

OK, so you were describing how one day you were told to clean up this tremendous amount of blood that was flowing like a river, you said--

Right.

--from the people who were killed in the field by the--

From the valley. So the valley were filled up. And one side of the valley is high and the other side is lower. Then they happened-- the blood went through-- past the valley a mile away. Was going on railroad train. The blood starts shooting through the railroads so they don't want to do that.

So they try to catch as many people they could get, whatever they find in the camps. People not then to work, whatever they was. They took them to-- and I was included in them. They took them to that place and they came down to that place-- what I saw-- here they were shooting. And they took us the other place to over there, the mile away to the blood was were. Here they were shooting and a mile away was blood streaming from the people, from those killed people.

And so dig ground and make it stop for that blood. And we were working there until late at night, until the dark. And that was summertime, must have been in July. Whatever. So when they--

It must have been very difficult for you to do this.

Difficult. What we saw there, you'll not believable. One guy went-- he went down to that leader he said, listen, I am a German officer. I was in the army in the--

Germany.

Went to army-- by the--- by Kaiser Franz Josef. I said, "I was in his army. And mine honor is I ask you to do me a favor and kill me. I don't want to stay and wait. I'm going to get killed anyhow. Kill me now," he says.

So this guy didn't want to kill him. So he went out to ask the other-- the higher man and said, "Listen. That crazy Jew want me to kill him." He said, "Why not. Tell him-- let him dig out a grave for himself and you kill him."

He did. He dig out a grave, and bullet, fell down. That was at the [? present. ?] Then I saw something like that. And he says, I'm an honorable man. He say, he's a German, because he was in the Wehrmacht. I mean, in the first war-- that was the first war. It was the 1914 war. Was that the first war?

The first war, yeah.

He says I was a rank. I was a Captain. And my honor is to be killed with honor not the was like slaughter like an animal. And he did it. He did it. He killed him. And then I was working that time until dark, late at night.

And then they took us down to overnight because they need us for tomorrow again, the group. So they took us down to the room to a insulated room, separated under the control from watchmen and whatever. And they brought us supper and give us to eat because after whole day, they want us to be ready for next day to work.

And next morning, they brought in breakfast. They gave us bread, and coffee, and milk. They give good food that day. Then people should go back to work. And all those people when they went back after this the job was finished, they don't let them-- didn't let those people go out no more. They killed them right there.

What happened-- I was a guy where he brought the food to eat at breakfast with a friend of ours, mine. And he lived in our house. And he was a police in the concentration camp police. They also have police. And he just name my name, just get the tools out. He told me was that he's supposed to take it out. So he's free. So he told me to take this out, tools. And I took out the tools and that's why I survived from that group. Otherwise, I would have been--

Killed.

Just like anybody else. Over there I have no protection and no more pass. And I was no more privileged. And that was the thing.

How long were you in the Janowska labor camp?

I was-- when they brought us in and the army delivered us and they took a receipt for us. They delivered so many people, you know? That's the way that Germans are. And we came there like in beginning in June. I was there June and July and in the beginning in August.

I was there with a very close friend and his name was Renner. And he was working by the building construction. Where they were needed. So always did something. They build the stand. They did all kind of work.

And he found out they need for the building paths to build, and the locks and doors. Something to build. Go to the city to pick up. And he got acquainted with the guy when he was going to the city for getting the parts, material, steel, whatever, cement, whatever they needed. They went with a truck.

And he got acquainted with this guy and that he's going with a group and he made him a deal. They should take me and him to the city because-- on the protection that we have something to get over. Get some money from private people. That's what he was telling them. So anyway.

He did took us with them. The arrangement was like this. He let us off in the place where we used to work, on that [INAUDIBLE] commander tour. And we told him like this. Our plan was to escape. But he didn't know if he going to be able to find the-- later escape. So we told him, by 4:00, they going to return. They meet us in the morning. They went to the city. By 3 o'clock they supposed to go back to the camp.

So he told them-- OK. 3 o'clock. He supposed to go. They have to return to the concentration camp. They have both to stop for us, pick us up. But for the time being, we got arranged. We decided not to go more back. So when they passed by and they don't see us standing there where we made the appoint. So they went without us. You know, you got two Jewish left.

And then we made arrangements with that Christian. Then he told us wait for 4:30 or whatever. And one of the officers on that military police escort us. And we made arrangements with him. Then he see us make a left. When we going to see the guy where he is supposed to wait for us. They saw him. So he mentioned, if he going to make a left. You keep on going straight. They shouldn't make any suspicion.

And then they went. After the police, we went after that guy, the Polish guy. We went to his house. And over there we was by him-- over there was already a nephew of the other guys. He was with me. He came with me. The nephew was already with this guy from before, as a child to survive there. I mean he saved him.

