

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:18,420

2

00:00:18,420 --> 00:00:20,670

In your story, after  
the liberation,

3

00:00:20,670 --> 00:00:24,180

you had returned to your  
hometown in Czechoslovakia?

4

00:00:24,180 --> 00:00:25,800

Right.

5

00:00:25,800 --> 00:00:26,970

You found your mother there.

6

00:00:26,970 --> 00:00:27,470

Right.

7

00:00:27,470 --> 00:00:28,000

8

00:00:28,000 --> 00:00:29,640

Whom else did you find?

9

00:00:29,640 --> 00:00:35,620

My brother, and we  
did not know whether--

10

00:00:35,620 --> 00:00:41,070

we knew that our sister  
survived till a certain time,

11

00:00:41,070 --> 00:00:42,960

but we were not sure yet.

12

00:00:42,960 --> 00:00:46,720

Later on, we heard that  
she was taken to Sweden.

13

00:00:46,720 --> 00:00:52,440

One transport of  
young children were

14

00:00:52,440 --> 00:00:56,700

taken, because after Auschwitz,  
she wound up in Bergen Belsen.

15

00:00:56,700 --> 00:01:00,360

From Bergen Belsen,  
they took her to Sweden.

16

00:01:00,360 --> 00:01:03,620

And my sister came  
back some time--

17

00:01:03,620 --> 00:01:08,290

must have been already May  
or June 1945 from Sweden.

18

00:01:08,290 --> 00:01:12,960

And we all gathered together,  
and we made plans to leave.

19

00:01:12,960 --> 00:01:15,990

Of course, we all  
wanted to go to Israel.

20

00:01:15,990 --> 00:01:19,560

We had an uncle that  
was living in France,

21

00:01:19,560 --> 00:01:21,810

so our first stop  
was to go to France.

22

00:01:21,810 --> 00:01:27,750

I stayed behind because  
we had some property still

23

00:01:27,750 --> 00:01:29,220

left over there.

24

00:01:29,220 --> 00:01:31,410

The house still belonged  
to us, although we

25

00:01:31,410 --> 00:01:34,100

couldn't get it back, because  
it was a communist regime.

26

00:01:34,100 --> 00:01:36,570

But they let us  
live in the house.

27

00:01:36,570 --> 00:01:40,970

And the store was taken  
over by a Gentile woman,

28

00:01:40,970 --> 00:01:44,070

and there was no more  
merchandise left.

29

00:01:44,070 --> 00:01:47,400

But somebody told us that she  
was hiding some merchandise

30

00:01:47,400 --> 00:01:48,300

in her apartment.

31

00:01:48,300 --> 00:01:49,770

We got back some merchandise.

32

00:01:49,770 --> 00:01:51,630

We tried to sell  
out as much as we

33

00:01:51,630 --> 00:01:53,880

could to make a few  
dollars so we'll be

34

00:01:53,880 --> 00:01:56,070

able to leave Czechoslovakia.

35

00:01:56,070 --> 00:02:01,815

So first, my mother, brother,  
and sister left for France,

36  
00:02:01,815 --> 00:02:03,990  
and they stayed there with  
the uncle for a while.

37  
00:02:03,990 --> 00:02:08,160  
And I stayed back to  
liquidate whatever we had.

38  
00:02:08,160 --> 00:02:14,820  
Then I came to France in 1946.

39  
00:02:14,820 --> 00:02:17,230  
They left in 1945 for France.

40  
00:02:17,230 --> 00:02:19,710  
I stayed until '46.

41  
00:02:19,710 --> 00:02:21,370  
Also, I wanted to go to Israel.

42  
00:02:21,370 --> 00:02:23,580  
I found out they had  
left already for Israel

43  
00:02:23,580 --> 00:02:28,260  
with one of the Exodus ships.

44  
00:02:28,260 --> 00:02:32,490  
And so I stayed back  
in France by my uncle.

45  
00:02:32,490 --> 00:02:34,560  
And I was in contact--

46  
00:02:34,560 --> 00:02:36,150  
I was writing to Israel.

47  
00:02:36,150 --> 00:02:37,980  
[INAUDIBLE] My brother

wrote me a letter.

48

00:02:37,980 --> 00:02:40,290

She said, do not come  
to Israel right now.

49

00:02:40,290 --> 00:02:41,490

Things are very bad.

50

00:02:41,490 --> 00:02:44,220

We are struggling over here.

51

00:02:44,220 --> 00:02:46,380

He says, you better go  
to the United States

52

00:02:46,380 --> 00:02:51,960

and make some money because we  
could use some money over here.

53

00:02:51,960 --> 00:02:54,540

So I was listening my  
mother, and by my time

54

00:02:54,540 --> 00:02:58,440

came to go to the United  
States in January 1948,

55

00:02:58,440 --> 00:03:01,310

I came to this country.

56

00:03:01,310 --> 00:03:03,660

I got a job right  
away as a salesman.

57

00:03:03,660 --> 00:03:06,390

I could read and write English  
when I got to this country,

58

00:03:06,390 --> 00:03:08,060

but I couldn't speak it.

59

00:03:08,060 --> 00:03:11,910  
Where I learned to speak it is  
I was drafted into the United

60  
00:03:11,910 --> 00:03:15,402  
States Army in--

61  
00:03:15,402 --> 00:03:19,850  
it was November 1948,  
the Truman draft.

62  
00:03:19,850 --> 00:03:23,700  
And this is how I  
learned to speak.

63  
00:03:23,700 --> 00:03:25,550  
First, I learned every  
four-letter word,

64  
00:03:25,550 --> 00:03:28,410  
and the rest of the vocabulary.

