

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Marc Samuels
July 25, 2014
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PREFACE

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MARC SAMUELS

July 25, 2014

Gail Schwartz: The following is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview of Marc Samuels. It is being conducted by Gail Schwartz on July 25, 2014 and is taking place over the telephone at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and in Brookline, Massachusetts. This is track number one. What is your full name?

Marc Samuels: Marc E. Samuels.

Q: And when were you born and where were you born?

A: I was born in **Ciechanów** in, in the ninth of February 1922. I remember that 1922. In 1922, yes.

Q: And that town was in Poland, correct?

A: The town is in Poland, not far of the German border. It was about 40 or 50 miles from Germany, in Germany.

Q: Let's talk about your family. Your parents' names?

A: My father was Shmuel **Lokiec** and my mother her name was **Wertheim**. Of course when she married her name was also Lokiec. But she, her name was Devora, Devora Wertheim. She came from a family of, was very well known.

Q: And her maiden name was what, what did you say?

A: Wertheim.

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Carol Samuels: W-E-R-T-H-E-I-M.

Q: What kind of work did your father do?

A: He was, he had a store, a hardware store.

Q: And did your mother work with him at the store?

A: No, it wasn't near. But we had, the building was ours, not ours but the Lokiec family. It was a large family so I was too young for then to know the details of it but it was a very friendly _____ with his brothers. He had brother. His father had what should I say.

Carol: A hardware store did you say, Marc.

A: My father had a hardware store yeah.

Carol: It was somewhat of an agricultural type of –

A: No, had for instance and so, it was a, I don't know what to say. It was iron store and the Germans so they came in. They opened the doors and took out everything.

Q: We'll talk about that a little later. Tell me did you have any brothers or sisters.

A: Yes I had two brothers in addition to me. And four sisters.

Q: Where were you in the order of children?

A: I was number ok I'll get, there always was a, my brother **Moshe** and the next to him was **Iona** and he was in the Polish army. And then he was a prisoner to the Germans. So they let him go home in 1942. And he was eventually kept at a crematorium, was killed in Auschwitz. And so.

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Q: Your other siblings?

A: The eldest brother is Moshe and ran away to Russia when the war broke out so he survived.

Q: And you said you have other sisters?

A: Yes, and I was the youngest son. There were three sons. My brother Moshe was the oldest and he survived because he ran away to Russia. (both talking)

Q: What were the names of your other siblings?

A: Moshe and the other Iona.

Q: And the other ones?

A: Me. Marc.

Q: Yes, and then you had sisters?

A: Yeah, four sisters.

Q: What were their names?

A: **Chaya** was the oldest. She had a good job. And then after that was Miriam. And after that was **Chana** (sound drop out) and after that was **Lena**. Those were the two youngest, younger than I, were the two girls, two sisters.

Q: Was your family a very religious family?

A: Yes. My father especially.

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Q: Did you go to school in that town?

A: Yes, at **cheder**, a Jewish school.

Q: You went to a Jewish school.

A: Yes.

Q: And did you live in a Jewish neighborhood.

A: Yes and we owned, all the brothers the Lokiecs that they owned the two houses. They were built like, like a **Het**, do you know the Hebrew Het.

Carol: Like a piazza.

Q: A patio. Or something.

A: No, there were stores, two stores. They had one was ours and one was the other brothers.

Q: How much schooling did you have? What grade do you go up to?

A: What grade. You mean before.

Carol: Before the Holocaust?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Just the Talmud Torah and then also school for the Polish or something.

Carol: Gymnasium. Is that what you had?

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A: Gymnasium, no. No. I had, I didn't have public school either because we had our own school.

Q: Did you experience any anti-Semitism before 1939?

A: The Pollocks. No, also some anti-Semites. But we didn't feel. We were freedom, free to go. We walked night and day

Carol: You weren't threatened, right, Marc?

A: We are a known family because the Lokiecs there were houses we owned.

Q: Just to clarify. I just want to say that your family name was Lokiec. That was your name at that time. The name you were born with.

A: You know the spelling, L-O-K-I-E-C.

Carol: Now he had a middle name too and it's **Eliezer**.

Q: So that was the name you were born with. Yeah. So you went to school and you said you did not experience any anti-Semitism before 39.

A: No, it was, I went also to a Jewish school and yeshiva. And yeshiva and my father and a few, and another one they had to bring down after I finished the school, the Talmud Torah, they had to bring teaches for us for Talmud. They brought them in which my father paid and the other.

Q: Were your father and mother Zionists?

A: Yes. All Jews were Zionists in Poland.

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Q: When did you first start hearing about a man named Hitler? Do you remember your first time that you heard of him?

A: I don't know exactly how old I was but I was a reader. I can tell you I subscribe to the Israel newspaper **Ha'Aretz**. I subscribe to it and it was in Hebrew and the director of the school, the Talmud Torah, he came up, was a neighbor. Just our house and his was where he was living right next to it. They were two almost together. And—

Q: So were you a member of the youth group, a Zionist youth group?

A: No. No, I wasn't a member of the **Terecha Agudus** schul [ph] Israel. You know what Terecha means.

Q: No, I don't.

A: Terecha means very young. Young.

Q: What language did you speak at home.

A: Yiddish.

Q: Did you know Polish? Did you speak Polish?

A: I didn't speak Polish but I knew Polish.

Q: And what about German. Did you know German?

A: German, I did not talk German.

Q: You did not, ok.

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A: No.

Q: So when Hitler gave his speeches you did not know what he was saying.

A: No, no _____ Hitler.

Q: Like you said you liked to read. Did you have any other interests as a young, as a boy.

A: Yeah I was a reader.

