United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Sam Spiegel
May 3, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Sam Spiegel, conducted by Randy Goldman on May 3, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies.

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

SAM SPIEGeL
May 3, 1995

A: My name is Samuel Spiegel. I was born in _____, Poland on August the 23rd, 1922. I had three more sisters and a brother. I was the oldest one. We had a shoe factory at home, and my mother passed away in childbirth and I was four years old. Then my father remarried a year later. We had a pretty normal living until the war broke out. I wouldn't say we were rich, but we were middle class. We lived pretty nicely. Then when the war broke out in 1939 it was September 1st a bomb fell into the house. It was about 7:00 in the morning and we were lucky to get out about five minutes before, and nobody got hurt. But, this was only the beginning because the minute the Germans came in, things started to get very bad for us. It was September when school starts again, and Jewish kids were not allowed to go to school anymore. But, the Jewish community opened up some little Jewish schools that the kids went to so they can learn a little bit. In 1940, the middle of 1940, the Germans gave an order that we have to give away all the jewelry and all the furs that all the people had, and we gave everything away, but we thought it's a war, maybe they need it and things are going to get a little bit better. Things started getting worse and by the end of 1941 they made the Ghetto in our town.

Q: Actually, I just want to go back a little bit before you describe the Ghetto. A little more background, was your family religious and also before the war did you mingle with Polish kids or did you feel any anti semitism?

A: Before the war, I went to school, which was a public school, but there were very few Jewish kids in our class of 55 kids, there were about six Jewish kids. They must sit on one side, the left side of the class. Mostly it was a catholic school and prayers were said every morning and every night before we went home from school. We just stood there, but the Jewish kids didn't have to say the prayer. We mixed with the friends that I had in school, but socially we hadn't mixed. Sometimes when they needed some help, some school help, they used to come to my house, and I used to help them out a little bit, but otherwise, they had different friends and we had different friends. Because I went to school from early in the morning until about 2:00 in the afternoon. 2:00 we used to come home and have our main meal. Then I used to go to a Jewish school to learn religion. I usually didn't come home until about 6:00 in the evening. Then, at night my father was very active and designed this movement in those days, so I used to go to a Hebrew School which was called a Tabut, and that's usually how my schooling was, because when the war broke out, I was about 16 1/2 close to 17 years old.

Q: So your family was religious and involved in Jewish activity?

A: Very involved, but I wouldn't say very religious, more like conservative.

Q: He was involved in political organizations?

A: A little bit. I was younger. I don't remember exactly, but I know he was involved in organizations quite a lot.

Q: Did you ever experience any attacks or any --?

A: Usually around Easter or Christmas time, the Jewish people used to be a little bit afraid and they used to lock their doors because what they preached mostly in the churches. When they come home and they have a couple drinks or so, things were pretty rough, but otherwise we didn't have any problems.

Q: Were you aware of what was going on in Germany at this point?

A: No, we were aware very little of what was going on in Germany. Even when the Germans came in, we figured it's a war maybe things are going to change a little bit, but they closed in every time, there came some new rules out and it got to be very bad for the Jewish people.

Q: How large was your town?

A: Our town had about close to 10,000 population. 4,500 of it were Jews, close to 50 percent.

Q: Business and that was fairly integrated?

A: Right.

Q: Now, you told me when the Germans came into in your town and bomb fell on your house, what was going on?

A: September the 1st?

Q: Yes, what was happening?

A: We ran out from the house, then we had to get another place to live. I think we moved in with our grandmother for a little while in a room just to stay until things straightened a little bit out. Then when they moved us in and we stayed there for a while, and I got sick in 1940, I had the typhus, and I was lucky they put me away in a separate room and nobody found out about it, and I survived somehow the typhus. Then I worked for the Jewish Community Center at home, because the Germans, when they made the Ghetto, made like the Judenaut which was a self -- you know the Jews governed themselves and I worked in the office over there for them, until I sent away to _____, to the slave labor camp. Things got very bad in the Ghetto. There was a lot of sickness, a lot of poverty. We didn't get enough food to eat to feed the people, but we helped each other as much as we could as a community. Because we still lived in our own homes, and we had

some little things we could trade for food with the farmers from the outside and I even had a paper that I could go outside of the Ghetto, because I worked in the office and I worked in the labor department, in that section. I could see what started going on and I was very, very upset with all those things, and I figured that I couldn't stay over there too long, and I decided to get out and when I went to _____ to the camp, this was before they took all the Jewish people out from our town. The fellow that took me out from there was an SS man by the name of _____. He said we have to go to _____, because there's a big ammunition factory and we'll have to send a lot of people over there to work. We have to go over and see how things are set up over there. When I came over there, we went over there on a Thursday and he said Monday maybe we'll come back and he said Sam there's nothing to go back anymore because all the Jewish people from your town were taken away. That's how I stayed over there. All the time I was in _____ for about two years.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit more about the Ghetto, what you all did? Was it closed in?

A: It was closed in barbed wires. You couldn't go in, you couldn't get out unless you had a special paper from the German government. The SS used to come in every day to the Ghetto, take people out to work, kill a lot of them while they were doing it, and we even had a little hospital over there. A lot of people that got sick and had typhus, they took them out and they shoot them, they killed them. Also, I remember when they came in one day and this was in 1942 in the beginning, and they said they need about 25 men and 25 women because they had to take them away to a factory somewhere to work. They took them into a public bath house. They gave them a bath and they shaved their hair and everything else and they send them away. We found out later that they took them away to a concentration camp that they tried out the crematoriums on them. This was a try out. We couldn't believe that those things are happening, but later on we found out that they were true. There was gas put into the crematoriums. Life was very difficult in the Ghetto. You couldn't do anything. There was no work. Nobody was working except when the Germans took you out to work somewhere on the outside, but you still used to come home at night and be with your family. That was one good thing about it. You always had hope. You figured it's a war, maybe the war is going to finish tomorrow. Maybe things are going to change. We also felt that we have to stick together in order to keep each other alive and maybe things are going to change a little bit.

Q: What about activities in the Ghetto, cultural activities, religion, your father's political --

A: All cultural activities and everything stopped because the Germans were watching out that you couldn't do, you couldn't do things, you know, you were lucky. You were afraid even to go out into the street during the day because they would catch you all the time and send you out to work and sometimes you didn't even know if you were going to come home, so usually you were hidden all the time as much as you could. They used to come in every day to the Ghetto and do what they want to, and a lot of people got killed. If they didn't like somebody, they just killed them in the middle of the street. It didn't make any

difference.

Q: Did you see that?