65  
00:03:28,410 --> 00:03:32,360  
And I stayed in the Army.

66  
00:03:32,360 --> 00:03:33,560  
We only stayed over a year.

67  
00:03:33,560 --> 00:03:36,660  
They had enough volunteers  
then, and they released us just

68  
00:03:36,660 --> 00:03:37,830  
before the Korean War.

69  
00:03:37,830 --> 00:03:40,390

70  
00:03:40,390 --> 00:03:41,550  
I'm sorry to interrupt.

71  
00:03:41,550 --> 00:03:46,200

When you came from France,  
came to the United States,

72  
00:03:46,200 --> 00:03:49,020  
did you have prior  
contacts with individuals

73  
00:03:49,020 --> 00:03:49,905  
in the United States?

74  
00:03:49,905 --> 00:03:50,405  
Yes.

75  
00:03:50,405 --> 00:03:54,430  
Yes, I had-- first of all, I  
had two uncles living over here

76  
00:03:54,430 --> 00:03:56,340  
in the United States.

77  
00:03:56,340 --> 00:03:59,650  
And I was picked up  
by my mother's cousin.

78  
00:03:59,650 --> 00:04:02,500  
Then when I got here in January  
of '48, that was the biggest--

79  
00:04:02,500 --> 00:04:05,280  
they said the biggest  
winter in history, yeah,

80  
00:04:05,280 --> 00:04:07,350  
the '47/'48 winter.

81  
00:04:07,350 --> 00:04:10,260  
It was more snow than  
there was in Europe.

82  
00:04:10,260 --> 00:04:14,650  
So I was taken right away  
to her house, and then--

83

00:04:14,650 --> 00:04:16,079

Which was where?

84

00:04:16,079 --> 00:04:17,529

That was on the East Side.

85

00:04:17,529 --> 00:04:18,279

In New York City--

86

00:04:18,279 --> 00:04:18,870

In New York City.

87

00:04:18,870 --> 00:04:19,680

--the Lower East Side.

88

00:04:19,680 --> 00:04:20,513

The Lower East Side.

89

00:04:20,513 --> 00:04:22,630

Then I was taken to Brooklyn.

90

00:04:22,630 --> 00:04:26,580

My uncle lived in Brooklyn,  
another uncle in the Bronx.

91

00:04:26,580 --> 00:04:32,430

And then I got myself a job as  
a salesmen in the textile line.

92

00:04:32,430 --> 00:04:34,570

And then I was  
drafted into the Army.

93

00:04:34,570 --> 00:04:38,610

We'll come back to the United  
States part of the story soon.

94

00:04:38,610 --> 00:04:41,070

I just reminded  
myself that I know

95



00:04:41,070 --> 00:04:44,940

you had some connection  
with one of the real heroes

96

00:04:44,940 --> 00:04:49,715

of the Holocaust,  
the rabbi of Nitra.

97

00:04:49,715 --> 00:04:52,950

Well, the rabbi of  
Nitra, I knew well.

98

00:04:52,950 --> 00:04:56,850

But the real hero  
was his son-in-law,

99

00:04:56,850 --> 00:05:01,830

Michael Weissmandel, who was  
working very hard to save

100

00:05:01,830 --> 00:05:03,780

the few thousand  
Jews that were--

101

00:05:03,780 --> 00:05:09,870

about 20,000 Jews left  
in Slovakia in 1944.

102

00:05:09,870 --> 00:05:13,210

And he was doing the  
negotiating with--

103

00:05:13,210 --> 00:05:15,350

Gisi Fleischman.

104

00:05:15,350 --> 00:05:19,680

Gisi Fleischman was also active.

105

00:05:19,680 --> 00:05:24,090

And they were paying  
off as much money

106

00:05:24,090 --> 00:05:25,980

as they could get  
out of the community.

107  
00:05:25,980 --> 00:05:28,940  
There were so few  
people left with money,

108  
00:05:28,940 --> 00:05:32,820  
and to postpone the transports  
as far as they could.

109  
00:05:32,820 --> 00:05:36,730  
But it didn't work because  
they stopped for a few months.

110  
00:05:36,730 --> 00:05:41,520  
And at the end, we all went.

111  
00:05:41,520 --> 00:05:42,100  
But while--

112  
00:05:42,100 --> 00:05:44,110  
Could you describe  
Rabbi Weissmandel?

113  
00:05:44,110 --> 00:05:48,660  
Weissmandel, he was  
a brilliant man.

114  
00:05:48,660 --> 00:05:52,710  
He had a wild look in his  
eyes, and he was so devoted

115  
00:05:52,710 --> 00:05:57,670  
to the course of saving  
people that many times he just

116  
00:05:57,670 --> 00:06:00,870  
had complete disregard  
of his own safety.

117  
00:06:00,870 --> 00:06:07,170  
He fell-- he was the one that

jumped off a moving train

118

00:06:07,170 --> 00:06:09,900

and got into a  
bunker in Bratislava.

119

00:06:09,900 --> 00:06:12,510

And even from the  
bunker, he was working

120

00:06:12,510 --> 00:06:15,480

to try to find out where all  
the Jews are hidden, if they

121

00:06:15,480 --> 00:06:17,400

have any needs, to help them.

122

00:06:17,400 --> 00:06:18,700

He's a fabulous man.

123

00:06:18,700 --> 00:06:19,230

I still--

124

00:06:19,230 --> 00:06:23,900

He was the one who demanded  
that the Allies bomb the tracks

125

00:06:23,900 --> 00:06:26,870

and the camp, Auschwitz.

126

00:06:26,870 --> 00:06:29,520

I was carrying  
letters between Nitra

127

00:06:29,520 --> 00:06:31,830

and while i was traveling.

