Interview with William Lowenberg

[Date not labeled on audio tape]

Question: Would you tell me about the ring that you're wearing?

Answer: This or this one?

Q: This one.

A: Oh, this is a Masonic ring, I'm a Mason. _____.

Q: And what led you to the Masons?

A: Oh, the man I worked for, he was active in the Masons, some other people in office and it was in 1950, I forgot it was, no, I think after the _____ in '55, San Francisco had a very strong element of Jews who were involved in the Masonic work. There were two Jewish lodges here. _____, almost all Jewish and it's, now, now _____ has changed, that life has changed in America, in the so-called fraternal orders. Some are still around, but the, the Masonic orders are _____ because our lodge, they've merged with four or five others by now and I'm not active at all. And then I went, from the Masons you go to the Scottish _____, you go to the Shriners, so, that was always nice, you had a circus once a year. But it took care of the children, you know, the Shriner's, Shriner's hospital. So it intrigued me cause I met a lot of wonderful people through that. It was entry for me also in the community, which I didn't have, I had no relatives here, made some friends, but, and I didn't want to just only live in the Jewish community alone, so this was a broader segment of the community and I still have friends today from, from those days. That, that was, was fun. Went there once, I think every week or every other week, I forgot now. Didn't do anything there except talk, except play some cards and listen to lectures. Taught me a little about America. _____and I couldn't go to school, I went to school the first year, at night, four nights a week. Little over a year, about almost two years actually, til I learn how to speak English.

Q: Before you go there, let me do two things. Will you begin by introducing yourself?

A: My name is William J. Lowenberg. Born August 14, 1926.

Q: And where are we today?

A: We're in San Francisco at 44 Montgomery, in my office.

Q: And your office, describe please the work you do and where we are.

A: Well, I'm in real estate development, mostly industrial, almost all industrial, some commercial. And I've been in this business since I came to San Francisco in 1950, January 1950.

Q: Let's begin if you would with your liberation from the camps.

A: If we, if we start with the liberation was, I was liberated on August, on April, pardon me, on April 30th, 1945, in Dachau, actually in the side camp of _____. And because the side camp where most of the Jews were. Dachau had at that time, mostly Christians, political prisoners. And the Jewish prisoners, who had come from all part of, of Europe, mostly eastern Europe, they were sent into the side camps and we were in the area of Landsberg and Kahlfring(ph) etcetera, in _____ we were building underground munitions factories for the Germans and for the V2, they were being built right outside, in those areas and there were _____ satellite camps, I don't know how many, but quite a few, I was in one of them. We came there from, from Warsaw. I was in Warsaw and yes, _____ the uprising, from Birkenau, Warsaw, Dachau. And on April 30th, we were in, well on April 24th, or 20, 20, somewheres the week before, 10 days before, we were in one of those satellite camps and we were marched out. And, I don't know if it's in the previous tape, we were marched out and we marched for several days and we were told at that point, after we were halfway through, one night there'd be, the Germans told us this, had instructions that the war is over and he have to take all these prisoners to Switzerland and the Red Cross has taken over and Red Cross was taking us all to Switzerland. In retrospect, was a lie, that was only to keep us calmed down and to make us subdued and they could handle us, so, but they marched us two more days and we were back, we were behind the wire in Dachau. So that was the easiest way to keep us together, not to have us escape. Anyhow the, the American army liberated us early in the morning and this morning, interestingly enough, I got a picture from a man whom I met a year ago. His, he lives in Mill Valley, across the Golden Gate bridge. He was one of the soldiers that liberated the camp that I was liberated, that morning and by pure accident, the reason we found each other, we gave, we honored liberators last year as a Yah Meshua(ph), 50th anniversary and we, our staff had a Jewish, a _____ , send off ads and letters and they found 120 liberators in this area, up and down the coast, almost close to Los Angeles and into Oregon. One of these men, during the dinner, that night we gave a dinner for, I was the chairman of it and during the dinner, he said to me, he saw the picture, that famous picture being, which was being used in, for all these years at, at the museum, our museum, he says, "That is not Dachau." It's a picture that you have seen on the, _____ Dachau liberation. It really was

Allach(ph). He said, "That's Allach." I said, "How do you know?" He said, "Because I know it as Allach." So he twist it back and by God we met again, surely I said and he, he showed me, "It is Allach(ph), I can tell you." And it was Allach(ph). So I have the picture here, so I'm in the picture. And since then he, well he's very active in the 42nd division, the Rainbow division, which is the division we were liberated, who liberated Dachau and our camp and this morning, I lunched with about two weeks ago, three weeks ago and this morning he sent me a picture, which I want to give to the, to the museum in Washington, I don't know if they have this, it's a picture of the American soldiers killing quite a few of the Germans. They lined them up, they lined them up on the wall and they killed them, until an American general came there and saw this happening and he went almost berserk, this general, I'm going to meet with him in a very, very, in the next couple of months, he's still alive. He was so upset that they did this, he kicked, the machine gun, he kicked the soldier and stopped them using the machine gun. And they had killed about 17 of the guards and maybe more. He _____ me that again this morning with the pictures. And I didn't, I realized that I saw that happen, but that came back only today to me. Anyhow, we were liberated and with my luck, a Dutch Red Cross came immediately., for some reason there was a connection about, there were several hundred Dutch Christians in Dachau and other who were, who were political prisoners, saboteurs to, to political, _____ whoever, if they got you, if you're not with them, as you well know. And this appear from the Dutch underground and others and the Dutch Red Cross came immediately, within 10 days, two weeks, to, to the camp, with trucks, Prince Bernardi(ph), then husband of the then Princess, who's now, who's now the Queen Mother already, Juliana's husband, came with them. And they picked us up and they drove us all the way from Dachau back to Holland on those trucks, took about six, five, six days, the bridges were out, you know and _____ stuff. I remember we stopped in Frankfurt for some reason and _____, Iggy Farben(ph) factory, which was a big cafeteria _____ and they kept us there for one or two nights, one night and we went back to Holland and at the border, we, we were asked where we were from and I was not a Dutch citizen, I had no documentation, all I could say, I was from _____. But I'd only, I'd only lived there since I was 10 years old, we came there 1936, we went over the border from Germany into Holland, only about 25 miles. Wasn't far enough obviously because they killed all my family. And the Red Cross took me back to Holland, to, to, to Berculo(ph) from the, from the, that, there was a town on the border, Savina(ph), where they, it was kind of an army, army town and that's where they held them for a day or two and, and assigned us where we wanted to go. And we were, I was in a, in a, in a pair of black pants, which were some pants I'd taken off a soldier, an SS I'd killed and a toothbrush from the same SS man I'd killed. And the, and the shirts. We had no clothes except the striped things, which

we couldn't get out fast enough and they were very filthy. So I was in some beat up German's uniform. And then they gave us other clothes at the border and as much _____, that's because Holland was in very bad shape in 1945, the Germans had plundered it. And they took me back to my, what I call my hometown and they took me to the city hall, there was no place for me to go. The house was occupied that we lived in, it was occupied by people, I had no idea who they were. And...

Q: You remembered the town, was it still familiar to you?

A: Oh sure, oh I went to school there, oh sure, went to school there, I mean like my father had a business there, my father had a textile store there. And there were, there had been 42 Jewish families and it was known in Holland as the most religious Jewish town. Religious meaning what we call Conservative here. Everybody _____ on Shabbat, everybody eat kosher, nobody smoked on Shabbat and nobody drove his bicycle or car on Shabbat. Very traditional, went to Temple three times a day on Shabbat and during the week twice a day. And everybody had their different businesses, from cattle dealers to butchers to textile to scrap, you know, typical Jewish trades. And we had a, a rabbi and we had a mikba(ph) of course. And there was a wonderful Jewish life there before the war, literary things, my father was quite active in the community and so was my mother and they, but there was no one left when I came there, except the mayor says yeah, there's somebody came back that was hidden and was a man by the name of Mayer(ph) and his children were all, all killed, so was his wife, he survived and was hidden in some farmhouse. And another couple survived, there were no children. And then, they didn't, they couldn't handle me because they had no place to live themselves, they lived somewheres in, I forgot where they _____, weren't back in their homes yet. And our neighbor, Catholic, was a Catholic town, to some extent, maybe 50-50 and our neighbor came over, they heard about this, a small town, there was 7,000 people and they said, "He's staying with us," so I lived with our neighbors. They _____ , they had a room in the back, near the stables, _____ people have the cows in the, in the winter they stayed, not in the house, but in the back of the house there's stables. So I slept there and they made a bed for me and I stayed with my neighbors, I couldn't, I wouldn't eat pork things, so I usually potatoes and breads and salads, but I couldn't, I did not eat the, the pork products. Which, that was the only thing they had in meat in those days, because they had their own, they raise their own pigs. And I stayed with them for, and the mayor of the town knew my parents quite well, gave me a job in the city hall, to work some clerk, was awful, pencil pushing, you know, whatever that's called and but I had a job because I had no money.

Q: How old were you at this point?

A: I was 18. In April I was, in April '45, I was not 19 yet, I was 18. And it was very strange because number one, there was no one left, a few here stray people, Jews, were hidden. No one came back from the camps, I was the only one there who had come back from the camps. And there were Jews in those towns in Holland, every town had Jews and, and they had wonderful lives there. We, we never knew about anti-Semitism. We knew it from Germany, my family and I did, but native Dutch Jews did not know about anti-Semitism, it didn't exist, as far as I remember. And since I was, I was not a Dutch citizen because we were stateless, til Hitler made the Nuremberg laws, said we are stateless, I never became a Dutch citizen, _____ first I was citizen was when I came to this country, became American in 1954. Anyhow, so I stayed with the neighbors, then about a month or two and I found my uncles. My mother had two brothers who were in the camps and I found them in a camp in Holland, in Westerbork. And I went there...

Q: How did you go about finding them?

A: By word of mouth.

Q: Was that common, was that going on around you?

A: Yeah, there were, you know, people made phone calls, people knew my uncles for some reason. I knew that they were in Westerbork when I went to Auschwitz. They stayed there. But I didn't know it because the _____ that my parents were there, two of my sisters, they went to Auschwitz, my uncles allegedly stayed with _____ , I didn't know that, but they did stay and they, I don't know how I found them, I don't know how they found me, but we found each other. I forgot who told us how it was done. And then, but they couldn't come to the _____ to Berculo(ph), _____, there was no place I could, I could put them. So finally they came anyhow. But before that, let me step back a bit. After maybe a month or two, after I came back, I'm called to this, to the mayor's office, in the town and he says, "You know, your grandmother's here." My mother's mother, who had lived with us, cause she also came over the border from Germany, she was a widow, and she had lived with us for, from 30, from Kristallnacht on. Was also shipped to, to Westerbork and wound up too, in Theresienstadt. And she survived. So they brought her back and they put her in a Red Cross van and they, she remembered Berculo(ph), the name, so that the Red Cross, I don't know how she, _____ she got in. _____ I think it was about the same _____, I came in from over the border. They flew her back by plane and she's sitting in the middle of town and the town's all have a square, you know, with a church in the middle. There is this Red Cross van with my grandmother in it.

Q: Alone? Were there others with her?