Your nephew?

His nephew.

His nephew.

His nephew. And then we came down to this guy's house and we get together with his nephew. We were only three in his house.

Now--

But now when we were there, he got connections. He arranged us to make us papers like with pictures as non-Jewish.

How was he able to do that?

There was people. There was people, smugglers, for money, you know? The people were even working in the government did. If you have connections-- he was also a Pollack, and the Pollack worked then for money. He just gave him the pictures and the other guy made the documents.

They give you a name, for example. My name was-- my name was Sawaryn, a Polish name. You never you know. Whenever they made it. They have to have some-- and that's why.

Then the other guy, later when he had the papers, he moved to the facility of Krakow. He got some friends there.

So you got the papers in--

We got the papers--

October?

We got the papers right in-- that was in August. By the end in August, we had the papers.

By the the end of August already.

And I was with this guy most of the time. I went with him sometime to work in the field. With his-- he got a brother and--

How was your physical condition then?

Very, good. Very good.

It was good.

Very good. There was no deficiency. I had no deficiency because I was always in good shape. Then I was in the army with them. I ate food with the general.

And even when you're in Janowska?

In the-- I was in Janowska, we was also in the maintenance.

Yeah.

So the maintenance has a better chance to-- than the people where they used to go out to work. They used to bring in all kinds of food from the city. The group was a group of 100 people used to go out. They used to bring in all-- everything from the city. The main thing was the money.

And I happened-- I had a way to get money from a guy when he was working by the clean up-- the clothes. He was working in the brigade when they was emptying all the clothes from those people. So they had the chance to get some gold, whatever it is.

And those people they go to work-- it was business. They used to bring in everything to food. And this guy when he was working by the clothes. That one was the group. They had very good because they had enough valuable things to give those people, when they went out to work, to bring in extra food. And they used to bring in-- and you wouldn't believe it. They'd bring in even whiskey, they used to bring in. So we did have not bad. At the time we was there.

And then we escaped, we don't know after that what happened. We know that-- yeah, was out and we know what to

expect. So the reason why we tried to get out.

What happened then after you left this man who had given you the false papers? Where did you go?

No, no, we were-- I was with this man almost to the end.

Almost to the end.

I was this man almost-- I just worked out with him. And he got a brother--

How far was he?

In the suburb. He was in Lemberg, out the city about-- in the suburb.

In the suburb of Lemberg.

In the suburb of Lemberg.

And you weren't afraid that somebody would recognize you or--

No, no, no. We didn't go officially like this. We went down or with a horse and wagon. We was going down to like some work. And then later we also made a bunker underground in his house. We dig out like under the floor, saving space, in case somebody comes in to the house. Then we should be able to go down and with him not to be in dangerous. It was-- that we made.

Did anybody ever come searching at his house?

No, not exactly. Not in the house. In the neighborhood but not in the house.

So you were with him then from August--

We were in August until the next year. That was in '43. And they come and-- they got in spring if '44-- the Russian come into the city. So I was there almost-- that was until August. That was September, October, November. We was there about close to a year. In April, they started the rally bomb Lemberg. The Russian bombed Lemberg.

It was 1944.

It was already-- 1944.

All right.

And in the beginning is spring, March and April. When they start bombing, there was already a relief and all those things that was going on that--

For the entire period that you were there, like close to a year or so. Pretty much you were in hiding the entire time. You didn't go out too much in the outside?

No, no, no, no. Not too much. Except his brother had a farm.

Yeah.

And he need some help. So we did the arrangement. We went with a-- we came down to visit them with a horse and wagon and we went down to work in the field.

Did you know where the rest of your family was at the time, your other brothers?

At the time when I was there--

You truly had no contact with your brother?

No, no. I have no contact with nobody. You have no contact with nobody, nowhere. And where was it? When we was there, was it? And my brothers-- I had no brothers available. I was only one in Lemberg. The other two brothers was in Russia. One survived and came after the war. And one was killed there in a bombing. He was working in a shop in Russia. They were bombing the-- the Germans was bombing Russia and he got killed. And then one brother was in America. And one brother was in Israel. And the oldest brother was in the Russian army and took him into American prisons, so was no more. I had no more brothers available.

So April 1944, the Russians were bombing--

Lemberg. And they were coming closer. They didn't come so fast but once they were bombing, there was already the relief a little bit. The hope was already coming. And there was already--

What happened between April '44 and the end of the war?

April '44. Then the Russian did arrive to Lemberg. It was a few days. Was organized a committee, a Jewish committee, and was a few hundred people reported to the-- or was an organization, made a Jewish organization. And the Russians helped to give food to those people. The organization got some food. And people came down there who know other people from hiding. A lot of people was registered, quite a amount of people.