128

00:06:31,830 --> 00:06:34,340

There's one incident  
that happened.

129

00:06:34,340 --> 00:06:39,390

I was once on a train, and  
a tall fellow with boots

130  
00:06:39,390 --> 00:06:41,970  
came over to me, looks me  
straight in the eyes, and says,

131  
00:06:41,970 --> 00:06:42,870  
[HEBREW].

132  
00:06:42,870 --> 00:06:44,618  
The word [HEBREW],,  
you know what means.

133  
00:06:44,618 --> 00:06:45,410  
It means "urinate."

134  
00:06:45,410 --> 00:06:47,680  
It's a Hebrew word  
for "urination."

135  
00:06:47,680 --> 00:06:51,900  
This was the password  
among us that we

136  
00:06:51,900 --> 00:06:55,530  
wanted to recognize each  
other without letting

137  
00:06:55,530 --> 00:06:58,090  
anybody know who we are,  
the ones that were traveling

138  
00:06:58,090 --> 00:07:00,150  
with false papers.

139  
00:07:00,150 --> 00:07:03,720  
And he says to me, [HEBREW].

140  
00:07:03,720 --> 00:07:06,480  
And he says to  
me-- he gives me--

141

00:07:06,480 --> 00:07:10,517

it was Slovakian money, a few  
hundred koruna, or whatever

142

00:07:10,517 --> 00:07:11,350

it was at this time.

143

00:07:11,350 --> 00:07:14,940

I don't know how  
much it amounted to.

144

00:07:14,940 --> 00:07:19,470

I was at that time near the  
Polish border, [PLACE NAME]

145

00:07:19,470 --> 00:07:23,820

He says, there is a train  
going to leave over here.

146

00:07:23,820 --> 00:07:26,380

He says, in a half an hour.

147

00:07:26,380 --> 00:07:28,650

I want you to get on  
this train, he says.

148

00:07:28,650 --> 00:07:31,530

The police is paid off.

149

00:07:31,530 --> 00:07:34,350

We have some smuggled  
Jews they smuggled

150

00:07:34,350 --> 00:07:36,120

over the Polish border.

151

00:07:36,120 --> 00:07:39,480

They're on the way to  
Hungary, and from Hungary they

152

00:07:39,480 --> 00:07:42,360

were going to Turkey,

and then to Israel.

153

00:07:42,360 --> 00:07:44,210

He says, all I  
want you to do is,

154

00:07:44,210 --> 00:07:45,880

over there, keep that money.

155

00:07:45,880 --> 00:07:50,100

He says, if you have any trouble  
over there that they recognize

156

00:07:50,100 --> 00:07:52,840

or something, most  
of them are paid off,

157

00:07:52,840 --> 00:07:56,160

but in case there is one of  
them that gets out of line,

158

00:07:56,160 --> 00:07:58,860

and he wants to cause  
trouble, he says, pay him off.

159

00:07:58,860 --> 00:08:02,540

He says, they all take money.

160

00:08:02,540 --> 00:08:04,760

And go with them to--

161

00:08:04,760 --> 00:08:07,550

the town was Rozmberk Just  
accompany them all the way.

162

00:08:07,550 --> 00:08:08,840

See that it's all right.

163

00:08:08,840 --> 00:08:10,610

And there was--  
see, at that time,

164

00:08:10,610 --> 00:08:13,820  
there were still some  
families who were still

165  
00:08:13,820 --> 00:08:16,700  
allowed to stay in  
Czechoslovakia because

166  
00:08:16,700 --> 00:08:18,600  
of economic reasons.

167  
00:08:18,600 --> 00:08:21,680  
In other words, the Gentile  
that took over the business

168  
00:08:21,680 --> 00:08:25,060  
claimed that he needs  
the Jew to help him out.

169  
00:08:25,060 --> 00:08:26,420  
So

170  
00:08:26,420 --> 00:08:30,330  
Some of them were  
producing Army uniforms.

171  
00:08:30,330 --> 00:08:34,289  
In other words, it was all  
necessary for the war effort.

172  
00:08:34,289 --> 00:08:35,490  
So those Jews could stay.

173  
00:08:35,490 --> 00:08:40,330  
So, and a lot of families  
that were able to get papers

174  
00:08:40,330 --> 00:08:41,210  
stayed there.

175  
00:08:41,210 --> 00:08:43,909  
So there were still plenty of--

176

00:08:43,909 --> 00:08:46,340

about 20,000 still left  
that were not sent away

177

00:08:46,340 --> 00:08:48,590

with the family transports.

178

00:08:48,590 --> 00:08:50,420

So there was still a  
community over there.

179

00:08:50,420 --> 00:08:53,810

They had a synagogue  
over there in Rozmberk

180

00:08:53,810 --> 00:08:55,970

And this is where  
all those Polish Jews

181

00:08:55,970 --> 00:08:57,860

were gathered, waiting.

182

00:08:57,860 --> 00:08:58,970

I brought them over there.

183

00:08:58,970 --> 00:09:00,500

I see everything was all right.

184

00:09:00,500 --> 00:09:02,167

I didn't know what  
to do with the money.

185

00:09:02,167 --> 00:09:04,090

I gave it to one  
of them over there,

186

00:09:04,090 --> 00:09:05,330

and I told them the story.

187

00:09:05,330 --> 00:09:09,680

First, they missed--  
they didn't trust me



188  
00:09:09,680 --> 00:09:12,275  
because the way I was dressed.

189  
00:09:12,275 --> 00:09:13,650  
But when I came  
in the morning, I

190  
00:09:13,650 --> 00:09:16,233  
told them that I just came here  
to see that they're all right.