A: No, just herself, no one else. And said, "You have to take your grandmother _____ ." So I had no place to put her. So was this one Jewish family who were colleagues of my parents, competitors really but, you know, same business. And we weren't close to them, but we knew each other quite well because the Temple and the Shul. He, they said, bring her in. They had gotten their house back. So they took her in, just took her in _____. They also took in the three children of the rabbi, who were found by Christian, they were hidden by, in, by Christian families, they took the three, three children in, they were found. The parents were killed, the rabbi and his wife were killed, but they found the three children, how, I can, I cannot tell you how they found them. They were hidden in farmhouses, some as far away as 50 miles. So they all of a sudden had a big family and so my grandmother stayed there. And then my uncle's got out of the camp and they had no place to live, so they went, came to town, they _____ . The only place which had almost a _____. So my two uncles, they were still single in those days, and they were born, they were at that point in their 40's already, because the war, in '38, it came over the border in '38 from Germany and they were single. They were born in 1901 and 1902, somewhere in those years, they were two years apart. And we put them in the mikba(ph), that's where they lived. No money, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing. And they had been quite well off in Germany, they were people of great means, my mother's side. And so I was working and my uncles were cattle dealers and I think I should have it in the story that gives you an, I think I take great credit for that. The farmers, one day I got a call, I mean not by phone, but they found me and about four farmers came, they said, "Look, we, your father always sold us textiles. We liked your parents very much, they were so good to us. Needed credit, got credit, we didn't have money..." That's how my, my mother was always active in this kind of work. "And we have decided that we took a piece of land, _____ and we bought 12 cows in the pasture and here they are for your uncles. Now, my uncles had never lived there, they had never lived there, they knew my mother. And they said, "Here they are, you go and trade with them and when you make money, you pay us back." Well my uncles took that of course, it was very, very emotional. They did and they became extremely successful cattle dealers, to a point that there was another two men, two Jewish men who also had survived, who were friend, old friends of theirs and the four of them, they were the largest exporters of cattle to Israel. They had boatloads going out of Rotterdam every three months. And they developed in Israel, the dairy industry. They, they supplied the Israeli's with the dairy cows, which came from Holland, you know the black and whites? The Holsteins? And they were experts, my uncles and their two friends. So my uncles became quite successful again, in their businesses.

Q: Let me back up and ask...

A: Am I giving you too much?

Q: No, I think you're doing exactly perfectly. I want to do a test on this. It's so fascinating, where to even begin. I want to, two things I want to ask you, first of all, how did you feel, tell me how you felt as, I'm going to try and stay chronological, the photograph, let's start with the photograph.

A: The photograph.

Q: At Dachau, which...

A: The one I _____?

Q: ...the one, the one, no the one that's in the museum, that is not really at Dachau and where you're in the picture. Tell me what you, tell me what you remember about that photograph being taken.

A: Okay, let me tell you about the liberation. When, we were liberated early in the morning, saw the tanks coming over the, over the hill. And we had to scream to the soldier, the American soldier because the wires were all high tension wire and they had to bring in the engineers first. The next day or so, or maybe a day, within this, there were about half a dozen of us, we could still walk, we were in fairly good shape. We moved out of the camp immediately and moved into one of the SS barracks. Why, I don't know and I was the youngest of the whole gang, there was one other kid from Paris was younger. And, and we decided we, because the Americans immediately closed the camp, it was full of Typhoid, there was Typhoid and you name it, all the diseases, so we didn't want to be behind the wires because it took, they couldn't get out any more. They were, they were liberated and they were still back, they went back in the concentration camp. The first troops were very good, but the second troops they, very protective of the surrounding Germans, for whatever reason. _____. And we went, I remember, the only time I went to, to town of Dachau, we went in the town and we took a pushcart and we cleaned out one house with clothes and with food. And what I remember...

Q: How did you go about doing that, where were the people that lived there?

A: There were people, we just picked a house, I remember, it was _____ house and we went in and took as much clothes as we needed and, four of us, because we had found next to us in the camp, another small camp with about 40 some odd women, young girls, Jewish women, who were from Lithuania and from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. All eastern, eastern Europeans. And we bought things back for them, they were in terrible, terrible shape, those girls. And we took _____ , one of the Germans in the house _____ tried to get fancy with us. Well, we didn't kill him, but

we put him in a corner, we took care of him that he didn't, he couldn't fight us any longer.

Q: What do you mean?

A: Well we, we beat him up. Because he was, he called us, he was nasty, he wasn't, we did what we shouldn't have done, but we did it because at that time it was allowable. In my opinion it still it. They, but I've told this many times, I'm very proud of one thing. That in as much as the Jews were liberated, us, be it anger beyond any measure, we had seen killings hourly, not daily, hourly, morning til night, over a period of years. I don't know one Jew, one Jew who killed a German. I'm not talking about soldiers, SS, but not a German civilian, which no one appreciates, the Germans never appreciated that. But the Jews that were left out of the camp and I've checked this with other friends, so-called colleagues, that when they came out of the camps they did not kill German civilians. That gives me the pride as a Jew and as a human being, of that we were still civilized after having lived in the mud and the murders and the gas chambers, etcetera, our Jews were still, still civilized. And that gives me, and that always will give me great deal of pride.

Q: Why do you think you yourself were able to hold on to that dignity?

A: We weren't brought up like, look, the people I know _____ my families and the town I lived in and other towns I used to visit, we were brought up in a, in a, in a civilization which we didn't, we had never seen this kind of thing _____ , no one had. But the Germans and Goldhargen(ph) says it very clearly in his book, in as much they didn't, they weren't racist murderers, but they let it happen. So, and it was consent, the consent of the Germans, the consent of the Dutch, the consent of all the Europeans, the entire Christian world. And I will maintain, as long as I live and I said it in my own, my own book too, that when history will be written, I hope that some of these stories, writers will say, that during a Christian era, six million Jews were killed. It wasn't a Arab era, it wasn't a Chinese era, it wasn't a Buddhist era, it was an era in time, in Europe which was a Christian world, Catholics and Protestants and that's when they killed six million Jews. They can't hide, they can't walk away from that. It wasn't done by people who weren't religious. The majority of the people, I would say the majority were church going people. I know in my town they were. I went to Catholic school.

Q: Do you, have you over the years developed a thought of why?

A: Why? Why? Because there was deep down anti-Semitism. I mean go, you go back in history, the Jews in Europe, they were only permitted to come to towns, they were invited, if they were invited. _____ Jewish

communities there, before the Inquisition and after. And I found gray stone, which we can go in later, gray stone rubbing in the town I was born, going back to 1530, of my families names. So I lived there longer than some of the other, non-Jews. Some have lived there too that long, but, but why did the Christians do this? I don't know, that, that's something, I'm not a psychologist, but I, it happened, it's there and they can't get away from this. It happened during a Christian world, in a Christian world. So, enough of that, I'm, I'm, because there's, there's nothing you can add to this. I'm not angry about it, I, I, that, that, my feeling has stopped then, because that is, would be counter-productive, I don't say that, I don't think I ever said it to a Christian because they wouldn't understand. I'm talking about American Christians now, _____ with my friends. I couldn't say that to them, they understand it maybe, without me telling them.

Q: I'm struck by that moment that one day in April, you're in the camps, behind the wires and the next day you're sleeping in the barracks of the guards, the men who guarded you.

A: Well, we weren't sleeping so much. The feeling, how did you feel? Well, I said earlier, when we were told that the Germans told us on a march from the outlying camps back to Dachau that we were free. One of my best friends at that time in the camp was a Jew from, from Antwerp, Belgium and we never cried in the camps, I never cried when I heard that my parents were killed, that someone _____ the gas chamber, I couldn't cry. I didn't cry then, but my friend cried and I cried almost, when we thought we were free. But the shock, the variation of shocks and remember I was arrested in 1942, so I wasn't even 16 years old yet, i was 15 year old. My sister was not even 12, not even 13 she was, well 1928. We were so numb, we were almost, the shock hypnotized us, I believe and for that matter, I'm slowly getting out of hypnosis right now, in 1996, even now, today...[end of side 1 of tape 1]

Q: So let's go back and talk about that photograph.

A: Well all I know, that the, that the American army came in and we were standing on a bridge, on a tower, on the stairs of the watch tower and I remember, I remembered all these years that they took a picture. And I also remember that the American army put me in a room, I'm sure they did it with others also and I was interviewed and I remember a soldier sitting there and typing, typing for hours and hours to interview me. And I can't find, I would love to find that interview. Some person took, archives of the United States Army, where I don't know. I have to make time one of these days to find it. I don't know how to find it. I know it's there, I don't know what division it would be in. Could be a 42nd, I doubt it.

Q: Try and remember some of the questions he was asking you?

A: I have no idea, probably the same like you're asking me, how did you feel and what happened and I would like to hear myself or read what I said then, because we were numb, because the night of the liberation, went through a bombardment. The Germans had taken the anti-aircraft batteries and bombarded the camp. They killed hundreds of them that night. 29th or the night of the, the night of the, no, the 29th rather. And they took the aircraft batteries, the guns, instead of shooting where they shot those airplanes, they shot them straight out. _____ and they killed quite a few of our people. Because there were probably 30,000 people there, a lot. And so, I don't remember, I do not remember how I got into the Dutch transfer, because I was the only Jew that I knew, there may have been others, who was on this Red Cross transfer back to Holland. I know that, I remember seeing Prince Bernard, that was made a deep impression on me. I don't remember who the people were I was with, they were all Christians and they were _____ I had known before, _____ in the camps with.

Q: How had they realized that you were from Holland, how was that communicated to...?

A: You know there's always the word of mouth and then, and then, what do they call, the, the grapevine or the, I don't know, I found out somewhere that the, the, the Dutch were being picked up by the Red Cross and I got myself on that, on that transport, pure accident I'm sure because I don't know, I don't know if there were other Dutch Jews with me or not, I don't think so, because I would know, I would have stayed in contact with them. There were none that I remember.

Q: Did you, for a moment when you were out of the camp, even though you'd seen your parents going to the gas chamber, seeing your family, at all had, were you at all seized with this feeling of wanting to go search for them?

A: Yes. Well I knew we had agreed to back to Berculo(ph), but I went also within months, I went to the town in Germany we were born. It was only, I got somebody to take me there.

Q: How?

A: Somebody had a car, somebody in the, in the town had a car, I don't know how he had a car, but he had a car, it was maybe six months after liberation and he took me to that town, I think I took, went by car, I don't remember, _____ , I don't remember, yet I stayed, you know, he didn't have a car, didn't, that was the second time. I went there and I stayed with our neighbors, there was one neighbor who talked to us, stayed, had some connection with us, up to as long as he could and when I went there I knocked at the door and when they saw me, I said, they asked me what are you, you know, we talked, I said, "I'm looking for my parents

and my sister and my grandfather, my grandmother." And, and, not my grandmother, she was, she had come back to Holland. My grandfather though, didn't, my father's father. And I think I stayed overnight with them, I vaguely remember and _____, but they said, "No, your parents have not been here." And that was the answer. They said, "There are no Jews left here." They told me that. I went to a synagogue and it was burned down, they burned it in '38 and it was _____ there. Now it's a parking lot, except this woman, this neighbor, she put a little statue there for the Jews and there's flowers there all the time, it's a very religious Catholic lady and I correspond with her. She came to visit us here. That was about 1993, I think, it was a visit with her, yeah. For a different reason I was in Germany with the United States army. In Holland, rather, Holland, Belgium and France. And I stopped in Germany to see my grandfather's grave and that's when I saw her for the first time again. I will not go back to Germany now, I'll never go back, they insulted me. And, and that's it, as far as Germany's concerned, _____ went there. My feelings, I don't know, I went back to Holland, I lived with this neighbors, I went dancing every night, I can tell you that. Holland was celebrating for a year, the Dutch and the, dances every other night, every night. I went to every dance.