Q: Did you like sports?

A: Less than reading. I remember the director from the school, the one the Talmud Torah came into me and he had a Hebrew word. He didn't know what it said and he came and asked me and I told him. And I still remember it.

Q: When did conditions start to change? When do you remember when things started to get difficult?

A: When the war broke out, 1939.

Q: This is 39. So up to that point you had a normal childhood, without any problems.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But then comes September 1939 and what happened in your town?

A: In 1939.

Q: Yeah.

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A: That Friday in 1939 and mostly --

Carol: Oh the Kristallnacht.

A: No, not Kristallnacht no. The war broke out on a Friday, Friday and I don't know the time was exactly. I have to look at.

Q: That's ok. What were your memories of that day, just generally, what were your memories.

A: Germans ok. When the Germans came in they occupied it.

Q: So you saw German soldiers coming in.

A: Oh yes, yes. The Jews there, as soon as they came in, the Jews were forbidden to walk on the street and they had to go at the **Ringstoch** (German word?) we called it. Not where the Germans, where the people go, were not allowed to go.

Carol: The sidewalk probably.

A: That right away. We were not allowed to go on the sidewalk. But they would, going to the market. Our stores and markets.

Q: You were what, 17 years old then right?

A: No I was born. I always had to change my birthday. If it's good to be young. I was young. If good to be older, I was older.

Q: Was it very frightening as a teenager to see German soldiers?

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A: Yes, yes. Yes. But we had a Mogen, Mogen David. We had in front on the houses and a yellow, big yellow on the back, on the jacket.

Q: You had to wear a yellow star is what you're saying.

A: A yellow star and a yellow star of David. Yes.

Q: How did that make you feel?

A: What choice did we have.

Q: So it was very upsetting to you, to have to –

A: Yes.

Q: Wear that.

A: Yes and the Germans used to come to our building. We had many, we had like 40 families living there. They pushed in more families. They took us, away the building next to us and the people they put them in our home. And another. And –

Q: And what did your parents say? Did you talk to your parents about what was happening?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember anything that they said to you about explaining?

A: No, I remember one thing. I didn't let my father go. Whenever they came in, so for take for works something, to their private homes, the Germans. I went for him. Yes, so I made myself older and they asked how old I am, I always gave two or three years more.

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Q: What kind of work did you do for the Germans?

A: Whatever they needed. To clean their house. To, anything they needed.

Q: Just to go back in time, you had mentioned Kristallnacht. That was in November 38. Did you know what was happening? Do you remember that at all?

A: What, what do I remember what?

Q: Kristallnacht. Do you remember that. That was the year before.

A: The Kristallnacht.

Q: Did you know about it when it was happening?

A: Yes, we had to know. We had, I was a reader from, from my youngest years.

Carol: My husband is addicted to newspapers and to –

A: I was, I was.

Q: So you read about it in the newspapers.

A: Yes, I knew everything that was going on.

Q: But nothing happened around you. Let's get back. So the Germans are in –

A: I know but people who lived in our house, they were hanging. They hanged them.

Q: This was when?

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A: This was before we were, before we were taken to Auschwitz.

Q: You were living at home with your family.

A: That's right.

Q: And then what was the next change?

A: The next change was Auschwitz in November 1942. And the war broke out in 1939.

Q: Ok so you were home until 1942.

A: Until 1942 I was home.

Q: With your whole family.

A: No cause my sisters were in Warsaw and so on. They went. We had no connection. We couldn't call them. The Jews weren't allowed, didn't have phones. The phone was taken away from us. So —

Q: You didn't know what was happening with them.

A: No, I don't.

Q: So you were home with your parents?

A: Yes. Until 42.

Q: And did you have enough food up til 1942. Was there enough food?

A: I think so. It wasn't a problem.

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Q: And you were working for the Germans.

A: That's right. Not every day. But then they took me. I had to work then a long time.

Q: But you weren't going to school during that time.

A: No, no school no, nothing. No.

Q: Did you have a lot of friends that you could talk things over with?

A: But we couldn't communicate. We were separated. For instance I was a member in the **Parchada Agudus** [ph] schul. The young very young and so and it didn't function anymore. Nothing functioned.

Q: Did you have no contact with your friends, the other members of the group?

A: During the war, that's right, that's right.

Q: Now comes 1942 and what happened?

A: 1942 we were called all of us to come to the, we had a medieval place, I'm looking for the word.

Q: A castle?

A: Yes, a large one. But it has only from the middle ages that only the walls were there. And the others were _____ know how it was. Only the walls were there and then the whole city, all the Jews were taken in, went to go in there to the **schloss** we called it. And –

Q: So these were men, women and children.

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A: Men, women and children, but we go into the schloss. There were three entrances and the Nazis stayed at each entry and we were going in, they beat us, beaten us over the head and whatever. To put in the, I don't know why they did it. They were beating us. And I did not get beaten because I figured when I saw when they're going in, if you have the specialty (?) hand and to go into the ____ you couldn't do it the one that's closest to you. I was closest to the German soldiers so the way that they was so that they were beating the people, they didn't hit me. I wasn't hit because, and then inside I, they did one of the first things that they did. They took away the watches we had. I had a watch I got from my eldest brother in for my bar mitzvah. And they took away. And then we had to give away everything that we had.

Q: So you were with your mother and your father and who else?

A: My mother, father and –

Q: Anybody else?

A: No. Because no –

Q: The three of you from your family?

A: No, we had sisters.

Q: Your sisters were with you?

A: Yes. Not the oldest. The oldest was in Warsaw. Yeah.

Q: And then how long did you stay in the castle?

