

[MUSIC PLAYING] Good afternoon. I'm Bernard Weinstein, director of the Kean College Oral Histories Project. We're continuing with part three of our interview with Aba Prawer, Springfield, New Jersey. This interview was initiated on March 19, 1987, and we are continuing it today to its conclusion.

Mr. Prawer, I'd like to start off on a somewhat happier note. At the last interview you mentioned meeting your wife, and you told us that that was another story. Why don't we start with that story?

OK. I used to live after being moved from camp to camp and liberated in Buchenwald, we landed-- we found to be moved in a camp we called Landsberg am Lech in Germany near Munich. I lived in camp for a while. And we lived there actually it don't cost us nothing, very reasonable. Because we were supported by the UGA.

Who were you with at the time?

Well, I was with my uncle and two cousins, my uncle Prawer and two cousins. Their name is Polsky from Schlesien. We met in Buchenwald at the end after World War Two. And since then we stick together. Well, we survived, so we help each other, and we give courage to each other to continue life.

Well, it took us quite a while to arrive in Landsberg am Lech. Quite a few weeks or months since we were liberated. We start to realize that life has to go on in searching for family. We travel to all kinds of different states in Germany, different camps, and different big cities where Jewish population and people from concentration camp lived there, survived, until they get the permanent place where to be, where to live.

And my uncle should rest in peace, he found a friend in Munich. And they got together one day and he says who's with you? Same question what you ask me. He says I have my nephew, I have two cousins. How old? I wasn't there at the present, but later on I found this story from my uncle.

And he says, Aba, why don't you try to go to Munich, Germany. I have a good friend there, his name is Tobias Hoffman. And see what you can do there. What I went there for actually is exchange rations food, where we got chocolate, food, and for clothes and so on, whatever I need, personal things. And when I came there I found two sisters, I met two sisters. And Mr. Hoffman was a very close friend-- used to be a very close friend of my uncle-- both passed away.

And I went there actually for business, the transactions, exchange something for something. And they told me to stay overnight. And I also, at the same time, I was planning to go to Italy because it has a lot of big population-- Jewish population, and I had a cousin there, Ari A Perla. And he was there in Italy. Matter of fact, today he lives in Israel. I'm going to see him there.

And why I go to Italy I may buy something in exchange, like saccharine, whatever, you can take with you to pay for the freight and tickets for the train, buses whatever it cost. But I didn't go to him because I met this girl there, my present wife. And we enjoy it, I canceled my trip.

We have a wonderful time. We called my uncle. He came to me, and then I find out there was a trick from his side and my wife's brother-in-law-- ex-brother-in-law. And it be better to get married, because with two sisters he wants to marry one and I should take the other one.

And I let them know after awhile I didn't say that way. I like the girl, a very hard working girl. Matter of fact, when I arrived she didn't expect me, and matter of fact she was on the knees and the floor and scrubbing the floor and cleaning the-- like at home, like in the old home. And this impressed me very much. Because I already learned about life-- what life is about, how people are, how people act. And I saw a very simple, honest girl, the way I am, the way I been looking for.

So I went home the following week. I stayed there, we went to opera, we went to movies. And my brother-in-law was involved looking for business because he was a professional dry cleaner in the dying clothes. Matter of fact, we dyed

those blankets for American soldiers from the military, the green.

The khaki?

The khaki, whatever you call the color.

Yeah.

To me, there's no color. And I am in this in plastic and I don't even know a color like this, khaki. And he told me when I would like to I would come there and help him out, and be partners and so on, and stay in Munich where we can build a life. Well, I went home and I talk over this with my uncle and my two cousins, and I decide to marry, not to travel no more, and settle and build a family. And helping my brother-in-law build his future, and also mine.

Can I ask you how you felt being in Munich at this time?

Well, I've been already in Landsberg for quite a few months. So I have to adjust my life to life, to live. Not only just as a DP, we call the part-- a DP is a name for something.

Displaced person.

Displaced person-- I want to be on my own. I don't want to be fitted for nothing, doing nothing, sitting. This brings bad memories and bad things in life. And I noticed what happened to other people going out from their way, and they turned to be bad people, and bothers me.

