

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,170

2  
00:00:05,170 --> 00:00:08,085  
You didn't yourself recall.

3  
00:00:08,085 --> 00:00:11,197  
So you spent then  
about six months--

4  
00:00:11,197 --> 00:00:12,030  
well, what happened?

5  
00:00:12,030 --> 00:00:13,260  
You were three months  
in the refinery

6  
00:00:13,260 --> 00:00:15,180  
and you were going back to  
your home, and then one day--

7  
00:00:15,180 --> 00:00:16,510  
About-- in total, six months.

8  
00:00:16,510 --> 00:00:18,343  
And then another six  
months in the refinery.

9  
00:00:18,343 --> 00:00:21,300  
Another six months  
in the refinery, OK.

10  
00:00:21,300 --> 00:00:23,490  
Again, I haven't  
kept any diary, and I

11  
00:00:23,490 --> 00:00:25,240  
have no calendar at that time.

12  
00:00:25,240 --> 00:00:26,820  
But it seems like that way.

13  
00:00:26,820 --> 00:00:29,040

And I could probably  
confirm that

14  
00:00:29,040 --> 00:00:35,070  
or at least ask more accurately  
of this Rabbi Wagshal.

15  
00:00:35,070 --> 00:00:38,560  
He's older than I am and he  
remembers a lot more than I do.

16  
00:00:38,560 --> 00:00:42,880  
OK, so the  
approximate month then

17  
00:00:42,880 --> 00:00:45,340  
at the end of that period  
of time at the refinery

18  
00:00:45,340 --> 00:00:45,998  
would be when?

19  
00:00:45,998 --> 00:00:46,540  
It would be--

20  
00:00:46,540 --> 00:00:49,590

21  
00:00:49,590 --> 00:00:50,630  
How to figure out--

22  
00:00:50,630 --> 00:00:52,200  
Let's say a total of a year.

23  
00:00:52,200 --> 00:00:54,050  
It would be '39, '40.

24  
00:00:54,050 --> 00:00:56,340  
It was probably toward  
the middle of 1940.

25  
00:00:56,340 --> 00:00:58,080  
Right.

26

00:00:58,080 --> 00:01:00,782  
In mid 1940.

27  
00:01:00,782 --> 00:01:05,280  
OK, now you mentioned that that  
was the last time-- you know,

28  
00:01:05,280 --> 00:01:07,280  
once you were told to  
stay in the refinery, that

29  
00:01:07,280 --> 00:01:12,110  
was the last time you ever saw  
your mother and your sister.

30  
00:01:12,110 --> 00:01:15,320  
You saw your father a  
year and a half later.

31  
00:01:15,320 --> 00:01:16,010  
What happened?

32  
00:01:16,010 --> 00:01:18,050  
You know, what changed  
during this period

33  
00:01:18,050 --> 00:01:19,880  
when you were in the refinery?

34  
00:01:19,880 --> 00:01:24,640  
We were there, as I said,  
for quite some time.

35  
00:01:24,640 --> 00:01:28,100  
It may have been  
more than six months.

36  
00:01:28,100 --> 00:01:34,550  
One day we were told that  
our job is being terminated

37  
00:01:34,550 --> 00:01:40,170  
and we would be  
taken to a gathering

38

00:01:40,170 --> 00:01:43,440  
place for all other  
work parties in the area

39  
00:01:43,440 --> 00:01:47,910  
at that time who apparently  
also stayed behind like we did.

40  
00:01:47,910 --> 00:01:50,340  
This was the so-called  
Lotnisko, which

41  
00:01:50,340 --> 00:01:54,010  
is an airport, a  
small local airport.

42  
00:01:54,010 --> 00:01:55,920  
On the Lotnisko  
we stayed awhile.

43  
00:01:55,920 --> 00:01:57,270  
A few weeks, maybe two weeks.

44  
00:01:57,270 --> 00:01:58,280  
I don't remember.

45  
00:01:58,280 --> 00:02:01,050  
It was a very brief period  
because I have no recollection

46  
00:02:01,050 --> 00:02:02,595  
other than having been there.

47  
00:02:02,595 --> 00:02:04,290  
And you stayed in some barracks?

48  
00:02:04,290 --> 00:02:05,060  
Yes.

49  
00:02:05,060 --> 00:02:06,060  
Yes.

50  
00:02:06,060 --> 00:02:09,090  
And from there we were  
taken to another--

51  
00:02:09,090 --> 00:02:14,550  
by transport, by trucks,  
to another, as it were,

52  
00:02:14,550 --> 00:02:18,420  
I guess a small concentration  
camp by the name of Szebnie.

53  
00:02:18,420 --> 00:02:20,460  
We were there also  
a very brief period.

54  
00:02:20,460 --> 00:02:23,852

55  
00:02:23,852 --> 00:02:25,810  
Can I just ask what was  
going through your mind

56  
00:02:25,810 --> 00:02:28,850  
during this time?

57  
00:02:28,850 --> 00:02:32,820  
I was simply accepting and  
doing what I was told to do.

58  
00:02:32,820 --> 00:02:37,080

59  
00:02:37,080 --> 00:02:43,180  
There's several things that I  
do remember clearly is the fear,

60  
00:02:43,180 --> 00:02:48,390  
and the hunger I would say more  
than the fear, and the lice.

61  
00:02:48,390 --> 00:02:51,550  
It made me very uncomfortable.

62  
00:02:51,550 --> 00:02:53,410  
I guess hunger and  
then lice and then

63

00:02:53,410 --> 00:02:55,900

fear in that order

if I had to put them

64

00:02:55,900 --> 00:02:57,730

in any kind of an order.

65

00:02:57,730 --> 00:03:01,720

Was there any discussion among  
other people who were with you,

66

00:03:01,720 --> 00:03:04,780

"let's run away," "let's flee?"

67

00:03:04,780 --> 00:03:06,190

Or was it just an impossibility?

68

00:03:06,190 --> 00:03:09,910

Yes, there was a  
discussion because I

69

00:03:09,910 --> 00:03:13,930

have heard some adults  
talk about somebody having

70

00:03:13,930 --> 00:03:15,490

come in from an outside--

71

00:03:15,490 --> 00:03:17,560

from out of the camp--

72

00:03:17,560 --> 00:03:20,470

outside the camp from a  
work day and bringing back

73

00:03:20,470 --> 00:03:24,520

some news, which obviously  
somebody must have given them.

