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HOLOCAUST MEDIA PROJECT

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INTERVIEW WITH: Aron Grynward 65

INTERVIEWER:

DATE:

PLACE:

TRANSCRIBER: Robin Nodland

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- 1 Q. Your name?
- 2 A. My name is Aron Grynward.
- 3 Q. And where are you from?
- 4 A. From ben-jin.
- 5 Q. And where is that?
- 6 A. Poland, West Poland.
- 7 Q. And when were you born?
- 8 A. I born in 1904, October 21.
- 9 Q. And --
- 10 A. And I -- in 1937, I move to Krakow, where I open my
- 11 factory for wire dooring, and wire screen, wire
- 12 fence, everything from wire. The same factory that
- 13 my father has in ben-jin. I was in ghetto Krakow.
- 14 'til the 13th of March, 1943. Then in
- 15 ^{lager Plaszow} lag-a-plash-of, where I work, many time was
- 16 selection, but I had papers from German school,
- 17 technical school, what I finished in ber-go near
- 18 Breslau. For this the Nazi hunter -- that I am
- 19 engineer for this metal, and they leave me a few
- 20 times. I was in Plaszow. I work in the metal shop,
- 21 and from Plaszow they send me in 1944, August I think
- 22 -- I think so. August 1944, they send me to
- 23 Mauthausen. Mauthausen, I worked in the
- 24 ^{Wiener} veen-er-gard-en. This was a few weeks. Then they
- 25 ^{St. Valentin} send me to sin-va-len-tee, where I work like a

1 controller by the machines. They work over their
2 tanks for the Army.

3 Q. You made tanks?

4 A. They made tanks.

5 Q. For the German Army?

6 A. For the German Army. And I work because they
7 examined -- they had the papers that I am -- that I
8 know the blue prints, I can read. They made me with
9 other controllers to measure everything. We come
10 over there to san-va-len-tee 600 Jews. We built the
11 barracks, the camp, a small camp for us, a branch for
12 Mauthausen.

13 In 1945, on the 13th -- 13 of -- of April, yes,
14 13 of April, they vacate us to Ebensee, another
15 camp. There was only in this time 140 Jews from the
16 600 Jews. On the 6th of May, the Americans, they
17 liberated us from Ebensee. This is all the story.

18 My family, nobody leave. I had five brothers,
19 four sisters, and my parents. The father was shot in
20 our backyard. He don't -- he refuse to go when they
21 want take him to Auschwitz. They shot him in our
22 backyard. This told me the Polish people what they
23 leave over there, near our, because we live in the
24 factory, we have the factory, and you have -- the
25 apartment house was old, and the -- the factory.

1 One brother, this -- when I come after the war
2 back to ben-jin, they told me one brother was in the
3 underground.

4 Q. You have to fill that out. One brother --

5 A. My brother was in the underground. They caught him
6 for sabotage, and he was in the prison, mis-lo-vitz,
7 in the prison, and he was beheaded.

8 Q. Beheaded?

9 A. Beheaded, yes. This is the German sentence was.
10 They beheaded him in the backyard from the prison.
11 They told me, one man. He was in prison also, a
12 Polish man.

13 Q. So you were not there when this happened?

14 A. No, no. I -- no. My -- all my brothers and sisters,
15 they, everything is gone. Two brother-in-laws I
16 have, two sisters was married. That's all. That is
17 -- that is the story.

18 I was in Poland after the war. We -- four Jews,
19 we walked six week, from Ebensee to Poland, we walk.
20 One Jew was Hauser from Krakow, pos-loosh-nee from
21 mair-ik-hoov, and the third, I don't -- I forget the
22 name, from yen-jay-oov, a town in Poland. We walk to
23 Poland six week.

24 When I come over there, the Polish, they took
25 over the factory from my father. They let me not in,

1 because it's communist. And they took over my
2 factory in Krakow, too. They let me not in. I
3 provide -- I sued in court, and this was 'til 1949,
4 to the Supreme Court I lose. Then I -- and then they
5 don't let me out because the communists don't let out
6 professionals, and they -- so they know that I am
7 technic, because technic engineer, they let me not
8 out, until 1961.

