out and they said all Jews have to report go to Slobotka. That's where you're going to stay.
- Q: Was this outside? Was there a proclamation written outside?
- A: It was written outside and then they were going around with their loudspeakers and saying that. Also, the rumor was going around, but I don't remember that much of it.
- Q: Do you remember the day you moved into the Ghetto?
- A: No, after that I was done.

Q: So, what's your first memory?

A: Well, my father had two brothers there, in Slobotka, and also my mother had two brothers living there. We stayed with my mother's brothers. I remember good times, because you know you didn't realize because we had the freedom to run around. Nobody bothered you. You couldn't get out of the Ghetto, but nobody bothered you. You could walk on the sidewalks again. I remember my cousin had a bike and I was in Israel the last time and we were talking about it. He used to take his bike and ride around because the things we had we all confiscated. And life wasn't bad for me, but maybe because I was young. The older people were suffering, but when you are a child, especially a youngster, you get everything you want whatever was possible. Food we never had a problem.

Q: In the Ghetto you had not problem?

A: No, my father used to work for the Ghetto. He used to bring the food in to the Ghettos from the outside. The Ghetto always had food, even most of the people had food, used to do baking, always got flour. We used to bake, you know, bake the bread, used to dry it out and make like a toast so it doesn't spoil so fast so that if you couldn't get no flour you had extra bread. I don't remember being hungry.

Q: Did your brothers work as well as your father?

A: Yes, my brothers worked also where the food -- the side by the gate where I told you that's where the stables were. The only one that didn't work was me.

Q: What about your mother?

A: My mother didn't work, no. Most of the men worked. The women didn't work. And then little by little, you know, the first, -- I don't know how long it was, maybe one, two months after, the first action that they told everybody to report to this parade ground around there, and the Germans took certain people on one side and some other people go on the other side. I remember they told us to go on the left side, and we didn't know which was good, whether the left way was good or the right side was good. What happened, my father was working and when he came back into the Ghetto, he couldn't locate us, so he found out it was the action. So he went to the commandant of the Ghetto and he told him that he can't find his family, and the commandant from the Ghetto came and they found us and we were on the wrong side of the action, because people that were on the side that we were on, they went to the Ninth Fort, and everybody got shot. Whoever went, nobody came back. My uncle, my father's youngest brother with his wife and two children was in that action. They died, also one of his sisters with her husband.

Q: Did your father try to get them out too?

A: He couldn't find them. There was so many, maybe 20,000 people were going inside. He

was happy, must finding us.

Q: This was a German?

A: Yes, the German commandant. He came and he got us out. Because nobody knew which was good and which was bad until they started to transport you out.

Q: Did you know after that that they were shooting at Ninth Fort?

A: Oh, yes we knew it. People were coming back, like the Gentiles, they said a lot of them were alive when they were shot. They were still alive and when they put the dirt over the graves, the ground was moving. After that we knew they were killing. They had Ninth Fort and they had another one, I think it was the Fifth Fort, but mostly killing was going on at the Ninth Fort.

Q: So what did you start thinking then? Did you then get afraid?

A: I was never afraid. I was never afraid. I never had no fear. No matter what happened. I remember one time they were taking all the children away from the parents and my father where the stables were, with the horses, we used to have a cellar there, so he took me and my cousin and the two children and my cousin and another kid and he put us in that cellar and he put wheat over the door, over the trap of the cellar so he figured the Germans weren't going to find us. What happened to my cousin, she had asthma and from the wheat, it started to affect her. She couldn't breath. So, what happened, she lifted up the cover, and the wheat was starting to fall inside, and then she was trying to close it up, and the wheat must have gotten stuck on the hole there and when the Germans came into the stable to see if anybody was hiding there in the straw, the wheat seeping into the hole. They opened it up and they found us. We had to get out from the cellar and like somebody told me Sol, _____, it means run away. I started to run and I jumped into one with the horses, one of the bins there where they put the horse feed and I went in that bin and I covered myself with straw. I figured nobody's going to see me. So, when the Germans were going and poking into the bins to see if anybody's hiding there, and my brother _____, he got killed in 1963, he said _____, that means Sol, they're going through the bins and poking, and run away. I jumped out from that bin and there was a back door. I ran out from the back door. There was a fence there maybe eight nine feet tall. I was a little thing. I don't know how I got over it. I jumped over that fence. There was an outhouse in the yard. I opened up the door and I jumped right into the whole in the outhouse. I stayed there overnight. The Germans came in to look but they couldn't see me because I was covered with human manure.

Q: How deep were you in?

A: I don't know, it must have been at least three feet deep, and I was covered up to my neck. After the next day I came back. After I feel it was safe I came out and my mother and my

father and my brothers thought I was dead already. I came back smelling beautiful. It took me days to purify me. They were happy to have me, even though I smelled. They were happy to have me. That went on and a couple of weeks later, my cousin and the two children, they all got killed. At the time they found us in the hole. Everybody that was hiding there was taken away.

Q: Who told you to run?

A: My brother _____. Then another time, in another children's action, and they took me away and they put us in a stall to take us away to be killed and my brother _____ was delivering water there and he came in where they had those big wagons for water, it's like a tanker made out of wood. He got me out and put me in the tanker, in the water, and he took me out from the barracks and took me back home. He saved my life. First my brother _____ saved my life, and then my brother _____ saved my life. There were always actions there and they were always taking away children. One time I remember they were looking for children, my mother, may she rest in peace, she hid me in the house, they had the big quilts made out of feathers and that's where she hid me. When the Germans passed by, they didn't find me.