And from all those people from Lemberg, was only a few hundred. And there was-- another happened-- and when this-- later gradually we start living with the Russian. Coming almost to-- and then the war was going on. A lot of people, from the people that they survived, was taken to the Russian army to fight. The Russians immediately-- when they took over Lemberg-- anybody was in the age and they able to go to war. They was immediately. They still were hundreds of-- they took them into the army and there's still a lot of them killed in the army-- in the Russian army, fighting against Germany. They did mobilized immediately. They had-- they did a lot--

And I was also in the stage to go into the army but I was working for the always with the Russian people and they did protect me from going to the army. They also have an economy trade. And somehow-- that's the way-- I would have been probably taken to the army. A lot of people went to the army and they still survived, but a lot of them got killed.

So what happened then after the Russians? I mean, the war is not over yet for another--

The war is not over but here start to be already normal living, was already a normal living in most of what the war was faded down. And here was already like almost normal. A lot of--

This is another year now until the end.

When the war was, I think, it was in '44 was finished.

'45.

'45 was complete finish.

Complete.

Yeah, but also was in '44. We was already practically relieved. We haven't got the-- except the one thing was the dangerous was to go into the army. In fact, I got a friend of mine. We came back from Russia. They survived in Russia and they came back to Lemberg. And they was-- the army want to take them to the army.

And I'm working for those-- I was working for the Russian institution. They was like-- and they asked me. And I was able even to protect them. To tell those people that they know a lot of secrets from those people. They were looking for all kind of-- they want some information from the people. Who was against them? Who was-- there was always under the go. They were investigating. So I was protecting some people.

But they came back from Russia when they supposed to go to the army. And because I know them and I told them that they was needed to find out what-- they were looking for enemies always, the Russian. And there really was involved. And they were not from Lemburg directly. They were about 10 miles, 20 miles away from Lemburg. And they know the villages there and the city. So I definitely helped one of them and now they're still living here.

What I did protect them from going to the Russian army to fight against the German. But it was too dangerous. Very easy possibility to get killed.

How long did you remain in Lemburg?

I remained in Lemburg until March '40-- the beginning in '46.

'46.

They was organizing-- they give permission. Whoever was Polish origin. And if you want to go voluntarily to Poland, they let out. They made a resettling. And they took Germany. They took away people, the Polish people, where they had in Lemburg and in the facilities, suburban, or whatever. All the Polish people, they went down. They settled them all. They made them settling to Germany.

And anybody, any Polish, if you're Jewish it's OK. Once is Polish born and if you want to go, they let them go to-- then they let them go to, without objection, they let them move to Poland. And they also then they make transport shipping to Poland through the border. The border was in Lublin. And we went to Poland. And Poland was Krakow.

But Krakow, Warsaw, everythin was Poland. Here was the Ukraine. When we was Lemburg, that was included in Ukraine. And then over there from Poland, there also was-- later they made all the arrangements, like the Bricha. And from Poland, they smuggle through the Jewish that will be in Poland, whoever want to go to Germany. They brought us into Germany, not actually legal and not legal. Through Czechoslovakia from Poland. They brought us into Germany. And in Germany was those DP camps. And it was DP camp until the immigration start to America.

So you were in DP camp from 1946?

Then in 1946 we went to Poland and then immediately we went to Germany. We was in the DP camp from the beginning actually. 1946 until--

You said which group? You said the Bricha?

The Bricha. The Bricha had connections with the borders like Austria, Czechoslovakia, that go from Poland to smuggle into Czechoslovakia. And from Czechoslovakia they smuggle in to Vienna.

Who is the Bricha?

Bricha is a Jewish organization. Jewish-- like Zionist organization. They call it--

Did any people go to Palestine from--

Yeah, a lot of people went to Palestine. We came then to America, because our mother was in America. You know that my mother was in 1939, America-- '38. And we had family. So that's why a lot of people went to Israel in those days.

How long were you in DP camp in Germany?

It was 19-- oh, it was about maybe, close two years. Close two year because we came to the country in 1949. In the beginning 1949. So we was '48, '47.

So you came to the United States in 194--

1949 on March 12th, 1949.

March 12th, and 1949. Now, how did you feel in the DP camp all those years? You where in camp before and now the war is over.

No, no, no. The DP camp was not a camp. That was just a living they give. You were not in a camp.

But you didn't have the displaced persons?

The displaced persons they give you food. They give you food, whatever the limit of it. And there's lot of things. And then they had schools. There's schools for trade. They learned trades in the camp.

Did any other organizations help you in DP camp? Red Cross or any other Jewish organizations, UNRRA, anybody?

The United Jewish Appeal. We went through-- we registered in the United Jewish Appeal and the HIAS to get the immigration. And the immigration was free because for the displaced persons. My mother tried to send us papers. That's why our years was disorganized with the date. Because they tried to send us papers and--

Who did you come to the United States with?