74

00:03:24,520 --> 00:03:28,600

And the messages were  
going back and forth.

75

00:03:28,600 --> 00:03:33,510

I remember people were  
buying and selling

76  
00:03:33,510 --> 00:03:34,680  
bread and cigarettes.

77  
00:03:34,680 --> 00:03:36,580  
Some of them had some  
jewelry with them

78  
00:03:36,580 --> 00:03:39,155  
or still some other  
valuables which

79  
00:03:39,155 --> 00:03:41,280  
they were trading in with  
some of the guards, which

80  
00:03:41,280 --> 00:03:44,400  
were mostly Ukrainian.

81  
00:03:44,400 --> 00:03:46,590  
Some of them were Jewish  
guards, so-called kapos.

82  
00:03:46,590 --> 00:03:49,390

83  
00:03:49,390 --> 00:03:53,790  
And after that, Szebnie,  
that brief stop over there,

84  
00:03:53,790 --> 00:03:56,030  
we went to a concentration camp.

85  
00:03:56,030 --> 00:03:57,810  
And there we were  
separated, the men

86  
00:03:57,810 --> 00:03:59,852  
from the women, although  
we were always separate,

87  
00:03:59,852 --> 00:04:01,950  
but not that far away.

88

00:04:01,950 --> 00:04:06,040

That concentration  
camp was Płaszów.

89

00:04:06,040 --> 00:04:10,110

It was not far from Kraków and  
not far from the salt mines

90

00:04:10,110 --> 00:04:11,700

of Wieliczka.

91

00:04:11,700 --> 00:04:17,303

OK, so this is mid 1940.

92

00:04:17,303 --> 00:04:18,220

You were 12 years old.

93

00:04:18,220 --> 00:04:20,740

Yeah, maybe even  
toward the end of '40.

94

00:04:20,740 --> 00:04:22,450

Toward the end the '40.

95

00:04:22,450 --> 00:04:29,740

Płaszów was a pre-war cemetery  
which was leveled and enlarged

96

00:04:29,740 --> 00:04:35,440

several times and then fenced  
in with electrified wire

97

00:04:35,440 --> 00:04:39,120

and barracks.

98

00:04:39,120 --> 00:04:40,650

How many--

99

00:04:40,650 --> 00:04:43,700

This was, I would say,  
all Jews, of course.

100

00:04:43,700 --> 00:04:45,630



And all the other camps  
were also all Jews.

101  
00:04:45,630 --> 00:04:48,340

102  
00:04:48,340 --> 00:04:50,980  
Was there any kind  
of selection process

103  
00:04:50,980 --> 00:04:55,960  
other than males and females  
when you got to the camp?

104  
00:04:55,960 --> 00:04:57,790  
No.

105  
00:04:57,790 --> 00:05:00,340  
And there, by coincidence,  
I met my father.

106  
00:05:00,340 --> 00:05:03,040

107  
00:05:03,040 --> 00:05:06,390  
He was walking in a group, and  
I was walking in another group,

108  
00:05:06,390 --> 00:05:09,720  
and I saw him, and he saw me.

109  
00:05:09,720 --> 00:05:11,770  
There was quite a reunion.

110  
00:05:11,770 --> 00:05:16,510  
He told me the sad news that  
from Chorzów when that ghetto

111  
00:05:16,510 --> 00:05:20,100  
was liquidated, all able-bodied  
people were taken off

112  
00:05:20,100 --> 00:05:30,930  
to Płaszów and the  
rest went to Auschwitz.

113  
00:05:30,930 --> 00:05:33,600  
And that was the last  
that he had heard

114  
00:05:33,600 --> 00:05:35,520  
from my mother and my sister.

115  
00:05:35,520 --> 00:05:38,300  
My sister was a year and a  
half younger at that time.

116  
00:05:38,300 --> 00:05:42,737

117  
00:05:42,737 --> 00:05:44,209  
That was very sad.

118  
00:05:44,209 --> 00:05:44,709  
Very sad.

119  
00:05:44,709 --> 00:05:48,170

120  
00:05:48,170 --> 00:05:55,680  
Now when we arrived to Płaszów,  
we arrived at a very fortunate

121  
00:05:55,680 --> 00:06:01,500  
time it appears for us because  
just prior to our arrival,

122  
00:06:01,500 --> 00:06:08,860  
from what I understand, over  
55,000 Jews were machine-gunned

123  
00:06:08,860 --> 00:06:14,570  
to death and buried  
in mass graves.

124  
00:06:14,570 --> 00:06:17,600  
Now, I haven't seen  
any of it, but I

125

00:06:17,600 --> 00:06:22,910  
have seen some of the shootings  
that went on afterwards

126  
00:06:22,910 --> 00:06:24,980  
and their bodies being  
burned because there

127  
00:06:24,980 --> 00:06:30,120  
were shootings continually,  
but not on such a mass scale.

128  
00:06:30,120 --> 00:06:32,952  
And the monument which  
now stands in Płaszów,

129  
00:06:32,952 --> 00:06:34,160  
of which I have the picture--

130  
00:06:34,160 --> 00:06:37,110  
I mentioned that to you before--

131  
00:06:37,110 --> 00:06:41,180  
recites exactly that  
fact, that gruesome fact.

132  
00:06:41,180 --> 00:06:47,990  
There was a very  
ironic and not funny,

133  
00:06:47,990 --> 00:06:50,260  
although maybe it may  
have been meant funny,

134  
00:06:50,260 --> 00:06:54,180  
name for this  
place of execution.

135  
00:06:54,180 --> 00:06:56,860  
It was called  
Hujowa Gorka, which

136  
00:06:56,860 --> 00:07:00,200  
is not a nice thing to say.

137

00:07:00,200 --> 00:07:01,770  
And it wasn't even a gorka.

138  
00:07:01,770 --> 00:07:02,890  
Gorka is a hill.

139  
00:07:02,890 --> 00:07:06,550  
This was rather a depression.

140  
00:07:06,550 --> 00:07:07,690  
That's what it was called.