Q: Were you under the quilts?

A: Under the quilts. Little by little most of the children were gone from the Ghetto. We used to have a big river there called the _____. That was the only thing that wasn't guarded. You couldn't escape from there because the guard was so treacherous there that you couldn't go through there. Also, my cousin, he used to work with the underground. He used to smuggle arms into the Ghetto. He used to help people escape from the Ghettos and the Jewish police, because they were called the kopos and they found out about it, and one day they got him in the house and the Jew kopos killed him. They killed my cousin. They didn't want any trouble in the Ghetto, because if they find out that you're doing things like that in the Ghetto, they punished _____ and things like that.

Q: Did you know that he was helping the underground resistance?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you think about that? Did you think it was a good idea?

A: I told him it was a good idea. It was an excellent idea, anybody that worked in the underground.

Q: Did you want to?

A: I was a little too young at that age, but I tell you those days you went alone, but now they

would never take me alive, nobody. I would fight. I knew people that went just like sheep, most of us. I guess we were taught that way. If somebody hates you, turn the other cheek. In the Jewish religion that's what we're told. We were told respect.

Q: Sol, you kept running away?

A: That's to save my life, but I didn't know how to fight. We weren't fighters. I only had one fight in my life and that's a long time before.

Q: Were your brothers in the resistance, in the underground?

A: No, the only one that was in the underground was my cousin, my father's sister's son. He was the only one. There wasn't that many.

Q: What do you remember about the Jewish police?

A: The ones were nice. Everybody gets a little power, and everybody wants to save his own life so what they do to somebody else as long as they could save their life. They had a little more power than everybody else and they thought that the Nazis would never do nothing to them because they are kopos. So, the people that they -- like the underground - they used to take jewelry from the people and give it to the Germans just to save their own neck.

Q: Do you remember seeing things that the Jewish police did?

A: The only thing I remember is my cousin being killed.

Q: What did you see?

A: I didn't see him being killed, but my sister told me. They came into the house and just shot him. That was it.

Q: In your normal every day life did you ever see the police, did they ever shove the people or did you hear them say anything?

A: Even the actions, the Jewish police were involved in that. They used to walk with the Nazis. If they knew somebody from their family, they saved them. That's human nature, and they had that power and that's what happened. Most of the actions the Jewish police were involved with it.

Q: What about the Jewish council. Did you ever hear about Elkous?

A: I heard his name, but I didn't know what was going on.

Q: Anybody else?

A: I told you, names I don't remember.

Q: Did you play with other children? I mean, as they kept taking children away there were fewer and fewer children?

A: Sure we played. As they took away it got smaller and smaller. Ovariotomy there were separations, by the time they liquidated the Ghetto it was tiny, maybe six thousand Jews were left.

Q: Were there particular games you remember playing? I know you went on bicycle.

A: The children used to play football and soccer. That's most of the games we played. We used to go through the water in the summer time. We still could walk through the water.

Q: You went swimming?

A: Yes.

Q: Was there any kind of schooling?

A: No schooling. I know I didn't go to school at all.

Q: Did you have books in your house?

A: We had some books. My uncle, should he rest in peace, he smuggled in some books, they used them on the outside that's because the whole family was involved in buying food in the Ghettos, so he smuggled in some books. So, I found a picture it was in Israel and I found a picture of my uncle smuggling in the books and he was distributing books to some kids and they didn't know who it was and me and my brother _____ identified him.

Q: Did he give books to you?

A: Yes, we had books, because my brothers were very educated, especially my brother _____. When the Russians came in, he used to teach them Lithuanian, and they used to teach him Russian. He was an intelligent young man. He had golden hands. There wasn't a thing that he couldn't do. He got killed in 1963 in Russia.

Q: Did you ever notice starving people in the Ghetto?

A: I saw people getting beaten up.

Q: By the Germans?

A: By the Germans. If you didn't look at them the right way, they used to beat you. I saw one child being torn away from the mother and just thrown right against the wall. When you're young, those things don't affect you so much. The only time that bothered me was my cousin, he got beaten up. I mean his hands were _____, he was bloody. That's the only time I felt anything.

Q: Did you get thinner?

A: Did I get thinner? I was never fat. I'm still not fat. I wasn't starving then. My weight wasn't bad.

Q: Were you hearing any rumors why you were in the Ghetto, about what was happening in the concentration camps?

A: We heard that people were being killed, but we didn't believe it. Nobody believed it that they are doing things like that in camp.

Q: Did you believe they were shooting at the Ninth Fort?

A: Oh, yes, that we knew, because people came back. I mean the Gentiles came back and they told us that they were shooting there.

Q: As the Ghetto got smaller and smaller, were your parents talking about trying to run away?

A: You couldn't run away. It was so guarded that nobody could run away. Even if you ran away, the Gentiles would kill you. They wouldn't help you. There was no where to run. Maybe the individual could make it, but a family would never make it.

Q: Your father was going in and out of the Ghetto?