Q: And did you dance?

A: I danced, I danced a lot, I just didn't want to think.

Q: Who were you dancing with?

A: And girl I could, was willing to dance with me, short or tall. No, I remember that distinctly because there were always dances there, there was, it's not done any more today, but after the war they danced, everybody was celebrating, celebrating, celebrating, not drinking, there wasn't, you know it's not like we, partying here, where you have to drink, the Dutch don't do that. Maybe, there wasn't even beer I think in those days. And obviously I didn't drink, then. And I went dancing a lot, a lot, dance, dance, not to think.

Q: Did it help?

A: I don't know, didn't hurt. I don't know, it must have helped because I didn't even have to force myself. That's all there was to do and you worked and there was, I mean they didn't take you, you didn't have to go to high school to do what I had to do there. I was just sitting there behind the counter and handing out the coupons for the, for the rationing. And I did this for about six, eight months. Then I decided, maybe six months, then I decided to go back in business in my father's business.

Q: Textile business?

A: Textile. I didn't have a store, so I got myself a bicycle and two suitcases and through connections my father had, that they helped, they helped me and I had also a first cousin of my mother had survived. They helped me, they gave me, got me merchandise, was very, very hard because you had to have connections and you had to have a store and I didn't have anything so I got merchandise and then I went every morning, five days a week, I went by bicycle from farmhouse to farmhouse, I was 19 years old, and to sell textiles. And then when I sold out I went back to the sources and they gave me more, they were, they always helped me, people were always very nice to me.

Q: Tell me what was in the suitcases on your bicycle, what were you, what did you have to sell?

A: I sold underwear, I sold yardage goods, mostly yardage goods so they could sew their own. Holland, woman in Holland are very talented with that and socks, shirts, yardage and I sold that. And stockings and, and whatever I made, I could buy more. I never had a store and then after about a year, in 1946, obviously I wasn't making any money and this was no future and I couldn't get the store back because some Nazis had it. And the town was, it wasn't for me. There was nothing for me to do, I was the only Jewish young person there. And I decided that point that I was going to remain a Jew, I didn't think so when I was first liberated.

Q: Just say more about that, please?

A: Well I, I, I survived, you know, I had my doubts, I had a fight with God, with myself and God about if there's a God, how can He let that happen? And we were brought up religious as I said earlier and I had some, not long, it was a very short period after the war that I thought maybe it be better to just throw up any sign of religion, just live as a human being, period. And that didn't, that didn't sit well with me after a few days because I had too much tradition in me, thinking, then I thought about my mother, she would be totally disagreeing with that and my grandmother and my grandfather, my grandparents for that matter, they would disagree with that and they wouldn't tolerate that if they were alive. And I'm thinking of back from before the war end. And I had very good education, I studied not only Tanakh, the Bible, but also the Gemara and, and the other many books, we studied every night in Holland when we were children, _____ Saturday and Sunday, the Mishna. So I had learned a lot in my short life. When I was 14 I could read Roshi(ph), the commentator on the, on the Torah and the mission, so we were highly educated in the Jewish ways. And that, that, that left something in my veins, in my blood. So I, I went back and then my uncles and my grandmother were alive, so I think I'm a Jew, I'm a Jew. That, that went by the wayside real fast, just _____ of becoming a nobody.

Q: When you were in the camps, did you pray and did you connect to God?

A: Well, yes, I always prayed, I have a short prayer that I say even now, the same prayer I said then.

Q: Will you say it?

A: It's the Shema, with a few other sentences, and...

Q: Do you, will you add that?

A: Huh?

Q: Can you say that for the tape?

A: Sure, I always say Shema, the whole Shema, the first three, four sentences and then I say a sentence at the end of a prayer, which is usually said in the, in the religious community at Temples at the end of the service and I'll give you the last line of it. And that's, that's sad, my mother taught me that when I was a child. _____ , I trust in God, I have no fear. And that helped me a lot, it even helps me today. So I pray that _____ now and at night I, I would say a prayer. And, yeah I said it a, I said it a lot when I was in the camps, but I'm not that deeply, I'm religious maybe when I'm, when you listen, like when I was saying what I'm saying now, but I'm not a, I don't feel like I have to _____. I don't eat, I don't eat pork. On the other hand I do eat shrimp and crab.

Q: Well, you live in San Francisco.

A: I live in San Francisco and where I was brought up they never, I never heard of it, so that wasn't, they never could tell me I couldn't eat it. Pork they could tell me, they taught me plenty, but crab, I never heard that word before, or lobster. We lived inland, there was no refrigeration. So I never was taught, so that, that doesn't bother me for some reason. Anyhow, the Jewishness stuck to me, thank God, it really stuck to me and it didn't go away. And I must say that there's a large majority of the survivors have maintained their Jewishness. There are very few, very few that I know, survivors and I think some of this, _____ so close to us and _____ came out of the camps, but the ones that came out of the camps that I know, they all have maintained the Jewish religion and their Jewishness. There isn't one I know who has, who really has said, "I'm now a Christian," or, "I have no religion." Which is a miracle, because I thought about it very often in the last, last year or two, even more so, that all this people I've met around the Holocaust development, the Holocaust Museum, Washington and here, survivors and, not that I'm that close to many of them, cause I don't want to be around them. I got into, I'll get into that later. I'm around them, I don't want to live

with them, for different reasons. They all have maintained their religion and look, let's face it, we know when they march into the gas chamber, we could hear the _____ and screaming, _____. The Jews kept on screaming until they died. So that, one cannot forget it, one should not forget. And so the real survivors have remained to be Jews. The majority went to Israel, they had no place to go, but still, they may not be _____, they may not _____ to fill in every morning, but they're certainly Jews.

Q: Before, I've a few questions right at the time when you were leaving the camps and going back to Holland, do you recall music that you heard at all in those week or two, once the Americans were there?

A: Music? Like what?

Q: I don't know, were people in the camps singing, were the Americans singing, was there music on a radio?

A: There was no, there was no music. There was no music, there was no singing. I don't remember, the liberation if there was any singing or music.

Q: Did you know, did you have a sense Germany was losing the war when you were in the camps, could you tell what was going on with the war?

A: We smelled something. We smelled something that there was, we saw, the reason that we heard it more was because we heard the bombings as time went on, were in the, in '40, we left, we came out of Warsaw in '44 and the reason we had to leave Warsaw, which is in the, in the _____ because the Russians poked through. And they marched us for two weeks. And you know, you might have heard that we had 3600 Jews in Warsaw. In the ghetto, this was not the ghetto _____ the ghetto, but when the fighting, so-called, stopped, the uprising, they took 300 people from Birkenau to Warsaw, to burn bodies and to dynamite the ghetto. I was one of those. Unfortunately the museum hasn't made an effort and I have to do something about it, that should be written up more, that story. Because we went to Warsaw and built a camp within the ghetto. And they build it up, they bought us all the Hungarians then, in '43, the end of '43 and in '44, June of '44, there were 3600 people alive. 300 couldn't work any more, they killed them, 300 stayed to dynamite the ghetto and they killed them and 3,000 marched out of Warsaw and 240 got out of the boxcars in Dachau. I'm one of those. The rest were killed on the road. And that's the story. We went through a river, they drowned a lot of our people, a lot. And see, I always had luck, I was always in the front column or the back column, never in the middle. And then...

Q: Do you have a theory of why you have that luck, do you have a...

A: Theory? No, you know, the theories would be a self, self fabricated theory. I happen to believe that, as much as God didn't pay much attention to us in those days, that he wanted that some of them survive because I believe that God, there is a God and it was pure luck, cause no one can tell you that they were smart enough to save themself from the Holocaust, there is no such thing. It was pure, pure luck. Be in the right place at the right time and in the, in the wrong place at the right, at the wrong time. There is no luck, there's no _____ , no knowledge, it was pure, pure luck. Look, I was the first transferred out of Holland in, in over a year they kept anyone alive. There were 3,000 people on the trains and they kept a couple hundred alive, I was one of those. The rest were all gassed _____ within hours after they got to Birkenau. First transport in over a year. Pure luck, right?

Q: Right.

A: So who can say? Pure luck, our wonderful family, it was pure luck as much as we all _____ , I'm sure. But it was luck to meet my wife in my 39 years, it was pure luck. The man who hired me also introduced me to my wife and then made me a partner. He _____. So, no it's destiny, it's who knows, who knows why anyone survives anything?

Q: I want to, before we go beyond the camps also, would you tell me about killing the SS officer?

A: Oh yes, kill him, we kill him with some stones or some two by fours, something. You know, we were angry at that point and we were hungry, we hadn't had food in days, four or five days we hadn't had food and they were bombing all night and there were people laying all over. Hundreds died the last night of the... They knew they're liberated but they died within hours or during the liberation at night, they were bombing and we didn't know whether the Americans were bombing or the Germans were bombing. We heard the, the, the, the, the, the bombers going overhead, bombing German installations. But they didn't, but the Americans and the British did not bomb the camps. They could have _____ the trains to Auschwitz, you know they talk about the famous, all those lines about why didn't they bomb the railroad tracks to Auschwitz? Well they were bombing down the streets, the chemical factories and missed them. So who knows? Their excuse was that we would have killed Jews. They were killed anyhow. And it would have saved some Jews maybe. _____, but I cannot tell you how I felt. I came to Holland, was very lonesome, we clung to each other, the few Jews. We really clung to each other and I used to travel all over the country and I had a chance, after, when I got into this textile business, if I _____ to spend the weekends through, there were always Jewish organizations coming back, where they had, _____ store, they had a dance in Amsterdam,

_____ to the major cities, where some Jews came back. And about, I think 20,000 Jews came back in Holland. Excuse me. So we found each other. And then of course, I, after, in 1946, your arm is going to get tired, let me hold that for you.

Q: No, it's okay, I just _____ .

A: In 1946, I decided that maybe that leads into _____ question, that I had to get out of my own, oh, I didn't tell you that we finally found a house. There was a house which was occupied by some Nazi in the city government, mayor, they got rid of him. Was a Jewish home, was a Jewish house, belonged to Jews from before the war. And they, they gave the house to us, to rent the house to my two uncles, my grandmother and me and my uncle, one of his closest friends, his widow, he was killed and she survived, she had no place to go either and she moved in, was our housekeeper and we were friends for many years. She didn't marry my uncle, she married a friend of another friend, my uncle married somebody else, it's another story. Wait a minute, I think she has to talk to me for a minute, my secretary, hold on. (pause) ...together, we had a house and, yeah, I can do it later.