A: Oh, sure, absolutely. I remember the name. He was a Ukrainian, not really an SS, by the name of Schmitky, they used to call him. He was a very, very cruel man. He just came out. I remember right near our house there was a fellow, his name was Littman, Phil Littman was his name, and I remember he shot him right in front of our house. We were sitting inside. We were afraid even to go out. So those things were going on daily. It was a daily occurrence. It wasn't new.

Q: Did your father keep up any this organizing underground, the Zionism?

A: I couldn't say because I don't remember and I don't think so. It's true that they got together and they talked about certain things, but very little could be done, because there was no help from the outside. In the Ghetto without help from the outside, it was very hard to organize anything, especially in a small town like ours.

Q: Did you observe shobot, holidays, anything?

A: We used to observe it in the way we could. I remember my mother used to light candles every Friday, but as far as the food was concerned, we didn't have the food that we had before the war. If you had a little piece of bread and some potatoes it was enough just to survive. I used to help a little bit because I worked in the Judenaut and I had maybe my portion a little bit more so I usually used to bring it home instead of eating so I can help out the family a little bit.

Q: Tell me a little about the Judenaut, how you got that job?

A: The way I got the job was the fellow who was running the Judenaut, was a very good friend of my father's, and that's how I got the job. It wasn't easy to get a job like this, because usually when you work for the Judenaut and you're over there and all the food and everything came in, you always had a little bit more that you can have a little piece of bread more to eat, but I usually didn't eat it myself. I brought it home, because I knew the rest of the family needed it more than I did, because they didn't have any other means to get their food from.

Q: What other privileges did you get from working there?

A: The privileges that I had was that I wasn't called to work every day, that I was at home, and I worked in the office, and I had special papers that even I could walk outside of the Ghetto, if I had to go out for something. If you get out from the Ghetto, because you mix with the Gentile people outside, you could help yourself a little bit more.

Q: Were you able to help your family by virtue of your position other than the food?

A: No, not much. I had a younger brother, which I send him out to work one time, which they worked at _____, and it was named _____, the firm. But what happened, the day before they took all the Jews from our town, he came home, the night before. He was caught in the transport and he was taken away.

Q: Was your Judenaut appointed by the local community or by the Germans?

A: Mostly by the Germans. They picked one man, and then he picked everybody that he wanted to. Some people that he knew or were close friends of his.

Q: You hear stories about Judenauts and various communities. Some of them were very helpful to the community, some of them were trying to save their own lives. How do you kind of assess how your Judenaut operated?

A: We knew it was a very difficult time. You have to understand what was going on in those days. You had to do what the Germans wanted you to do. If they came in and saw the President of the Judenaut, I want 200 people tomorrow to work, you had to be the one to supply those 200 people. So, you had a lot of people that didn't like you because, they said why take me? Why not take somebody else? You're put in the position that if you do right or you do wrong, you're not right. I'm sure that you heard that _____, which was the President, committed suicide because he knew what was going on. Some people were a little bit stronger and they didn't commit suicide. They did what they had to do and they made a lot of enemies. In my opinion they really helped a lot of people, too. But you don't remember the good things that people do, a lot of people you remember the bad things what a lot of people do. I couldn't say that I think most of them didn't want to do what they did, but they had to do because they were forced to do, because if not, somebody else would do the thing, and they would lose their life.

Q: Now, you worked in the labor department?

A: Right. The labor department, for instance, the Germans came in. They said we want 200 people tomorrow to go to work tomorrow morning, and we had to get out the names from the register that we had, which people are going to go tomorrow and which people are going the next day. I worked in the office, you know to go alphabetically, but I wasn't really the one who went out and took the people out, who put them to work. I worked in the office.

Q: But how were those choices made, which 200?

A: They usually were made according the list that we had. The way the President of the Judenaut decided or the people on top of them. I was young. I was 17 years old. I didn't make the big decisions. They said, listen, those people we don't want to go, and those

people we want to go, because you know there is always somebody who is a little better off or have other people, and we were watching out that the people in the position to help other people they should stay in place to help them, instead of sending them out of town.

Q: Can you give me any more ideas how they choose these 200 people versus another 200?

A: Usually we try to take them according to alphabetical order, so we really, I don't think we made choices you know this person is going to go and this person is not going to go. I mentioned that there were certain people who were privileged. If he had some in his family, you know, he didn't send them out to a certain job that was very hard. He picked them out to go to a job that was a little easier. I imagine everybody did the same thing. If I could help some of my friends, I helped them. If I could help somebody else.

Q: Were there women in the Judenaut?

A: No, not too many that I can remember.

Q: Were you aware of any sort of manipulation of the Judenaut toward other people because of their special power?

A: I don't remember. There might have been in the higher echelon, but I wasn't in the higher echelon to be able to tell you.

Q: The Judenaut also took care of food and everything else?

A: That's right. They used to dispense the food. They used to get it, and then divide it. The people used to have little carts that you used to come to collect your food, once a week or twice a week. We also had soup kitchens that we set up in order to help the people that didn't have a place to cook or couldn't help themselves.

Q: Anything else about the Ghetto that you can think of?

A: The Ghetto was very, very bad, and lot of people when they had people who hardly had anything, if they heard about a good job that was outside, that the Germans took you away, they wanted to go because the Germans never told you that they were going to take you to a concentration camp or somewhere else. They said we have here, we need some people to send out the job. We're going to take you and you're going to be living over there and you're going to be all right. So, a lot of people even went by themselves because they figured they would be better off than being in the Ghetto because the Ghetto was very bad. You didn't have enough to eat and there was a lot of starvation and sickness going on. We didn't know really until later on what was going on in the concentration camps, because even I, myself, didn't believe until I got to Auschwitz that they're really gassing and burning people until I saw it myself.

Q: So, you were already in _____?