A: Now, about only less than a day because after that they hanged. The first thing they did they took in a few boys, young boys yeah to start digging a grave and then they killed them. They put

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fear to them so they killed them and then they buried them there. And then they hanged they hanged a, he's not they hanged him before because he, they did, he buried all of the **swarem** [ph] the **Severai Kodosh** [ph], the holy books and they know it and knew of that. I don't know how. That he did it and so they said they're going to hang him. And they put it, thing over him and then they forced the son to hang him. In other words they had the **patla** ____ Over his neck and he had to take the table away from his legs. So he was hanging so they hanged him. **Berish Klenis** was his name, the one was hanged. And the son that had to take away the –

Q: Was he a rabbi?

A: No he was a **gerehoset** [ph].

Carol: Excuse me for interrupting. I think it sounds as though he needs to drink something. Could I give him a sip of coffee?

(coffee break)

A: When your wife tells you, you have to do it.

Q: So you stayed in the castle for one day.

A: No, not a full day.

Q: And then where did you –

A: Several hours.

Q: Then where did you go?

A: We were taken to the train. We didn't know where we're going. We came to Auschwitz.

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Q: How long did the trip take?

A: We were, we came there closer to the evening.

Q: So you got there within a day is what you're saying.

A: Less than a day because we spent a half a day in the castle.

Q: And then a half a day on the – was it in a cattle car?

A: No. They packed us all one on top of the other.

Q: In a regular train?

A: Yes.

Q: When you got to Auschwitz did you know what that was?

A: No.

Q: What happened when you got off the train?

A: After the train we have to get completely undressed and put on the **haftling** [ph]. I got put in the uniform.

Q: Who were you with. Were you still with anybody in your family?

A: No.

Q: You were by yourself?

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A: Yes because I, the older people they went in another transport or something.

Q: You did not go to Auschwitz with your parents? You went by yourself?

A: I thought I went with my parents.

Carol: Were they separated at Auschwitz --

A: That's right, that's right.

Carol: A place for the older people, the young people and another place for those who can work and who wanted to --

Q: OK that's when you got separated, when you arrived at Auschwitz?

A: That's right.

Q: Did you say anything to your parents when you got separated?

A: No, from the well we were not, we didn't come in the same, on the same train. Everybody came separate.

Q: You came separately. Now you're in Auschwitz and you have your uniform you said. You're wearing a uniform in Auschwitz?

A: No, no I didn't take it with me.

Carol: What do you mean uniform? You didn't have a uniform to take with you did you?

A: No it was a --

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Q: What did you wear when you, after you arrived in Auschwitz?

A: I don't know how to describe it. We didn't have on our clothing at all, nothing. They gave us pants and a yellow star on the back and front and so prisoners a special, they can recognize them in this way and so on. But –

Q: Did you get a tattoo on your arm?

A: Yes. Yes, I still have my number.

Q: What is your number?

A: My number is 751, I have it here.

Carol: 5 7. 75157.

A: 75157. This was my number. The early, I am from the early --

Q: And what was it like when they did that to you? Do you remember your thoughts or how you felt?

A: No. That I don't know how they did it. They did it with needles but I still have it.

Q: What were you thinking of when they did it to you?

A: I don't know what I can say.

Q: Then what happened? Did they put you to work?

A: Yes.

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Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: They didn't, for a day or two I collected stone from the grounds. But then we were taken and after a few days we were taken, first we were sleeping in Birkenau. Birkenau is next door . They know, the head of Birkenau but and I remember that my uncle, one of my uncles was with the children so when they took the children away from him and he did say no I want to go where they go and he said, so and they said **Bitte Schein** [ph]. So they were taken to the crematorium.

Carol: By the way, going back to the tattoo if you don't mind. My going back. The man who did the tattoo he was a Kopo. Did you say he was a Jew and he made some kind of sadistic remark towards you, about you. He said that Marc, said he was a bad man. Just to rub it in literally and figuratively.

A: He was Jewish himself.

Carol: That's right. He was a Jewish man. You know this Stockholm syndrome they call it. So he was just mean. He was mean to the other Jewish inmates.

A: No he was joking around.

Carol: He was joking. That's no joke when you say the things that he said.

A: I know that part.

Q: You were about 20 years old at that time.

A: Yeah I think I was younger at Auschwitz. I told them but I don't know, not too young but younger.

Q: The first couple of days you said you moved rocks.

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Carol: He split rocks

A: I stayed there and they didn't have any special work for me. Then suddenly a few days after that they called me and they took me away from there. I collect the stone. I don't know.

And **Otsoff** were there and took me, it took me to **Golleschau**, our little **steinbruchs** at the end, German. So do you know what steinbruch is .

Q: A stone? Was it a quarry?

A: A quarry, a quarry that's right. That's right and a cement were made. And the place was Golleschau, was several miles from Auschwitz.

Q: Did you go back to Auschwitz at night or did you stay in Golleschau?

A: I stayed in Golleschau.

Q: How long were you in Birkenau? For how long? A couple weeks? A couple days?

A: A couple of days.

Q: Days. Then you went to Golleschau and what did you do there?

A: I was taken to, to the steinbruch, to the quarry, I was taken and my job was splitting the stones. The stones. And I did a good job in that cause I knew of the stones have veins, veins. That I was a good splitter of stones.

Q: Were you able to talk to the other prisoners?

A: Yes, if we worked together but we couldn't talk. You have to do your work.

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Q: Were they mostly young people like you?

A: I would say there were no old people, yeah.

Q: And what about food? How much food did they give you?

A: We were hungry every day.

Q: What did they give you to eat?