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: ...and he says, well so and so, two sisters survived, they live in Utrecht(ph) and those two girls, one of them, was my so-called, she was destiny and so I was I, that we would marry someday, when we were children. Never happened, but we were always together, she was my same age, her name was Ruth and we found each other. She and her sister have come back from Auschwitz and they went through hell, those two girls, just like we all did, but they more so. And so then I went to visit them.

Q: Wait, now where were the girls, I'm sorry?

A: In Utrecht(ph), in Holland, in Utrecht(ph) is a major provincial town in the center of Holland. It's like Chicago here _____ the railroads, you know. And they were living with their mother's brother, who also survived and his wife, who was the daughter of a famous rabbi and she was a physician. And when I visit them, this man fascinated me no end and I, I must have done so to him, he hired me. He hired me and he said, "I want you to go to work for me." I said, "But I want to get out of this small town." So they were in the spices business, peppers, pepper and all this different and they had this business before the war, he and his brother, his brother was killed, parents were killed. And I went to work for him _____ five days a week, from town to town by train in Holland. But the condition of my hirement, I had to live with them because of a very, very religious, kosher. Now when I tell very religious, they dress like you and I, they

weren't with the black hats, this we don't, we didn't know that in Holland. This was just people who lived very religious. And did everything else, very sophisticated _____ but they very religious, which you see here too, but when we talk about religions or anything, it's all _____, which is not the case, Holland didn't have that. We never, I never heard Yiddish in my life until I went to the camp. In Holland Yiddish was not known. We didn't know, I never knew there was such a thing. We had Hebrew, we didn't understand all of it, but we studied all the time, we translated. But we never knew Yiddish, I learned it in the camps. Anyhow, so I had to live with them and since they were so religious, food was awfully abominable, because she was a terrible cook. Wonderful lady, but a terrible cook. And, and, so I lasted for one year and it was no good for me, I went and while I was there I made another contact _____ was a larger community and Jews have come back, there's a congregation there and Jewish events there, so through that you meet other people and then I went, I was at, in Amsterdam and my best friend, my lifelong friend, who, we were in the camps together and we...

Q: You had known him before the camps as well?

A: Vaguely. My sister knew him better. My mother knew him because _____ an orphanage and the, we went back to Holland together, not together, he came a little later, he stayed, I introduced him to his wife. If that's one of the girls in this 40 girls we found, she was one of them, _____ . She is like, she was like a sister to me after that. And she, she, we found her that night of the liberation, the morning after. He fell in love with her, we had an American army chaplain, a Jewish chaplain, married them, right on site there. The rush was okay, it worked out. She couldn't have children, they had done experiments on her. But she was like my sister. To a point, I can tell you when, after the war, I lived with them for, used to visit with them, I didn't live with them all the time, I used to visit, we slept on one mattress. She was in, she was in the middle and we were on each of the, she was like my sister, we were that close. They both dead now and he died very sadly. Two years ago he visited me and he had a heart attack here in New Orleans, on the way back. He had been here 15 times, lived in Rhodesia, Salisbury, in Zimbabwe(ph). I went to America and he went to Zimbabwe(ph) because his cousin gave him a big job there, lived with him before the war. Anyhow, where was I? Oh, I went from Berculo(ph) to Utrecht(ph), so I made a lot of contacts there and I had a good time. We had dating, you know. But you only dated Jewish girls, this was, you didn't, you didn't go out with non-Jews because for whatever reason.

Q: Were you ever attracted to a non-Jew?

A: Not to a point of, oh I had some relationships, but not to a point of marriage. And as a matter of fact I was going to, a girl, I was going with a girl, _____ again to Switzerland, who was half Jewish. I think one of the main reasons I didn't marry her was because her mother wasn't Jewish, her father was. _____, I was still of that kind of mind. Now my wife today is the same, her mother is not Jewish. So you change, right? I grew up a little, whatever that meant.

Q: Did you stay in contact with that woman?

A: Yes, it takes about five minutes, it's another story. You want to hear?

Q: Let me look at the tape. (pause) Okay, so there you are now in which city?

A: In Utrecht(ph), Utrecht(ph) and I didn't like the job I had with this, selling spice, it was terrible. Was nothing, there was no future there, maybe there was, but wasn't for me and I had to live with them. So I went into this, this man who knew me through my, my uncle in the meantime had married, one of my uncles _____ , got married in '46. He has a son who lives in, still in Amsterdam, we are very close. And her sister introduced me to, my uncle's wife survived, she was hidden in Holland too, _____. And I met this man by the name of Oppenheim(ph) and he says, "I hear you speak German." _____ said, "Well a little bit, but not enough." He says, "I need somebody to open my branch up again in Switzerland." And he was selling chemicals to the paint industry and he had been very successful, they were German Jews, they'd gone to Holland in the early 30's. They had branches in several countries. So he hired me to be their Swiss and Italian representative. I went to Switzerland and...

Q: Now how old are you at this point?

A: It was in 1946, I was 20 years old. Went to Switzerland to become a, and travel in Switzerland to sell paint, paint extracts or paint, oil, oil base paint to the paint industries. But was an oil _____ manufacturer, was very well, very highly respected at that, that particular item and they mixed it into the paint when they paint the exteriors in Switzerland and wherever. And it lasted three years, that job, til '49...

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

A: Next time when we meet, on a different, we don't have to do this...

Q: Yeah, we'll do, we'll hear the other.

A: ...will give you some _____, a real schmutz(ph), you know what schmutz(ph) is?

Q: I know the schmutz(ph), I know from schmutz(ph).

A: The schmutz(ph), that's right.

Q: That's what the book will be called, the schmutz(ph).

A: Schmutz(ph), I like, I like that.

Q: I do too, it's a good title.

A: I still haven't been able to find a name for my book.

Q: I don't think for this...

A: Now I'm going to Switzerland and all I had in Switzerland was me, my, a suitcase and a bicycle.

Q: You're always on a bicycle through all these stories.

A: Because I couldn't afford a car. _____ would have liked a car, yes. I didn't even have a driver's license because why would I need it for? My boss had a car, the man, he had a car, but they couldn't buy me one and I couldn't afford one. So I went from town to town by bicycle in Switzerland, I was climbing the mountains and by train.

Q: What did you wear? What were you wearing during those years? What did your clothing look like?

A: Oh, I look with tie, I was always dressed _____ . Of course you wear a suit and tie. As a matter of fact, I still have, my clothes are still in Zurich in an hotel room somewhere. I was kicked out of Switzerland. That's another story. I got in trouble for selling some black market business, which everybody did after the war, to survive.

Q: What were you selling?

A: _____ maybe you should not put this in here. I had a good friend who was in _____ my parents and me, we became good friends and he survived the war. He came back from Auschwitz too. And he used to have a kosher delicatessen. And he became a big wheel in the Dutch, so-called black

market, he did, you could do everything after the war, cause that's how people survived, that's how people got food and coupons and that was an accepted thing, because he didn't steal from anybody, he was just trading. But he was doing it on a very good sized scale. And maybe I should tell this story about him because I admired him so much. He survived, his wife and two children were killed and by pure accident he found and I don't know again, know how, through the Red Cross I think again. Because in Holland, published names of people who are found and the Red Cross kept on publishing, every week, he looked at those lists, that's how a cousin of ours found my grandmother. He read that she was safe in Theresienstadt.

Q: Where were the lists published?

A: In the Jewish press, there's a Jewish press, very _____ . So my friend found his sister's daughter in Poland, he had come from Poland as a young boy and he went, this guy could move mountains, and he went to Poland and found this girl, brought her back to Holland in 1946 and she had no place to live, he had a house, she moved in with him. She was 18, 16, 18, _____ 18 by now. And they fell in love and he want to marry her, except in Holland you can't do that, that's against the law. And so he made a request to Queen Wilhemina, is the only one who can do this, only the Queen and she can give you permission, whatever that's, that's called. And she wrote him back there's no way I can do that, we don't do this and denied. So he, when he came back from the camps, he came back on a stretcher and on that hospital where he was brought in over the border, the Princess Julianna(ph), she visits hospitals, _____ like to visit hospitals _____, wonderful family. And she visit that hospital and he was laying in the bed, he had come back out of Auschwitz and they took a picture of her standing at his bed. And she said to him, "If there's ever anything I can do for you, feel free, you can call me." Which is, which is like giving you a check you can cash when you need it, you know. So he, so he wrote a letter after the Queen turned him down, to the Princess, said, "I want you to talk to your mother, I want to marry my niece." And the Princess wrote him a letter back, these are all true stories. "I can't give you permission, my mother doesn't waive, no she said so as you well know, but if someday in the future, it will all, things work out normal, I will be Queen, I'm in succession and then you try again." 1948, two years later, Wilhemina abdicated her throne to her daughter, he didn't wait three weeks, he writes a letter to the Queen, then, "Remember me? Here's the picture." She gave permission and they married. And they had two wonderful girls, they all live in Israel except he died on a trip in, he dropped dead in a _____ at an airport. But before that, when I was in Switzerland, Emil was in contact, he called me one day, he says, Emil was making deals, American dollars, gold, you know and he says, "I'm coming in such and such a date next week and I'm in a

wheelchair and you have to get me off the plane in Zurich." I knew this was all a scam, I knew right away that he wasn't in a wheelchair, but he sat in a wheelchair and what he had, he had, he was sitting on a wheelchair, on a cushion which was, which had maybe, in today's dollar, in those dollars, maybe three million dollars in Belgium and Indonesian and Dutch government bond, who were totally worthless. Worthless because the Dutch government made an edict in '45, about within a month or two after the liberation, that everyone who had dollars, I mean gildens(ph), in Holland, had to turn them in and every person alive in Holland got 10 gildens(ph) that day. Every stock certificate had to be turned in and they forced every corporation or government _____ to issue all new ones, because the Germans had falsified so many. They had emptied all the safe deposit box, deposit boxes of the Jews and others. So no one knew who was what and who owned what. So Dutch _____ made a cutoff day in '45, that no one was worth more than 10 dollars. The phony money, the _____ money, you went to the banks, later on, every week you could get, release some of it because they couldn't give it to you _____ , they had to print it and finally everybody got dollar for dollar and the Dutch, whatever they did economically. So he now, so now it's 1948, about that time and he ran into a guy who says, "You know, I found in the backyard of my uncle, a whole box full of these bonds, they're worthless." So my friend is smart, he says, "Well," he says, "maybe I can do something with that." So he gave the guy, he says, "I'll give you 5,000 dollars for it, as a friend,", this man say, "but you have to deliver it in New York." So I had friends in New York, but _____ American army, soldiers I met. And I arranged that I deposit some money in, it's a complicated situation, but I got to deliver 5,000 in New York, through the Swiss, through a Swiss bank. _____ but I had access to, to the business. And he put up 2500, I put up 2500. So now we own all these shares and he comes to Zurich, I take him off the plane and he's got a whole big suitcase sitting on him and a pillow. And I have no way what to do with it, I've never done this before. I was leaving the next day for Lougano(ph), where we also had a little office and I stayed in this hotel for a couple of years and I got to know the owner and I thought they are very nice people. So that night, I had dinner with them _____ the hotel and then I tell them, the biggest part of the part of this story, he says, "I know who can help you, I can help you," he says, "but the man you talk to is a lawyer in Zurich." I said, "I just came from Zurich." He said, "Oh, you got to go back." So I went back to Zurich and I met this lawyer, I gave him a sample. From that, within three days I was followed by two plainclothesmen. I was followed for two weeks. Two weeks, it was in 19, in August '49, summer of '49. And finally I got so scared, I said there's nothing I can do, they keep on following me and I don't know if they were police or they were gangsters. I thought about police. So I walked up to them, they're sitting on a sidewalk cafe and I sat, I sat down next to them, right on the table, I said, "Are