191  
00:09:16,233 --> 00:09:19,737  
And I say goodbye to  
them and I left them.

192  
00:09:19,737 --> 00:09:21,320  
And one other question,  
and then we'll

193  
00:09:21,320 --> 00:09:24,080  
come back to the  
United States part.

194  
00:09:24,080 --> 00:09:26,090  
When you came back  
to your hometown,

195  
00:09:26,090 --> 00:09:30,290  
four of the six members  
of your family survived.

196  
00:09:30,290 --> 00:09:34,850  
What was the proportion of  
the people-- of the Jews

197  
00:09:34,850 --> 00:09:37,490  
in the town who survived?

198  
00:09:37,490 --> 00:09:41,660  
We had about the best  
percentage of survival because--

199

00:09:41,660 --> 00:09:44,300

"We" meaning your  
family or your town?

200

00:09:44,300 --> 00:09:46,050

No, my family, I would say.

201

00:09:46,050 --> 00:09:48,410

We were very lucky.

202

00:09:48,410 --> 00:09:50,180

Well, lucky-- I lost my father.

203

00:09:50,180 --> 00:09:52,410

My mother was hiding out.

204

00:09:52,410 --> 00:09:56,150

The percentages  
was-- some families

205

00:09:56,150 --> 00:09:57,540

were wiped out completely.

206

00:09:57,540 --> 00:10:00,340

In fact, most of them  
were wiped out completely.

207

00:10:00,340 --> 00:10:05,180

But as the youth  
that went in 1942,

208

00:10:05,180 --> 00:10:08,780

that got a little better jobs  
in Auschwitz, a lot of these

209

00:10:08,780 --> 00:10:11,310

survived.

210

00:10:11,310 --> 00:10:12,090

The youth.

211

00:10:12,090 --> 00:10:15,240

You're talking the  
youth It was my age now.

212

00:10:15,240 --> 00:10:18,030

The ones that were  
in their 40s and 50s,

213

00:10:18,030 --> 00:10:20,130

I don't know of  
anybody that survived,

214

00:10:20,130 --> 00:10:25,710

maybe one that looked young and  
were very strong that survived.

215

00:10:25,710 --> 00:10:28,395

My father came from  
a family of 12.

216

00:10:28,395 --> 00:10:30,940

217

00:10:30,940 --> 00:10:33,520

Nobody came from--  
and I don't know,

218

00:10:33,520 --> 00:10:37,090

it must have been at least,  
I don't know, maybe 5,

219

00:10:37,090 --> 00:10:43,630

6 dozen children among the 12--

220

00:10:43,630 --> 00:10:44,650

Siblings.

221

00:10:44,650 --> 00:10:46,441

--siblings.

222

00:10:46,441 --> 00:10:49,600

The ones from the  
concentration camp

223  
00:10:49,600 --> 00:10:53,830  
came back from one  
family, one girl,

224  
00:10:53,830 --> 00:10:56,320  
from another family, one boy.

225  
00:10:56,320 --> 00:10:58,630  
That's the one that  
saved me, and the girl

226  
00:10:58,630 --> 00:11:02,080  
is the one that saved my sister.

227  
00:11:02,080 --> 00:11:04,810  
But they are the only ones  
that came back, their families,

228  
00:11:04,810 --> 00:11:06,250  
nobody else came back.

229  
00:11:06,250 --> 00:11:09,370  
But my family, we were  
lucky that I got back

230  
00:11:09,370 --> 00:11:10,360  
my brother and sister.

231  
00:11:10,360 --> 00:11:13,390

232  
00:11:13,390 --> 00:11:21,180  
Were you later in going to the  
camps, or was it just luck?

233  
00:11:21,180 --> 00:11:24,010  
Well, it had to do a lot--  
a lot had to be luck.

234  
00:11:24,010 --> 00:11:27,520  
And also, in my case, it

was because I went late.

235

00:11:27,520 --> 00:11:29,470

My brother also went late.

236

00:11:29,470 --> 00:11:33,630

My brother was only caught in--  
my brother left for Auschwitz

237

00:11:33,630 --> 00:11:36,880

sometime in September, in 1944.

238

00:11:36,880 --> 00:11:37,615

It's also--

239

00:11:37,615 --> 00:11:38,740

Towards the end of the war.

240

00:11:38,740 --> 00:11:40,480

--towards the end.

241

00:11:40,480 --> 00:11:45,980

All right, now, if we may, let's  
bring the story closer to date.

242

00:11:45,980 --> 00:11:47,920

You were in the  
United States, and you

243

00:11:47,920 --> 00:11:49,430

were drafted into the Army.

244

00:11:49,430 --> 00:11:52,390

You got out of the  
Army, became a salesman.

245

00:11:52,390 --> 00:11:54,250

I used to get \$75 a month.

246

00:11:54,250 --> 00:11:56,620

I used to send my  
mother every month \$50,

247  
00:11:56,620 --> 00:11:59,290  
and I kept \$25 for myself.

248  
00:11:59,290 --> 00:12:00,550  
She was in Israel?

249  
00:12:00,550 --> 00:12:02,380  
She was in Israel already.

250  
00:12:02,380 --> 00:12:05,410  
And this was when,  
about '49, '50?

251  
00:12:05,410 --> 00:12:09,830  
This was '49, and beginning  
of '50, I was released.

252  
00:12:09,830 --> 00:12:10,830  
You weren't married yet?

253  
00:12:10,830 --> 00:12:12,160  
No.

254  
00:12:12,160 --> 00:12:14,050  
I assume you married  
shortly after that?

255  
00:12:14,050 --> 00:12:15,970  
I married two years  
later, in 1952.

256  
00:12:15,970 --> 00:12:18,070  
And where did you live?