141  
00:07:07,690 --> 00:07:10,330

142  
00:07:10,330 --> 00:07:12,080  
They have two monuments  
standing there.

143  
00:07:12,080 --> 00:07:14,720  
One stands right in the  
middle of that pit, which

144  
00:07:14,720 --> 00:07:19,460  
is a huge, huge boulder  
reciting that fact

145  
00:07:19,460 --> 00:07:23,080  
that these Jews were  
machine-gunned there.

146  
00:07:23,080 --> 00:07:25,090  
Who put up that monument?

147  
00:07:25,090 --> 00:07:29,600  
I think it was the  
Jews of Poland.

148  
00:07:29,600 --> 00:07:35,800  
And this is also one of  
very few monuments in Poland

149  
00:07:35,800 --> 00:07:43,090  
that states that the  
victims were Jews in Poland.

150  
00:07:43,090 --> 00:07:47,030  
And most often, the monuments  
to those that were either

151  
00:07:47,030 --> 00:07:54,480  
persecuted or killed refers  
to citizens of Poland

152  
00:07:54,480 --> 00:07:56,670  
or citizens of other countries.

153  
00:07:56,670 --> 00:08:01,350  
This was one  
specifically designated

154  
00:08:01,350 --> 00:08:07,020  
for this unusual  
distinction as they were.

155  
00:08:07,020 --> 00:08:10,780  
It's one of very few that  
mentions Jews by name

156  
00:08:10,780 --> 00:08:11,930  
and were the victims there.

157  
00:08:11,930 --> 00:08:14,950

158  
00:08:14,950 --> 00:08:21,370  
Now, Płaszów apparently has  
a very intriguing history.

159  
00:08:21,370 --> 00:08:25,420  
And Kraków in general, which  
I was not aware of until a few

160  
00:08:25,420 --> 00:08:26,500  
years ago--

161  
00:08:26,500 --> 00:08:29,230  
I read a book, which was  
written by a German--

162

00:08:29,230 --> 00:08:32,080

actually written by  
an Australian author,

163

00:08:32,080 --> 00:08:38,620

and it is a biography of a  
German civilian in Kraków.

164

00:08:38,620 --> 00:08:42,039

Schindler's List is the name  
of that book which I have.

165

00:08:42,039 --> 00:08:46,120

And many of the names and  
places mentioned there

166

00:08:46,120 --> 00:08:47,500

I remember quite vividly.

167

00:08:47,500 --> 00:08:53,560

Many of the scenes, the public  
hangings, the public floggings.

168

00:08:53,560 --> 00:08:55,580

The kapos I remember by name.

169

00:08:55,580 --> 00:08:59,215

Chilowicz, a very  
notorious name.

170

00:08:59,215 --> 00:09:01,630

A Jewish kapo and his wife.

171

00:09:01,630 --> 00:09:08,850

Both very mean people I  
remember their demise and public

172

00:09:08,850 --> 00:09:11,560

display of their  
bodies and how we

173

00:09:11,560 --> 00:09:15,640

were required to walk  
by and stare at them

174

00:09:15,640 --> 00:09:18,820

and look at them  
as we walked by.

175

00:09:18,820 --> 00:09:20,140

It was quite an ordeal.

176

00:09:20,140 --> 00:09:21,410

Quite an ordeal.

177

00:09:21,410 --> 00:09:23,840

How many kapos were  
there in your camp?

178

00:09:23,840 --> 00:09:29,000

I don't remember, but I remember  
that the group that was shot--

179

00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:31,880

I remember the story was that  
they attempted to escape,

180

00:09:31,880 --> 00:09:35,060

and they were captured, and  
they were brought back and shot.

181

00:09:35,060 --> 00:09:35,720

The kapos--

182

00:09:35,720 --> 00:09:36,230

The kapos.

183

00:09:36,230 --> 00:09:37,233

--attempted to escape.

184

00:09:37,233 --> 00:09:39,650

I don't remember whether they  
actually attempted to escape

185

00:09:39,650 --> 00:09:41,180

or if they were  
just simply executed

186

00:09:41,180 --> 00:09:43,785

because they had seen  
too much or knew too much

187  
00:09:43,785 --> 00:09:44,660  
or whatever have you.

188  
00:09:44,660 --> 00:09:49,700  
Maybe they known too much about  
some of the Gestapo people

189  
00:09:49,700 --> 00:09:51,600  
in the camp.

190  
00:09:51,600 --> 00:09:53,580  
So I would not speculate  
on the real reason,

191  
00:09:53,580 --> 00:09:56,300  
but I do know they were  
shot, and they were

192  
00:09:56,300 --> 00:09:58,760  
very prominently displayed.

193  
00:09:58,760 --> 00:10:03,440  
And this is one instance  
where none of us

194  
00:10:03,440 --> 00:10:07,564  
felt any sadness just  
looking at these dead people.

195  
00:10:07,564 --> 00:10:10,970  
We hated them.

196  
00:10:10,970 --> 00:10:15,230  
Why do you think that Germans  
wanted you to view the bodies?

197  
00:10:15,230 --> 00:10:16,610  
That was a standard procedure.

198  
00:10:16,610 --> 00:10:17,870  
It was a routine.



199

00:10:17,870 --> 00:10:20,780

We were required to view  
any kind of punishment

200

00:10:20,780 --> 00:10:21,910

or executions.

201

00:10:21,910 --> 00:10:24,080

We used to be called out  
on a so-called appell.

202

00:10:24,080 --> 00:10:26,930

There was an appelplatz which  
was a quadrangle or whatever,

203

00:10:26,930 --> 00:10:28,887

one large square.

204

00:10:28,887 --> 00:10:30,720

This is where we were  
counted every morning.

205

00:10:30,720 --> 00:10:32,820

This is where we were  
counted every evening.

206

00:10:32,820 --> 00:10:34,310

And this is where  
we were required

207

00:10:34,310 --> 00:10:43,690

to stand at any of the periodic  
occasions that were put on.

208

00:10:43,690 --> 00:10:45,786

The shows, as it were.

209

00:10:45,786 --> 00:10:48,520

Hangings and such.

210

00:10:48,520 --> 00:10:49,690

Floggings.