you following me?" There was a younger man and an older man, they said, "No, I'm not." I said, "Well, you are. Last week was somebody else, but there was _____ two people following me." So I figured I got to have an emotional confrontation here, so I said, "Look, I know what you want, but I'm scared and I don't know how to handle this," _____, show them a number on my arm. I said, "Look, I'm not a gangster, I'm a survivor _____ the camps, _____ I'm not a thief, I haven't done anything wrong." And this man says to me, "You did something wrong, you're peddling illegal documents, I mean stocks, bonds and that's not done in this country," he says. "And we're going to put you in jail because you're trying to sell that." And you, and we, and I didn't know if it was that, which, that's what he told me, but I'd also been buying up gold and I was smuggling it out of Switzerland to Holland, gold coins. But you, and in Holland I could, could make a huge profit every time I and I used packs of cigarettes, you know and things like that to smuggle them over the border. And _____ maybe and I thought that could be also it. So he says, "Know what you're doing, you're selling things." So he says, I said, "How can I, how can I stop this?" Says, "I'll tell you what we'll do," He was an older man and he became very sympathetic. He says, "See my car there?" "Yeah." I was in Zurich. He said, "We are going to the airport right now and I'm going to drop you off there and you get out of this country and never come back." I says, "Okay." What was I going to do? All my suits were in the hotel room, all my clothes. Never went back to the hotel, he wouldn't let me and to the airport. Put me on a plane. I walk in my bosses office in Amsterdam and I say, "I quit." He said, "Why?" I say, "I hate you." I couldn't tell him why I was quit, I was doing on his time, all this black market business. So I never went back to Switzerland for a long time, until maybe 1980, the middle 80's with my family. Because now I had an American passport you see, they couldn't do anything. But that's, that's my friend, _____ . I mean, great stories, as far as I'm concerned, so. I still have a suit somewhere's in a hotel room in Zurich.

Q: Now, what happened to him and what happened to the...

A: She went, he dropped that, they had moved to Los Angeles.

Q: But before that, with bonds?

A: Nothing. Oh. I couldn't have them, I couldn't have a safe deposit in Switzerland after he gave them to me, so I gave this to a girlfriend I was dating, this girl I told you about whose mother wasn't Jewish?

Q: Cecile?

A: Cecile. You want to hear this now?

Q: Okay.

A: Cecile, so we were going steady, kind of, we were very close and great friends with a beautiful girl. She was younger, she was about two years younger than I am. And I left Switzerland, went back to Holland in August of '49 and in December I came to America. I, and then in '53, in '52, we kept on corresponding. In '52, early '52, we decided she would come here. And now it goes in the middle to the, in the, in the end of '52 and she had worked all the, for a number of years, in a children's home, where they had children from England, which was common in Europe, _____ took children in mountains in Switzerland who had TB. And for some reason in those days, the air in Switzerland, and the rest, could cure them, today you have medicine. So she worked there. And the reason she worked there is, she didn't have to financially because her family had enough, she wanted learn English language and figured that would be the easiest because she was going to America. She worked there and, when she went to her visa, to the American consul, they had, she had to have an X-ray taken, it's the law in those days. And she had TB. Poor girl, she had contracted TB from being around those children. And they wouldn't let her in this country, they wouldn't let her in. And it was devastating for her and for me too, it was disappointing because, and that was the end of '52, it goes into '53 and all of a sudden I'm drafted in the army, Korean war. _____ the Korean war here. So I'm go in the army, I said there's no way I can bring this girl over here. I mean _____ I can, I was making 72 bucks a month in the army, I had no money, I had nothing.

Q: And how old are you at this point?

A: Now I'm 25, 25, yeah it was 19, let me see, 25, 26. And so I write her a letter, I said I'm sorry. I couldn't tell her that I didn't want her to come, I couldn't tell because I wouldn't marry if she had TB, I was scared, in those days, you didn't know that TB was curable, in the early 50's, it was a very serious matter, I was scared to death. So what did I, I said _____ some other girl here, that's how terrible _____ , I lied, there was no such thing. And then she wrote me one more letter back, which I never wanted to read again, I threw it away real fast because it was, it was horrible. Anyhow, so I had to contact here before that though, because all those bonds, she had in her safe deposit box and my friend _____ , he went there and met her. He met her I think once before with me and he picked them up so that's the end of that story and he dropped it, my friend. I don't know what happened to this girl. I can't find out and I shouldn't find out, I'm married now.

Q: Did in part you, did in part that feeling like I survived the camp, I mean the first thought that comes to my mind is, you survived World War 2, you survived the camps, you didn't want to get TB at that point.

A: Well, let me tell you what happened to me after the war, that I haven't said that too often, hardly ever, I don't think I ever told my family. When I got out of the camp, I knew I was sick. I knew I was sick. I went through every doctor I could get in. First our family doctor, small town, I said, "I have TB." Why? Because everybody else comes out of the camps has TB, _____ . Doctor said, "No, you don't have TB." Six months I went back to the doctor, "I'm sick, I have TB." I didn't feel sick, I had it in my head that I was, that I was sick. Then I went from Berculo(ph) to Utrecht(ph), I went three ___ to the university, four or five doctors in a row, "I have TB." And they kept on saying, "You don't have it, we can't find it." I went to Switzerland and the same thing. I had this constant fear, that I would end up having TB, because there was no medicine. I know that my colleagues, a lot of them had TB that I knew and were living with this and dying of it. And I thought I had TB. I didn't have TB, I wouldn't be sitting here.

Q: But she had TB and she was wanting to come to America with it.

A: This story I never told her of course. No, she didn't know, she was coming here then she found out she had TB when she had to take an X-ray. The doctors found it, the American consulate. So that's kind of a sad story because...

Q: Very sad.

A: ...she was a, she was a beautiful girl, a terrific girl and we liked each other a lot, I remember that, but _____ , but a past love affair, everyone has had those. And not, it's not make an exception with me. So that, I tell you all my bubbameisers(ph) here. You know what bubbameisers(ph) are? I tell you all my bubbameisers(ph) here. Cause they come to me while I'm sitting here thinking. I must tell you, that I started saying earlier, my book starts with a line that I've _____ heard. It takes 40 years to remember if something bad happens to you, that's in the, _____ in one of the books of our religion. In another _____ mishna, it says that at one of the _____ , one of the rabbis said it takes 40 years for a human being to remember something bad, if something bad happens to him that they can talk about, takes 40 years to clear out your mind. And I must say, the man said it maybe a thousand years ago or 800 years ago, I agree with that. I didn't think about other things, I didn't think about the camps, you know, you think about it. Not the way I think about it today. I took showers all those years, didn't bother me, now when I take a shower in the morning, I'm feeling my back cause I have scars. Now I feel it every day. I don't feel, I've never felt it. Smell. I can't stand chlorine smell, because that's all we smelled in the camps. This, this, they spread chlorine on, all over. I smell it more now than I ever did. Just in general, thoughts about my childhood. People have, people have said that you remember. I'm, I feel I'm coming out of a hypnosis finally, after 50 years.

Q: Why do you think that's happening?

A: It's because that's what the rabbi said, it takes 40 years to, to, to remember if something sad happened to you, like you don't want to remember and it had to come out of your system maybe. It's not, it's not, there's no impact on my life.

Q: It's a safe enough distance?

A: Oh yeah, I can live with it, because I have to live with it and I have enough other things which attract me, my work and I like to work, I really enjoy my work, I love to work. And my family and my grandchildren. So I have _____ being pulled away, _____ and I do a lot of things that I enjoy, various things.

Q: Let me have you go back and that...

A: My mother's brother left in the, in the 30's, to United States. His wife had relatives here. And they lived here in San Francisco, they moved here. And, when the war was over, I contacted him and my, and his and the two uncles, I talked to in the camp, I said brother. And I finally went here, my uncles didn't want to go to America, they were too old by then, they thought and couldn't make a living here, the language. So I went and he had two children. My uncle and aunt died in the meantime. My uncle _____ left, he died in 1951, so I only saw him for a little over a year. My aunt died later, she had become a very good friend of my wife's. They became very close, those two. A very beautiful woman. And they have two children, a boy and a girl. The girl lives in New York, I'm very close to, we talk to each other almost every week. My cousin, the boy, we never talk. We talked last year or two years ago, but he, he has got a hang up with Jews. So he's married to a non-Jew, which is his business. But he, he is, he's anti-Semitic almost. It bothers me no end. He's got a terrible anti, he's anti-Israel and he doesn't talk to his sister hardly either. His sister Phyllis, who is not involved in the Jewish world as such, even though she is married to a Jew and married to a terrific guy.

Q: Why do you think he?

A: I have no idea, I have no idea why he is, he's so anti anything Jewish, he makes very nasty remarks about it and he knows how I feel, he knows how his sister feels. And his aunts, who are dead now, his cousins. He has very little contact with the family. He was sales manager for Levi-Strauss, he's not an incompetent human being. He, he was in southern California, the big territory for Levi-Strauss. Levi's _____ and he's retired now, I think. He ran for mayor of Santa Barbara , he's no slouch, but I will, I don't want to talk to him. I don't think he wants to talk to me either. It's a mutual thing.

Q: Would you repeat about...

A: He doesn't talk to his own child, he has a daughter, who lives up here and my daughter, they talk to each other, but he doesn't talk to his own daughter, so _____ see there's something wrong with him.

Q: The, about how you remembered the address.

A: I don't know, I remember more things from my childhood at times, like addresses than I remember what happened yesterday. I forget who, I forgot who I have lunch with, see I got to think. But I do remember things way back. They come back now, they open part of me, they open up now. A psychologist would have a heyday with me, a psychiatrist would have a heyday with me. I was offered by a psychiatrist, he wanted to do, really go through sessions and sessions with me and I said, "Not a chance, I don't need that."

Q: But you were saying that you, you had heard the address of your...

A: Well, my mother used to write them all the time, you know and for some reason I thought, I remember my grandmother's phone number.

Q: What was it?

A: Number 2. She lived in a town, there were about 3,000 people at the most, maybe even 1500, I don't know. They were the only Jews in that town, my mother's mother, the one who went to Theresienstadt. And there were two phones in the town, one was at city hall and the second one was my, my family because they could afford it, the rest... I told you, we were in good shape. I know my parents phone number, 270. I don't know, why would I remember them, _____ . I don't remember numbers I've had in here, in this city.

Q: But the most...

A: That I remember. I do not remember my phone numbers I had before we got married, say, or the office number, I worked in an office for 18 years until we sold it, I have no idea. I remember the street address, but I don't remember the phone number. I should, right? Logically I should.

Q: It's not logic.