A: Yes. The thing is my father wouldn't leave the family and run away. He could have run away, but he wouldn't leave the family, because we had a very strong bond, and even after the war, they made if there was a wife, you go back to Kovno to see if you can find the wife and he went back. He didn't find my mother. We didn't know that my mother was dead. So, he found a couple of brothers and some nephews. But once you got back over there, you couldn't get out no more. That was it.

Q: Do you remember what your apartment looked like in the Ghetto?

A: In the Ghetto? It was a small little apartment. We shared it with somebody. I don't remember the name. We had one room for all of us and there was another one and

another one. Two families in two rooms. The kitchen we had outside. You had to go outside to cook. If you had wood you could cook. There wasn't much wood, if you didn't have any wood, you didn't cook.

Q: So, it was quite a different situation in Kovno?

A: We had a beautiful house. We even had a toilet inside the house those days, which was a big thing. We had running water, hot and cold water in the house, and we had about seven rooms. I was on the top floor, because nobody wanted to live on the ground floor because we used to have floods. There was the _____ and the _____, the two rivers. In the wintertime they used to freeze up and we used to go ice skating on them and what happened one day, when it came right before Passover, it started to melt, so the ice, the two rivers used to meet and the ice used to start backing up. So, all of a sudden you got up in the morning and you had maybe ten feet of water, so nobody wanted to live downstairs. Everybody used to live on the first floor, one flight up. One time we got up and we had water right up to the windows. Those things, still good memories from those things. When the water used to recede, we used to go out on the ice. There used to be piles of ice there and we used to jump from one piece of ice to another. I remember, and I start thinking it was crazy. The nerve I had for things like that.

Q: You said if people didn't have wood they couldn't cook?

A: Right, most everything was with wood.

Q: Do you ever remember not being able to eat because of that?

A: Well, if we didn't have the hot food, we ate the cold, whatever we had. That's why we used to make the bread, we needed the wood to bake, so they used to dry it out so when it's dried out it doesn't spoil. So we always had a reserve until we picked up some wood something to cook. It used to be the actions, you know, and then the people were taken away, some people used to take their furniture and break it up and whatever they had left and do the cooking.

Q: Do you remember the names?

A: Names, no.

Q: Did you sleep okay?

A: Yes. I made up my mind that I have to outlive Hitler. When the war broke out, I said I must survive. With all the things, that was my outlook. Even the concentration camps, as soon as I got my bread in the morning, I used to put it in my stomach and then nobody could take it away from me. Because somebody, if you had a piece of bread and other people were afraid to eat their bread. They wanted to save it for a little later on.

Somebody found out, they used to kill you for the piece of bread. Once I ate it, I knew nobody was going to take it away from me. As soon as I got it, it went into my stomach.

Q: What did you sleep on in the apartment?

A: In the apartment, we had mattresses.

Q: On the floor?

A: No, we had a bed.

Q: Everybody had a bed?

A: Yes, I slept in my brothers. We had two beds. I slept with my brothers and my mother and father slept together. We had blankets, we had a _____ because certain things they allowed you to take into the Ghetto.

Q: What did they allow you?

A: Like the blankets, the pillows. Furniture you couldn't take out there, but the Jewish people used to live in the Ghetto. When they put you together, they put you together with other families. When we first went into the Ghetto, we stayed with my mother's brother. Also, my father had a brother right across the street, and their houses were all furnished. Our furniture was gone from when we came back from running away. Everything was gone. When you went into the Ghetto, whatever you got, they put you in with families. Everybody got assigned to an apartment, that was it. Whenever you were there, that's what you had.

Q: But for you it was fairly orderly?

A: Yes. The separations or the actions, that was an awful time, but when they stopped, you know, you went back to normal.

Q: Do you remember the burning of the hospital?

A: No, I do not remember the burning of the hospital.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the Ghetto?

A: I can't think.

Q: Any sights, any sounds, any smells?

A: Tell you certain things are blocked out from my mind.

Q: I want to ask you a question. When you jumped into the outhouse did you even think about what you were doing?

A: No, I didn't think what I was doing. I just wanted to save my life. I didn't know how deep it was. I just jumped right in there. I was lucky it wasn't full. It was the will of survival is unbelievable. You could go through is just mind boggling, the human being can endure if the will of survival is there. Even right now when I start to think what I went through in my life, I can't believe that I did it. I'm here to tell about it.

Q: When were you _____?

A: We heard the Russians because we heard the war was stalled and then about 1944 we heard that the Russians started to move and the Russians were coming close to Kovno. Everybody was saying that maybe soon we'll be liberated, and a couple of days before the Russians came into Kovno and liquidated the Ghetto, everybody had to gather at a certain place and they marched us from the Ghetto to the train station and went into Kovno. We boarded the trains and I don't know how many days we went.

Q: Did they give you any notice?

A: No, just one day they said everybody from the Ghetto into the this and this part. They're liquidating the Ghetto. Everybody took what belongings they said you could take. Whatever you could carry, you took along. I remember we walked over the bridge, we went to the train station. Everybody boarded the trains. The families were together. They didn't separate families there. I don't know how long it took, two days. I don't know how long on the train. We stopped of at _____.

Q: Do you remember an approximate date, when this was?

A: I think it was July if I'm not mistaken. I know it was warm already.

Q: Do you remember seeing the Ghetto burning?

A: No.

Q: What happened on the train?

A: We were together with the family, and they took us to _____. It was a little card and they carded me and they said everybody off, women and children separate and men separate. I was standing with my mother and then a German came over and he looked at me and he says you go over here. So I went to my father with my brothers and they took us to Landsberg, Loger A.