257  
00:12:18,070 --> 00:12:19,970  
Well, at the time,  
I lived in Brooklyn,

258  
00:12:19,970 --> 00:12:23,840  
and my wife lived in New Jersey.

259

00:12:23,840 --> 00:12:25,360

She's in New Jersey first.

260

00:12:25,360 --> 00:12:26,090

She's in NJ.

261

00:12:26,090 --> 00:12:29,570

Well, she was born in Manhattan,  
but the parents lived in NJ.

262

00:12:29,570 --> 00:12:30,070

All right.

263

00:12:30,070 --> 00:12:31,487

So that brought  
you to New Jersey?

264

00:12:31,487 --> 00:12:34,360

That brought me-- that's where  
we got our first apartment,

265

00:12:34,360 --> 00:12:35,660

in New Jersey.

266

00:12:35,660 --> 00:12:38,020

And where did you  
live after that?

267

00:12:38,020 --> 00:12:41,590

Well, the first apartment was  
in Union City, New Jersey.

268

00:12:41,590 --> 00:12:45,810

Then, from Union City,  
we moved to Plainfield.

269

00:12:45,810 --> 00:12:48,220

And then we came to Elizabeth.

270

00:12:48,220 --> 00:12:49,990

From Plainfield to Elizabeth.

271

00:12:49,990 --> 00:12:52,570

What brought you to Elizabeth,  
where you've been living

272

00:12:52,570 --> 00:12:54,555

most of your married life?

273

00:12:54,555 --> 00:12:57,950

Well, mostly the children,  
the school, the JEC,

274

00:12:57,950 --> 00:12:59,470

the Jewish Educational Center.

275

00:12:59,470 --> 00:13:02,950

276

00:13:02,950 --> 00:13:03,640

All right.

277

00:13:03,640 --> 00:13:06,370

Do you have any questions about  
the New Jersey part of it?

278

00:13:06,370 --> 00:13:10,850

Having a family network  
or relatives in place

279

00:13:10,850 --> 00:13:12,730

attracted you to Manhattan.

280

00:13:12,730 --> 00:13:15,050

Right.

281

00:13:15,050 --> 00:13:17,780

And you were able to get  
a job in a business you

282

00:13:17,780 --> 00:13:18,710

knew something about.

283



00:13:18,710 --> 00:13:19,850  
Right.

284  
00:13:19,850 --> 00:13:21,800  
Was that-- did you  
find other survivors

285  
00:13:21,800 --> 00:13:23,710  
having similar experiences?

286  
00:13:23,710 --> 00:13:25,900  
Or was that relatively  
unusual from what you knew?

287  
00:13:25,900 --> 00:13:26,900  
I'll tell you something.

288  
00:13:26,900 --> 00:13:31,520  
I wish I didn't know  
English the way I know,

289  
00:13:31,520 --> 00:13:33,020  
because some of  
those that didn't

290  
00:13:33,020 --> 00:13:35,330  
know how to read and  
write English are now

291  
00:13:35,330 --> 00:13:37,766  
they're big builders and  
they're multimillionaires.

292  
00:13:37,766 --> 00:13:40,020  
[LAUGHTER]

293  
00:13:40,020 --> 00:13:43,160  
They had to become  
carpenters and bricklayers,

294  
00:13:43,160 --> 00:13:46,430  
and today they're  
multimillionaires.

295  
00:13:46,430 --> 00:13:49,310  
But when you came here,  
did you find-- particularly

296  
00:13:49,310 --> 00:13:52,040  
in the family, your  
relatives, did they

297  
00:13:52,040 --> 00:13:55,100  
have any understanding  
of what had gone on?

298  
00:13:55,100 --> 00:13:57,035  
Or was your story--

299  
00:13:57,035 --> 00:13:57,827  
No.

300  
00:13:57,827 --> 00:13:58,910  
Let me tell you something.

301  
00:13:58,910 --> 00:14:00,740  
First, when we came  
over here, of course,

302  
00:14:00,740 --> 00:14:03,320  
they knew that there  
was problems over there.

303  
00:14:03,320 --> 00:14:06,830  
But they had no idea what  
happened to concentration --

304  
00:14:06,830 --> 00:14:09,290  
From the silly  
questions they ask us--

305  
00:14:09,290 --> 00:14:13,410  
how did the food  
taste, and did you--

306

00:14:13,410 --> 00:14:16,120  
were you able to see a  
movie, they asked me.

307  
00:14:16,120 --> 00:14:18,200  
Or what could you read?

308  
00:14:18,200 --> 00:14:20,030  
Did you get newspapers?

309  
00:14:20,030 --> 00:14:22,790  
So when we heard these  
silly questions over there,

310  
00:14:22,790 --> 00:14:25,370  
we shut up and we  
started to talk about it,

311  
00:14:25,370 --> 00:14:28,370  
because we also heard  
that some of the guys

312  
00:14:28,370 --> 00:14:33,620  
that told them  
what happened, they

313  
00:14:33,620 --> 00:14:35,200  
felt they were exaggerating.

314  
00:14:35,200 --> 00:14:39,150  
They didn't believe them, so we  
just stopped talking about it.

315  
00:14:39,150 --> 00:14:42,170  
In fact, we stopped talking  
about it for such a long time,

316  
00:14:42,170 --> 00:14:47,240  
then even after I had  
children, and my wife

317  
00:14:47,240 --> 00:14:49,850  
asked me a question, we

also did not discuss it.

318  
00:14:49,850 --> 00:14:52,850  
We just felt that nobody is  
going to believe it anyway,

319  
00:14:52,850 --> 00:14:55,100  
because I myself wouldn't  
believe it if somebody would

320  
00:14:55,100 --> 00:14:56,510  
tell me a story like this.