A: Yes, in 1942 I was in _____, and I worked over there in the building section. It was a very, very big place. We lived right in the factory. It was like a whole city. It was one of the largest ammunition factories in Poland. That's where I got to know my wife over there in 1942 because women and men were in the same camp. We lived in separate barracks, but we were in the same camp. The camp was really watched by a Ukrainian. The Germans were in charge, but Ukrainians were watching our camp. It was pretty tough over there, but we had a little bit more to eat. We worked but we mixed with other nationalities. The Polish people worked in the same factory. At night time we used to come home and still see our friends and everybody else. We tried to help each other as much as we can. Let's say, if somebody could bring a little piece out from the outside and he could share it somebody else, he usually shared it with somebody else. We found out after the war that the fellow that was in charge of our camp over there, he was a German by the name of Brant, that thanks to him, that labor camp was a little bit better, that we didn't suffer as much as in other camps. He was caught after the war in the _____ and he was telling the things that he was doing for us. I know when they took us away to Auschwitz, he went to Auschwitz and told them that _____, we were very good workers and we know the ammunition, that we worked in the ammunition factory, and they should send us to work in the factories. They did. Very few of our people, except the older ones were taken away to the crematorium. The rest of us we got numbers and we were sent away to work. I wasn't in Auschwitz really too long. I was over there maybe three or four days. When we came to Auschwitz, by the old conductor trains, the wagon, the cattle trains, a lot of our people were dead, because we traveled -- I don't remember exactly if it took two days, or three days, or maybe four days, but we didn't have any food. We didn't have any water. They didn't give us anything. We didn't have any facilities even in the wagons. When they opened up, a lot of people were dead, and because we were people that already came from another labor camp, we didn't have any luggage with us, or any valuables. They chased us out from there and we went through the showers, and luckily it was showers and not gas. We came out from there and they numbered us and they put us in barracks. Then, people came in from factories because the Germans, this was in 1944, a lot of the Germans went up on the front lines and they needed people to replace them at their factories, so they needed workers. So they came in from the _____ factory, this is from the train factory and they said they need sheet metal men. I didn't have a trade, but I had a friend by the name of Coopersmith. He passed away, he survived and lived in California and they said Sam, when they ask for sheet metal men, why don't you pick up your hand and tell them you're sheet metal man. You're very handy, you'll go with me. We'll see that you do something, but God's will they picked him and sent him to a coal mine and they sent me into Germany to work in the train factory. I came in over there, I didn't know the trade, I didn't know what to do, but then I tried to take the broom and keep the shop very clean, which it was a very big factory. There was about 6,000 people working over there, but our section had maybe 30 people working, 35, in the sheet metal section, and there were three Germans that were running it, so because I kept the place clean, so they figured everything is fine. They took

a liking to me. I learned a little bit of trade over there. By the end of 1944 I think it was in November, when the United States and the Russians started progressing more on Germany, and the Germans used to have their shops on the front lines in trains, and they bunked a lot of those trains, they brought a lot of our men to the train factory to be fixed. The soldiers that were in those trains, came with them. They usually waited until the trains were fixed, so they put on another shift. Before they put on another shift, the SS man came in. His name was Fox. He said, each one he assigned us a train, a pullman to go out and check on those pullman. I went out to mine because I didn't know the train, but I knew how to write and read and I made a plan of the train and I showed him where the damage was and what we're going to fix. When he came on and asked everybody what to do, he came to me and after I showed him those, he says you're going to run the second shift. I couldn't tell the men. I took the bull by the horn. I figured listen I had to take a chance because I had different nationals working under me in the second shift. We went out to work, and we did the job so fast that we got a little bit tobacco extra and I never smoked. Usually everything I got, I shared it with the people. They knew that I didn't know the trade, but they couldn't tell the men that I don't know it either as long as I was put in charge, I was put in charge over the train. That's where I learned my trade. When I came to the United States, that's the trade I went into, and I built up a shop in Washington DC and thank God I was very successful, and that's how I made a living in the United States when I came over here.

Q: I want to learn a little bit more detail about some of these camps, these labor camps. Your interaction with the other people, with the guards, what your daily life was like?

A: In concentration camp we didn't have any interaction with the guards. You're very, very scared of them. I'm going to tell you an incident which happened to me. I worked in the sheet metal shop, and I used to make things out of little pieces of copper that I used to find, other things, some rings. I used to exchange them for little pieces of bread. I was called one day, and this was about the end of November 1944, and the men took my number and usually every Sunday the persecutions were going on, because we didn't work. Anybody did something that they didn't like, they used to hang them and then send them away to the crematoriums.

Q: This is which camp?

A: Auschwitz. And I already knew what was going to happen. I figured my gosh how can I get out of it. I knew what was going to happen to me on Sunday because I was caught with materials that _____, which means they are materials they use during the war for war materials, because I used copper. So, I made the decision that when the main commandment came out, we had appeals every morning that we stayed out. I had to come because the Germans were very how do you say it -- they counted us almost all the time. I went out and I went down to the main man behind him and I told him that I was making something for him for Christmas and it was taken away from me in the shop. I said I don't mind that they took it away from me, but I said I worked for it for almost two

weeks in order to have it for you as a present and I would like you to have it. It went away, I never heard any thing more about it. They never called me. The commander got to know me very well because we went out through the gate a lot of times. He used to knock me on the shoulders when we went out. That's how I survived from going to the crematoriums one time. We had to think sometimes. When the Ghetto was liquidated, my whole family went to Treblinka, and they all perished in the crematorium in Treblinka. That's what I found out at _____, a couple weeks later after I was there. So, I was the only one from the whole family left, from the immediate family, but I had some friends that they brought in from my town to _____, too, and they worked over there. So, we used to meet every day. I think in _____ there must have been about 2,000 or a little bit over 2,000 people over there working. Things were tough. We didn't have enough to eat. There was sicknesses. I had two friends by the name, one of them, that he was sick one of them was _____ and the other one was _____, and they took them all out one day and they shot them all. They liquidated the whole hospital in _____. They took everything out. So, you can imagine how we felt. Things were very bad. I had to get in to tell other monstrosities that were going on over there, but that's what they did. They took them all out and shot them at one day. Plus the other things that were going on. We got beatings every day, coming in or going out. The food was very bad. We used to get a little piece of bread in the morning and we used to get little bit of soup at night. But, like I told you, we tried to help each other in order to keep our things a little bit up. When we came to Auschwitz, it was altogether different. It was hard to believe what was going on over there. We could see the chimneys. We could smell the smoke. We knew the people that were taken over there. We were ones of the lucky ones. The minute we got out of the wagons and they started chasing us and they gave us the numbers on our arms, and they shaved us all together and then they put us through a solution that we walked through. We didn't even know. We were just like animals. You were chased and you didn't know what was going on to you at that time. Then they put us in line and they came out and the doctors mingle and the other ones were in white coats, and they look through and one of them goes to this side, and one of them goes to this side, and one to this side, and one to the other side. Now, I was lucky that it was Birkenau, not really Auschwitz. This was part -- they called it Auschwitz II. Then them came to make the selections. When they made the selections and I was sent away in those first three days, that I was in Auschwitz three or four days. I don't even remember. It's very hard for me to remember. We didn't do any work. We were sitting outside. It was cold, it was wet and they wouldn't even let us get into barracks until they came at night. Then we used to sleep with 15 people on one _____, with a little bit of snow. I was glad to get out from there. When they brought us into _____, which was part of Auschwitz, it was the factory that we went to, over there, because we worked with different nationalities and we worked in the factory with a lot of Germans, everybody had a different _____. We had a straw sack with a little blanket. That's all we had. We slept with about 200 people in one room. But they kept us a little bit cleaner. We had the laundry and the clothes that we were wearing the striped clothes. We had to change because in the factory it was grease working around trains. We had to change. We used to come home, and used to change