Q: Did you want to stay with your mother?

A: Yes, I wanted to stay with them, but I couldn't. I was with my father and my brothers. My father had two brothers that were also there and their children. The women were left at _____ and the men they took us to Landsberg, Loger A. They were there for a couple weeks. The men used to go to work, and the smaller children couldn't work, were left in the camp. One day they came and said all children, gather in this place, and they came down there and they loaded us on trucks and they took us to Dachau. I guess when the men came back, we weren't there anymore. We came into Dachau, we had to get undressed, they deloused us. That was like they put -- the lousing they cut our hair.

Q: They didn't do any of this at Landsberg?

A: No. The only time we got the louse was at Dachau. They took away all our civilian clothes we had. They gave us striped clothes because in Landsberg we were still in civilian clothes. They took some of the kids. They put me in the front soldiers. There were sections, there were American soldiers in Dachau. There were French soldiers there. There were a lot of German political prisoners, that were against the Nazis. In Dachau we got a loaf of bread. We got some meat. We got some salami. That was the first time I saw a piece of salami in years. Every Sunday we used to get a loaf of bread, maybe because they gave it to the French prisoners they probably got it also from the _____ they got food. I said, boy that's nice that kind of food because in Landsberg we didn't have any food no more.

Q: How long were you in Landsberg?

A: A couple weeks. Maybe two or three weeks tops, and I was in Dachau for about two weeks. Then, all the Jewish children that they gathered in a certain place and they put us on trains. We didn't know where we were going.

Q: How many children?

A: I think about three or four hundred children together, that was left. They shipped us to -- we came into Auschwitz. We got off the trains in Auschwitz. We walked from Auschwitz to Birkenau. We didn't go on trains, we walked to there. That was in the evening, and they said everybody to undress you're going in for showers. They gave you soap and they gave you towels. The first group went in before us and we were next to go in and we were going into the crematorium. It was about 12 o'clock. It was a big bath there and we were going into the crematorium it was about 12 o'clock and all of a sudden they said, it's closed, get dressed. We didn't know what it was. They took us from there, they walked us to Loger A in Birkenau. The next morning they lined us up on the grounds there and we got into two numbers. A number here and we were there for about two days. We didn't know what was going on and then one morning the order came everybody outside. We lined up in big lines from one end of the camp to another and my _____ was

completely undressed and he passed by and he looked at you. He walked over to me and he looked me up and down and he says to me, take a step forward. I said to myself, we're going to the crematorium. Then he walks a little further down in front of me and Marvin Shapiro, he lives in New York, too, he looks at him and he says take a step forward. From the whole line, four of us, took a step forward. The rest that were left standing there, they took them away. We didn't know where they went. We found out they went to the crematorium. They all got killed. Me and the three more of us, they took us to Loger D. It was an experimental barrack. In the barrack that they put us in, it was an experimental barrack. We didn't know, but that was supposed to be a labor camp. And we were there -- the food they gave you a little slice of bread, a little water and that's it. Once in a while you got a little soup and that was it. I got very sick and when I felt I was burning up with fever so I went over to the water there and I washed myself with cold water and I said to myself, whatever will be will be and I laid down. I got up the next morning and it was like nothing happened. The fever went away and I felt beautiful. We were in that camp for about three weeks, four weeks and all of a sudden they walked in and they needed somebody for work on the farm for harvesting not far from the camp. They took a couple of people from our barrack. They didn't take me because I was little, small. Somebody told me he says Sol put some straw in your shoes. You'll get a little taller, and that's what I did. I put some straw in my shoes and I got a little taller and all of a sudden a German walks in and says "We need one more," because one of them was sick. He wasn't healthy enough to go to work. He came in and he looked and looked and he took me. I got to work on the farm. I thank everything that is happening to me all the time I thank my grandfather, he was watching me. He still watches me. Everything that happening to me, he's still watching me.

Q: In that experimental barrack what did you see?

A: We didn't know what was going on there. Nobody knew. All those things I found out after.

Q: So you didn't see anybody --?

A: No, they were making lampshades from human skins. They were experimenting how to save the soldiers. They would take the people and experiment to see how they could save the soldiers' lives.

Q: So, you never saw anything?

A: No, all those things I found out a little after. As a matter of fact, I got some pictures from where they made the lampshades. Somebody took pictures and I got one of them.

Q: How did you know it was --?

A: You looked at him. You could see his eyes. That little smile on his face.

Q: How did you know it was _____?

A: I didn't know until later on. I just know one with the gleaming smile on his face just shot you, you. We didn't know the names or nothing. Later on we found out who he was.

Q: Was he tall?

A: He wasn't that tall. He wasn't a big man. I never looked at size anyway. First of all, you weren't supposed to look in the face, because if you looked at them, that was it. You were gone. Your head was supposed to be this way. You didn't look up at the Germans. I learned it because I knew what my cousin went through. Even if they told you something, you looked down. I went to work on the farm. I was a very good worker. I rolled up my sleeves you know, and I was doing the work. Before that we were working on the railroad stations. We saw all the people coming into the camps, a whole trainload of gypsies came in. The next thing we knew smoke was coming up the chimney. The whole trainload was just wiped out.

Q: You were working on the ramp?