A: No, it's _____ , but I remember my parents phone number and my, look, there were 7,000 people in that town, maybe, it was 270, wonder why I remember that.

Q: Do you remember songs from your childhood?

A: No, not really, no. I don't remember. That's a good question, no one ever asked me that. Oh, children's songs, which are, maybe, things like they sing, sing now.

Q: Such as? _____ sing a little bit of it if you could?

A: I don't remember. But every _____ I hear children sing this, we used to sing the same melody.

Q: Do you remember your mother ever, or your father ever singing you lullabies?

A: My mother must have, my father was very musical, he liked to, he played the harmonica. He loved that. They couldn't afford violins, things like that, but they weren't on that level. None of, none of the Jews in where I was born and _____ I ever went to college, they didn't, most of them, I don't think that, I don't know how many went to high school even. That wasn't done, nobody went on, they didn't have those things. They went to elementary school eight years and _____ , that was enough and that's all they had to, to be. And except my mother had one cousin who was a physician, the rest were all merchants.

Q: Well let's go back to you telling the man that you hated working for him in Amsterdam.

A: Oh, you mean when I quit?

Q: Mm-hm, then what happened?

A: Then I called my uncle in San Francisco, that was in August, end of August of '49, called my uncle here in San Francisco, I said, "I want you to send me the papers." He just kept on writing me all the time, come over here, come over here and I didn't want, I didn't know. I wasn't ready yet and I wasn't ready to go to Israel. For some reason that had no feeling for me at that time.

Q: Why do you think that was?

A: Because I was in the wrong milieu, most likely. I didn't, luckily I think, that I didn't get into the DP camps, which happened to most of them. Most of the eastern European Jews really couldn't go back behind the Iron Curtain, but Holland and Belgium and France, they all went back to their countries. And why didn't I want to go to, I don't know, I just wasn't ready yet. I was, it wasn't, I wasn't ready, even though my uncle wanted me to come here. So I, I got a hold of my uncle and I say, "I want to come now." And by the end of August he thinks that he has set things in motion and the fifth of December, I left Holland. You couldn't get on the boats, this was a very serious problem and through, through another friend I got on the boat because this was a big steel company with offices in, in Holland, in New York, in England and they had guaranteed seats on these ships leaving Holland because for the commerce, bring the commerce back and they gave me one of their seats. It's a mutual friend and he arranged it and that's how I got _____ to

New York. And I spent about three weeks traveling, sitting in New York with my uncle's wife, my aunt, her sister and I went to Philadelphia to see a friend who had survived, I was in the camps with and then I went to Chicago to see another friend of mine and then I went to San Francisco, by train.

Q: What were you thinking on the boat over?

A: I was very excited to, to get to America, we had this huge dream of America, it's a garden of Eden and all this. I knew my cabin, there are four people in the cabin, it was very packed. But it was overwhelming. We went to Bermuda, went first from Holland to England, to Southampton, then they stopped and they stopped in Bermuda, it was beautiful, I never seen this kind of tropics and this kind of environment. And then New York, Statue of Liberty. And, but it was all, you know, it's so overwhelming, people, people think they remember details, I don't remember, it gets overwhelming, things of importance. You forget the emotions I think, years. We act and look and then observe.

Q: Did you speak any English at that point?

A: Very little, hardly anything. I'll give you an example how much English I spoke. After I'd been here for a few, a few weeks, I had a terrible sty on my eye, so someone says, "Well go to the Mount Zion clinic," which as you know, the Jewish hospital here was then. So I went to the doctor and he says, I remember, I don't know why I remember that. He said, "Does it hurt?" And I said, "It's very painless." So he says, "Painless? You mean painful?" I said, "No, painless." No where'd I get the word painless? When I used to be on the bus to go to work, there was an advertising dentist, he was called painless Parker. So I thought, pain, painless, painful, what's the, so I tell him no, it's very painless, he says painful. That's how much English I spoke, now you know. But I learned fast, I went to school every night.

Q: Where?

A: ___ high school in, four high schools. Washington High, Balboa High, Commerce High and Mission High. Every night that English class, they had different nights, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursdays. Went by bus to the high school from seven to nine and I lived in a boarding house, in a boarding house on Washington Street, right near the Jewish community center, I used to go there. _____ night time before, I usually worked, I worked quite a bit.

Q: What... [end of side 1 of tape 2] Okay, so...

A: _____ do you have to close that?

Q: Thank you.

A: Will it work without?

Q: Yeah, it'll work, but it just keeps the dust out, it keeps it more protected. So, what work were you doing when you came here?

A: The same, real estate.

Q: Immediately?

A: But, well I was hired by this man, because when I came here my uncle had got me a job within a week or two to sell to the restaurants and apartment houses, deodorants and disinfectants and soaps and toilet paper, you know, those janitorial supplies. It was awful, it was terrible and they didn't pay me. And so then I heard, having met by now some people, that the Jewish family and children's service had an employment committee and I went there and I met this wonderful lady, her name was Paula Shirnholtz(ph), I'll never forget that. An elderly person, she worked there as a caseworker and I told her that I needed a job and she says, "Well we have a committee and I will take your case to the committee tomorrow night and then you'll hear from me." Well, the next morning, or the, the morning after, she says, "Here, go see Mr. Alberton at 157 Sutter and he, he's a member of the committee, he wants to see you." So I went in there, there's another man sitting there waiting and he interviewed me and he said, "You know what the real estate means?" "No, I don't know." He hired me, at, and his partner, there were two partners, a younger partner, his partner says, "____ the guy can't speak English, what do you _____ ," you know, somebody _____ when he was in his late 60's, early 70's, very compassionate, very fine person and he hired me. So I had to put up signs and collect rent. I didn't have to be a scientist for that, right? So that was in 1915, and then I started slowly making leases and making sales and then, then the army came, had to be in the army for two years.

Q: Now, why did you have to be in the army?

A: I was drafted.

Q: But had you, when did you get citizenship?

A: In the army.

Q: You were drafted before you had citizenship?

A: Yeah. That was the law then. I was drafted and then I went to the draft board and I told them my sad story. I didn't, my boss did. So the draft board says, "Well, we can handle, we can change that, why doesn't he go and join the reserve unit and go into the _____ , the army base here once a month and he can do it for a number of years and he doesn't have to go in the army."

Q: Now when you say, I told them my sad story, what do you mean?

A: Well I told them I already was in a war. And I don't, I didn't go into details because there was some lady sitting there, she wouldn't have known.

Q: Did you tell them you were in the camps?

A: Yeah, I told them I was in the camps and I was in the, in the, in the, and that, because I said I didn't want to go in any more wars. But it didn't make any difference to them, that's just a book and they followed the book. They didn't have anything in the book that you can't take guys with my background. So they said, "Well, I want to be," she want to be nice to me, really nice, and she said, "Well go to the ___ and join the reserve unit, you go once a month on Tuesday nights and, and, and you don't have to be drafted." I did that, but they drafted the unit, they took the whole damn unit after six months going through, through this _____ thing. And ended up in Fort Worth, 16 weeks of basic training, I was the oldest man in the platoon. He called me Pop, cause it was all young kids, they were 19 and 20 year olds and I was 26. And then, then I went to Fort Lewis, they were going to send me to Germany, I refused to go to Germany. They said, "You got _____ ." I said, "I don't care, but I'm not going to Germany." So I went up to Fort Lewis on the way to Korea and they kept me there. I became a supply sergeant. I came out as a sergeant, which is pretty good.

Q: How did you feel, being in the army?

A: I hated it but I liked it also because, in retrospect more so, I, I never knew Americans. In San Francisco, the Jewish community center, I go to the Temple, I go, made a few Jewish friends there, met over _____ and some family, my aunt and uncle. And I never knew the Americans. So being in the army I met the Poles, from Chicago and then the Blacks from the south and the, and they, and the Jews from Brooklyn, I met every American there is. Indians. And, which amazed me the most was when I was the supply sergeant this young man used to come down and say, "Can you read me the letter from my mother?" They couldn't read and write yet, people who had come in the army couldn't read and write, they were so illiterate. And mostly out of Tennessee and Indians out from the reservations. And I was their interpreter and I wrote letters for those kids.

Q: You, who was just learning English yourself?

A: Myself, yeah, but , but I, I could write them a letter to their, to their parents, and they, they all, excuse me, they were very, very good kids and then they brought a lot of Mormons in from Utah, who were very disciplined and very straight and, and others, but...

Q: Do you remember the content of any letter you wrote for somebody?

A: Not, these _____. Dear Mama, I'm fine, how are you? Yeah. Hope you're fine and goodbye. We went, we had inspection yesterday, or we took a march. These kids weren't college material. But the, the Indians were very good, they made very good sharpshooters. But then I met Blacks, which I'd never met before. I met people from all over the, different nationalities and background, so, so in retrospect, I still correspond with, with several of them, from the army. Boys who, boys, boys, they're not boys, they're now in their 60's, who are in Montana, one in Wyoming, one in New York, one in Seattle. Christmas time we send, we send each other Christmas cards.

Q: Now one thing I notice about you, you keep everybody in your life.

A: Not really. I can give you a longer list from people I don't want to talk to any more.

Q: Yeah, but there's an awful lot of people you keep track of and you stay in touch with.

A: Well, well, yes, not a lot any more, it's, because _____ people who have not shown loyalty to me and if they don't show, then I drop them, then I can't handle it. But people over the years, we stay in touch. Now this army situation goes back, it's only once a year, Christmas time and, and from the camps, the only friend I had really from the camps is the one who dropped dead in the, just two years ago, my friend Hans, we were very, very close. Another fellow I was in the camps with lives in Paris. I met him twice in Israel, it so happened, because we have a mutual friend now. I'm in, in, in, in touch with his mutual friend I met when I was on the board of governors of the Jewish agency and we have become very good friends, the four of us. But this other boy was in the camp, we had nothing to talk about to him. He speaks very hard English because he's a Frenchman from Reeon(ph) and we met twice and I thought maybe should get together more, but there was nothing to talk about.

Q: While you were in the army, were you telling, or in America, did you tell people about what you'd been through, did you tell them about the camps and World War 2?

A: Until a few years ago, maybe now it's 10 years, 12 years, not more than 15, nobody knew that I'd been in the camps, I never talked about it, I didn't tell anybody. People maybe, maybe people knew, people didn't ask me, I didn't tell them. People didn't know. I got involved, through the Jewish family, _____, called me one day and I was active in the federation in '55 or, I mean every campaign since 1955. But early Rob called me, he says, "Look, there was an incident with

the Nazis in the sunset district and we have to organize the survivors here. I know you're one," and we knew each other fairly well. He said, "And I want you to help me, because the survivors are going bonkers, I need to arrest one, one father and son who have burned a Nazi bookstore and you're going to get involved." They weren't organized, so I got involved and from there and then we had this group, that I've chaired most of these years, I can't find a, a substitute, nobody wants it. And they won't let me go. And immediately _____, every year now. Then we built the, the memorial, you know, that Holocaust memorial, and which _____ Goldman _____ and I chaired and others, but we were there. She was the chairman, I was, I was the fundraising chairman. She was the artistic chairman, _____ I was the overall chairman. And then we, we build the...

Q: You're talking about the Holocaust memorial in San Francisco?