321  
00:14:56,510 --> 00:14:57,770  
So we didn't talk about it.

322  
00:14:57,770 --> 00:15:01,940  
In fact, my oldest son, when  
he was about six years old,

323  
00:15:01,940 --> 00:15:04,730  
and something came up.

324  
00:15:04,730 --> 00:15:07,850  
Company came, and they  
started to ask questions,

325  
00:15:07,850 --> 00:15:10,070  
and I just gave  
him a few details.

326  
00:15:10,070 --> 00:15:13,160  
So my little son  
says to me, Daddy,

327  
00:15:13,160 --> 00:15:15,800  
you were just standing there  
and let them shoot at you?

328  
00:15:15,800 --> 00:15:17,300  
You didn't shoot back?

329

00:15:17,300 --> 00:15:18,080  
[CHUCKLES]

330  
00:15:18,080 --> 00:15:19,580  
So there was no understanding?

331  
00:15:19,580 --> 00:15:21,800  
There's no understanding, no.

332  
00:15:21,800 --> 00:15:24,650  
And when did you start talking  
to your children about it?

333  
00:15:24,650 --> 00:15:27,810  
Well, when they were a little  
older, usually during the Seder

334  
00:15:27,810 --> 00:15:29,672  
night, when we  
have Passover, when

335  
00:15:29,672 --> 00:15:33,190  
we have a gathering,  
the whole family, and we

336  
00:15:33,190 --> 00:15:36,120  
recount the exodus.

337  
00:15:36,120 --> 00:15:40,190  
So sometimes the children  
would say, well, Daddy,

338  
00:15:40,190 --> 00:15:42,380  
tell us something what  
happened in the camps,

339  
00:15:42,380 --> 00:15:43,370  
just a few things.

340  
00:15:43,370 --> 00:15:44,770

341

00:15:44,770 --> 00:15:49,130

But I didn't want to  
spoil the Seder evening,

342

00:15:49,130 --> 00:15:52,340

so I may have told  
them a few stories.

343

00:15:52,340 --> 00:15:54,750

But I didn't want to tell  
them about the real things

344

00:15:54,750 --> 00:15:56,420

while I was gone over there.

345

00:15:56,420 --> 00:15:59,810

I felt it was not fitting to  
talk about it at the table.

346

00:15:59,810 --> 00:16:02,590

But you have told  
them the real thing?

347

00:16:02,590 --> 00:16:04,340

Or have they discovered  
it for themselves?

348

00:16:04,340 --> 00:16:06,290

They discovered most  
of them by themselves.

349

00:16:06,290 --> 00:16:07,100

They were reading.

350

00:16:07,100 --> 00:16:09,090

My children always  
go to when there's

351

00:16:09,090 --> 00:16:12,410

stuff over here in Kean College,  
when they have the Holocaust

352

00:16:12,410 --> 00:16:12,980

gathering.

353

00:16:12,980 --> 00:16:15,500

My daughter, especially,  
she always comes and listens

354

00:16:15,500 --> 00:16:18,240

to the stories.

355

00:16:18,240 --> 00:16:22,610

And they also urged me to  
make this tape, [CHUCKLES]

356

00:16:22,610 --> 00:16:26,420

if they called me, I  
should not refuse it.

357

00:16:26,420 --> 00:16:28,330

So they'll want to see  
this tape, I believe.

358

00:16:28,330 --> 00:16:29,210

Right.

359

00:16:29,210 --> 00:16:30,960

One final question  
I've got, then

360

00:16:30,960 --> 00:16:35,510

is just I'm interested in  
following you into New Jersey.

361

00:16:35,510 --> 00:16:38,653

I take it then it was a business  
opportunity, a career move,

362

00:16:38,653 --> 00:16:40,570

more than anything else  
that brought you here?

363

00:16:40,570 --> 00:16:42,295

Yeah, but what  
happened, we lived--

364  
00:16:42,295 --> 00:16:46,540

365  
00:16:46,540 --> 00:16:48,342  
I worked in Manhattan.

366  
00:16:48,342 --> 00:16:50,300  
When I was still single,  
I worked in Manhattan.

367  
00:16:50,300 --> 00:16:53,050  
And then this was Second Avenue.

368  
00:16:53,050 --> 00:16:55,400  
And Bellevue Hospital  
was expanding,

369  
00:16:55,400 --> 00:16:57,740  
and they took down  
that whole area.

370  
00:16:57,740 --> 00:16:59,390  
And I lost my job,  
and I was looking

371  
00:16:59,390 --> 00:17:01,610  
to go into business for myself.

372  
00:17:01,610 --> 00:17:04,400  
And through some  
contact, a fellow

373  
00:17:04,400 --> 00:17:08,480  
that I knew in Jersey  
City, in the same line--

374  
00:17:08,480 --> 00:17:10,520  
I helped him out  
with some merchandise

375  
00:17:10,520 --> 00:17:11,480



at one time he needed.

376

00:17:11,480 --> 00:17:12,560

He appreciated it.

377

00:17:12,560 --> 00:17:16,040

He asked me if I would be  
willing to go into business

378

00:17:16,040 --> 00:17:19,550

with him, open up another  
store because I was mostly

379

00:17:19,550 --> 00:17:20,780

in the decorating line.

380

00:17:20,780 --> 00:17:23,240

He was mostly in the  
dress goods line.

381

00:17:23,240 --> 00:17:26,490

So we opened up a little  
store in Rahway, New Jersey.

382

00:17:26,490 --> 00:17:31,820

And then we expanded, and  
this is what brought us to NJ.