A: To eat in the morning was a, in camp language a **pikel** of bread. That would be a small portion of bread, dry bread then and nothing. And for dinner it was a **shisel** [ph], I don't know. No meat, nothing. In fact we were very hungry every day.

Q: Where did you sleep?

A: Sleep. There was a factory there where I was and the workers, there were workers there. So I, where we sleep there. Yes in many, many beds there were almost 20, 30 beds in a room, big room because the factory had, was employees before we came there.

Q: Did you have to work every single day?

A: Yes.

Q: No day of rest?

A: No day of rest. And I went to work 6:00 in the morning.

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Carol: And Marc was telling me that in winter time these guards were so cruel. As soon as they got up from bed, this was about 4:00 in the morning they had to roll in the snow and the ice in their pajamas.

A: That happened once or twice.

Q: How did you keep yourself clean?

A: Pardon

Q: How did you keep yourself clean or did you keep yourself clean?

A: Yes you could wash yourself yeah.

Q: Did you talk about what was happening with your other workers, with the people with you?

A: No, they knew it. I have some very nice friends there, I made there. I know their name. I couldn't find them after that because I don't know when we were starting to march, to leave, I could if I knew I could tell more, when you see me. I don't know. If I, you called me today in the morning I'm not even dressed.

Q: How long did you stay in Golleschau?

A: Two and a half years.

Q: Oh two and a half years.

Carol: That saved his life.

A: That's right, that's right.

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Q: Did you know what was happening in the outside world while you were at Golleschau. Did you know?

A: No, people came you know with the food had to come from Auschwitz, the cook. The cook was Jewish doctor, a Jewish doctor and when we went to the quarry we also had a Jewish doctor from Paris. He was born in **Płok**, not far from Cierchanów. I, I have a friend that , they were my friends and I ascribe them, a lot to them for my survival.

Q: Do you remember their names?

A: (both talking) Yes, ---**Shok** was one. I don't think he's still alive. Dr. **Rusa** was from France. And but he was born in Płok, not far from Cierchanów. Dr. Rusa and then had also other doctors. I had friends, younger friends too.

Q: Did you have any contact with your parents? Or your sisters while you were in Golleschau.

A: I didn't know anything about them. I til now. I know where they were taken. I don't know if at Auschwitz or Birkenau. I know nothing about them.

Q: So you stay for two years, two and a half years and then

A: Two and a half years.

Q: And then where did you go?

A: Stayed in Germany for a while and the Germans took us. We was at one camp. Then we left the camp. And –

Q: Do you know the name of the camp, where you went?

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A: No. One of them I was around who was the **burgermeister** before, under Hitler. You know but they took us in.

Q: This is 1944 we're talking about right?

A: 1945, is it?

Q: Oh it's already 1945.

A: That's right. When I was, when we was liberated.

Carol: Was this the death march that you were on, Marc?

A: Before that. I was on the death march.

Q: You went from Golleschau.

A: That's right.

Q: What was that like? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

A: We were, we walked day and night. Until we came to I have it written the name of the –

Q: This is what, like January? Or February?

A: When we, no. It was –

Q: In 45.

A: 45 because right. Yeah.

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Q: And then you went to another camp you said and then what?

A: I went another and then Golleschau.

Q: No, no after you left Golleschau. You said you went on a death march.

A: Yeah that's right. And then I have an incident on the death march because I know the Jew that was so weak and couldn't walk. So I took him, I took his arm and I was carrying him. I was carrying him so they, the soldier who accompanied us was telling me let him go. That I should not hold him. And that then but since there were so many people so I said well he doesn't know so I didn't. And so he came in with his --

Carol: Bayonet

A: Bayonet and give him a stock so let him go. And he pushed him. He killed him twice and I continued and continued into . He only gave me a shtoyda with the end of the gun.

Q: So then you went at the end of the march thing you were in another camp.

A: That's right.

Q: Was that the time of liberation or what?

A: No. It wasn't. It was just another, and then we came another camp to another camp and Pocking and Pocking that's in Germany. But --

Carol: And Munich, Marc too. Munich.

Q: This is, the war's still going on. It isn't the time of liberation.

A: That's right. But soon after that it was. But I -- we were then in Germany in another place.

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Q: Where were you at the time of liberation?

A: In the town of liberation.

Q: At the time of liberation, where were you?

A: Pocking.

Q: And that's where you were? And what was it like, what do you remember?

A: No next to Pocking about a few miles there was a camp. Where have had in homes but we took it over when we were there. There were many people –

Q: What was it like at the time of liberation? What do you remember about that time?

A: Yes, I remember very well.

Q: Tell me a little bit about it.

A: Yeah. We were liberated and after was a camp outside of Pocking. Pocking was a small city. It was in Bavaria I think and not too far from Munich. So –

Q: What did you do when you heard it was, the war was over?

A: When we heard the war was over.

Q: Did you celebrate at all?

A: No, no.

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Q: What was your health like at that time, what kind of condition were you in?

A: I was in, except for being a little bit thinner than I was, I don't know. I didn't give it any thought.

Q: Then you stayed for how long after liberation?

A: In Germany. I suddenly got a surprise note from America, from my father's uncle so who had heard at the time that I survived. I heard from other people. I don't know how. And so they took to America. My father's uncle I don't know, they went those _____. Of them the second generation or the third, I don't know.

Q: You were in Germany and you got this notice from the relatives and how did you get to the United States?

A: Because I had on my father's uncle was in the United States.

Q: I understand that. I just wanted to know where did you go from Germany? Did you go back to Poland at all.

A: No, no, no.

Q: What did you do? Where did you go?

A: I stayed in Germany until I went to the United States.

Q: When did you come to the United States?

A: In the 1940s, I don't know.

Carol: The late 1940s.