So I decided we'll get married. Matter of fact, we married in June the 3rd. We married in Landsberg am Lech, the Jewish wedding. Both sisters and my brother-in-law-- my ex-brother-in-law, we have a double wedding. And I went To Garmisch-Partenkirchen for our honeymoon. Never been i have no idea what honeymoon was at this time, but we went there.

This was in '46?

In '46, and I came back. My brother-in-law went there, and we just two started working harder. And we worked in a basement for people getting jobs from dying from those blankets. Matter of fact, we made my wife a coat from dying from the same khaki color. It wasn't easy, but I worked with my brother-in-law and they call it "Farberei." This is the dying. "Dying" is in English, correct?

Yeah.

And little by little he built a big factory in Munich Hohenzollernstrasse near Kurfürstenplatz. We were together almost till we departed to United States. I live in my old place in Fluggenstrasse. In Munich. And my brother-in-law lived-- because he has his own life, his own wife.

And I worked daily at this place, travel by streetcar. And I pick up also work from people around and to get me to work there, so I made money on my own. Plus I worked there and learned a new trade.

Until we reached-- and I got a daughter that was born in Munich, Toby Prawer.

To was your oldest?

My oldest daughter. And she was born June 13, 1951. 1951, she was two years when we arrived in United States.

So you spent about seven years or so in--

Six years, yeah.

Six years, right.

'45, yeah, because we were living in Landsberg am Lech in the camp for a few years, then I lived in Munich.

Can you tell me very briefly what your wife's background was? Was she a German or Polish?

An exempt-- no she is from Schlesien, she's from Bendin-- Benzin. This is Schlesien, ex-German territory before World War II. This is when they divide it in Zurich, and the Volkerbund, they divided nations after the World War I. So Schlesien actually was part of Germany, and then was given to Poland as part of Polish territory.

She speaks fluently German, but other languages like I do. But she was a housewife. She helps me out going to work and sometimes she brought me clothes which neighbors give it to us, and people who live in town they know us. We have a dry-cleaning.

And we made a decent living. We were not millionaires. We just I get what I deserve, what they earn.

Yes.

We were happy. When the time came to leave the United States my brother-- I have my first affidavits to come to the United States. It was a tragedy because you have to split between the sister and brother-in-law. And meanwhile, also my brother-in-law have his brother coming in from Russia. And he worked with us together on the dry-cleaning and laundry.

Then we split. The two brothers took over the dry cleaning and the laundry and the dying. And I went on my own, because I know soon I get the visa, and I don't want to work tomorrow. But I went working to a different dry-cleaning to learn more, to work for somebody to see how it tastes.

Because I was on my own, and so I worked when I wanted. I came usually in time, but when I feel like to go home early, I went home early. If I didn't feel like to work, I didn't go to work. Be there with my brother-in-law and his brother.

I went to people that work for the United States Army, dry cleaning and pressing. And I learned spudding, I learned pressing. To work for somebody else is different than work for you, but I was happy. And I work for a couple of years just to get experience. I know because I got a note that my visa is on the way to come. So I don't give a rat for anything. I like that--

You knew it was temporary.

Yeah, temporary. So two weeks I enjoyed without pay. I drew my pay from partnership over there with my brother-in-law and his brother. But I live on my own and I was happy, and we met people private. We went to opera house, we went to movies, we went to operator in Germany.

When time come to depart there my papers came I said I'm going to the United States. I will not wait for my brother-in-law and his brother. A few weeks later they got the papers to go to Australia. And we were already in Bremerhaven. This is the port from Germany.

Point for embarkation.

Yes. And my sister-in-law called up, come back home. We go together, we got papers all the three of us. Because we apply here and we apply there.

So to United States I only got the permit and my wife and my daughter. And to Australia we got all the three families. Because the brother-in-law's brother remarried again with also a cousin in Germany. So those two decided to go to

Australia.

I said my luck was to come to United States. I'm staying here. I'm not coming back home. And they came to us say goodbye, because we already say goodbye before, but a few days after this we have to leave.