I was in a boat, a ship. The Marine Jumper was the ship, and they came. Marine Jumper was the ship which I was shipped through.

Any brothers with you? You were the only person from the family.

I was only one. And one more brother was came also from Russia. One brother survived. And he came two months later to the United States.

And your mother, you said, tried to send you papers. You came to New York.

We came to New York. I arrived in Bos--

In Boston.

My mother lives in New Jersey in Elizabeth.

She was living in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

And since I came I've been living in Elizabeth and I never moved out, except for business.

What did your-- what was it like seeing your mother? I mean, it must have been very difficult. All those years she was in America and her whole family was--

Was a very big coincidence when I came. When we arrived, my mother's supposed to get a telegram when we supposed to arrive. She knew. She expect me to arrive but she didn't know the date. But she does come and-- when's she supposed to get known. When is she supposed to come down and-- when I was to pick up in the boat, whatever?

But I arrived instead to New York, we arrived in Boston. Our boat stopped in Boston. And we was coming by train to New York.

Who was in charge of that?

The United Jewish Appeal, I think. And they brought us to New York. And in New York everybody has to wait for their next to get-- whatever they got connections. Everybody had an address to go into the family or whoever don't have it, they took him to down under their protection. And they gave him a place to stay. They gave him a hotel. They gave him facilities to live for the time until they get organized.

When I came to New York, nobody was waiting for-- a lot of people, family was waiting. But my mother didn't have in time the notice. So from New York I took the train and I came to Elizabeth of myself. I bought a ticket, that time was \$0.35. A ticket to come from New York to Elizabeth.

And I came to Elizabeth. I know the address. I took a taxi from the train. Came to my mother address. And then I came to my mother's house and the house was closed. I mean, the home was-- it was night and my mother was close.

The neighbor knew that she expected-- my mother expect somebody to come. And my mother first didn't expect me, she expect a telegram. And I was knocking on the door. And what happened? The neighbor came out. My mother had a house here, a family house.

And the neighbor know that they expect somebody-- something, a telegram, whatever. And they ask me-- she happened-- English. I was very-- I know very little English. Practically nothing. But that woman was Polish so we talked Polish.

And happened my mother was in the synagogue where they had a party. It was a Purim party. I came, next day was Purim. And it was a Purim party in the synagogue. And my mother let know the neighbor, if anything going to come, she should let them know in the synagogue. She was just a block away.

And that woman took me down to the synagogue. Went to my mother. I left the valise in her house, and I walked over to the just -- and they came down. And she let know my mother that somebody is waiting. And I didn't go into the shul. She walked out and that was a coincidence that she met me.

And we came in to shul, Rabbi Teitz had the speech. I mean, he was learning the [INAUDIBLE], the [INAUDIBLE]. When I came in, that whole thing stopped and he had a little speech from me, my mother. And that was the reunion. Since then, we was together with my mother. My mother passed away in 1968. That's what's going on the life. I got married in 1954.

1954. What occupation have you been in?

I went to construction work. They gave me. I got to work as a worker. Was Diamond factory. Steel construction. Name was Diamond. And I got a job there and that was my first job. Until I made the change around for something else because there was job can make more money in the job, make a living. Then I have a lot of different things.

I got a farm. And I got a-- and then make a living.

Field.

No, I got a farm in Upstate New York. Livingston, New York. I lived there by myself. I had a farm I run. There wasn't-- I was single there, when I had a farm. And then later, the Korean War. And then there was a farm and larger. I think a guy had a son killed in Korea and the other son is supposed to go to the army.

And they advised him if he could buy a farm of a certain size. And my size should suited his purpose, that he could protect his son away from the army. So he came and he bought my farm. And then I went back to work. And then I got married and I got two children. And they live their lives. It's going up.

And the other business and other business. So now I'm already retired. I'm just taking it easy. Slow. Anything else?

Any thoughts you have? Any thoughts or any lessons to learn from the whole experience?

I had a lot of experience. But what could you-- you can't change things. Thing happened. You lost a family and so many hundreds of people. Practically nobody left. I got two cousins but they was shipped the day to-- in the train, they jumped out from the train. And they survived. They're living here in Cleveland.

But they jumped out from the train and they were shot by the guards. Every train had a guard. By jumping out, where they could get killed anyhow in case. So they got shot on top of it. And what they survived. The whole thing could happen is unbelievable. How come a guy like me survived and people like with so many knowledge, like the people, doctors and lawyers, big heads. And they didn't survive. So that means something has to be like this, whatever. You don't know what a privilege but-- and there are things you have to be thankful, whatever it is. And to go on with life.

OK. I want to thank you.

You're welcome.

Very much for coming.