the clothes and they gave us other clothes. But, we had selections every Sunday. They looked us through, and if somebody didn't look so good, they took them out and they send them away to the crematoriums. They brought in other people to replace them. The food we got in the morning, you had to get up about 4:00 in the morning and we stayed outside. They called it Appeal, that they counted us, every morning, and if somebody was missing, we had to stay outside, cold or rain didn't make any difference until the men were found. Because sometimes somebody died during the night and never even came out, or something happened, but we had to wait. And if they didn't count us, we didn't couldn't go to work until everything was counted. Then we had about five miles, maybe four miles that we would have to walk from the camp to the factory. The music was playing near the gate where we went out, and the music was playing at night when we came home. We got a little piece of bread, about six of us got one pound of bread. The bread was made out, you could feel the straw inside that you could hardly eat it, but we had to eat it because you had to survive on something. We got a little bit, it was like tea. They said it was a special tea that was made that we drank a little bit. Then in the middle of the day you got a little bit of soup which was mostly water. Then at night, when we came home, either we got another little piece of soup or we got another little piece of bread. This was our food for a whole day. Things were very, very bad, because a lot of people, we didn't have enough food, they used to get diarrhea and they used to get sick. The minute you got sick a little bit, you were taken out, and we alot of times when we went out to work and maybe 2,000 people, and the men says I only want 1,800 back and by the time we got back, we had trucks behind us that they killed off the rest of them. We just loaded on the truck the ones that couldn't keep up with --you know, because we walked from the factory to the thing. The ones that couldn't keep up with it, they killed them on the road, and they put them on the trucks and then they took them away to the crematoriums. But we couldn't help ourselves. We couldn't even escape because on the outside there was nobody to help us. I had a friend that escaped from the trains when they took us on the trains and got into the woods, and when he came back, he was taken to Treblinka at that time. His name was _____. I'll never forget. He came back, he said listen don't go on those trains because they burn you over there and we thought that the man was crazy. We didn't believe him. We said how can they tell living people and burn them especially you know in our days? And another thing that we couldn't understand it's as if the world would know that those things would go on, we are taught that somebody outside must know because if they would know what was going on in here, they couldn't sit outside and not do anything about it. But, we never got any help from the outside. When he was on the outside and was in the woods, he said he couldn't stay over there because they wanted to kill him because _____, so he tried to get back and came back to our camp in _____. This was in _____ before they took us on the trains. That man didn't live through. They took us on the trains to go to Auschwitz, because he was already on those trains going to Treblinka one time, from _____, from our town. He jumped the train from Auschwitz, and he was shot before he got -- no, before we got on the train, he ran away, and he was shot. But, when we came to Auschwitz, we realized what the man told us was true, but we couldn't help ourselves. Auschwitz, we had a lot of hope. We could see that

this thing couldn't last on forever. But, it was very easy to commit suicide. All you had to do was through yourself on the wires, because the wires were electric. They had 600 volts in them. And a lot of people did it. But, if we found out that somebody was very despondent and we felt that he was going to do something, we tried to talk to him and tell him listen, the outside world cannot sit like t his and watch what's going on here and not do anything. It looks like the war is already coming to an end. We knew little things what were going on because we didn't have any radios. We didn't have any papers, and nobody was telling us anything because even the Germans that worked with us in the factory were afraid to talk to us, because if they noticed that they talk to us too much, they took him away. They took them away, too. So, we tried to help each other as much as we could in order to survive. And thank God some of us survived. When they took us out on the Death March --.

Q: Wait a minute, we haven't talked about the Death March yet so we need to set that up.

A: All right. One day, when we were _____, they came in and they said that they have to take us all out. They didn't take us where we were going. We found out later that this was the death march. We were only about 60 kilometers away from Auschwitz and all the people that were going met the same way. So, they took us out one morning. It was snowing in January, January the 22nd. It was snowing and it was very cold outside because over there the temperature goes about 30 degrees below zero. We didn't have any clothes. We didn't have anything with us, and we marched because they didn't have any trains to put us on, and anybody that couldn't keep up with the marchers were shot on the way. One night it was in January, I think it was the 25th of January, they brought us to a camp in _____, which was a big factory. They brought us in all over there because the SS that were going with us, they had to rest a little bit too. So, we stayed over and in the middle of the night they started shelling the factory. They woke us up about 12:00, 1:00 in the morning. There might have been about 60,000 of us over there because they brought them from all over. They chased us out and I had a dream that night when I was sleeping, my mother came to me and said Sam, don't leave this place and I had an argument with her. I told her listen, how can I not leave. You know we're almost liberated. You see what's going on, but when they started chasing us, I forgot the dream. When I was near the gate to go out, I had two friends with me, one was from my town, Weinberg was his name, and the other one was from _____. When we came to the gate, my dream came back to me and I figured, no I'm not going to go. I'm not going. So, the other one from my town, he didn't want to go with me. He said, Sam we're almost liberated I'm going out. I'm going where they chasing us to go. I said no, but the other one, I took care of him. He was a little bit younger and I took care of him a lot in camp when I was there. So, I smacked him in his face and I took him with me and I ran back into the camp to the other side and there was a big hole. It was a brick wall over there about three foot thick, and there was a big hole in it that was made from one of the shells or something. I crawled out and there was a ravine and I rolled down into the snow with them and we ran into the woods and we stayed over there for about eight days until the Russians came in. The Russians liberated us. If you asked me how I survived in those