Our ship arrived-- General Sturgis, this is the ship. And we left for United States. It was a tragedy, it was crying. While we was crying while we were happy, that's it.

My wife missed her family, especially her sister. They were very attached to each other. But this was the goal, this was the way to which it be from God. So we said, well, what are you going to do? We have to leave and build a family home.

We arrived in New Orleans. We didn't come to New York like other ships, because I have to go to-- my visa was to go to Jackson, Mississippi.

Is this-- in other words, the visa was assigned-- the place was assigned to you where you were to settle?

Yes.

You had no choice in the matter?

We have no choice, no. I have to go where I was assigned to.

I see.

But we arrived in Little Rock after we arrived in New Orleans. And we stayed overnight. It was before Pesach, right before our holiday. They give us-- no, it couldn't be Pesach, because we arrived in August or October, something like this. So we arrived there-- oh, it was on a Shabbat, on a Friday. On a Friday, so they made a Shabbat for us. And we went-- they say you have to go to Little Rock.

And we went to Little Rock. And the way by train, with many more people than I was with my family. Came at night, and we looked out. It's dark, and we traveling for hours, for hours.

Early in the morning we see police with rifles, bayonets, with prisoners there with those stripes that we had in concentration camps, similar to it. I said oh, boy, and we all together got to be frightened, because I thought that we not in the right country. Because we were looking for the high rises. Where those 20, 30, 40, 50 story high?

That must have brought up memories for you also?

Yes, and I said, we are in Russia, we were tricked. This is the truth. This is no lie. Everybody has the same impression, everybody thought this. First comes frightened and the bad things in your mind.

Yes.

We just left one concentration, now we go again to Russia? Because we were thinking about America in different way. The beauty, the big houses, we never saw in the south. You don't have the special and farming, and on the road there.

So the conductor come in to us and we took out our dictionary, German and English, and we ask him where are we? Is this America, or is this Russia? He says America, don't worry about it, it's the United States, USA. And I said where are those-- those big houses, why are the police here with prisoners in chains?

He said those are prisoners. They're thieves, they're murderers, or whatever it is, and they have to be in jail. The police are watching them.

Chain gang or something?

Well, it's something like they have to be attached to the wheelbarrow, whatever. I don't remember exactly, but I think it was chain. Because they work so slow, so must be serious crimes they committed. But we didn't realize this. And then we don't believe him, we say where are those big buildings? He said when you come in town, or you go to New York, or when you release when you come in the daytime you will see.

Well, finally we arrived in Little Rock. We were happy because the sponsors greet us, and they spoke to us German. Matter of fact, my two sponsors were German ladies, Mrs. Peiser and Mrs. Gartenberg. So we were home already. And they put us in a hotel.

Were these people individuals who sponsored you, or were they part of an organization?

No, they were just from the UJ, from the HIAS. From the city probably they organized it, because they spoke German. They were born German, German Jews, and we speak German perfect. And we were happy to have them, they were very nice ladies. They went through in their life probably what we went through, but this was before Hitler's rise to power, or was probably in the old years, like '39, '38 before it was too late. They were lucky.

And after a few weeks I asked my sponsors I don't like to be in the hotel, because what they serve me I remember this meat, milk sodas, steak, jam, white bread. I never saw this, so much food. I ate this in a week what they served us for breakfast early in the morning. And this is how they eat. They eat steak in the morning.

Yes, very hearty breakfasts, right.

Yeah, I didn't know about it. Then how many grits, whatever you call it. This is-- we could make a wedding, a big party.

That's right.

But I have to decide eat the best I could. Then when I was friendly with those people and we get used to each other I told them I hate to stay in a hotel. I like to do my own cooking, eat kosher food whenever I can, and work. I want earn my money.

How long will I stay there? It's been a few weeks. Plus, there was lots of noise at night from people came in at night, make problems, all kind of problems. I don't know what kind-- now I know what the problems were, but it's not important to mention now in the conversation with you and me now.

So she said well, we'll do something with eating first. You're not going to eat anymore. Whatever you eat we put you in a Jewish place where they cook-- Mrs. Briar, Briar Restaurant.