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A: I'd have to look in my papers.

Q: You stayed for a few years in Germany?

A: No, not a few years. A few months. Or several months.

Carol: How did you support yourself, Marc.

A: The UNRHA got, gave us a little bit of money and then and –

Q: Where were you living in Germany?

A: Some people took us in where we got it. We paid \$10 or \$15 and I mean we were, I was a German settler too in Munich.

Q: You were in Munich.

A: Yeah that's right.

Q: And then from there you came to the United States.

A: That's right.

Q: By boat?

A: By boat.

Q: What was the name of your boat?

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A: I don't remember any more. When I came in. You called me and am just got up from bed so I'll take my, have my papers. I'll look over something.

Q: That's ok. You came to the United States and where did you settle.

A: I came to the United States and I settled in New York I think in the Jewish Theological seminary. I went, I was taken in there and they gave me my life back.

Q: You lived at the Seminary.

A: That's right.

Carol: At first he had a little rented room but then when the seminary heard about him, they invited him to stay with them.

A: No, the seminary students there.

Q: Yeah the dormitory, right and did you go to school or did you –

A: Yes.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: I whenever, one of the first things I went to school. At first I went to study English that's right. And eventually, eventually I was taken in by the burgermeister, the mayor of Pocking. He took me in. He and his wife and his daughter and she was teaching me French. To do a language. I should have the English

Carol: But when Marc was in New York he had to go to high school first. So they gave him money. The seminary gave him money.

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A: No, I went to Columbia University.

Carol: Yeah but first you had to go to high school and finish. Then you went to Columbia University.

A: And I finished Columbia University with a master's degree.

Q: In what field did you study? A master's degree in what, what field?

A: No, no just at first you get a bachelor's degree and then I got the master's degree, academia.

Q: In –

A: In the college of teachers.

Q: You got a masters in teaching?

A: That's right.

Q: And then what did you do?

A: Then I went to the, I went to Columbia University. Did I tell you that?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, Columbia University.

Q: You said you got a master's and then what did you do after you got your masters.

A: I went for the English and to study and that's right, at first have to get an education. And I got it.

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Q: Did you teach at all? Did you do any teaching?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Where did you teach?

A: In the synagogue I taught. I had jobs.

Q: In New York?

A: Not in the city of New York.

Carol: Oh you mean north of New York like those fancy neighborhoods in New York.

Q: In Westchester?

Carol: Yeah, that's right Westchester County there were a couple of families and used him.

Q: Then you did what, after that? You stayed there how long?

A: In, I was in the rabbinical school. At first I went to the teacher's institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary but I came already with a background. My, when I was young, before I had any knew Talmud and so on, I was one of the knowledgeable ones.

Q: I wanted to ask you. Do you remember your bar mitzvah?

A: If I remember we had no big celebration. So –

Q: You just took part in the service?

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A: That's right.

Q: You are teaching in Westchester. And you stayed there how long?

A: I was teaching and –

Q: Did you become a rabbi? Did you get –

A: Yes.

Q: Oh you did, from the seminary, you got a –

A: From the seminary.

Carol: A master of Hebrew letters. And also a doctorate of Hebrew letters.

Q: Tell me about the change of name when you were –

A: Since I didn't have my father, my father was Shmuel. In Lokiec the people could not pronounce it because the spelling is, was L-O-K-I-E-Lokiec-C. And so I sent, I took my father's first name. I didn't know where he was killed and where he was taken. I have no idea. And perhaps you would know, if you were able to tell me. Perhaps. I don't know. And so –

Q: When did you do this, when did you take your father's name? When did you change your name?

A: When I think when I became an American.

Carol: Yes, when he became a naturalized citizen in the court at that same time.

Q: Wonderful. What was it like to become an American citizen?

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A: I like it.

Q: Do you remember that day at all? The ceremony?

Carol: I do.

Q: When was that?

A: My wife, I met my wife in the seminary. I slept in the seminary too. So I lived there and –

Q: Tell me how you met your wife.

A: Ok my wife came to the seminary for her book. She was in college. She had, a book of Jewish, what is it, Jewish

Carol: In folklore. At Indiana University and I was home for the holidays.

A: So she came into the seminary our seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary was famous for two big libraries. So she came, but she came too late in the evening. 6:00 is when they closed already. So she was in the telephone booth to call home and I stayed there and so I came over to her and said can I help? And she told me about it. I say oh this book, I have it.

Carol: Very conveniently.

A: And I really had it, I did some – and I gave her the book. And then she came home, her mother says where did you get the book. And she said oh at the – at this man was yeah he went up to his room. Said right away that you have to give it back. I will give it back to him.

Carol: I'll mail it back to him. She was horrified that I should go into some strange, as she said

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strange man's room but I figured with a rabbinical student and at the seminary how fearful do I have to be and he did have the book that I needed. Those were different, different days I'd say.

Q: How long were you together before you got married?

A: I think as soon as I saw her.

Carol: And we met during the so called Christmas vacation and then we were engaged in November and we married in April.

Q: Of what year was this?

Carol: 1957 is when we were married.

Q: Wonderful.

A: Carol remembers better than I.

Carol: I do and also I don't know how much detail you want but when he came to New York he had no means of self-support so, beside this small amount of UNRHA money and so he took a room in some poor little area, one of these funny hotels, shabby looking hotels and he got a job as an usher in a movie theater. You know the guy with a uniform and a flashlight. That was the only thing he could do cause he didn't know any English so when people heard about him, people at the Seminary heard about him, they took him in right away. And that's how he was saved. He was an excellent student and he –

A: I was seven years there.