A: And then the, the George Segal(ph) piece. And then we built, before that even, we built the Holocaust library and research center here. And that was done while I was president of the Bureau of Jewish Education, about that time. But that was spearheaded by Max Garcia(ph), a Dutch Jew, a Sephardic Jew, is one of the few Sephardic Jews alive here from Holland. My wife is Sephardic, her father's family. Originally, great-grandfather came from Baghdad(ph), through England, to Hong Kong. My wife was born in the Orient, all Sephardim.

Q: Now when you say no one knew you were a survivor, what about your wife and your children?

A: My wife knew a little, yeah we talked, but she never asked me, she didn't want me to talk, cause she didn't want me to think about it and talk about it and she tried not to have me see anything on television if she could help it. My children knew because they did it behind my back, they never asked me and one day, when they were in their middle teens, I remember it very vividly, I decided that I better tell these kids more than just what they hear, what they read and what they have extracted from me. So I took them individually, first one, then the other, in the car and we drove up to the Sonoma and I said, "Look, we going to, today we going to talk about, I'm going to tell you a few things." And they, unless, it felt like, they said both and I didn't tell one from the other, they both said independently, they weren't together, that I brought them separate, "We don't want to talk about it, we know all about it, we know, you don't have to tell us any more." So they didn't want and I think that was because my wife must have instilled that in them, they didn't want me to feel hurt and to think about it or talk about it, think about it, whatever.

Q: Relive it?

A: Huh?

Q: To relive it?

A: Yes, they said, "We know, we, we checked everything out, I mean _____, we've read about it, but you don't have to talk about it." So obviously now they're 36 and 38 and we never talk about this. My best friend, the one, my friend Hans, who I told you, he and I were in Auschwitz together and we were in Warsaw together and Dachau together, he would never talk about it. I tried to talk about it to him, is because I wanted to prepare myself for my book. I wanted, he would never, he says, "No reason talk about it any more." He would never talk about it, he would never talk about it.

Q: Did he have a family as well?

A: He never had children, she couldn't have children, she had, they did experiments on her. She died before he did.

Q: How did you feel when they said, we don't want to talk about it, when your children, you were ready to open up and they didn't want to hear?

A: I was a little disappointed and then I also felt that they were very protective of me, so I dropped it. They knew and they can read and they know.

Q: Would you do it the same over again, if you knew now that...

A: Yeah, probably. Yeah, I couldn't change that. And that's the reason I want, I'm writing this book, so they have, so they can read it, but they, of course if they want to ask me, they could ask me, they never ask me and that's only because they want to protect me. And my grandchildren, who are six and eight, by the time they have, by the time can comprehend life a little bitter, better, _____, I may not be here. So that's why I want to put it in writing.

Q: Well what about, what about the interview that you did with the Holocaust museum, have they seen that?

A: No.

Q: Or read that?

A: No.

Q: You mean I know more about your life than your children do?

A: Right.

Q: And your wife?

A: I don't know if you know more, but they didn't read it. I'm putting all, I'm combining it all in there, in my book, not, there's separate documents. I had a oral history taken because it's the custom here in San Francisco that the past presidents of the federation have their oral history taken. And the one who took mine was the _____ for the federation. It's not finished yet, it's finished, but they haven't _____ yet. And they'll come out the next couple of months. They haven't read it, they haven't read, I didn't want them to read the manuscript, not of the book, because I want to finish that, but they have not and the one from Washington, I must tell you, I have it in video and in writing. I don't even know why they want, yeah I think I have it, I know where it is now. I think it's not so good and I think that _____, almost think it's boring, but that's me.

Q: It's not boring.

A: It's not boring, I thought it was very poorly done. You've got more out of me than they have, I think, right? Smart. Very smart.

Q: Well tell me this, how do you think it affected you as a father, especially that you weren't telling them about it. How do you think having what you went through...

A: Well there's a reason for this and I'm going to tell you the reason. When I came to San Francisco, I stayed with my aunt for a week, my aunt and uncle, then I said, "I need an apartment." How much, I had no money. So I got a room in a basement on 25th and Anza(ph), which cost eight dollars a month and I had a bunk bed, whatever it's called, a mattress and a curtain and that was my side of the garage and the other side was a car, left every morning at seven. I don't even know who's it was, lived upstairs somewhere. But I, I, I saved enough after I got, I bought myself a radio for five dollars. So I listened only to speaking, never to music. Anything speaking to listen to the language, night after night, way into the night. Damn flowers. And so that's how I learned the language a little bit and I wanted to be an American. I didn't want to live with my aunt's here and her sisters. They still spoke German and all their friends. I can speak German, to continue that.

Q: This was, you were out of the village now, you wanted to be somewhere else.

A: I want to get out of there and I went to the Jewish community center and I joined. Was 12 dollars a year, but I couldn't pay them 12 bucks, so I worked a deal with the girl on the counter, I pay one dollar a month, a month. One dollar when I could pay, but I couldn't pay more. So I wanted to be an American, I looked up to this whole country and I still do, as much as I'm now complaining more than I did then, because of our damn politicians.

Q: But that's being American.

A: That's being American. So I, I went to the center, after the first year being in there, going to school, on weekends went to the center, then I went to the center almost every night. And when you ask me about why did he join the Masons, I want to be an American. I went in Toastmasters International, I went, I joined, which was very hard for me, but I joined Toastmasters International, later on, after 55, I was in the junior chamber. I wanted to be like, and I'm saying this over, is I want to be like everybody else, I want to have that, that part of life had to stop because I couldn't function if I lived that life. I didn't want to think about it. And I wanted to have my children a normal life, an American, so called American, meaning a normal life. I'd been watching some of my friends who were survivors, who messed up their children no end, messed them up, psychic, psychiatrically. That's all they talked about _____ and then listen, I had to listen sometime and I, obviously _____ , when I was in the camps I didn't have a nice meal like you have tonight. And they do this, they did this. And I can tell you some of these people are really fucked up, pardon my language, it's not messed up, they're so messed, so horrible. I have a guy I help every so often because he, the guy is going crazy with it, _____ himself, they can't function, those kids. They're not kids any more. And I didn't want to be like that. I wanted to be like same _____ guy, like this lady is here, I wanted to be an American and I didn't want my children to be affected by that. Pardon my language, I shouldn't have used that word, but that's how I felt about it, I was angry that they would, that they messed up their children and I didn't want that and I'm still, I still feel this today. I still talk about today and I watched this. They're either estranged from the children... I have a couple I ran into recently that I hadn't seen for awhile, they moved out of town. I said, "How are your kids?" "I don't know." I said, "What are you talking about?" These were people in the camps, I said, oh no, first I said, "You have grandchildren?" That's how I started out, because you know, I love my grandchildren, I have a great time with them. They said, "Oh, we never see our grandchildren." I said, I said, "How can you talk like that Helga?" I said, "What about your son?" "We never see him." I haven't, I talked about it for one week to my wife, I said, "I can't believe them." And these are nice people, these are not slobs, these are nice, decent, good citizens. Intelligent, successful, they're retired. And they messed up their children. And I was right, I didn't want to live that, I smelled it, I saw it in Holland right after the war. I saw the cliques and they sit there and _____ about how it was in Auschwitz, how it was in Birkenau. I said, I knew it already. Now a lot of, some of the more intelligent survivors didn't talk to each other about it and when the conversation come up, there was nothing to, there was nothing to remember and nothing to commiserate at the misery, because it would only perpetuated, I wanted to be like everybody else and I will tell you today, I succeeded to the point that my children are very, very

normal, very successful, very smart, they have everything. They're college educated, they have it all.

Q: And what did they think when you started getting involved with the Holocaust memorial here and the Holocaust Museum nationally and that part of your life started expressing itself more?

A: Good question.

Q: So...

A: Did my children, did my children and my wife encourage that? First of all I didn't ask them. Second of all, if I had asked them, they would have said, "What do you need that for?" My wife more so than my children, most likely. Most likely I shouldn't say, because I know. I did it anyhow because I, I was asked, I felt I owe and it had to be done by someone who, who was willing to do it and, and, and had the connections nationally, was politically involved. And just as a matter of, I think that I couldn't walk away from this, since I was asked. And I was asked locally was mine, it was easy. Nationally it was much, much more, more a bigger commitment. They were very proud of me. They always applauded it, my children and my wife, but if I, if they had to make a decision for me, they would have says no, enough is enough. Which I think was normal and I would have done the same in their position, because they're very protective of me. So that's why I didn't ask them. I didn't know that. Now, did they go to the opening, of course.

Q: And what happened that night and that week in your family's life?

A: In the opening? Well, I tell you, since Susan works with me here, she saw more what's going on and, but David really, really took to this, to a point that I could see it on his face. His wife also went of course and his wife and I are very close, she's a wonderful, wonderful girl. They understood it even better, they were very proud that they could see their father's name on the wall there, as one of the markers, you know. And, and maybe they didn't understand when I was _____ there twice a month for many years. _____ all about, cause was hard to understand for anyone. But when they saw that, and Fern had been with me in Washington of course, not often, but you know, a few times. On the way to Israel we stopped over there, so she was with me. And of course they, they understand it fully. It was not that there was any remorse or regret that they had not stopped me, to the contrary, it's just not discussed. That's what he wants to do, that's what he has to do, that's what he should do. Oh yeah, and the kishkas(ph) in the, in the, in _____, they know that it has to be done. They're very, very, my daughter is more of a street person, like me. David is, there's no gray with him, it's white or black. And he's a very, very successful surgeon, he's an orthopedic

surgeon here. Very, he's a, he's a real star. I can say that because people tell me that daily. So he's on his own and so there's nothing, in retrospect it's good and I know they're very proud of that. That's all but, did he agree with me at times, no. Not that he said it, but I could feel it. My wife says, "God, you're killing yourself, you're killing yourself, schlepping(ph) there all the time," you know, flying back and forth. What can I tell you?

Q: I have about five questions at once here. First of all, how, did they ever see your tattoo growing up?

A: The children? Yeah.

Q: What did they, how did you explain that to them?

A: Well, the early days I couldn't explain it _____ . Even my granddaughter asked me not to long ago, what is that? Oh she said, "Is that your phone number?" Something like that, the little one, you see and I couldn't explain this to a five year old, four year old, five year old then maybe. I said, "I'll tell you one of these days." My children? Fern told them, my wife told them, I'm positive, because they didn't press the issue and I've never heard them say, that's, like, things like my father had a number on his arm, you see, I never heard them say that. Because it's private. I tried to, I tried to wear long sleeves most of the time, which I notice a lot of survivors do. You don't want to, except when I'm in Hawaii where we go on the beach, or on the pool here, swim every morning, that you can't help it. People are very respectful of it, to me at least and the ones who ask, I will explain. Non-Jews don't understand, some of them really don't know what it is. And then I explain it. And Jews, if they have to ask me, then there's something wrong with them, they should know. And do I, I tried to play it down, that's why I don't wear short sleeve shirts in the summer or in the winter. So and the children never, they never made an issue of it. I'm sure their mother explained it to them because that's the protection _____ they had.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: The man who hired me also introduced me to my wife. That's Mr. Albertson. They lived in the same building together, they were friends, family friends.

Q: Here in...?