So I took for granted it's kosher and so on, but it was kosher style. But it was better at least I got Jewish people there serving me what I like, what I wanted. And they have a daughter the same age of my daughter. And this was great.

And they like us, and we like them, and we tell them what we like to eat. They understood a little bit Yiddish. And they give us food, whatever we wanted. We didn't pay for it because the HIAS paid for it.

And then they looked for us for an apartment. We get a five room apartment, and I got a job. The job was doing pressing, clothes in a dry cleaning. The name of the company was Little Rock Laundry and Dry Cleaning.

And Mrs. Peiser worked-- one of those sponsors-- worked in this company. She was a forelady-- for foreman, some kind of foreman. But she works in the laundry department. I worked in the dry cleaning department.

When I started working my boss's name was Mr. Lasko, very nice man. Very nice family, very nice people, you couldn't find better people. Even they say that people not nice in the south, the nicest people I ever met in my life. I tell you why when you listen to the story.

While I worked there the first week, at first I started on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. He just told me, just look around, don't do anything special. Look and feel comfortable, and feel the way you would at home in your own place.

The following week I work and he give me \$5. I didn't have a home yet. I still lived in the hotel. But to get adjusted he said stay there until you find and furnish your apartment, then you move.

Meanwhile, I go there to the job. When he gave me \$5 the Friday, I looked at him and I said Mr. Lasko, in broken English, \$5? For working a whole week, \$5? And he couldn't correspond with me, so he called in a sponsor, Mrs. Peiser.

And he said to her, Mrs. Peiser-- Edith I think was her name-- Mrs. Peiser, why does Aba complain? I just brought him in to get adjusted. He don't need the money because he get food and shelter at the hotel. This is just a tip from me personally, \$5, pocket money. He says-- and I told him, I don't smoke, but I like to make money and earn my money. I've been working for you.

So he showed me the sheet what I worked-- what I produced. And I worked like you work in Europe, by union law, union rules, 10 pieces per hour.

Yeah. This was a piece work that you were doing?

Piece work-- well, I didn't understand. And piece work, I don't care what it is. I just work.

But I give them all the job like in Europe. If you see this crease you can take a shave, this way the crease comes out in Europe. Here, it evaporates from the air. It doesn't-- because you work like a machine there. You have to make so much to make a living.

That's right.

I didn't realize this. So I keep slowly working, and he told me to write down everything I made every hour and every eight hours. Every hour what I make. And they explain to me, if you make more you get bonus.

I don't know what bonus is, and I didn't care, because I was eating in the restaurant. So food I got, and home I get. But when I get \$5 that got me on my stomach, I got a bellyache, butterflies. I says here I work all day and eight hours a day, five days a week, and he give me this.

So she explained to me-- he explained to her first-- that 10 pieces an hour this is good for Europe, not for United States of America. You get to make a quota 25 pieces an hour, can you make so much? And if you make more we call it bonus.

And if you're more you make more money, and then you make a better living. Then I start-- my tears came in my eye. And I knew I could do it, but nobody pushed me to do it. Nobody ask me, they just let me do whatever I wanted. I just write it up like a new arrival and I didn't pay too much attention to it.

So he give me another thing. It was \$10. And I shake my head, it's still not enough. Because I know there was one guy there he made more pieces, he made much more. But I said to him, Mr. Lasko, through my interpreter Mrs. Peiser, if he could make 25 I make too, and I make more, and I will make more than 25. And I proved to you,

But this hurts me. Nobody explained to me, they just said to me, but I couldn't digest, I didn't understood everything that was the right words what I know now to this lady. Finally, I wind up with \$25. I was the happiest man. He give me every time another fin, another fin, I wind up with \$25 cash.

Following day it was Shabbat, Sunday-- Monday came to work. And I tried so hard and I couldn't make that amount. I learned this guy next to me is cheating on me. He picked up the good merchandise, the good stuff, what is wool and is not washed. And it came out in the way he works, in and out, in and out. In like a bread in the oven.

He goes real fast, and I was thinking he must have a motor on his arms what goes so fast. He worked so fast. And I observed him. But I also noticed when the goods came out from the machine, and it came in a hamper. And he was picking up.