A: First we were unloading potatoes from the trains.

Q: This is after the experimental camp?

A: Yes. That was after the experimental camp. No, that was before the experimental camp, I'm sorry. That was before the experimental camp, and the whole trainload of gypsies just killed. They killed the gypsies faster than they killed the Jews. The crematoriums were going 24 hours a day. What happened, they couldn't burn enough people and the crematoriums what they did, they used to dig ditches and they took human bodies and put wood on, human bodies, wood, human bodies, put stalks up and that's how they burned the people. Also, they used to take the fat, from the people it used to run off and they used to make soap.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: Talking about the crematorium you said you found out later on an explanation of why you got out of there, can you tell us?

A: When we came, the first group of children and everybody, they went into the gas chambers. We were the next ones to go in. We were all undressed. We had the towels and soap. We were going to the showers. It was 12 o'clock and they said no showers today and they took us to Lager A in Birkenau. The next morning we got up and they put numbers on our arms. That's the way they identified you. You didn't have no names. Everybody was a number. No names. A couple of days later, about 48 hours later, they told us to go outside everyone. We went in a line and one end of the camp to another. And _____, I didn't know it was _____, but I found out later that it was _____. They passed me by, they looked at me and they told me to take a step forward and then my friend Marvin Shapiro, he took a step forward. The rest, they went for showers. We found out later that what happened how we were saved, the German government wanted talks with the American government and they told them if they're going to give them trucks, they're going to stop burning and they gave them 48 hours. I was lucky enough to come on the day that the 48 hours started, and that's how I was saved from the gas chamber.

Q: Did you also with the number have a striped uniform?

A: Yes.

Q: With a cap?

A: Yes, the cap and the yellow star on it.

Q: All yellow?

A: Yes, yellow start it said Jude in block. I should have saved those things. That's a real treasure.

Q: Before you went into the experimental barrack you were working on the railway lines in Auschwitz?

A: Yes, they took everybody to work, in the camp, everybody went to work so they took us to the railway stations, and some used to carry bricks. A guy used to bring the blocks from one side and bring it over there and the other group used to take it from there and bring it back to keep you busy. They gave me a worker, he came from Romania, a young man, and when you put on the rocks you have to carry them, two people had to carry them. One in the front and one in the back. He supposed to run with it and you couldn't walk and what happened this guy was a little lazy. He just came from the concentration

camp and wasn't used to working I guess because in Romania the one guy they weren't toughened up like we were already. He didn't run, and the German that was guarding us picked up a shovel and I got hit in my right arm and now I can't move my arm, for many, many years this caused it to happen. The shovel broke in pieces. I didn't even feel the pain. Now, my arm I can't straighten it up. I may have to go for surgery. From that camp they took us to the Loger -- it was going on a couple of weeks and we saw people coming in from the trains, gypsies, Romanian Jews, everybody is coming, they were burning -- they couldn't burn fast enough.

Q: Were you outside where you saw the trains coming in?

A: Oh, yes, we were outside. While we were working there, the trains were coming in with the people.

Q: During the day?

A: Yes, during the day. You worked a twelve, fourteen hour shift, well, from the morning until at night. They were going to the gas chambers. The crematorium was day and night, we saw the smoke coming out.

Q: How did you find out they were gas chambers?

A: You could smell the flesh, you could smell the burning. Especially when they burned them outside, when they used to pile up the bodies and the wood.

Q: Did you ever see the piles of bodies?

A: No, it was always away from the camp.

Q: But somebody told you about it?

A: Yes, after this, the pictures were shown. You could see when they burned them the outside of the wood, the stench was so that you couldn't even breath. You could smell the human flesh being burned.

Q: Did anybody help you in Auschwitz Birkenau?

A: Did anybody help me? Well, when I went to work, no help actually, just self endurance to survive, the will to survive and also worked hard. They liked when you worked. When they took me to work on the farm, there was a German guard over there that used to watch us. The commandant from the camp wasn't around, officials, and he used to say sit down and take easy. He used to give us his food to eat.

Q: This was in Auschwitz Birkenau?

A: Yes, that was when I was working the farm already. He was an older man. He said, that's my job I have to do what they say. If I'm not going to do it, they're going to kill me. The commandant came one day, he came -- they take me from the farm, I was in charge, and they liked the way I worked, and he gave me a job. He said I got a job for you. He put me where the gate and he said make sure -- because people used to come away from the farm, there used to be potatoes and vegetables and things like that. There was man on one side and women on the other side. They were Russians. There was a lot of Russian women were there and he says, make sure you don't let anybody bring in any food in the camp. I had to search them. I was a little kid. I used to stay by the gate and a little hut or whatever and I was supposed to search them. I never searched them. One Sunday morning they had an inspection and they came in and they found potatoes in the box and vegetables. What happened, they got everybody out that was in November, we got everybody out completely naked undressed. He made them crawl on the ground like snakes the whole day and the whole night. He comes over to me and he takes out his gun and I thought he was going to kill me already. He says to me "You're lucky that I like you, because you're a very good worker." He says, "Next time, make sure that nobody brings in any food in the camp, if not you're going to be done." Two days later, they started they took the women away from the camp. I was watching. I used to inspect. I was there until they started liquidating Birkenau.

Q: How far away from Birkenau were you?

A: I would say maybe five six miles, a big farm.

Q: Did you start checking people after this?