211

00:10:49,690 --> 00:10:51,700

I guess this was apparently--

212

00:10:51,700 --> 00:10:54,130  
I'm sure this was  
designed to discourage

213

00:10:54,130 --> 00:10:56,710  
any further incidents  
such as that.

214

00:10:56,710 --> 00:11:00,380

215

00:11:00,380 --> 00:11:04,680  
So there we stayed for quite a  
while, maybe a year and a half.

216

00:11:04,680 --> 00:11:06,245  
How many people  
were in the camp?

217

00:11:06,245 --> 00:11:07,120  
Do you have any idea?

218

00:11:07,120 --> 00:11:08,830  
No idea whatsoever.

219

00:11:08,830 --> 00:11:10,600  
I know there were  
many, many people.

220

00:11:10,600 --> 00:11:14,270  
There was a very large woman's  
part and a very large men's

221

00:11:14,270 --> 00:11:15,260  
part.

222

00:11:15,260 --> 00:11:18,360  
And there are several people who  
were there who are here now--

223

00:11:18,360 --> 00:11:21,710  
from New Jersey and New York  
who were there at the same time

224  
00:11:21,710 --> 00:11:22,810  
that I know.

225  
00:11:22,810 --> 00:11:24,730  
There were various workshops.

226  
00:11:24,730 --> 00:11:28,300  
And apparently what saved  
my father was the fact

227  
00:11:28,300 --> 00:11:30,970  
that he was a watchmaker.

228  
00:11:30,970 --> 00:11:34,090  
And what saved me was  
that I also claimed

229  
00:11:34,090 --> 00:11:37,700  
to have been a watchmaker.

230  
00:11:37,700 --> 00:11:41,900  
And in Płaszów, there  
were many shops.

231  
00:11:41,900 --> 00:11:44,870  
There was a watchmaking shop  
and there was a printing shop.

232  
00:11:44,870 --> 00:11:47,540  
There was a tailor shop and  
all kinds of other shop.

233  
00:11:47,540 --> 00:11:49,790  
Machine shops.

234  
00:11:49,790 --> 00:11:53,330  
And this is where we  
worked, my father and I.

235  
00:11:53,330 --> 00:11:56,300  
And it was funny because  
I knew how to take

236

00:11:56,300 --> 00:11:58,190  
a watch apart or an instrument.

237  
00:11:58,190 --> 00:12:00,530  
Very often we were  
given instruments

238  
00:12:00,530 --> 00:12:04,730  
from trucks or cars or  
planes or whatever to repair.

239  
00:12:04,730 --> 00:12:07,070  
I never knew how to put  
these things together again,

240  
00:12:07,070 --> 00:12:07,820  
of course.

241  
00:12:07,820 --> 00:12:10,220  
And so between my father  
and another fellow

242  
00:12:10,220 --> 00:12:12,980  
on the other side of me,  
they did a good job for me.

243  
00:12:12,980 --> 00:12:15,530

244  
00:12:15,530 --> 00:12:18,540  
Could you describe the living  
conditions in the camp?

245  
00:12:18,540 --> 00:12:19,790  
Did you live with your father?

246  
00:12:19,790 --> 00:12:20,510  
Were you in the same barrack?

247  
00:12:20,510 --> 00:12:22,760  
We lived-- I lived  
together with my father.

248  
00:12:22,760 --> 00:12:25,958  
We had a barracks--

249  
00:12:25,958 --> 00:12:32,450  
let's see-- probably  
the length of this room.

250  
00:12:32,450 --> 00:12:36,980  
And there were bunks on both  
sides from wall to wall,

251  
00:12:36,980 --> 00:12:39,170  
and they were three tiers high.

252  
00:12:39,170 --> 00:12:42,150

253  
00:12:42,150 --> 00:12:44,640  
And the bottom one  
was on the floor.

254  
00:12:44,640 --> 00:12:47,610

255  
00:12:47,610 --> 00:12:49,170  
No, I think they were four high.

256  
00:12:49,170 --> 00:12:51,860  
There was nobody on the bottom.

257  
00:12:51,860 --> 00:12:54,650  
And we climbed one  
on top of the other.

258  
00:12:54,650 --> 00:12:57,310  
There were, I think, 30  
inches between barracks.

259  
00:12:57,310 --> 00:12:58,550  
It was quite a high ceiling.

260  
00:12:58,550 --> 00:13:01,400

261  
00:13:01,400 --> 00:13:09,720  
And we had some straw

and our prison clothing,

262

00:13:09,720 --> 00:13:11,990  
and we also had a blanket.

263

00:13:11,990 --> 00:13:15,950  
And those that were a  
little more considerate

264

00:13:15,950 --> 00:13:19,250  
and that were above us  
were very careful not

265

00:13:19,250 --> 00:13:24,110  
to turn abruptly or  
stir very strongly

266

00:13:24,110 --> 00:13:26,810  
because the rain of fleas--

267

00:13:26,810 --> 00:13:29,120  
not fleas-- the lice  
was unbelievable.

268

00:13:29,120 --> 00:13:32,580  
It was simply raining on us.

269

00:13:32,580 --> 00:13:37,670  
And I remember now,  
if I make comparisons

270

00:13:37,670 --> 00:13:41,420  
to what we lived  
like, it was I would

271

00:13:41,420 --> 00:13:47,695  
say like you house a horse  
today in a stall, your animals.

272

00:13:47,695 --> 00:13:49,900  
Something like that.

273

00:13:49,900 --> 00:13:52,910  
Now, we had a sink--  
very long sink

274

00:13:52,910 --> 00:13:54,850  
with faucets, water dripping.

275

00:13:54,850 --> 00:13:56,350  
There was not much  
water, but it was

276

00:13:56,350 --> 00:13:58,510  
dripping something  
[? about. ?] And we were all

277

00:13:58,510 --> 00:13:59,830  
washing at the same time.

278

00:13:59,830 --> 00:14:03,490  
Then after that, we went down  
to this appell to be counted.

279

00:14:03,490 --> 00:14:06,730  
And then we stood in  
line to get our food.

280

00:14:06,730 --> 00:14:08,080  
That's another thing.