A: Here in San Francisco. He and my wife's family, they were friends.

Q: Where was she while you were in the camps?

A: At, in San Francisco. She went to Lowell High School and she went to Stanford, when I was in the camps, kind of, you know, she, she was born in the Orient, came

to this, came back here before the war, parents divorced. She was raised by aunts, two aunts, who were like parents to me, she had two wonderful aunts. They also born in the Orient, they spoke Chinese fluently. They were born there, so was their father. They were Sephardic Jews who were in business in Hong Kong. And my wife was born there, so she was here during the war, so was her father, he had come back here. And they were in the import-export business in San Francisco, the offices in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Manilla. So they didn't know much about, first of all, they were Sephardic Jews so they had no, no relationship with any Ashkenazim in Europe, so nobody was killed, except my wife's, two of her aunts died in the Japanese concentration camps in Hong Kong, because the Japanese interned the British, they all had British passports. So they died in the camp. Not for, not like the Germans, they died there of, I don't know if it was malnutrition or some diseases, but it was different. That's the only relationship they had with the war, cause they were British subjects.

Q: Were you afraid for her to find out when you first met her? Anything about your past?

A: No, that didn't bother me. No, but I didn't make an issue of it, I didn't make an issue of it because, like I said earlier, I didn't want to be like, I don't like to be around survivors. They're very narrow minded, at least the group here in San Francisco, others I know in other parts of the world, over the years, but here in San Francisco it's so, it's not a, I don't enjoy this group at all, that's between us, maybe I shouldn't put it on tape.

Q: That's to be stricken from the record.

A: Yeah, but their nice people and I, we go out with some of them, every so often we have them over, they go to their house, to keep this relationship, but no, they're not, they don't think like I do, meaning I don't want to live that life any more. I want to live like the rest of, like everybody else in this town, like 740,000 people.

Q: One thing you're saying that kind of amazes me is that you say you go swimming.

A: Every morning.

Q: From the first interview, you said that you didn't, as a child you weren't allowed to learn to swim, because of being a Jew.

A: Ah, and I lived in Germany. They took the kids swimming, you know, not every day, but you know, once a month, once a week, I forget. Because I was the only Jewish child in the entire school of 800 children and there's a, there was a city pool they used, on the outskirts of town and I was, I went in that pool once, I think it was

in first grade, was in 1932, or thereabouts, in '33, then I could never go in there again, they let me, I had to sit on the side, while, while all the other kids were swimming. And I was the only Jew there. Couldn't have really messed up too badly, but there's anti-Semitism. And the head of the school was an anti-Semite, my teacher was not, but head of the school a was a Nazi, so no, I never learned to swim until, until I was in the army. I never had lessons, I just taught myself. Now I can swim.

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

A: ...nobody else ever, nobody else ever asked me.

Q: Well, thank you for saying that.

A: You should just use your own judgment.

Q: Well, one thing, as I'm listening to you, talk about being, how did you make your political decisions, when did you become political and how did you choose what political party to, oh wait. How did you choose your political affiliation?

A: Well, as you know my wife will, will take, she would love to sit here now and explain it to you. She keeps on, my wife was a Republican when I met her. I can't explain why, but she was. When I met her I was a register, registered Democrat. Why? Because the Jews in San Francisco are all Democrats, so that you know, you ask around, you register, so you register like all the rest of the Jews, Democrat. Until, until, I think was around the Nixon, Nixon era, or there about and I became more conservative and definitely when the Reagan, I really did not get involved in, in, in overt politics until Reagan, national politics. For some reason I got involved with the Reagan campaign here and I used to go and travel with Reagan in southern California to introduce him to Jewish audiences, B'nai Brith lodges and Temples and all this. Because mutual friend was very close to his campaign and he asked me to fly down there. And then I worked very hard, I was a chairman for Reagan in San Francisco, _____ Jews. And I'm very conservative and apropos, the majority of survivors and I'm talking about camp survivors, now everybody thinks they're a survivor, but camp survivors, are Republicans, are conservative. It surprises _____ because the biggest surprise when you talk to _____ so-called, they say, "How can you, how can you, a guy was in the camps, how can you be a Republican or be so conservative?" It blows people's minds, I'm talking about Jews, it blows their mind, cause I'm supposed to be a real bleeding heart liberal, you know, who gives everybody else's money away, except their own. And you see I'm prejudiced, right? And I'm conservative, because I had to make it, I did. When I was in the army, I made 72 dollars and that's all I had and I bought a war bond of 18 dollars and 75 cents, every month for two years. Did I have money left over? No, because I didn't have enough money because you know, I have to get, certain necessary things you have to buy. I worked at night as a waiter on top of it, every night and Saturday and Sunday, cause I'm conservative and I, I believe that you do it yourself, you help, obviously you know my life a little bit, people that need you, help them. That's why I'm involved so much with all the institutions here. But, but, this, this liberalism to me, is pulling the country in the direction Russia went. Russia is a basket case, they can never get out of this, Russia is gone. They can't pull out of this. And, and

I see, I see how we _____ the deterioration which starts with the economics and then it goes into the mentality of people and the crime, it's all part of this, this, this ultra-liberalism and I cannot stomach this, I can't handle, I think it's wrong, you need to be more conservative, the liberalism is not going to, is not going to work the way this is designed for this country. It isn't going to work. Holland has a liberalism in a different way and I watch Holland's _____ the Dutch press, I read a little bit, not much and theirs is working differently, it's working better than ours.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: Cause they're controlling it differently, they don't let it get out of hand and the government controls it, so they don't let, they, the special interests groups, who direct things without really having knowledge, for instance this, this, this thing this week about the trees up in, up north, a thousand people demonstrated. Two-thirds have never been up there, they don't know anything about it, they saw dead trees and I think that sometimes you have to help nature. They weren't destroying the whole thing. Plus the fact, how many people are out of jobs there? There's, the unemployment is unbelievable there in that area. Because that's all they had to live off, that industry. Destroy it? They're destroying, they're destroying an industry, very simple. Cause, it's the eagle. They don't care about those God damn trees. Sure, I'm saying they should take all the trees down, but in an orderly fashion you can handle that, but no by saying, not negotiable. The people on welfare because of this. And there must be a middle path. You don't have to be on welfare, everybody. Healthy, workable people. But there's no other industry up there. It happens constantly. I can tell you that closing up the situation was chairman of the, he built a wing, the new wing on the Jewish home, he lost, we had, _____ certain glass, from PPG, largest company in the country. We found out after we were waiting for delivery that the factory closed up because, it was closed up because of, happened to be the union closed up that factory and we had to go to Spain and buy that, that whole town was unemployed. There's got to be a middle path. You see this, it goes too far. Now as a dictatorship, my side, no it's no dictatorship. But some people need, some people need guidance, but not the guidance of saying, we'll worry about you, just get out of bed in the morning, if you don't want to get up, we'll pay you anyhow. That's why, my kid's think I'm, my daughter is a Democrat, my son is a Democrat, they think I'm Atilla the Hun. They think I'm too far to the right, but I don't care.

Q: So what lies ahead for you, what do you see ahead for yourself?

A: For me? Not much any more, you know, I had some medical problems and this, I'm going through that, slowly I'm getting much better, I'm almost back to normal,

but I, I have a pacemaker and I had some heart problems and I, I think I'm okay with that.

Q: Is that part of what motivated you to write the book?

A: No, but, no, no, what motivated me was basically because I was thinking about it more and I want my grandchildren to know where they came from, what they, what they, who their grandfather was. One of my serious problems I have and I thought about it yesterday, I don't know why it came to my mind, that most people can go to a grandfather or to a relative and say, "What happened when I was a child?" And I've no one to ask. I don't know, I'd like to know more about my grandparents. I know that I knew them, I know they lived there. My father's sister, she disappeared, she died in Auschwitz, we don't know where, how, what date. My grandfather died, was killed in Sobibór. But I've no one to ask. Someone, anyone you see has someone they can ask, there's some relative and I have no one. That bothers me at times and it's, it's the link that I cannot repair. So at least I feel that I got to pick up where I remember. I have no uncles to ask, my cousins all young, I'm the oldest, so they don't know. And I had one aunt and a first cousin on my father's was still alive, she lives in upstate New York. And _____ , I talk to them regular, I'm very close to her children. But I went to see, I made a special trip, I took my tape recorder with me, I said, "Sophie," her name is Sophie, Aunt Sophie, she's 97. So I tried to get some out of her, I couldn't, she was too old. Was too old, I went too late. Because _____ this book about, I went about a year, two years ago and I spent the day with her and I ask her daughter to try and she couldn't get it out of her. She can't talk, this is somebody older, so there's no one left. I have cousins in Jerusalem, my mother had a first cousin in Jerusalem, they _____ , they gave me pictures. So I have some pictures of my parents. I had no pictures. Now I have pictures. In 1980's, in the '70's or whatever, I _____ to my cousin in Jerusalem.

Q: You had gone until the 1970's from, from that last image of them in the camp to the 1970's without seeing a, even a picture?

A: I never had a picture. But the pictures I have now, they're not that good, they're all taken in the 30's when there was already, when they already, their faces are not that, that happy. I have some pictures, except for pictures of my grandparents, my mother's side, silver wedding anniversary in 1917, I have two pictures that I found in Jerusalem and I really enjoy looking at those pictures every so often, my parents. And then, and I have a picture of my father, which is not a very good picture and I have only one picture of my sister and I found by accident, the neighbors had it when she was maybe 10 years old, I don't think she was 12, I don't know. So that's the only picture I have of my sister. And that link I miss, that I can't, I have no one to ask.

Q: I know, I think about that for you, of all those events you've lived through.

A: I think, I think about it very often, that my mother, would she enjoy seeing my children, my grandchildren. Of course life, life stops even in normal times, but wouldn't she like to see my success? You know, could she ever dream that I would be what I am? I'm known worldwide, I don't mean to impress you, I mean I have friends all over the world because of my Jewish activities and, not so much the museum, that too, in this country. My success, I have no need for money, I've got it all, two houses. What else can a guy ask for? I got a great family. And I, and I think of very often, my father and mother, if they could only see this, cause they, they were very emotional, especially my mother and so was my grandmother. They cried when somebody had a baby they cried, they cried for everything, you know how the Jews _____ ? But that would be, that would be a great thing which, under normal conditions that wouldn't have been alive with my great grandchildren are, chances are because they, they died in 1943, they were killed in 43 when they were 46 years old. So, take your numbers I mean, _____ the chances they would know more than grandchildren, minimum, they were in their late 20's. _____ my wife and I married, I was 31, I was 31, she was 30. So, that luck only _____ people who marry very young and stay together, right?

Q: The odds of that are slim.

A: Oh yeah, chances are. But I would have, I think about it frequently, not often, but frequently. _____, my mother could only see.

Q: It's ironic that being Jewish brought you the worst parts of your life and the best parts of your life.

A: Yeah. I don't think it was Jewish, could be yeah, because of the camps, but the Christians went to the camps too, a few. And look what it did to the Russians. I saw thousands of Russians being killed, in front of us in Auschwitz and other camps. They killed them. Put them in ice water, big pools of ice water. It wasn't only the, it was the Jews or the Gypsies, they did it to the Gypsies.

Conclusion of interview.