I just picked up the way it goes, not pay attention. He left it for me the one that was washed, like gabardine or linen. It shrinks and it stretches and don't come out right. I've been working so hard and even tried to make 10% out. It didn't come out as good like it should.

Then I went to him and his name was Alfonso. I said listen, Alfonso, I see what you're doing. I have to make a living like you. I said, you're picking up the good stuff. I said, you take five pieces good one, I take five, five pieces linen, five pieces for you, five for me. Five pieces washed went through in the laundry, washed, it takes longer to do it.

So he give in and I told Mrs. Peiser she should explain to him so there would be no difficulties later on between him and myself. And I made 20 pieces the first hour after the conversation where I try, you have to make 20, 25, and I couldn't make more than 15.

Right.

I made 20, the follow that I made 25. And I tried to cheat it the way he did, as long as it looks good, because that's the way they told me. They don't care if it goes out and blows up and looks like it's never been pressed. So long it's clean, it looks nice, that's what counts.

And I was a perfectionist. And here they don't need it, because my boss told me if you want to be a perfectionist you go back to Germany, because you will never make a living over here. And he was honest, and he was serious.

People resent when you do a better job than they do.

Yeah, but I--

And they're trained to do.

Yeah, but I prove it to him that I don't like doing this. I was a professional. I brought in papers as partnership, I brought pictures from my company.

The machines in Germany were much better machines than here-- more advanced. Over there we had machines you [NON-ENGLISH] machines. They make three operations in one shot. Here it needs three times-- three different machines to wash, clean it. Then it goes in a other machine to extract it, to take it out, then it went to a dryer.

And we have this one machine, one operation, just move the gear right, left, back and forth, that's it. [INAUDIBLE]. To prove it to him I brought him, this is why I cry, because I thought I was a better man. The perfect job, and a professional, and I especially went to see how it taste to work for somebody else. And he gives me \$5. This what hurt me.

But I learn fast. I making 35 pieces per hour, and I make more than Alfonso make, because I learn the trick and I was anxious to show that if he could do it--

It was a source of pride to you.

Of pride.

Sure.

You have the right word, the pride. And my boss was happy, and I keep working steady. And then came a holiday,

Hanukkah. I have a paging, Aba, come to the office.

I don't know what's going on over here in this country with people, whatever it is. But he called me to the office and I see a bunch of clothes and cakes and money. People for my boss-- my boss was the president from the Reform shul. Matter of fact, his temple was in his name, Lasko temple. His family donated.

His family is a very rich family. They have part of the Aspen companies and many more other business, horses, and races and whatever it is-- horse races. And he went hunting, and it happened he liked me and I liked him more than he liked me.

Because he asked me about my family, about my wife. He invited us to his house. And he gave us clothes-- his best clothes. He picked it up, he gave it to me.

And he want adopt my daughter. And we says no way. It's only one child I have, and he has three daughters himself. And they are so nice.

And the people were so good to us, and accounting probably because he was a very well known person. Not to show off, I wouldn't say, show it not the right word. But just to help somebody with the work by Mr. Lasko. So for Hanukkah there will be this, and this, and this, and I says, oh my God, look at this country. What's going on?

I accepted, because Mrs. Peiser told me don't refuse. Even it's no good, you don't like it, take it home. Whatever you going to do after you take home is nobody's business except yours. Then she guide me right and she explained to me why.

The American people like to help people whoever needs it. They have their own, they live here so long, and you are a newcomer. You can use it. So I appreciated this, and I sent packages to my brother-in-law in Israel and to friends in Israel.

Because I have my own clothes. I brought everything what I needed. But then I accepted and I thanked him, and they liked it.

Meeting my friends at the park Saturday or Sunday I told them what happened. We share, because we were new. And they said, nobody brought us anything.

So you need something come to my house, I share with you. I give you those clothes, whatever it was. I didn't have to send everything to Israel. They don't want it, but they were frustrated why I get, why they didn't get it. And I didn't mean anything to show off, I just wanted to share with them that we have nice people in a nice place.