A: I used to watch, but you see by that time already the harvest wasn't there no more because everything was harvested already. What they used to do they used to bury the vegetables in the ground for the winter so they don't freeze.

Q: Did you ever discover anybody stealing or smuggling in food?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you do?

A: I took it away but thank God it didn't last long because a week later we were finished already. We stayed in that camp until they started liquidating the camp.

Q: How was your food supply?

A: The food, we got rations. If you had a potato, some people used to eat potato. If you worked on the farm, you took a potato. But the food you got your ration in the morning,

bread and once in a while you saw a little soup and water, and that was it. You get used to it. Your body gets used to it. You eat it up and you learn to survive.

Q: Did you still wear the uniform?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did everybody wear uniforms?

A: Everybody wore the uniforms.

Q: Do you remember different kinds of insignias they have, different triangles?

A: The only thing I had was a star, a yellow star with a black marking.

Q: A black mark?

A: Yes, Jude, it said Jude because you had different nationalities. You had the Russians there, too.

Q: Did it have a J?

A: No it was marked Jude and they had a black marking an they had Russians there, Polish prisoners.

Q: Do you remember what color?

A: No, I don't know what color. The only thing I looked was myself. I had to survive myself, nobody else. So that's who I looked out for, myself. The Russians started coming close to Birkenau. They got us together and we went on the death march.

Q: Do you know when that was?

A: We walked for a couple of weeks, and people were walking and it was winter. It was in December, no food, no clothes. You wore the same clothes winter or summer. It didn't make no difference.

Q: What shoes did you wear?

A: What shoes? I had shoes with holes in them and the ones they gave me in Birkenau. That was the only thing I had. It was two sizes bigger than my foot, but that was it. I used to put straw into it so it made my size. We start to go on the death march for about I don't know how long. Day and night we walked and people used to die like flies. They used to shoot them right on the spot. As soon as you fell, that was the end of it. One night they

put us in the barn, the first time in a couple of days that they put us in a barn to sleep. The next morning we got up everybody _____. There was a lot of people that couldn't make it. Whoever made it walked out. The ones that were left they burned the barn down with the people.

Q: How come you had so much strength?

A: I don't know. I still say my grandfather was watching me. Something was pushing me. I'm sitting and I'm thinking and I still don't know how I survived this.

Q: Did you ever want to give up?

A: Never. I always said to myself I want out of here. That is the only thing I had. That was the whole strength I had from that. No matter what they did to me.

Q: So where were you going on this death march?

A: We didn't know where we were going. Walking and walking for a couple of weeks we walked, without food, without water. Once in a while they gave you a little piece of bread. Finally we came to a place, I don't know what town it was, and they put us on trains, open freight cars. It wasn't freight cars anymore, they were like coal cars, dead winter. They packed you in like sardines and we were riding for a couple of weeks, without food, without water. You're packed in that freight car, I don't know how many were, but and somebody used to die you used to throw them right out so you'd have little more space in the car for yourself. The only water we used to drink was from snow. We took some snow and used to put it in your mouth. That's all the liquid you had. The train that I was in, if 20 people survived the journey, it was a lot. I don't know how many people there were. Finally we ended up in Buchenwald. Into Buchenwald we got out from the train, the SS with dogs, and they march us into the camp and they took different, -- the children they put them in different types of groups. Me, they put me in the Russian barracks there. They had French in there, they had American soldiers there. Me, they put in the Russian barracks, me and my friend Marvin Shapiro. We stayed there for a couple months. I know we heard the war was getting closer. You could hear the bombardments. You could hear the shells exploding. They wanted the children. Take the children away. Most of the Jews they wanted to take from the camps anyway, and the Russians, they said that's it, no more, we're not giving anybody up and they said the Jews _____. Nobody should go. We should start a resistance there and they took all the Jewish children and they were hiding in the barracks. The one that I was in he was a colonel. He was one of the leaders that was supposed to make that resistance in camp. I understand that camp was supposed to be blown up. As they were looking out all of a sudden you didn't see no Germans no more because they used to be all over the place. When you looked out, the whole perimeter, you didn't see the Germans. You just saw a couple of SS in the black uniforms. As I was looking out, I saw like a tank coming down the perimeter of the camp. Meanwhile people before that people were dying like flies.

We didn't have no water, no food, because they were going to get rid of us. My friend Marvin Shapiro got very sick. He got typhoid and they put him in an infirmary, hospital whatever it was. Meanwhile, April 11th I was going from Birkenau from the back from the parameters I saw a tank coming down the camp and the time was about quarter after three, and sure enough the Americans came and liberated us.

Q: Did you scream?

A: No, no excitement whatsoever. People didn't have no strength to scream. People didn't eat. I understand the camp was supposed to be blown up at 4 o'clock. I didn't know myself, but people were saying. The commandant called from Weimer, how come you didn't blow the camp up. The answer, one of the Germans that was in the camp he said you come down and you do it because the Americans were there then. Everybody came running out you know, you mean we're liberated. And the Americans came and the next day they started to cook food with meats and everything fatty and greasy things. And me, I was a child and somebody told me don't eat that stuff. The only thing I ate was a piece of bread. That's it, bread and potatoes. I wouldn't touch a piece of meat, soup or nothing. People that were eating it got dysentery. They got that because the system wasn't used to food like that. They got dysentery, diarrhea. They were dying like flies. People were just dying like flies. Now, I still say my grandfather was watching over me. I mean I was so hungry and all that food in front of me as much as I wanted and the only thing I ate was bread and water. That was going on for about three or four days until I started to take a little meat. A couple days later they took us out to the camp and they took us to barracks where the German soldiers used to be. That's what they put us in. And we were there, with food, with freedom, we could go where we wanted to go. I went to Weimer and I didn't have no hatred. Whatever they did I still _____ because my thought is if you got one person that's nice from the whole nation, you can't condemn the whole nation. There were some that were real nice.