Carol: Yes and he is one of the more well I shouldn't say one of the more, but there are different categories of rabbis just as there are doctors and physicians and professors. And he was one of the top, very top students and one of the few students.

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A: I allowed my wife back.

Carol: Well you deserve it.

Q: So then you moved to Westchester. Is that what happened?

A: No I had several, several positions.

Q: Where else did you work?

A: Carol, my wife will remember that better.

Carol: Well these were not positions. These were, Marc taught the children of some well to do wealthy families and he would commute to Westchester and two of these children were Marc was it Jan Peerce. Jan Peerce's children. Their brother in law, Jan Peerce and the other Jewish cantor and also there was a doctor, a physician and Marc taught their children too.

A: My wife's memory is better than mine.

Q: And then you stayed in New York for how long?

A: New York, Carol.

Carol: Yes, we didn't stay in New York. We only stayed in New York as long as Marc needed in order to finish school cause we married in April and graduation was going to be in June. So we rented sublet an apartment from one of the students who was going off to England. We stayed there and then Marc got a job in Midland, Michigan. And so –

A: That's my first job.

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Carol: So that's where we went.

A: I was a rabbi.

Q: You were a rabbi, ok.

A: I was a rabbi there.

Carol: That was his first job. And we went off to Midland.

Q: And then you stayed in Michigan how long.

Carol: Three years.

Q: And then where did you go?

A: Because in the rabbinate you first you don't get the congregation. And then you go up and up.

Q: And then where did you go after that?

Carol: We went to Charlotte, North Carolina. And we had two children there. We had a baby in Midland. We had two in Charlotte and then we moved afterwards, not directly afterwards I think or maybe it was directly afterwards, we had a daughter. We had four children and the daughter was born in Pennsylvania, Washington, Pennsylvania.

Q: And now you're in Massachusetts.

Carol: Yes, but we were in Connecticut before we came to Massachusetts.

A: My wife's memory is better than mine.

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Q: Can I ask you some general questions. What are your thoughts now about Germany. Do you have any special feelings about Germany?

A: Yes, I have no feelings at all for them. Because –

Carol: But they're Israel's best friend now. Well he went –

A: I have other things to think about.

Carol: No, but you do think of the Holocaust all the time.

Q: Well that was going to be my next question. Do you think about the war years and the Holocaust?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Carol: All the time.

A: How can you be without them. I will say the seminary, the Jewish Seminary was so nice to me, very nice to me. Although in the beginning, as a student, the students, the men they take me in. Now I had a good background. I already then, I knew Talmud before all the things.

Q: Have you been to Israel?

A: Oh yes. Several times.

Carol: His one brother survived, the oldest brother, the oldest sibling, Moshe. He married a very lovely Jewish Russian woman and they had two children and we went to visit them so that's the only family he had left.

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Q: And where did his brother live? In Israel?

Carol: Yes he lived, after the war he settled in **Holon**, H-O-L-O-N. And we visited them.

Q: So that's the only relative you have on your side?

Carol: The immediate relative yes. There are a few little cousins here and there. Second cousins. I know first cousins maybe.

A: No I think I have a first cousin.

Carol: Yes, **Mietic**.

A: Mietic, he's still living, I don't know.

Carol: Yes and also there's another cousin who was in politics in Russia.

Q: Have you been back to Poland at all?

A: I was in **Sachenau** was it the ninth.

Carol: Yes, my son took us to, took us and my oldest son the four of us went to Poland. To see Marc's city and we saw his house which is in very good condition on this square, this market area which is now I don't know trees or something like this. We went to see documents at the city hall. And we went to Krakow and we went to where was your mother born, **Korogel** or something like that.

A: **Korgel**.

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Carol: Yeah, Korgel. And we went let's see where else. Oh Warsaw. There is a big building where the main synagogue was. I don't know. It was like cars or car repairs, but a very elegant large building. And then that was the beginning of the ghetto. But the ghetto of course was torn down and rebuilt. They have seen built buildings, houses where people lived. But it was right there, right near the synagogue.

Q: When your children were growing up, did you tell them about what happened to you and your experiences? Did you talk about it a lot with your children?

A: I don't remember.

Carol: No he did not because if we did say anything or I would say something, he would just brush us off and say well I'll give you some books to read. You can read about it because it was too difficult for him to face. And this is why he didn't write any books about his experience. And that's why we're so glad to be able to talk to you or somebody so that some of his, some of their understanding can rub off and they'll be a little more knowledgeable.

Q: Do you think you would have been a different person today if you hadn't gone through what you went through?

A: I don't know. I prepared myself. I was known. My father with a few other people did, brought special teachers, specialty for me because for me and a few other people, because we wanted to. And –

Q: You're talking about the studies?

A: Yes, I, in addition we studied beyond the normal that children go. We went a little higher in situation.

Q: Do you think you are more religious because of what you lived through?

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A: No, no. I was more religious before.

Carol: But you were younger too.

A: Yes I was younger too. I have the Jewish garb. A Yiddish **yetl**, a **kapote**, you know. Do you know what that is.

Q: When you were raising your children, what kind of religious background did they have. A good one I'm sure.

Carol: We sent them to day school.

Q: Jewish day school.

Carol: But the day school we sent them Harriet Academy in Springfield, Massachusetts was very poor quality and then they went to high school. Oh yes my oldest son went to a good day school. Yes, Marc used to schlep them back and forth –

A: Maimonides.

Carol: To Maimonides here in Brookline back and forth. They'd come home Friday afternoon and then go back Sunday night. They boarded with a family and it was expensive but we were happy for them to go. So –

Q: What brought you to Brookline? A job?

Carol: No. you want me to talk or should I have him talk?

A: You talk.