281

00:14:08,080 --> 00:14:11,980  
I think that somebody must have  
really taken a liking to me

282

00:14:11,980 --> 00:14:15,970  
because every time  
I saw that man

283

00:14:15,970 --> 00:14:19,820  
dip very slowly to the  
very bottom of the kettle

284

00:14:19,820 --> 00:14:22,690  
and bringing it up very slowly  
making sure that I have really

285

00:14:22,690 --> 00:14:24,880  
something to eat on that plate.

286

00:14:24,880 --> 00:14:27,403

It was nice.

287

00:14:27,403 --> 00:14:28,570

And I never knew the fellow.

288

00:14:28,570 --> 00:14:28,980

He didn't--

289

00:14:28,980 --> 00:14:30,355

You have no idea

why he did that?

290

00:14:30,355 --> 00:14:31,840

No.

291

00:14:31,840 --> 00:14:34,010

Maybe he felt sorry for me.

292

00:14:34,010 --> 00:14:35,770

I must have looked

a sorry sight.

293

00:14:35,770 --> 00:14:37,803

Who-- was he a German soldier?

294

00:14:37,803 --> 00:14:39,220

No, that was one

of the prisoners.

295

00:14:39,220 --> 00:14:41,178

It was one of the prisoners

who was doing that.

296

00:14:41,178 --> 00:14:48,890

297

00:14:48,890 --> 00:14:53,450

Was there any attempt at any

kind of religious observance,

298

00:14:53,450 --> 00:14:54,920

ritual observance in the camp?



299

00:14:54,920 --> 00:14:56,120

Not in an organized manner.

300

00:14:56,120 --> 00:14:58,280

I have seen people in

Plaszów especially.

301

00:14:58,280 --> 00:15:01,210

There were many Hungarian

Jews there at one time also,

302

00:15:01,210 --> 00:15:04,100

for the later part.

303

00:15:04,100 --> 00:15:10,150

And they were observant.

304

00:15:10,150 --> 00:15:12,248

I have seen them

[? schuckling ?] and all

305

00:15:12,248 --> 00:15:12,790

these things.

306

00:15:12,790 --> 00:15:17,050

307

00:15:17,050 --> 00:15:19,750

But I have never been

encouraged or asked

308

00:15:19,750 --> 00:15:24,190

to pray or become part of a

minyan or anything like that.

309

00:15:24,190 --> 00:15:25,765

But [? those ?] who--

310

00:15:25,765 --> 00:15:28,820

There were some

people who prayed.

311

00:15:28,820 --> 00:15:31,660

And they actually had a minyan

of-- quorum of 10 people where

312

00:15:31,660 --> 00:15:32,160  
able to--

313

00:15:32,160 --> 00:15:34,450  
I don't remember any  
particularly minyan,

314

00:15:34,450 --> 00:15:37,240  
but there must've been.

315

00:15:37,240 --> 00:15:40,730  
There's enough  
Jews around there.

316

00:15:40,730 --> 00:15:42,188  
Enough Jews for a minyan.

317

00:15:42,188 --> 00:15:53,910

318

00:15:53,910 --> 00:15:56,167  
We had a potbelly stove there.

319

00:15:56,167 --> 00:15:57,500  
Two of them as a matter of fact.

320

00:15:57,500 --> 00:16:01,350  
One on either end,  
which was kept going all

321

00:16:01,350 --> 00:16:03,930  
the time in the colder months.

322

00:16:03,930 --> 00:16:07,430  
In the barracks to  
heat the barracks?

323

00:16:07,430 --> 00:16:11,300  
OK, so you were there for  
approximately a year and a half

324

00:16:11,300 --> 00:16:12,350

you say?

325

00:16:12,350 --> 00:16:12,930

Maybe a year.

326

00:16:12,930 --> 00:16:13,930

Maybe a year and a half.

327

00:16:13,930 --> 00:16:14,745

Sometime like that.

328

00:16:14,745 --> 00:16:17,420

Now, during that time,  
a number of individuals

329

00:16:17,420 --> 00:16:19,090

you mentioned  
before were killed,

330

00:16:19,090 --> 00:16:21,480

aside from the kapos who had--

331

00:16:21,480 --> 00:16:21,980

Oh, yes.

332

00:16:21,980 --> 00:16:22,570

--escaped.

333

00:16:22,570 --> 00:16:23,210

Oh, yes.

334

00:16:23,210 --> 00:16:25,550

Many just died because  
they were sick.

335

00:16:25,550 --> 00:16:27,950

And we had an infirmary  
there, but nobody ever

336

00:16:27,950 --> 00:16:29,013

came back from there.

337

00:16:29,013 --> 00:16:30,680

Did you think you

were going to survive?

338

00:16:30,680 --> 00:16:31,640

Did you--

339

00:16:31,640 --> 00:16:34,710

I didn't think in  
those terms at all.

340

00:16:34,710 --> 00:16:37,130

I just simply didn't think.

341

00:16:37,130 --> 00:16:39,920

Most vividly, as I stated  
before, what I remember

342

00:16:39,920 --> 00:16:44,350

is the constant  
hunger and the lice.

343

00:16:44,350 --> 00:16:46,700

And there was a  
fear from a beating

344

00:16:46,700 --> 00:16:48,950

rather than for my life.

345

00:16:48,950 --> 00:16:52,610

Because the beatings  
were very often there.

346

00:16:52,610 --> 00:16:53,787

Now, what happened--

347

00:16:53,787 --> 00:16:54,620

Let me just ask you.

348

00:16:54,620 --> 00:16:55,130

I'm sorry.

349

00:16:55,130 --> 00:16:56,380

I don't want to interrupt you.

350

00:16:56,380 --> 00:16:57,450

But the fear of beating.

351

00:16:57,450 --> 00:17:01,780

352

00:17:01,780 --> 00:17:03,710

Was it the personal injury?

353

00:17:03,710 --> 00:17:04,760

Was it the injury--

354

00:17:04,760 --> 00:17:07,520

the physical-- the pain that  
would come from the beating?

355

00:17:07,520 --> 00:17:11,599

Or was there something  
psychological maybe?

356

00:17:11,599 --> 00:17:16,270

No, this was a fear of the pain.

357

00:17:16,270 --> 00:17:18,560

Pure and simple.