Q: So you're not bitter because of this?

A: Never bitter. I take people individual. I don't take a nation. You can't just hate everybody with what a couple of people did. 90 percent of the Germans could have done something. You can't make anybody do something if they didn't want to do it. Everybody looked out for themselves. They were promised the _____ actually.

Q: Did you find your family after the war?

A: No, I found out my father was alive and my brother was alive and what happened we were in Germany and _____ with children, 522 children I think it was.

Q: From Birkenau?

A: No, there were more but like the French government, every government took some

because they were without parents. Belgium, Holland, Sweden, France took children. 522 of use went to France and the funny thing, I forgot to tell you. I was liberated right on my birthday, April 11, 1945. It was a beautiful birthday present. We went to France. We stayed in a children's home over there. I went to school a little bit. What happened, my body was so unused to food that anything I ate I used to get poisoned. My body just reacted. I used to break out in boils all over my body. I used to have boils like my fists. It took two years almost until my body got used to food. One day we were supposed to go to Israel, 1945 and what happened, a couple days later before we were supposed to leave, somebody came from the American Red Cross and asked if anybody --- I'm going a little too far ahead of my self. A guy came into the home and he's asking names and he asking my name and I told him and he said did you have a father and three brothers. I said yes. Your father's name is Simon? I said yes. He said well he was liberated in Dachau and they're staying in Landsberg. I was happy and going to the home I said they found my father and my brothers and I want to go to them and they said okay. They got me tickets on the train. I went on the train. I came to the German border and I met somebody. This is a little kid he said where are you going and I said I'm going to Landsberg to find out if my father is alive and my brothers. He said I just came from there. The whole family went back to Lithuania, Kovno. I said to myself I'm not going to go I don't know where to find them. I picked myself up and I went back. I went back to the children's home. And while I was there I was supposed to go to Israel and I was saying they came from the Red Cross and they asked if anybody has family in American, and I remember when my grandfather went to American and I knew had some children there and I remember New York, I said yes, I have uncles there and aunts and I remember New York and I gave them the last name because it was the same as mine and he said okay, we're going to put it in the paper any survivors of the Holocaust, and sure enough my cousin is reading the paper and she sees my name Sol Lurie is looking for _____ in America and I got back a letter from her and she asked me my father's name, my mother's name and my grandfather's name and I wrote them back and sure enough it was my uncles my aunts. They were so happy that I was alive. So, I went to America. I wasn't going to go to Israel. I figure I'll go to America and be with my family. At least I have somebody. So, we made up papers for me in 1947, April 15 I came to America. I got

Q: April is a good month for you?

A: Good and bad month. I got married on April 6 and my wife passed away April 22. It was good and bad.

Q: Your mother didn't survive?

A: My mother, the day before the war ended, before my mother was _____ and they were liquidating the camp and my cousin's wife was sick and my mother wouldn't let her alone. She had to go with her. My aunt and her daughter was begging my mother, leave her, come with us, don't go with her because they knew the sick people they're going to kill and my mother wouldn't leave her. They put them in a boat and they sunk the boat. If

my mother would have gone, she would have survived. I guess her time was up and that's it.

Q: Sol, tell us what happened to you after _____, what changed?

A: In 1987 I was like a piece of stone, I didn't want to talk about the war. I didn't want no questions asked about it. I couldn't show affection to my children. I was messed up pretty bad. So, I couldn't show affection. I was like a piece of stone. In 1987, I had to go in for open heart surgery, and after my open heart surgery, my whole personality changed. I guess I got another chance at life or got a new life and I became very sentimental, very soft. I started to show affection to my children. I started to show affection to my wife. I always loved my wife and my children, but I couldn't show because anything that you got close to in the war, you lost. So, I was afraid to show my affection, because God forbid I would lose them. My open surgery changed my whole personality. I became so affectionate with my kids, everybody. Even now when somebody says something, I watch a movie, I start to cry like a baby. Before it never bothered me. In 1992, my wife was diagnosed with cancer. They gave her three months to live, tops if she survived. She fought for eleven months, it was a miracle to survive. I guess I got a good chance to get close to her. I showed her how much I loved her. She knew it. I didn't leave her for a minute and she was terminally ill. She couldn't walk. She was in terrible agony. She started with 25 milligrams of morphine, she went up to 275 and that didn't help her. But I guess God wanted me to survive to show her how much I loved her. She was a fantastic human being, a terrific mother a beautiful wife. She was so sick and she didn't want to hurt her parents because her parents were still alive. Her father is 88 and her mother was 85. But the cancer and the will to survive is unbelievable. They gave her three months, and she fought for eleven months. She wouldn't give up. She denied that she had it. She said I'm going to be beat it. I got so affectionate to her. I got so close and she showed me her love which was unbelievable and she kept on fighting the cancer. She wanted to go to Florida with the cancer. She was getting radiation and chemotherapy. She wanted to go to Florida. She couldn't walk, we went to Florida in a wheel chair. The whole time she was in a wheel chair on pain killers, she was getting radiation in Florida, too, and chemotherapy in Florida. I guess my wife was looking out for me. She wanted me to be happy I guess. She fought an unbelievable battle and we have a friend of ours her husband passed away 2 1/2 years ago and my wife used to tell me I should call _____, maybe she wants to go out with us. Her mother also had cancer and she said call _____ and see if she wants to go to support group with us. And I didn't want it. I loved my wife, but she insisted I had to call her. I said okay I'm going to call the Jewish support group. My wife was very happy. She used to call her and _____ used to call her and used to talk for hours. As I was saying she was starting at 25 milligrams of morphine any treatment that she could have and she suffered so from the treatment it was unbearable. She used to get such pains in her legs that you could see by the fingers. The pain was unbelievable. The only thing my own invention I used to take hot compresses, boiling hot compresses, turkish style, I used to wrap them on the legs. I used to put on a plastic bad, I remember from Europe yet, and that's the only thing that