woods for eight days in that cold weather and everything else, I can hardly remember. I know we had frozen toes and at night time we used to go out from the woods. In Europe they used to have to put away potatoes in the winter time outside and they used to cover them with sawdust and then have a door on the southside that they used to take the potatoes out. The sun used to come out during the day, so we stole some of those potatoes and we ate those raw potatoes and we had snow as water. That's how we lived through until we survived from those eight days. If you ask me to tell you anything about those things, I couldn't. But there were some other people in the woods too, when I was over there. I met a friend of mine, from my town, that escaped too, at the same time, by the name of David Bay, and he lives now in Washington, D.C., and we're still very close. We used to crawl one into the other one in order to keep us warm during the night until we got up the next morning. Then we used to run a little bit, you know, in order just to survive. Then from that time after, I walked home. It took me almost about two weeks to get home because there was no transportation. We could catch any transportation we could, and when I came home, -- so I was one of the ones who was liberated early. Even when I came back to my town--the reason I went back was because I thought maybe somebody from my family was alive still. I couldn't believe that everybody was gone that was there. There was no work, and no way to make a living, and I told you before that one of my father's friend's daughter was alive. She was on the Gentile side. She was not in a concentration camp. She was home already. I even got together with her I told her I said Tasha, we are only about seven Jewish people in the whole town that came back in those days when I was over there. Some of them even came from the Russian side already or there were Gentile papers. I said we have to do something in order to make a living. I said I'm going to put that flour mill back in operation. I did. I got the Gentile fellow, the machine shop, and we put it back in operation. We started -- the farmers used to bring in their corn, and we used to keep 50 percent for the making the flour and they used to keep the other 50 percent. That's how me made a living in those days. We have a little house over there. We remodeled a little bit and we moved in. I didn't know that Regina was alive still --.

Q: We need to stop here a moment. First of all, I want you to tell me what it was like when you went back to your home town after you were liberated. I mean you didn't go there and five minutes later you were a business man. What did you do? What did you find?

A: When I came back to town, the first thing, we left a lot of things with a lot of people, with our neighbors. I couldn't get anything back, and I was afraid to get back because I figure when asking to give back they might do something to me. So, all the Jewish people that came back, we moved into one of our houses that my uncle used to have. And we stayed over there all together, and one of my cousin's survived too. She lives now in Belgium. So, we all lived over there for quite a while, maybe for a couple, two or three months, but we had to go and get something to eat, because nobody gave us. We used to go to the government, but they themselves didn't have too much, but at least we had a little piece of bread to eat because we didn't need the things like you know like we live over here now. If we had a piece of bread and a couple potatoes, this was enough for us to eat. But

we started to build up ourselves a little bit. But, I got sick. I had to go to the hospital. I had the infection. I was in the hospital for a little while, but when I came out and I got together with my father's friend's daughter, we decided that we had to do something. I didn't want to put it up as a business. I wanted to put it up so that we can make a living and the farmers needed us too. The farmers were after us to put the flour mill back in operation because that was the only flour mill around, maybe 50 miles around our community. The only one.

Q: How did your Polish neighbors treat you? Did they welcome you back?

A: Not really. I hate to say it, but even with the friends that I went to school and everything else, I lived over there. I was born over there. My family lived over there for generations. I don't know how many generations, but the first question when they saw me "You're still alive?" But, things are different now. I always tell them that I wish you would ask me if I lived in Holland, not in Poland. From the whole town, from the 4,500 that we lived in, I think maybe close to a 100 are alive and not all went to concentration camps. A lot of them ran away to Russia and they came back from Russia after the war. We still get together even during the summer, we have sometimes a gathering from our town that we get together, all of them together, to see how everything goes.

Q: So, they weren't very kind to you when you got back?

A: No, not too kind. And we had --I had to escape from there, because they started pogroms again. The pogroms started in _____ and the day Regina came back she went to her town, and she went up to her apartment and knocked at the door to find out if some of her family may have come back. There was a fellow behind that said Regina run away because they just killed_____. _____ was a fellow that came back too from concentration camp, and they just killed him. So, she went down from that apartment and she didn't have time to get into her apartment house, then she came back to my town.

Q: Now, we haven't even discussed Regina, so people watching the tape won't know who Regina is. You need to back track a little bit.

A: In the beginning, I think I said that I met Regina in _____ in 1942, and then when they took us on the train to Auschwitz before they took us off the trains we could see what was going on. We made up that if we live through we're going to meet in _____, my little town, and get together over there. She was liberated in May, and when she came back to our town, was sometime June, but it's miraculous that she was liberated on the third day, she already knew that I was alive, because things were going on, the communication. She knew, she met some people that says I already heard that Sam is alive and I was glad to hear too, and I was waiting for her to come back because I was the only one left from the whole family. She was the only one left from the hole family.

Q: I was wondering when you were talking about your fiance coming to your town, did you think you'd see her again?

A: I was hoping that I would because I knew I lost everybody else, but I was very happy to hear that she was still alive because I found out. News traveled, and maybe I should get back for someplace for her to come to, but we couldn't get married. What happens in the Jewish religion to get married you need ten people to have a witness to have a _____. There weren't ten Jews even there to get married, but we got together the ones that were over there and we told them, that because she doesn't have a place where to live and I don't, we're going to move in together and we're going to get married the minute we can get married.

Q: So, describe to me when she came, when you saw her?

A: Oh, it's very I was one of the happiest people because I figured she was the closest one to me, because I was with her for almost two years in _____ together, and in _____ she lived in a different barrack, and I lived in a different barrack and one time I went over to visit her and one Ukrainian took me out from a room and I got 25 lashes and I'll never forget it, but it was worth it to see her.

Q: You went to her barrack?

A: Yes.

Q: You went inside?

A: Oh, sure. You could go in. We didn't live together in the same barracks, but we lived in the same camp and the same camp you could go and visit them. But if the Ukrainian, if he wasn't a very nice fellow, he took you out and most of them were not nice and they just gave me a beating one of those times. He said it's too late, you should already be in your barrack not over here. Because I didn't have time to go when I got home from work anyhow. So, we knew in Poland that we couldn't stay over there no more. We'll have to leave this country. There's no place for Jews to live any more after what happened over there. So, one day, when I found out what was going on and I had a threat that they're trying to kill me so I went to the mayor of the town and I found out that he was one of the teachers that I used to go to school in my last years. His name was Peshko. He was in the underground. He was in the underground during the war. I went over to him and I told him Mr. Peshko, I have to leave. I lived through Hitler and I don't need this and I have to get a paper from you to get on the train because Russia was at that time in Poland and you couldn't just go on a train any time you wanted to. So, he said, Sam I'm going to give you a paper because we're trying to have a _____ out on _____ and maybe you can get over there. But when I got the paper I was afraid to take the train in my town because people knew me. So, Regina and I packed, just two sets of underwear