383

00:17:31,820 --> 00:17:33,870

You've been in business  
in New Jersey ever since?

384

00:17:33,870 --> 00:17:39,200

And I've been in business  
since 1955, 37 years.

385

00:17:39,200 --> 00:17:41,690

Mr. Moskowitz, after all  
that you've been through--

386

00:17:41,690 --> 00:17:44,870

and it's been tremendous,  
and we certainly appreciate

387  
00:17:44,870 --> 00:17:48,760  
your coming in and sharing  
with us your story--

388  
00:17:48,760 --> 00:17:52,420

389  
00:17:52,420 --> 00:17:55,540  
how has this affected  
your philosophy

390  
00:17:55,540 --> 00:17:59,740  
of life, your understanding  
of human nature?

391  
00:17:59,740 --> 00:18:03,010  
Well, I was very disappointed  
in the human race

392  
00:18:03,010 --> 00:18:07,410  
because what I saw what  
was going on over there.

393  
00:18:07,410 --> 00:18:11,800  
But if human beings can do the  
things that they were doing,

394  
00:18:11,800 --> 00:18:13,355  
I don't think they--

395  
00:18:13,355 --> 00:18:17,010  
we were much more above animals.

396  
00:18:17,010 --> 00:18:20,490  
But, then again, I suppose  
there is such a thing

397  
00:18:20,490 --> 00:18:21,550  
as self-preservation.

398  
00:18:21,550 --> 00:18:26,070

Everybody tries to  
preserve himself.

399  
00:18:26,070 --> 00:18:28,080  
I would say that most  
of the things that

400  
00:18:28,080 --> 00:18:31,170  
happened in the camp  
was self-preservation.

401  
00:18:31,170 --> 00:18:34,150  
And as far as the Germans, I  
still cannot understand to this

402  
00:18:34,150 --> 00:18:36,450  
day.

403  
00:18:36,450 --> 00:18:40,060  
Of course, there is some  
hatred to me against the Nazis.

404  
00:18:40,060 --> 00:18:40,890  
I would not say--

405  
00:18:40,890 --> 00:18:44,700  
I would say there is both  
pity and hate, but more pity

406  
00:18:44,700 --> 00:18:51,300  
than hatred, because  
it's unbelievable

407  
00:18:51,300 --> 00:18:53,640  
what one human being  
can do to another one.

408  
00:18:53,640 --> 00:18:55,170  
Then we are not  
more than animals.

409  
00:18:55,170 --> 00:18:59,250

410  
00:18:59,250 --> 00:19:03,760  
Did they see you as human  
beings, do you think?

411  
00:19:03,760 --> 00:19:05,760  
I think that most  
of the Germans,

412  
00:19:05,760 --> 00:19:11,790  
the training that they got, they  
did not consider us as human

413  
00:19:11,790 --> 00:19:16,950  
beings, maybe some kind of  
subhuman race or something,

414  
00:19:16,950 --> 00:19:21,510  
because I just cannot understand  
that if they would consider us

415  
00:19:21,510 --> 00:19:24,870  
human beings, how they could  
do the things that they did.

416  
00:19:24,870 --> 00:19:27,960  
When do you think they  
saw you as human beings?

417  
00:19:27,960 --> 00:19:30,550  
After the war, did they?

418  
00:19:30,550 --> 00:19:33,565  
Well the restaurant owner  
who cleared off two tables

419  
00:19:33,565 --> 00:19:34,930  
saw you as a human being.

420  
00:19:34,930 --> 00:19:36,818  
Well, maybe he  
was a human being.

421

00:19:36,818 --> 00:19:37,610

I still don't know.

422

00:19:37,610 --> 00:19:38,670

Maybe he was afraid.

423

00:19:38,670 --> 00:19:42,730

Maybe he wanted to show that  
he was one of the good Germans.

424

00:19:42,730 --> 00:19:44,260

You still can't tell.

425

00:19:44,260 --> 00:19:45,880

Or self-preservation  
on his part.

426

00:19:45,880 --> 00:19:46,380

Yeah.

427

00:19:46,380 --> 00:19:51,290

It's still hard to get  
into somebody's inside

428

00:19:51,290 --> 00:19:57,870

to find out what prompts  
them to do certain things.

429

00:19:57,870 --> 00:20:00,930

All I know, that a German  
could shoot somebody

430

00:20:00,930 --> 00:20:03,690

without hesitation,  
without thinking twice,

431

00:20:03,690 --> 00:20:08,250

just for his convenience,  
because when we were walking,

432

00:20:08,250 --> 00:20:11,040

and we were walking a little

slower because the shoes were

433

00:20:11,040 --> 00:20:14,242  
ripping, and the shoes  
were falling off,

434

00:20:14,242 --> 00:20:18,270  
and so if somebody had to step  
out of line to tie his shoe,

435

00:20:18,270 --> 00:20:21,150  
or he had to go in  
to relieve himself,

436

00:20:21,150 --> 00:20:24,330  
this would slow him  
down a little bit.

437

00:20:24,330 --> 00:20:26,340  
So it would be more  
convenient to shoot him.

438

00:20:26,340 --> 00:20:27,420  
And so we can't--

439

00:20:27,420 --> 00:20:29,920  
he couldn't let him  
there because that

440

00:20:29,920 --> 00:20:33,450  
would means that  
he escaped, which

441

00:20:33,450 --> 00:20:36,870  
would be against the rules.

442

00:20:36,870 --> 00:20:41,160  
And the Germans went strictly  
according to the rules.

443

00:20:41,160 --> 00:20:44,010  
In your estimation,  
is there anything

444  
00:20:44,010 --> 00:20:45,800  
we can learn from all this?