used to relieve her pain. I used to get up at night and I knew she was in pain, and I said _____ you got any pain, she says no, I said I know you got pain. She said no I don't want to bother you. And she went to doctor and she went to the last chemotherapy and she got so sick she was in the hospital and they gave her the chemotherapy and she got blisters in her mouth. She couldn't swallow. She couldn't even take a drink of water. Her face was completely blown up, her lips, the flesh was showing. It was such a pity, and the doctor says there is nothing more I can do for you. So, she went to another doctor and she went to him and he said you want to hear the truth and she said yes I want to hear the truth. He said, there's nothing more I can do for you. We came home and she says to me, I don't want to live no more. That's it. And all of a sudden the pain got so bad I called the doctor and he raised the morphine from 75 to 175 two days later he raised it another 100 milligrams, 275 milligrams and I didn't want to give it to her, I didn't know what the morphine was going to do to her. She couldn't take the pain no more. I said let's put you in the hospital maybe they can help you. She says okay. I didn't even want to take her to the hospital because this way I fear that she thinks I'm throwing her away. I didn't want to take her to the hospital. I took her to the hospital and she stayed there a couple of days and the pain, she was getting injections of morphine close to 275 and she needed medication and she was getting patches and the hospital didn't have it and I had to buy my own medication for that, and in the morning I went to pick up and I said to her she didn't want to eat. I used to stay there from 8 o'clock in the morning until 2 o'clock in the morning. I wouldn't leave her for a minute. So at 8 o'clock I said _____ why don't you eat something, she said I can't. I said have a chocolate chip cookie. She said okay I'll have a chocolate chip cookie if you promise me you're going to go home at 8 o'clock. I said okay. I gave her one chocolate chip cookie, then she took another one. I went home 9 o'clock and the drug store didn't open up until 9 o'clock in the morning and I got the medication for her I got it at 10 o'clock and she was waiting for me all of a sudden I walk in and they're working on her, oxygen, she couldn't breath and as soon as she saw me she stretched her arms out, her eyes bulged, she stretched her arms out to say good bye to me. She said Sol, Sol, I came over I said I'm here, everything is going to be okay. As soon as I came she relaxed and they put the oxygen on her. I transferred her to a private room, and that was Friday she was supposed to go home. I was going to take her home because I got in touch with the hospice because she didn't want to die in the hospital and Friday morning I was supposed to take her home, and she died Thursday night. I arranged for the funeral and everything I made sure we passed the house when we are going to the cemetery, we stopped by the house. Before she died she was pushing me at that lady there and she knew I'll have somebody and she passed away and after she passed away for a couple months I was very confused. I didn't know what to do. I was lonely. I missed her. The first time I went to _____ I was supposed to go to a party and I didn't know how to go there so I told _____ I didn't know how to go there and she said don't worry you'll find it and a member was right next to us said I'm going to the same party he says follow me and I'll take you there. I said okay, and I'm following him and following him and all of sudden I lost him. I couldn't find him and I'm going around in circles. I said to her _____ I'm lost. I don't know where I am. She said don't worry Sol you'll find your way. And then she disappeared. Like a magnet

_____ only lives a couple blocks away from me and all of a sudden like it was pulling me, going for a walk I pass by _____ house and I know somebody that lives across the street. I couldn't go into her house because it didn't look right and a man lives across the street from me and I know him and I always stopped to talk to her and my excuse was because I'm going for a walk that's why I stopped by. Well the thing was I wanted to see _____ I see her outside. About a week or so, one day she had a problem with the plumbing and she said to the neighbor across the street I have a little problem, he said why don't you call Sol, so she called me. That's I started to go with her and we're going to get married.

Q: When are you going to get married?

A: October 23. And another thing, about my wife, may she rest in peace, at the unveiling, the unveiling was supposed to be with a big storm and we came to the cemetery like the sky opened up for two hours, pouring. My son and my daughter got lost and we had to wait for them and after the services everything finished. As soon as we pulled out from the gate of the cemetery it stopped raining, the sun came out. It's like somebody said everybody is crying for her. She was a wonderful woman.

Q: Thank you, Sol. Sol, would you just tell us your number?

A: It's B 2858.

Conclusion of Interview