in a little suitcase and I went out of town to another town to _____ and took the train from over there. At that night we ended up on the Czechoslovakian border. They went through and they checked your passports on the Polish side. We went out from the train. We crawled under the train on both sides. Went out to the Czechoslovakian train and so when the Asians went out from their trains we went upstairs and wind up in Czechoslovakia. When we came to Czechoslovakia we came to I think _____ and then we went to Prague. We got off the -- we took a street car to get into the town from the train and Regina thought that I had the little suitcase and I thought she had the little suitcase and we left it on the streetcar. So, we came to town to the main it was a station over there, a street car station, and I asked Regina do you have the suitcase? No, do you have it? No. So, I asked the fellow, we spoke a little bit Czechoslovakian because it's the same language a little bit similar to Polish, he said you wait here. It takes about three quarters of an hour for the street car to come back and I'm sure the little suitcase is going to be on it. We waited over there for three quarters and we had a little suitcase and we got it back, so we're lucky to get the two sets of underwear because we didn't have anything else. But then they had the Jewish community over there already. We stayed over there, we stayed in Czechoslovakia for maybe a month, and then I decided we can't stay here either and I went back with Regina to the American zone in Germany and I came to the D.P. camp in _____ which was established at this time. We were one of almost the first ones over there and I worked in that office too. I worked for the United Nations Relief Organization. I worked for the Joint Distribution Committee. And the Joint Distribution made our wedding over there. We got married over there. The wedding was in Munich, took us to Munich. Then Regina got sick. Something was wrong and they took her to the hospital and they gave her some medicine which didn't agree with her and she developed some kind of a blood -- something was wrong with her blood and a fellow came in from the C.I.A, and American, by the name of Doctor Aaron Mayer, asked what can I do for you. She said I don't need anything, the only thing she says I know I have an uncle in the United States that lived in New York, but I don't know where he lives but I know his name was _____ . So, what he did, Doctor Aaron Mayer, he put an ad in the Jewish papers but the uncle didn't read the Jewish newspapers. He read the New York Times. A lady from Washington D.C. by the name o Mrs. Freedman, used to work with her mother. Her mother used to have a dress shop in Poland, and she read the _____ and she knew him from home and she called him up in New York and told him that the niece of his is alive and was looking for him. The first thing we got from him was papers to come to the United States and they were signed by J. Edgar Hoover, because J. Edgar Hoover was a friend of her uncle's. But we still couldn't come to the United States. It took us almost a year because in those days it was quarters and you just couldn't leave. So, we waited over there but her uncle also at that time send us some money but we never got it because he said it's not allowed for you to have any American money in those days, so they sent it back to the uncle. We found this out after the war. I was very friendly with that Doctor Aaron Mayer and the C.I.A. and we used to come together and meet each other while we were in Germany.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

A: We got those papers from her uncle, and it took us almost a year before we could come over here, even with the papers being in order and everything else, but we moved from _____ to _____ because we found out one of the brothers was alive and he was in the American Army. He escaped during the war. He went to England, then he got on a ship and came to the United States and jumped ship. Then he joined the American Army and became a citizen and that's how he came back to Europe. Then when we found out he was in _____ Regina says we might as well move to _____ so we can be closer to her brother. We stayed over there until we came over to the United States. Let me tell you something about _____. When we came to _____, we were one of the first ones to come to the D.P. camp. There were a lot of other nationalities over there, but they all had a home to go back to. They had relatives, but the Jews didn't have any place to go back especially in Poland. There homes were destroyed. No family left, and there was no place for them to go back and live. Even at the border, the ones that came back and _____ started, they found out there's no place for them to live. They had to come back. They have to go back and it was a lucky thing that we have to thank President Eisenhower for opening up the borders and letting the Jews from Poland come back in to West Germany. Also, a lot of the people that were in Russia somewhere else that they escaped didn't have any place to go and they came to the D.P. camps in Germany. We stayed over there. In the beginning the place was almost like a Ghetto too. We were closed in the camps. They had soldiers outside watching us. We couldn't go out. We didn't have freedom to move. So, finally, President Eisenhower gave an order to take the guards off that we can go free around and move to the towns that we want to so we could walk a little bit more out and everybody started to find out. Most of us wanted to go to Palestine in those days, but Palestine was not a state and they couldn't take us. So, they had the ax of the ship that they got, they took some of them in, but the rest of them we had to stay over there, especially if you were married and you already have somebody those were the worst ones that they wanted to take out in those days. They took out only the small children that were left. They figured that's the most important to get them out from Europe. The food in the camps was not too bad, but they gave us rations but you know they said we'll give you 1,300 calories but it depends what kind of food they give us, the calories. It wasn't food that the people were used to it. So, President Eisenhower changed those things too. Then we started helping ourselves a little bit, and started working a little bit and people started to find out where there families are so they can leave because none of us wanted to stay in the D.P. camps, but we didn't have a place where to go. The United States wouldn't let us in in those days. Canada wouldn't let us in. Australia wouldn't let us in. Go back to Poland, the Polish Jewish couldn't go back to Poland any more. I was over there already back one time and I had to escape. So, we had problems for quite a while. It's hard to understand what was going on over there. With all those things, unless you're over there yourself you witness it, because it's impossible to tell what was going on in the concentration camps or even the slave labor camps or even the D.P. camps. We still didn't have enough freedom in the D.P. camps until the end because we were still controlled by the Americans what

we can do and what we cannot do. President Eisenhower was a big help, and he really did a lot for the D.P. camps, quite a lot.

Q: Was it your sense that _____ was well organized and well run and that people's needs were basically taken care of?

A: Not in the beginning when I got in over the first time, but later on it improved, because I worked in the office. I worked for the _____ and I was taking care of the registration. People that came in over there and then the _____ was getting some food out already for the people and they found out exactly what they need and what they want. We had a kitchen. At least we had enough to fill our stomachs. We didn't have to wait until -- you still had to have cards to go and get your food, like coupons. But we already had enough. They set up a school. If there were any children that came in, they could go to school, and we organized our own theaters and clubs so we can come together and we can talk about. If a family was left, they found out if you were in one camp, they could transfer from one camp to another camp so they can be with the family together. It was a big improvement. We were free at least. We knew what was freedom. I'm going to tell you about the food incident so you'll know what the difference was when we finally got our papers to go to _____ and come to the United States. When we came on the ship, the first thing we asked the fellows, the Americans, says when we get our coupons to get food, because we always used all those years to get coupons to get food. He says, don't worry, you're going to get enough to eat, but we couldn't believe it. I remember the first dinner we had when the ship went out. We were all sitting around the tables, and we saw all the bread and all the stuff on the table, everybody filled their packets up because we couldn't believe that there's so much, that there's food enough, that you can eat as much as your heart desires. We had even a couple, an elder couple that passed away on the ship because they ate too much of the food that they shouldn't have eaten. Even I remember myself after the first meal I couldn't eat for maybe three days. I got sick, because we couldn't understand that there's so much food and here we were going around hungry. Even the D.P. camps, we had enough food but we didn't have the food just satisfy yourself what you wanted to eat. You eat what they give you. They gave you some soup. You had to go to the kitchen. You didn't cook yourself. You didn't have any facilities to cook. But things were much better in the D.P. camps than in the camps -- I'm not talking about Auschwitz. Auschwitz was just unbelievable. It's hard to describe. I remember when I lived through and I came home and I told some people what I went through. At first I couldn't talk about it. It took a long time until I could tell anybody what I went through, but the people couldn't believe this. They couldn't believe that something like this happened, which I and Regina were just invited to the British Embassy to watch a film and also to the Canadian Embassy to watch a film about the survivors, the American and the Canadian, that were shot down over Germany. A lot of them instead of putting them in P.O.W. camps, they put them in Buchenwald and other camps. There were a couple of survivors, one American, one Canadian and one British and I talked to them and they told me they came home and they told their parents what they went through in Buchenwald and their parents told them you're just telling stories.