358

00:17:18,560 --> 00:17:25,500

Now, what happened-- also a  
fear of your life very often,

359

00:17:25,500 --> 00:17:26,950

but not on a daily basis.

360

00:17:26,950 --> 00:17:30,960

For instance, there were  
people who did escape.

361

00:17:30,960 --> 00:17:33,450

Sometimes they were caught.

362

00:17:33,450 --> 00:17:35,180

They were brought back.

363

00:17:35,180 --> 00:17:40,180

They were publicly

flogged or hanged.

364  
00:17:40,180 --> 00:17:43,530  
Now, the floggings, I  
think, were for trespassers

365  
00:17:43,530 --> 00:17:44,760  
within the camp.

366  
00:17:44,760 --> 00:17:47,040  
The hangings were  
mostly for those who

367  
00:17:47,040 --> 00:17:50,490  
escaped and were brought back.

368  
00:17:50,490 --> 00:17:53,670  
There were many who did not--  
who were not caught then

369  
00:17:53,670 --> 00:17:56,610  
what happened is during  
one of these appells,

370  
00:17:56,610 --> 00:18:02,660  
mostly in the morning where we  
were counted and we were short,

371  
00:18:02,660 --> 00:18:08,870  
one of the guards just went-- we  
were standing in rows of five.

372  
00:18:08,870 --> 00:18:12,650  
They took every 10th person from  
the first row or second row.

373  
00:18:12,650 --> 00:18:15,270  
It was quite arbitrary.

374  
00:18:15,270 --> 00:18:19,130  
And they were then  
executed as a group.

375  
00:18:19,130 --> 00:18:21,750  
Every 10th person.

376

00:18:21,750 --> 00:18:25,350

And on one occasion, my  
father was the ninth person.

377

00:18:25,350 --> 00:18:27,750

It was very close calls.

378

00:18:27,750 --> 00:18:33,020

That was a very fearful  
kind of a experience.

379

00:18:33,020 --> 00:18:36,268

Was there any struggle  
among the inmates

380

00:18:36,268 --> 00:18:38,060

at the camp to make  
sure that they were not

381

00:18:38,060 --> 00:18:39,510

the 10th person if this--

382

00:18:39,510 --> 00:18:40,010

No.

383

00:18:40,010 --> 00:18:42,080

--happened on any kind  
of consistent b --

384

00:18:42,080 --> 00:18:45,420

No, they were required  
to fall into the ranks,

385

00:18:45,420 --> 00:18:46,867

and this is the way they stood.

386

00:18:46,867 --> 00:18:47,450

And were you--

387

00:18:47,450 --> 00:18:51,350

At least I was not aware of  
any kind of hiding or switching

388

00:18:51,350 --> 00:18:51,920  
of places.

389  
00:18:51,920 --> 00:18:54,520  
Nobody would allow that.

390  
00:18:54,520 --> 00:18:56,270  
It's like stealing  
somebody's bread, which

391  
00:18:56,270 --> 00:18:59,060  
also happened occasionally.

392  
00:18:59,060 --> 00:19:02,555  
I mean, the person who was  
caught or even suspected

393  
00:19:02,555 --> 00:19:03,305  
suffered terribly.

394  
00:19:03,305 --> 00:19:12,470

395  
00:19:12,470 --> 00:19:15,560  
OK, so you're in this camp  
then for approximately,

396  
00:19:15,560 --> 00:19:17,010  
we're saying--

397  
00:19:17,010 --> 00:19:18,440  
About a year, a year and a half.

398  
00:19:18,440 --> 00:19:19,190  
A year and a half.

399  
00:19:19,190 --> 00:19:24,610  
I remember it was late  
fall when a small--

400  
00:19:24,610 --> 00:19:26,180  
not a small.

401  
00:19:26,180 --> 00:19:29,960



Our entire workshop of  
watchmakers and possibly other

402

00:19:29,960 --> 00:19:33,050  
workshops, but I'm only  
aware of our workshop,

403

00:19:33,050 --> 00:19:39,700  
was taken-- loaded  
onto freight cars

404

00:19:39,700 --> 00:19:44,710  
and given a couple  
of-- two cans each

405

00:19:44,710 --> 00:19:52,720  
of conserves, the canned food.

406

00:19:52,720 --> 00:19:57,325  
And after a couple of day's  
journey, we arrived in Germany.

407

00:19:57,325 --> 00:20:00,460

408

00:20:00,460 --> 00:20:06,406  
The name of that concentration  
camp was Sachsenhausen.

409

00:20:06,406 --> 00:20:13,590  
OK, so this is the  
beginning of 1942.

410

00:20:13,590 --> 00:20:15,500  
No, I would say closer to '43.

411

00:20:15,500 --> 00:20:17,370  
Beginning of '43.

412

00:20:17,370 --> 00:20:19,880  
You know, I may be  
completely mixed

413

00:20:19,880 --> 00:20:21,380  
up on the time

because I remember

414

00:20:21,380 --> 00:20:24,140  
there were rumors  
that the Germans were

415

00:20:24,140 --> 00:20:26,060  
stopped at Stalingrad.

416

00:20:26,060 --> 00:20:30,920  
And we were still in Płaszów.

417

00:20:30,920 --> 00:20:34,610  
And that they were going  
to dig up all the corpses

418

00:20:34,610 --> 00:20:37,760  
and burn them, which they did.

419

00:20:37,760 --> 00:20:40,730  
And shortly thereafter,  
I don't know

420

00:20:40,730 --> 00:20:47,510  
how shortly, maybe a few months,  
we were taken away to Germany.

421

00:20:47,510 --> 00:20:49,310  
So that is the one  
point of reference

422

00:20:49,310 --> 00:20:53,600  
is that rumor of the Stalingrad  
battle, which came back, again,

423

00:20:53,600 --> 00:20:56,073  
from the work parties  
outside of camp.

424

00:20:56,073 --> 00:20:58,490  
And your father was with you  
in this group of watchmakers?

425

00:20:58,490 --> 00:21:01,160  
My father was with

me at that group.

426

00:21:01,160 --> 00:21:02,722

OK, so then you entered this--

427

00:21:02,722 --> 00:21:03,930

the name the camp again was--

428

00:21:03,930 --> 00:21:04,857

Sachsenhausen.