The most friends where I met that we came with didn't like Little Rock. They didn't mingle between the people. They were just heartbroken, they couldn't adjust it. I couldn't adjust either because I had problem with my wife. She missed her family. She cried more than anything.

But I explained to her we have to build our life here. We'll see later. I have good neighbors, I have a good sponsor. I have the best sponsors who speak my language, I speak their language.

And I went to learn English to school. I was the one of the newcomers to go to school to learn. The teaching was at the temple for my boss, that's where I learned about my boss.

Up to this time you spoke English through a translator?

Yes, a little bit I spoke a little, because I always carry with me my--

Your dictionary?

Dictionary. And I always my boss first thing what he gave me, says here is a radio. Or my sponsor give to me. Let the radio play. So long you not sit at the place and listen to the radio. Regardless, you understood our music, jokes.

It's universal language.

Yeah, this way you get in. Because over there, the language is more a singing kind. They don't talk like here in the north. But I did like this and I was happy because I learned everything more. I learned one day a word, that's what my sponsor told me.

You got a southern accent also?

Oh, not what I kept to my family that left from me. Big hat and don't ask. But I didn't know about it. I didn't know any better. If you don't know it's good.

And that went on. Then they made a big party from the Hadassah. I was invited, the one only from all the people there. It's not to exaggerate, not to lie to you. I wouldn't gain anything. But it hurts me because when I-- because I told them that I was invited, also the same place where we met, always in a park.

They told me to be ready. The Hadassah is making a big, big party for collecting money for the Hadassah. And I was invited, and I don't know what to do with my kid-- with my daughter. She's only two years old.

My neighbor, [? Imagen ?] [? Cocker, ?] non-Jewish people, we live in the same place. There were only divided different houses in the yard, and we show her we got the invitation. And say, we're not going. She said no, you go. I say, the baby, the baby. They were from Texas.

And she said, [INAUDIBLE] don't worry, baby, new baby. The way she explained the name so we should understand. Baby my house, it will sleep in the house, you go and you enjoy it.

How nice.

Because we were very good, they were very nice, and we were very nice to them, too. They share with us. Matter of fact, the husband-- she was a beautician, she fixed my wife's hair. And the husband want to give me a job.

He was working at Robert Hall.

Oh, the clothier.

Clothier, he was a mechanic fixing all the machines-- the sewing machines. He says, Aba, don't worry, I'll take you with me every day, I bring you home. But I don't want to go.

First, because I wasn't so good in English, and I was not mechanic. But I like mechanical work. I was inclined. I always looking always for mechanical with tools, because European people don't have this opportunity.

A nail and a hammer, this is what I know. But other things, tools, pipe wrenches, valves, I never handle it. So someday maybe I will. Let me work on these jobs, see how I make out with this job. And let me see how I'm going to make up, because my wife don't like to stay here because she miss family life.

So anyway, we went for the party, have a hell of a good time. Hell of a good time, believe me. There were singers and dancers, we were the one from all the people.

I was told-- I asked later on why we were invited, not our friends, who they also knew. Don't ask too many questions they say. They like you, the people like you, your boss like you, we like you. You a nice family, we like you.

I didn't ask for anything I don't wanted. I didn't accept anything I don't wanted, because I always say give to the people

who wants it, who needs it. Those people want to go back to New York. They have so many good things in New York, and make more money, and the life is different.

So those people was on one leg there, and the other leg was New York in their mind. So they lost already the connections with the sponsors. And they didn't cope with them right. If they want give me so much I said, I don't need it.

Everything is on the train, it's coming any day, any week I get my luggage. I get my belongings. I brought cases with me. You name it, I got there. I don't need nothing.

I got dishes. I got utensils, everything I need. [NON-ENGLISH]. What I need, I told them, a bed, two beds-- because we have two beds usually. And the table and two chairs, and a little chair for my kid. And that's all.

And everything three people-- three spoons, three plates, until I get my what belong to me. And the people like it-- the sponsors like it. I don't want to sat there and give me, give me, give me, give me. And if I need something I'll pay you back when I make more money. I told them this.