That is impossible. This could not happen. Finally now, they tape them in order to have their stories what they went through and lot of them are already very old. One of them told me that Walsh was his name he said his father couldn't even come because he had a stroke. He wanted to come to the gathering that they had about the film, but he couldn't come to it any more. So, his son was over there representing him. Those other things that happened, not only the Jews, even the other nationals, the Gentile people that were over there, the Americans and the English, even when they told their stories nobody would believe them when they told them what was going on in those camps.

Q: In the beginning when you were in _____ and people from a lot of other countries, did you mix with them or did the Jews kind of stick with themselves?

A: A lot of Ukrainians over there and we didn't feel very comfortable with them because they were in charge with our camps, of our labor camps and they all had to leave in order for us to get over there. We couldn't stay with them together. Because people don't realize but they were our enemies not our friends. They used to say they were in camps in Germany, but we know what kind of camps they went into.

Q: So, how did all of that work out?

A: It worked that they had to ship them somewhere else. They had a home to go back to but they didn't want to go home. They were afraid to go home because they were collaborators with the Germans.

Q: But initially at _____, they put you all together?

A: That's right.

Q: What else can you tell me about _____. Did people work there? Did you live in barracks? Did you live in apartments?

A: In _____ we had little houses like semi detached homes and usually you lived so many people in a home. In one house, for instance we had a little house and most of our relatives from out of town that came to our town lived with us in the same house, but we already had for instance we had separate rooms. Two people slept in a room, or three people slept in a room, because when we were in the Ghetto, we were a family of I had three sisters, a brother, myself and my parents, we all had only one room, and the room wasn't too big. I don't know if the room was ten feet by fifteen feet. We all slept in one room. Some people had it even worse. It was more crowded even. We already, we figured we're lucky. The whole family stays together in one room. Some of them they put different families together because it was very crowded. They didn't have any place for them. The Germans didn't care. They brought them in, you find a place for them where to go.

Q: Did people work at the D.P camps? I know you did.

A: Yes, a lot of them worked too. They worked for the _____ Joint Distribution Committee but as far as other jobs like working in trades or something, but the _____ came in and the _____ put up some schools to teach the people trades. That was a very, very big help because a lot of them don't like -- fix typewriters and other stuff and they came over here to the United States and somewhere else and that's the business that they went into. That's what they started doing here.

Q: What about religion? Did that start coming back to people? To you?

A: To me it took a long time to come back, but to a lot of people that were very religious and they had religion going on. They didn't have those big temples like they have here, but they had little rooms that they got together, but they celebrated either Passover or Rosh Hoshana, Yom Kippur. We celebrated those holidays. There were some that didn't want to celebrate and you had some that were very religious and some were not so religious.

Q: What about you and religion?

A: Myself? When I came back to Poland and I saw what was left from the whole family, for a while I thought why be Jewish. If God could have been around to watch over us the things that were going on and not say anything, maybe there's nobody around here. Finally you know I'll get away from it. I don't look so Jewish. I was born here. I'll get away from it. There's not too many Jews, but after the pogroms started again, I figured I cannot do those things, because if I'm going to marry somebody and my kids are grown up, they might do the same thing what the people are doing right now here. My religion is still better. I don't have to be very, very religious but it's still better than any other religion that sided against it.

Q: What do you think sustained you through all of these years? Why do you think you got through it?

A: Not that I was smarter than anybody else. A lot had to do with luck where you were, and what you were doing at a certain time. A lot of times, even now, I think why me why nobody else from my family except me. I can't answer that question. What kept us together was because we were young, very, very young. The older people that had more experiences and more knowledge about life, a lot of them committed suicide or they couldn't put up with it. But we young ones, we kept each other going. Life was just starting for us, and we figured that this has to come to an end. We knew that a war does not go on forever. And we also promised each other that somebody has to stay alive to tell what was going on in that hell, what was really going on in those camps and every where else. Who else is going to tell them, because now the youngest one already is my age and in another short time, there's very few of us going to be left, especially witnesses that were over there. It's going to be history and history doesn't change around. They

already deny it. You have a lot of revisionists that say that the Holocaust did not happen. So, we feel, because we never talked about those things, but we feel that now that we have to talk about them in order to make people and especially the kids that those are the things that really happened. For instance last year I and Regina went with a group of kids, Jewish kids from all over the world. We went on the March of _____. We went to Poland. We took them to the concentration camps. Then we went to Israel. It's amazing what that did to the kids. At least they know they talked to some of them that were really there and showed them the places and what was going on in those concentration camps. Because just talking to somebody about it, it doesn't bring out as much as you can really go to the place and witness and see what has been going on over there. A lot of those kids, that knew very little about Judaism have changed quite a lot.

Q: Over the last 50 years, I'm sure there are certain images that come back to you a lot. Can you talk about any of them?