429

00:21:04,857 --> 00:21:05,440

Sachsenhausen.

430

00:21:05,440 --> 00:21:06,023

Sachsenhausen.

431

00:21:06,023 --> 00:21:08,540

Not far from Berlin.

432

00:21:08,540 --> 00:21:13,460

That was a pre-war camp  
built as a concentration camp

433

00:21:13,460 --> 00:21:15,380

mainly for political prisoners.

434

00:21:15,380 --> 00:21:19,610

Then lately they were political  
and criminals as well as

435

00:21:19,610 --> 00:21:22,970

Jews, but not all were Jews.

436

00:21:22,970 --> 00:21:26,630

There were many non-Jewish  
prisoners in Sachsenhausen

437

00:21:26,630 --> 00:21:29,958

and many political.

438

00:21:29,958 --> 00:21:32,250

Were you told why you were  
being sent to Sachsenhausen?

439  
00:21:32,250 --> 00:21:34,600  
No?

440  
00:21:34,600 --> 00:21:37,260  
No, and we didn't ask either.

441  
00:21:37,260 --> 00:21:40,230  
I mean, even if we  
did ask then, nobody

442  
00:21:40,230 --> 00:21:43,807  
expected to be told the truth.

443  
00:21:43,807 --> 00:21:44,890  
Besides, it didn't matter.

444  
00:21:44,890 --> 00:21:47,840

445  
00:21:47,840 --> 00:21:52,990  
We were not in control of  
our actions or our time.

446  
00:21:52,990 --> 00:21:54,790  
We simply did what  
we were told to do.

447  
00:21:54,790 --> 00:21:58,050

448  
00:21:58,050 --> 00:22:01,470  
Now, Sachsenhausen,  
I was greeted

449  
00:22:01,470 --> 00:22:05,700  
with a big, beautiful  
sign, "Arbeit macht frei,"

450  
00:22:05,700 --> 00:22:09,370  
and that was also a work camp.

451  
00:22:09,370 --> 00:22:16,630  
The shops-- we were

again designated

452

00:22:16,630 --> 00:22:19,732  
to a watchmaking shop,  
which was outside the camp.

453

00:22:19,732 --> 00:22:20,440  
Outside the camp.

454

00:22:20,440 --> 00:22:20,950  
We walked.

455

00:22:20,950 --> 00:22:22,325  
I remember it was  
the wintertime.

456

00:22:22,325 --> 00:22:27,730  
We were having these  
wooden shoes, wood bottoms.

457

00:22:27,730 --> 00:22:31,240  
And the worst of  
it was that snow

458

00:22:31,240 --> 00:22:33,070  
kept building up on the bottom.

459

00:22:33,070 --> 00:22:35,545  
And pretty soon it was this  
high, and people were tripping.

460

00:22:35,545 --> 00:22:37,420  
And some of them were  
tripping, were falling,

461

00:22:37,420 --> 00:22:38,460  
and then they were shot.

462

00:22:38,460 --> 00:22:40,570  
It was chaos.

463

00:22:40,570 --> 00:22:42,760  
I think after a while we  
were given different shoes

464

00:22:42,760 --> 00:22:46,120  
because they were losing too  
many watchmakers or whatever.

465

00:22:46,120 --> 00:22:49,850  
That was a large  
group of people there.

466

00:22:49,850 --> 00:22:55,250  
I was there I  
think maybe a year.

467

00:22:55,250 --> 00:22:56,310  
Maybe less.

468

00:22:56,310 --> 00:22:57,790  
I don't remember.

469

00:22:57,790 --> 00:23:01,235  
You walked outside everyday  
to this work facility?

470

00:23:01,235 --> 00:23:03,560  
Yes, and we were brought back.

471

00:23:03,560 --> 00:23:04,730  
And the food?

472

00:23:04,730 --> 00:23:08,330  
I said both of these  
concentration camps

473

00:23:08,330 --> 00:23:10,190  
as opposed to  
extermination camps.

474

00:23:10,190 --> 00:23:11,880  
Correct.

475

00:23:11,880 --> 00:23:13,610  
And there is a difference.

476

00:23:13,610 --> 00:23:21,927  
Now, after that, a group of

youngsters of maybe 200--

477

00:23:21,927 --> 00:23:23,010

After that you're saying--

478

00:23:23,010 --> 00:23:24,920

After my stay in Sachsenhausen.

479

00:23:24,920 --> 00:23:27,220

The full the full s --

480

00:23:27,220 --> 00:23:30,960

Maybe a year or so.

481

00:23:30,960 --> 00:23:35,180

A group of youngsters  
was loaded up on a boxcar

482

00:23:35,180 --> 00:23:36,865

and taken someplace else.

483

00:23:36,865 --> 00:23:38,490

I don't remember the  
name of the place.

484

00:23:38,490 --> 00:23:41,540

It was either [Place  
name] or Ludwigslust.

485

00:23:41,540 --> 00:23:44,370

I think it was Ludwigslust  
It's a tiny place.

486

00:23:44,370 --> 00:23:48,110

I don't remember seeing it  
on the map after the war.

487

00:23:48,110 --> 00:23:51,580

It turned out to be  
a munitions factory.

488

00:23:51,580 --> 00:23:54,540

And they build a small  
area with barbed wire,

489

00:23:54,540 --> 00:23:56,660  
and this is where we were kept.

490

00:23:56,660 --> 00:23:59,780  
We didn't do much work at  
that munitions factory.

491

00:23:59,780 --> 00:24:03,050  
We were kept there, and  
we had very little food.

492

00:24:03,050 --> 00:24:04,370  
Very poor conditions.

493

00:24:04,370 --> 00:24:07,510

494

00:24:07,510 --> 00:24:10,650  
Was your-- you said  
a group of 200 or so?

495

00:24:10,650 --> 00:24:11,310  
Youngsters.

496

00:24:11,310 --> 00:24:11,850  
Youngsters.

497

00:24:11,850 --> 00:24:15,390  
Your father was not  
included in that group?

498

00:24:15,390 --> 00:24:17,380  
I think they simply took  
whoever they had seen

499

00:24:17,380 --> 00:24:18,800  
or whoever met their eye.