445  
00:20:45,800 --> 00:20:48,970

446  
00:20:48,970 --> 00:20:50,070  
I don't know.

447  
00:20:50,070 --> 00:20:54,140  
I don't know whether  
this is going to help.

448  
00:20:54,140 --> 00:20:57,350  
Maybe this will help, if people  
will see what could happen me

449  
00:20:57,350 --> 00:20:59,990  
if you don't behave  
like a human being,

450  
00:20:59,990 --> 00:21:03,880  
because I've seen  
educated people--

451  
00:21:03,880 --> 00:21:08,570  
most of the officers,  
I would say,

452  
00:21:08,570 --> 00:21:11,870  
in order to be a German  
officer, you had to be educated.

453  
00:21:11,870 --> 00:21:15,170  
So I see that has nothing  
to do with education.

454  
00:21:15,170 --> 00:21:18,380  
Sometimes you found  
a plain person

455

00:21:18,380 --> 00:21:21,770  
that could not read or  
write, and he took you in.

456  
00:21:21,770 --> 00:21:25,980  
And I didn't see too  
many cases in Slovakia,

457  
00:21:25,980 --> 00:21:27,950  
but here in Poland,  
I know stories

458  
00:21:27,950 --> 00:21:31,640  
that some of the peasants  
took in whole families,

459  
00:21:31,640 --> 00:21:33,360  
and they survived the war.

460  
00:21:33,360 --> 00:21:34,970  
And they had no education.

461  
00:21:34,970 --> 00:21:37,880  
So it seems that education  
has nothing to do with it.

462  
00:21:37,880 --> 00:21:39,920  
And religion,  
definitely, has nothing

463  
00:21:39,920 --> 00:21:43,880  
to do with it because I've  
seen the best Catholics that

464  
00:21:43,880 --> 00:21:46,490  
wouldn't take in a Jew.

465  
00:21:46,490 --> 00:21:49,870  
And then you saw some  
Protestants would take them in.

466  
00:21:49,870 --> 00:21:52,175  
And some Protestants



would not take them in.

467

00:21:52,175 --> 00:21:54,680

And so religion has  
nothing to do with it.

468

00:21:54,680 --> 00:21:56,150

Education has nothing to--

469

00:21:56,150 --> 00:21:58,650

either you have a good heart  
or you don't have a good heart.

470

00:21:58,650 --> 00:22:00,740

I don't know what it is.

471

00:22:00,740 --> 00:22:04,130

Final question, now that  
we've come this far,

472

00:22:04,130 --> 00:22:06,410

and we're finally  
talking about it

473

00:22:06,410 --> 00:22:08,600

and studying it and  
teaching it, what

474

00:22:08,600 --> 00:22:11,510

do you think our  
responsibility is in terms

475

00:22:11,510 --> 00:22:15,420

of the events of the Holocaust?

476

00:22:15,420 --> 00:22:18,540

Well, what you are doing  
over here in Kean College,

477

00:22:18,540 --> 00:22:22,260

I think you're accomplishing  
a lot because at least it's

478

00:22:22,260 --> 00:22:26,580  
going to be on the record, and  
people can see could happen.

479

00:22:26,580 --> 00:22:30,185  
The responsibility  
is to educate people

480

00:22:30,185 --> 00:22:34,430  
to behave like human  
beings, because today it

481

00:22:34,430 --> 00:22:35,880  
happened to the Jews.

482

00:22:35,880 --> 00:22:37,665  
Tomorrow it can  
happen to the Blacks.

483

00:22:37,665 --> 00:22:40,500

484

00:22:40,500 --> 00:22:42,720  
It can happen to  
Catholics, all of a sudden.

485

00:22:42,720 --> 00:22:45,140  
You don't know.

486

00:22:45,140 --> 00:22:47,520  
The United States may  
became more Protestants,

487

00:22:47,520 --> 00:22:50,010  
and they start  
persecuting Catholics.

488

00:22:50,010 --> 00:22:52,380  
So the main thing  
is to teach people

489

00:22:52,380 --> 00:22:54,150

they have to learn  
to live together

490  
00:22:54,150 --> 00:22:58,650  
and to recognize  
each other's beliefs.

491  
00:22:58,650 --> 00:23:01,140  
And just because  
you are different,

492  
00:23:01,140 --> 00:23:03,370  
that doesn't mean that  
you are his enemy.

493  
00:23:03,370 --> 00:23:06,940  
And I always felt the  
problem with anti-Semitism

494  
00:23:06,940 --> 00:23:10,430  
was because we were different.

495  
00:23:10,430 --> 00:23:12,360  
And by being  
different, they thought

496  
00:23:12,360 --> 00:23:13,920  
that we were their enemies.

497  
00:23:13,920 --> 00:23:15,790  
And they never trusted us.

498  
00:23:15,790 --> 00:23:19,270  
I think that's a proper  
note on which to conclude.

499  
00:23:19,270 --> 00:23:21,720  
I want to thank you for  
coming down and sharing

500  
00:23:21,720 --> 00:23:24,400  
this experience with us.

501

00:23:24,400 --> 00:23:27,730

I'm sure that it's going to be  
very helpful to your family,

502

00:23:27,730 --> 00:23:30,410

to your grandchildren,  
your children, and so on.

503

00:23:30,410 --> 00:23:31,890

And it's going to  
be helpful to us

504

00:23:31,890 --> 00:23:33,600

in teaching about the Holocaust.

505

00:23:33,600 --> 00:23:34,530

Thank you very much.

506

00:23:34,530 --> 00:23:36,540

Thank you.

507

00:23:36,540 --> 00:23:38,090

Thank you.

508

00:23:38,090 --> 00:23:45,000