And for this reason, they give us the apartment. It's \$37 a month rent, five rooms. I pay only \$7 until the last day I left Little Rock. They liked us so much they didn't want us to go. I wish I would stay here, I wish.

Because there was a Mr. Tanenbaum there where he worked. This was a conservative shul where I belonged to. The rabbi was orthodox, the people were conservative. I went every Friday night and Saturday.

Because people want to sing Kaddish, always good to have time in. The rabbi told me, and I went there. And he offered me also a job in a junkyard. I wish I would stay there.

My sponsors told me the community want to buy me a car. I should be happy and to stay there. Mrs. [? Croll, ?] she was the president from the-- I don't know what you call this.

Sisterhood?

No, it's from the whole town.

Oh, I see.

From the whole town-- community, from the Jewish community, just like--

Federation?

The Federation, Federation.

Yeah.

Mrs. [? Croll, ?] we buy you a car, we teach you. We give you it. I was so stupid not to accept it. I am not talking about get rich, but I would be so happy. Because the people want us there. They look forward to be there. They didn't believe we leave-- we leave this town.

My boss himself, Purim came. My rabbi called me in to the shul in Purim. He give me \$300. \$300 in 1951 was a lot of money. They collect from [INAUDIBLE] the Jews. Do it and I says no, I don't want it. Give the other people, please. No, that's for you. It was donated the people from the shul, and the committee what they know, they care for you.

Please, take it. I says no. I made a solution, I will compromise. Send to Israel to my brother-in-law. [INAUDIBLE] from the shul, and that's what I did. The name of the rabbi is Rabbi Fox.

And he accepted, and they will do. And they mailed it out, they send him a check. Not only this, they send packages to my brother-in-law. I don't know how many. And we give them the addresses, the sponsors helped us. They give us something to send, and they send the rest after this.

At work I was the one only from the newcomers. And Mrs. Peiser which she was already an old timer, she'd been there since 1939 or '38. I get along with everybody, and I learn with the people every day a different word. And I got my dictionary and the radio.

When we ate lunch together what is funny to me, because I never saw such a white bread and vegetables, lettuce, tomatoes, a piece of red pepper, green pepper. And I have a piece of salami, rye bread, what I like, like European way. And they looked at me and why you eating this? Why don't-- this is better to eat this. It's more healthier.

They call me honey, sugar. I said, my name is Aba. I didn't know they called in the south honey, sugar, sweetheart. I asked my sponsor, what is this, honey? This is not honey, my name is Aba. Honey there was honey. Sugar I know--

It was a term of endearment, right?

Yeah, it was. But until they explain the problem was so much. And I went and I kissed and I hugged them. Because the way she explained what is the meaning of this words that they like me, they care me, they call you honey. And so there's nothing to it, just the ways it goes in the south.

They're very friendly people. Even there was some discrimination against other minorities. Well, I saw it, but I didn't understand. But I get along.

If you are nice to them, they nice-- same thing that if I tell you good morning in the morning before you tell me good morning, it don't cost me nothing to say hello, how are you, good morning. If you answer good morning it's good, and if you don't it's good too. So next time I say again, but third time I don't say no more. Is there a reason? Maybe you don't speak English. Maybe you don't understand.

And I'll give you a joke for this. There is two people went to New York. And we're looking in the mirrors-- and the windows-- and they're window shopping.

Window shopping, right.

So one asked the other guy, could you tell me where's your 42nd Street? So the other guy doesn't say anything to him. He just looks and looks at the window.

So the owner from the shop happened not to be busy, looked at those two people. And the guy asked him again, can you tell me please where is your 42nd Street. That's the way he was talking about. The way I said the second time. So the guy don't pay attention to him.

So the owner got sore for the other guy, said look, he ignores him, he don't say anything. So he come out, says excuse me, sir, may I ask you something? The guy asking you a question. I could see he need some help. Why don't you answer?

He says I'm afraid to answer because he may hit me, may think I make fun from him. They both talk the same. See, he was thinking he will imitate the other guy.

That's right. The fear, the fear is what--

The fear, so this is the example where this is the way it was in Little Rock. So you don't ask, you do it. Why I stop asking why don't give other people, they told me the reasons. They dislike them because they didn't cooperate together. Whatever they give them wasn't enough.