500

00:24:18,800 --> 00:24:21,520

501

00:24:21,520 --> 00:24:25,750  
And my father actually  
stayed behind.



502

00:24:25,750 --> 00:24:27,640

Now, there were some  
German Jews there,

503

00:24:27,640 --> 00:24:31,090

and there were some Greek  
Jews there, which I have--

504

00:24:31,090 --> 00:24:35,290

I remember meeting boys,  
and there's boys my age.

505

00:24:35,290 --> 00:24:37,855

At that time you were  
approximately 15?

506

00:24:37,855 --> 00:24:40,010

15, mm-hmm.

507

00:24:40,010 --> 00:24:42,130

Maybe 16 or going 16.

508

00:24:42,130 --> 00:24:43,855

Something like that.

509

00:24:43,855 --> 00:24:44,825

15, I guess.

510

00:24:44,825 --> 00:24:47,740

511

00:24:47,740 --> 00:24:48,880

Maybe just in between.

512

00:24:48,880 --> 00:24:50,830

Who knows?

513

00:24:50,830 --> 00:24:55,870

We stayed there  
for a few months.

514

00:24:55,870 --> 00:24:56,460

Maybe a year.

515

00:24:56,460 --> 00:24:57,600

I, again, don't remember.

516

00:24:57,600 --> 00:25:05,130

The factory was almost  
always bombed and inoperable.

517

00:25:05,130 --> 00:25:07,440

I don't remember  
ever working inside,

518

00:25:07,440 --> 00:25:11,010

but we were there nevertheless.

519

00:25:11,010 --> 00:25:12,660

Actually, I do remember  
a few occasions

520

00:25:12,660 --> 00:25:15,960

where we worked inside because  
a friend of mine who also

521

00:25:15,960 --> 00:25:18,690

happened to have been a German  
Jew who now lives in Berlin,

522

00:25:18,690 --> 00:25:22,260

West Berlin was hurt there.

523

00:25:22,260 --> 00:25:23,130

He was injured.

524

00:25:23,130 --> 00:25:28,590

And one of his  
fingers was, I think,

525

00:25:28,590 --> 00:25:31,500

caught in one of the machines  
and became very infected.

526

00:25:31,500 --> 00:25:33,720

He didn't lose it,  
but to this day

527

00:25:33,720 --> 00:25:38,460

the finger is paralyzed,  
totally paralyzed.

528

00:25:38,460 --> 00:25:43,780

I have seen him as it happens  
a year and a half ago.

529

00:25:43,780 --> 00:25:48,430

And I just spoke to him  
recently because my son had

530

00:25:48,430 --> 00:25:50,890

gone to Europe for  
a vacation, and he's

531

00:25:50,890 --> 00:25:53,020

going to visit him in Berlin.

532

00:25:53,020 --> 00:25:56,230

You had no contact with him  
until a year and a half ago?

533

00:25:56,230 --> 00:25:57,970

We had contact with  
him after the war.

534

00:25:57,970 --> 00:25:59,110

We were liberated together.

535

00:25:59,110 --> 00:26:01,987

We lived together for  
about a year and a half.

536

00:26:01,987 --> 00:26:03,820

Then I went to Poland  
to look for my father,

537

00:26:03,820 --> 00:26:05,650

and I found out  
about his whereabouts

538

00:26:05,650 --> 00:26:08,310

and lost contact with him.

539

00:26:08,310 --> 00:26:09,465

OK, let me just go back.

540

00:26:09,465 --> 00:26:11,090

I'm sorry, I jumped  
a little bit ahead.

541

00:26:11,090 --> 00:26:11,882

Yes, too far ahead.

542

00:26:11,882 --> 00:26:12,430

Right.

543

00:26:12,430 --> 00:26:16,660

So you were in this munitions  
factory for about how long

544

00:26:16,660 --> 00:26:18,010

did you say?

545

00:26:18,010 --> 00:26:19,630

Maybe 3/4 of a year.

546

00:26:19,630 --> 00:26:20,410

I don't remember.

547

00:26:20,410 --> 00:26:24,850

It must have been more  
than seven or eight months.

548

00:26:24,850 --> 00:26:27,360

And the conditions  
were miserable.

549

00:26:27,360 --> 00:26:32,260

Did you know at the time  
about the extermination camps?

550

00:26:32,260 --> 00:26:34,630

Oh, yes.

551

00:26:34,630 --> 00:26:37,340

I knew full well.

552

00:26:37,340 --> 00:26:39,940  
My father told me what happened  
to my mother and my sisters.

553

00:26:39,940 --> 00:26:42,030  
I knew that they had  
extermination camps.

554

00:26:42,030 --> 00:26:46,448  
I also know what  
happened in Płaszów.

555

00:26:46,448 --> 00:26:58,205  
And there, the worst part  
was just before liberation.

556

00:26:58,205 --> 00:26:59,700  
It was a week--

557

00:26:59,700 --> 00:27:02,280  
a two-week period where  
people-- most of our group

558

00:27:02,280 --> 00:27:06,675  
were dying off of diarrhea  
or malnutrition or something

559

00:27:06,675 --> 00:27:07,318  
like that.

560

00:27:07,318 --> 00:27:10,190

561

00:27:10,190 --> 00:27:15,150  
And in fact, we had no tools.

562

00:27:15,150 --> 00:27:20,070  
As a matter of fact, I remember  
that many of the corpses

563

00:27:20,070 --> 00:27:21,430  
were taken to the latrine--

564

00:27:21,430 --> 00:27:24,360

it was the only large  
dish that we had--

565  
00:27:24,360 --> 00:27:28,360  
and were dumped there.

566  
00:27:28,360 --> 00:27:32,260  
We had nothing even  
to bury them with.

567  
00:27:32,260 --> 00:27:38,840  
And I suspect that  
some of these corpses

568  
00:27:38,840 --> 00:27:40,850  
were used and put to better use.

569  
00:27:40,850 --> 00:27:45,810

570  
00:27:45,810 --> 00:27:47,180  
But we had very little food.

571  
00:27:47,180 --> 00:27:51,110  
But we did eat something.

572  
00:27:51,110 --> 00:27:56,840  
At any rate, one morning  
I heard the rumble.

573  
00:27:56,840 --> 00:28:04,000