9 Q. And then you came here?

10 A. I came here.

11 Q. So during the war, what kept you alive was the fact
12 that you were a professional technician?

13 A. That was I -- I had German papers.

14 Q. And German.

15 A. This made -- this was so -- German papers from 1922,
16 1923 that I was in the German school, and I finished.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. And I have like a professional. This made me --

19 Q. Yeah, valuable.

20 A. Some time, some time. Not all the time, but this
21 is --

22 Q. Now, you did not marry.

23 A. Yes, I married. My wife also was with me in the
24 ghetto, Krakow, and they divided us in 1944. She was
25 in the woman locker.

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. And I was in the men's locker. But we see through
3 the wires. We see from the far.

4 1944, when they took me to Mauthausen, I -- she
5 told me how well to give me and she told me also this
6 -- this -- I remembered -- remember, let -- the shoes
7 which you wear have to be everything, good shoes.
8 This was from wood, the shoes, because, she said, the
9 foot is the fundamental from everything, that you
10 don't caught -- catch -- how do you call --
11 something, the name, this was a sickness.

12 Q. Not trichinosis, but --

13 A. And after the war she didn't know me, but when I come
14 back to Poland, I had I heard that from our men that
15 she is in ^{Theresienstadt} tair-en-shtock, in hospital. She is not
16 here now because she is a sick person. When she come
17 back from there, she is a sick person, very sick.
18 She isn't home.

19 Q. But you went to the hospital after the war and found
20 her?

21 A. No. This was in Czechoslovakia she was, and I was in
22 Poland, and she -- I know from this because she write
23 a letter to our Polish family. She write a letter.

24 Q. (Inaudible.)

25 A. Yeah, yeah.

- 1 Q. She wrote a letter.
- 2 A. She wrote a letter that she is in hospital from --
3 and she is coming home, but I cannot go. I didn't
4 know that she is so sick. After six week -- after
5 the war, she come back to Krakow, and she -- she find
6 me over there.
- 7 Q. Where did she find you? Where were you?
- 8 A. I was -- I was going from -- from Krakow to Katowice
9 because the red-par-ta-reesh-en from the people, from
10 the camps, come to Katowice, one place, and to
11 Krakow. I didn't know which station she will come.
12 This was maybe 60 -- 60 mile apart, Krakow from
13 Katowice. And I was in Krakow, and I had to go with
14 one man to Czechoslovakia for six week, and she come
15 in this place where I was sleeping by -- by -- by our
16 Jewish family. She come in.
- 17 Q. Did she wake you, like that?
- 18 A. Then -- this was in the morning. She knock on the
19 door. The men opened the door, and say, Mrs.
20 Grynward, I have a present for you. Dear.
- 21 Q. My -- my goodness. And you saw her? She came in the
22 doorway?
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. That was a gift.
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 Q. And then you started all over again?
- 2 A. Started all over again. I had this -- I had over
3 there in Poland the fact -- in my factory. I want
4 back to my factory. This was a small factory, but
5 they took over. And in Poland was the law, the
6 communist law was that a small factory, they have to
7 not socialize, not take over, only the big factories,
8 but was a paragraph, a law, one that when -- number
9 24, when this is needed for the -- for the regime,
10 they can take over. And they give me -- they give
11 the paragraph, the law 24, that they needed this, and
12 they took this over.
- 13 Q. Now, is it because you were Jewish or --
- 14 A. I don't know. This is --
- 15 Q. -- the way they are?
- 16 A. This is -- a little -- a little is-tis. I do not say
17 that -- oh, a little is-tis.
- 18 Q. And did you have children?
- 19 A. No.
- 20 Q. No.
- 21 A. No, no, nothing.
- 22 Q. And was your wife all alone, too, her family?
- 23 A. She is at home. I leave Newark, New Jersey.
- 24 Q. No. I mean when your wife came back --
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. -- after the war to Krakow, was her family alive?
- 2 A. Her family, they come, two brothers, they come to see
- 3 her, but they went back to Bergen-Belsen. They come
- 4 from Bergen-Belsen. They was liberated brothers, and
- 5 they are here. They're living here in United States.
- 6 Q. So your wife was very fortunate, her husband and her
- 7 two brothers. I mean, a lot of other people --
- 8 A. She has other family, a brother, mother, sisters.
- 9 Q. Well, I want to thank you very much.
- 10 A. You're welcome.

11 (INTERVIEW CONCLUDED)

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