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Carol: Ok. The children when they graduated from high school they got into Brandeis and one son went to the University of Connecticut. So when they were at Brandeis they made friends of course and they, that was where they settled and they just felt at home and why else would they go somewhere else. They felt. And then why else would where'd we go. So we settled in Brookline also for the same reason. Cause we have four grandchildren now. And so it doesn't make sense to go off to California or something.

Q: Do you remember the Eichmann trial, and if so what your thoughts were during that?

A: I am, I have been a reader of newspapers, even I still was in Ciechanów as a young boy. I remember that the director from the school Rabbi Ava **Keremon** was, lived next door to me, to us. So and I was a reader and on one can read some Hebrew and he couldn't make out one word. He came to me and asked me and he was the principal of the school like a .

Carol: And Marc speaks fluently in Hebrew from his early education.

Q: You think about your war time experience very frequently? Are there any –

A: Yes.

Carol: Constantly.

Q: Are there any sounds or sights or smells that bring it back, that sometimes make you think about Auschwitz or Golleschau?

A: No, no.

Carol: No, if you read something Marc you have a tendency to have a bad dream. That happens cause it remind him.

A: That's some of the Holocaust. I lost my whole family.

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Carol: Interestingly there was a fellow in his house, his house where he was living before he was taken away by the name of Leventhal, Zalman Leventhal. And it's strange by coincidence this fellow became a **Sondercommander** at Auschwitz. I think he was in charge of putting dead bodies into the crematorium. And this is a fellow that Marc temporarily went to school with. But eventually he was murdered and then also he wrote a lot of information. I don't know if it's a lot of information. But he wrote information and hid it around the concentration camp. So he must have left a little bit of a legacy but it can be seen and there's a mention of this Zalman Leventhal in the Auschwitz album. I don't know if you know about that. It's a book. So there's a mention of Zalman so it was a coincidence. He lived in the same house as Marc in the

A: And I had another thing to say, to write about him. He's the one who convinced me to go to yeshiva and of the **garon**, you know what garon is.

Q: The garon, yeah.

A: After yeshiva which was **lahonum vashenem**, the famous, a famous big, and the lahonum vashenem, I went there to yeshiva. They took me in and one of the people there came over to me. And can you please do me a favor. I said, what, of course rabbi. I need ink to write. I says I'll go out and get ink. And then I got homesick. I went home. I left and a few months after that lahonum vashenem was killed. And then that's another story.

Q: have you been to the Holocaust museum in Washington.

Carol: Yes, we were there Marc.

A: We were there.

Q: And have you been to Yad Vashem in Israel?

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Carol: No I don't think when we were there. There's a more recent building perhaps. I don't know. Maybe we did. I think we did, I think we did.

A: Yad Vashem.

Q: Is there anything else you wanted to talk about that we haven't covered. Anything that you might –

A: I might. I don't know.

Carol: There's one thing. It's not important but it seems that there are certain people who were better liked than other people. I mean not that there was anything unlikeable about these other people. But maybe they thought they would have a better chance at surviving. And Marc was very weak and so he was in this, what they called a hospital. But it wasn't and there was no medicine or care. But this Dr. **Rusa** was in charge and he called Marc and told him to please come in and he would help take care of him. And so then he came to Marc. I don't know how many days later, a few days later maybe, and said Marc get ready to leave because the guards are going to come and make a selection.

A: That was in camp.

Carol: Yes, that's right that was in camp and so they quickly hustled Marc out of there and then of course the guards picked out whoever they wanted.

A: That was in Golleschau.

Carol: That helped Marc to survive, to have friends. And I get by with my little friends.

A: I had a lot of friends too, there.

Carol: With help from his friends.

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Q: Are there any other stories you want to tell about like about your friends in Golleschau.

A: You go home and suddenly you know to be ready tell us –

Q: I wanted to ask you. Did they build, was a ghetto built in your town? When the Germans came in.

A: No.

Q: No, there was no ghetto. Ok.

A: No you know but most people lived in our house because they put in families in addition to our own families. We only had three rooms and they put in neighbors because they took the, they take for themselves.

Carol: And by the way Schindler's list and sometimes there might, probably are other movies which touched on the Holocaust. That you saw the prisoners eating. Now Marc says that nobody sat down. They weren't allowed to sit down while they ate. They all had to stand around and eat. But that just goes to show the inhumanity of these people. They were sadist. They were very sadistic. They were pathological murderers and criminals. They were sociopaths and psychopaths. And this is the existence they had to live among. These crazy hateful people.

A: I had, Jewish people, very nice people that were my friends. All the nice people were friends.

Carol: But as a matter of fact, an interesting also an interesting situation is especially during the war when we were married at the end of the 50s, we didn't know whether to buy German products or not. A lot of Jews were not doing it. In fact I even came across someone recently who won't buy at Trader Joe. I don't know if you have a Trader Joe in your neighborhood. They will not buy a British, German goods and so Marc said that well the state of Israel buys its buses and trucks and a lot of their Volkswagens from Germany so not that he was suggesting that we

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not buy from Germany. But it seems to be that that phase is over now. And Germany is one of Israel's good friends. They don't have very many friends in Europe any more, or even in China. There is a lot of anti-Semitism. And so –

A: I get that sub –

Carol: Yes, Marc said that Germany didn't suffer enough. The Germans didn't suffer enough. And they didn't. They just walked home after the war. Only a few of them were hung at the Eichmann trial and a few other places. But they didn't suffer enough.

A: Of course you know they all committed suicide.

Q: Tell me the names of your children and grandchildren.

Carol: You want to tell her.