A: Those images come back to me all the time. There's plenty of nights that I talk to people about them. I usually don't talk about those things during the day, and I told I have to be busy in order to forget those things, but I wake up in the middle of the night still seeing all those monstrosities and everything else. I can't talk about them a lot of times, but I can see them and I feel them. I wake up in a sweat and it's very hard for me to get back to sleep. If we get together with our friends that went through, that's all we talk about. We can't talk about anything else. Thank God we have three children. We have seven grandchildren and I ask my kids, I said when you were younger when they were very little and they saw my number when they were two years, two and half, they asked me what is that number I used to tell them some bad people did it to me. But later on they never asked us any questions because they realized they heard us talk to our friends all the time, and they knew that something very bad happened to us during that time. Even now, they tell us that's why we didn't want to ask you about it. We knew what you went through but we didn't want to ask you about it. Even now, after 50 years, it's very, very hard to talk about it. But then we figured we have to establish a new life when we came over here. We worked very hard. I worked seven days a week, 20 hours, as many hours as it took in order to build up what I did, and thank God it's a wonderful country. I wouldn't like to live anywhere else, and I appreciate everything that the United States did for me. And I'm paying taxes every year too, and I don't mind. They've been very good to me here and since I came to the United States, I've worked mostly for the government. I did a lot of work -- I have clearance with the F.B.I., with the C.I.A., and I never forget when I came over to this country and I worked at _____ and I worked at the _____ and in the middle of the day, one of the soldiers came over and took me up to _____ and I got very scared. I thought I was in Germany again. They were going to send me away somewhere else, and I found out the reason I was taken off of the job was because I didn't have my citizenship papers. I was not a citizen and it was a job in those days _____ was very secret and that I can't work over there because I wasn't a citizen, but the minute I got my citizen papers, I established back my credentials and I did not have a problem. Work mostly on the ladder. I even did the

_____ in the White House when Nixon was making the tapes. We worked around the clock for 24 hours in order to get the air conditioning and ventilation in the basement. I'm thankful for everything. I have a very nice family and I hope that we stay well that I can do more what I want to do to help other people which is very, very important.

Q: Is there anything else you want to add about those years?

A: I don't want to go through the monstrosities to tell you what's going on too much. I get very, you know, I'm but if you have any special questions you want to ask me that you want me to say about I'll be glad to answer.

Q: You have to appreciate that someone, sometime might look at this tape and say monstrosities, maybe they're going to want to know more what that means?

A: The only thing I can say that not all people are bad. They are some good people with the bad ones too. Even there were in concentration camps, and I worked with a German that was running the factory. It's true that he lost three sons in the war and he didn't like Hitler too much either, but he always every day, he knew what was going on, brought something in, like an apple sometime, a little piece of bread, but he told me don't take it until I go out from here, because if they catch me I'll be in trouble, and he put it away at a certain place and then I left, before I left I used to go out and get it and I used to come home, you know, back to the barracks, I used to share it with my friends. The fellow when were in _____ the fellow that was in charge of our barrack was a German by the name of Walter, and I found out that he killed his parents and they put him in jail and then they put him in charge of us. I also found out later that it was a homosexual which I didn't even know what a homosexual really was when I was in camp in those days, but he also had a girlfriend in the factory and he spoke German and she spoke only Polish and when he found out he took me to carry the letters from the factory back to camp from him to her because he couldn't go out from camp. We went to work, but he stayed over the whole day and took care of it, so usually when I came home at night he had this special soup for me which I shared with my friends and this means almost difference between life and death, this soup. And also, in the winter time it was very cold over there, but because we worked in the train factory an the trains were running on coal, so we made up that each man that came back took a little piece of coal and put it in his pocket, very little piece, maybe a centimeter and half by centimeter and half, and when we came back to the barracks, we had a little bellie stove, a little iron stove and the fellow that was running, that Walter, the German that was running the camp didn't mind and everybody threw the little piece of coal in that little stove and we had it a little bit warmer at night. We were one of the lucky ones maybe. You had to help yourself a little. You couldn't take too much of that coal back, but a little piece, nobody noticed when you went through the gate and coming in with it and that's how we kept warm at night in the camp. I imagine that we're also lucky that they took us _____ instead of being in Auschwitz, because in Auschwitz you couldn't survive. The people that maybe

survived there because usually they came in they picked them to do certain jobs, to take the clothes away when we came off they took the clothes away from the people then they sorted the clothes, then they took the people, you know. If you were picked to do a job you couldn't help it. You took the people from the gas chambers and put them in the crematoriums and it was people like us. You know, they picked them out and that's what you did. So, they use you as long as you could do it and if you got tired of doing it, they put you in the crematorium and picked somebody else to do it. So, it wasn't something like just -- in the camp that I was in _____ they used to hang people every Sunday and everybody that did something bad, they used to hang them on Sunday. They used to pick up people from the rolls after they stayed on that appeal in the morning and we used to hang them. They didn't do it themselves. Used to go out and put the thing on their neck, but you couldn't help it. Luckily I wasn't picked, but maybe if I would be picked I would have to do the same thing. It was one of those things. Another thing in those camps, in Auschwitz Sunday when we didn't go to work even if it was cold, we had to stay outside the hole day. They wouldn't let us go into the barracks and sit inside because we were going to make it dirty. The floors are going to be dirty. We had to make our bed as much as we could every morning and then you were sick you were afraid to go to the infirmary because you knew what was going to happen to you. I'll never forget I cut myself once in my arm here, right here, and I was afraid to go, and I don't know what I did but I put a piece of rope on one side and on the other side and it just healed up and I used to go to work, and I used to be sick. I used to get a sore throat and a fever. I used to go to work. I never stayed in the barracks. I figured if I stay I know what's going to happen to me, so this way I just went through and when we went home, walking, we used to hold tight, used to hold each other in to the ends and my friends if I couldn't go my friends were dragging me in until we got in there. I used to take my friends until we got back to camp, and that's how I survived. We helped each other. If not we wouldn't be here. Even when I escaped, I'll never forget I can't even remember they said I was in the woods it was so bad, but we survived somehow. It's amazing what a human being can stand when it happens. There was no place for us to escape because there was no body that helped a Jew on the outside. Maybe in another country. Maybe in Holland or Belgium or France but not in Poland because most of the crematoriums were built in Poland. Even from the countries, they brought them into Poland, like Birkenau, Auschwitz, Maidonek. Maidonek, is a camp that still the Germans didn't have time to destroy it and it's still, they can start up a ration over there in two days if they had to. The crematoriums and everything is over there. That's why I took the march of the living kids who went to Maidonek. It's not only the Jews that got killed during the war. A lot of the Russian prisoners. When I was in _____ there was a camp of Russian prisoners that they brought in. There was an American prison camp too. They put them on the outside with a fence around it, didn't feed them. They used to eat the grass from the ground. They never put them to work, and they all died out, then they took them to the crematoriums. So _____ with us with the Jews, he just wanted to get rid of all the Jews. You know in a war that you're going to have people that are going to get killed, but the Jews were all together different. He just wanted to get rid of all of them. Take a whole nation and get rid of them. From what I understand in a lot of those camps,

I have an American that was in the camp _____ and I worked with him after the war and he remembered me always used to have a lot of talks with me. He used to come over to me and tell me what was going on. He said, Sam, there are a lot of people that may not believe you, but I know what you went through, because he was there himself.

Q: Thank you.

End of Tape #2
Conclusion of Interview