A: You have better –

Carol: Ok our oldest son's name is Steven. I know this is a Christian name which is a popular name among Jews because there are so many Shmuels around and so we, since our last name was Samuels, and Marc wanted to call him Samuel, Samuels. That's what his name would have been. I said nothing doing. He said I hate you when he gets older for naming him Samuel Samuels, although it strangely enough Marc was, my son Steve was helping out, he was an assistant to a librarian at Brandeis and he came across the name Samuel Samuels. Then he came across the middle initial S in the middle. Samuel S Samuels. And then eventually he found out that the guy's name was Samuel, Samuel, Samuels. That doesn't even sound possible but he wasn't joking either. But I refused to name him Samuel with the last name of Samuels. So we called him Steven for that reason.

And then Steven. Jonas which was the brother who was killed in Auschwitz, who gave him this crust of bread, gave Marc this crust of bread and then was killed. And then, oh yes he was

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beaten up and they took his boots away. I don't know if Marc mentioned that to you. Took his boots away and then they beat him up. And then he was gassed or whatever they do.

Q: This was a friend of Marc's.

Carol: No this is Marc's brother.

Q: Oh Marc's brother. No he didn't say that.

Carol: Yes. Steve's middle name is Jonas or Yona after his brother.

A: He was murdered in Auschwitz.

Q: And your other children's names.

Carol: Oh yes, oh that's right. So that Steven Jonas Samuels. And Jonathan Gabriel Samuels. Gabriel was my grandfather's name. Jonathan sounds like Jonas and so I kind of snuck that in cause you are not supposed to give the same name to your children. So in Johan's time. Then David. I always liked the name David. It's just the ultimate Jewish name. I feel the Jewish, the most meaningful Jewish name I think. So David Michael. Since Jonathan's middle name is Gabriel. I have one angel. I named David, David Michael, the other angel. And then Debby is Marc's, Marc's mother. Deborah, Devora. So she has the name of Devora. Let's see.

A: She's a professor in the college, in Wheelock college here.

Carol: Yes, Wheelock College. She just came back from Italy and she was also in Munich teaching the Holocaust. This is her second trip in the course at Wheelock College. It was highly interesting and she got a lot of students to go with her.

Q: Have you worked?

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Carol: I personally. No because I was filled with kids and also there were a lot of synagogue things I had to go to. All the bar mitzvahs and the Hadassah and the Sisterhood, and the Sisterhood board, the Hadassah board. And this goes on and on. People who invite you which is very nice but enough is enough. So I didn't, but I did go to school at night. I didn't go to, I didn't graduate college because my parents just didn't have the money. My father was divorced and their parents were divorced so they had their separate families. So it took me about ten years or more, 12 years to get my bachelor's degree at the University of Pittsburgh when we were in Washington, Pennsylvania. And then we moved and so we were in the Springfield area. And I went to the University of Massachusetts and I finished my degree.

Oh yes, I got a degree from the University of Pittsburgh in English and I got a master of arts in teaching at the University of Massachusetts which is now a very good state school. And then I had nothing to do when we went to Connecticut. Willimantic Connecticut, Emanuel center. So I got another degree, a bachelor of fine arts this time in graphic design. So I've kept myself busy at night but not to get too involved with his work.

Q: Is there anything else, a message to your grandchildren, Marc, that you would like to give or anything else you wanted to say before we close?

A: Grandchildren, they're very young now.

Carol: Nobody is really interested in becoming a rabbi and not only that but we're very disappointed that they don't even take books out of this very large library. Marc donate more than 1500 books to the University of Connecticut, where he taught by the way and we still have over about 1600 books left right now in our very small apartment. So we really don't know what to do about that. So we have one of the largest book collections that any Judaica library has. And it's called the Rabbi Marc E. Samuels Judaica collection. Yes. So they're not interested for some reason. Of course they're very young now. But they probably will be interested later on but we still don't know what to do with them. We moved into assisted living.

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Q: Well thank you very much for doing this interview and I just have a few closing words I wanted to say. And so if you could just wait one moment, unless there's something else you wanted to add. Is there anything else you wanted to add or do you feel you've said –

Carol: Yes, about Germany today. Years ago Marc mentioned the fact that the Germans of today are not necessarily the way they were or not the same country as it was. And that you can't blame Germany, German people today at least most of them. There's always anti-Semites around. That you can't get mad at them. They had nothing to do with it. But the fact that they are supportive of Israel is a very good, it's a good sign. Now they're pretty sick and tired of the **Bittegoodmachen** [ph] I think it's called giving all this money away as a pension.

Q: Do you get money from Germany?

A: I do.

Q: You do, you still do?

A: Yes. And –

Q: How do you feel about that?

A: No. I, they took money from me. I came to Washington with some money put into my body, hidden and then they took it everything. Now –

Carol: They took his father gave each child money. I don't know how much it was, like about \$200 or something like that.

A: I don't know.

Carol: And –

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A: I got 500 –

Carol: Like it was folded up and put into their behind, in their rectum and that's how they hid it and for the girls they gave extra money. But when they got to the camps there was no way that they could hide it anymore. And it was useless anyway. You couldn't buy your way out. They'd kill you anyway, after taking the money.

Q: Those are all important stories. I just wanted to thank you for doing the interview and we will close now by my saying this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview of Marc Samuels.

A: I want to mention one, one thing more. It's not about me but I was present, eyewitness to it. There was a family. He went to the **Geresh Tebel** [ph] here. He was an Orthodox person and he and -

Carol: Did you lose your train of thought?

A: Yes, yes. Don't take for granted that this is all I have to say. Yeah.

Q: Thank you again for doing the interview. Let me just repeat that this concludes the interview of Marc Samuels.

A: Ok.

(end)