And I accept whatever I got. I need shoes, because I was pressing. And I have some flat feet, or sore feet from the war, from not enough nourishment.

I remember they sent me to a doctor to order particularly called shoes, what makes shoes. He put in gypsum and makes a form. And they send away to Boston, took them six weeks to get the shoes. Because I remember in 1952 over \$100. I put my foot in a--

These are orthopedic shoes?

Orthopedic, yes. To make a--

An arch or something?

Arch, no to make the way my foot is built. And this is to give me special shoes. Build an arch, but they have to go the layout of my foot, you know gypsum. Gypsum you call it?

Yes.

And they send this away. And I said to my sponsor, I asked for this, because I didn't make so much money now. And I sent out to Israel to my brother-in-law, and have other friends in Israel. And so I said I pay you back every week so and so much. They never took a penny from me.

They don't want-- I've been fighting with them. Same thing with the rent. But I didn't shnorr I no want it. I earn, and I invite people come eat to us. They stopped being the [INAUDIBLE] helping we ate like in Europe, potatoes and a big hamburger like European style for Pesach. I was still there, I remember.

A big family from Poland and business people, they have a pawn shop. And they stopped in on the way home, and here we ate borscht, red borscht, and fried hamburgers, the big size. What you call a Big Mac, whatever you call it here, and potatoes.

And we invite them to dinner the next few days or so, and they enjoy it so much, because this European meal. They invite us the first time they invite us to a big place in Little Rock. We have to walk I bet 50 feet long, narrow. They were a pawn shop, and they want to adopt us. No way. Us, I mean, my wife, my daughter, and myself, to be their kids. Because they have problems with their own children, not too many other two kids. One was with them, one wasn't.

And I said no, but they help us and they pick out whatever you want, Aba. The store is yours. I never saw so much goods, from rifles to diamonds and watches. And he give me a watch there, so he give me a watch there. And it's lovely people.

Even there in the south they're lovely people. You have to know how to handle them. You have to be nice. One hand versus the other hand.

Don't wait until he tells you good morning. Say hello, how are you? Have to be nice. Same as here, same as there. The whole world is one world. And finally I made a good living in Little Rock, and we find out we have family in Akron, Ohio. And--

How did you find that out?

Through writing a letter to my uncle in New York. He found out that we have family there, and they told us to write to Israel-- through Israel to my brother-in-law. And he says, well, Leo Weizenberg, your cousin is in Akron.

So from Little Rock through Israel to Akron?

Yes.

Interesting.

Yes. And then we found an uncle, and we found two aunts, and their grandchildren and children, nephews, and big family. And I know her. But they should rest in peace. Most passed away already. And my wife--

They were all survivors?

No. That was American. They came to the United States maybe-- they came before the World War Two, way ahead. So they were established people, business people, working people. And my wife clearly would like to go there.

Plus, a cousin was a survivor. We wrote to him. Find out first about the family because they told us American family is not like European family. There's problems, it's different. Life is rough here, tough, and working, busy, living far away, driving miles away. It's not where you live in a state.

It's not an extended family.

Yes, you go and walk distance, this is driving for hours. So we wrote him and my wife-- I decided my wife should go alone with my daughter and I work. And she was cooking, maybe it doesn't work right to go. Meanwhile, there was a disease, something in Little Rock, and they don't let her go out. Nobody has to leave town.

It was after a hurricane or something, and we cannot go. So finally, we decide we leave for good. I still say it was the biggest mistake we did. Till today my wife says, I'm happy, but my wife knows what I go through in life-- what I want through in life. And there were the people beg us.

The men from the junkyard told me Aba, you gonna learn a trade, of your own. You gonna learn driving. You gonna drive a truck. Let you go on your own. It's easy.

It's not Europe what you have to work with a horse and buggy if you can afford one. You have to work in a farm and bike carrying your bag on your shoulder and make pennies. You have to raise a family, you young. Why don't you?

I said my wife, my wife was lonesome. She needs family, and I do understand. So we decide we have to leave. And all the people were shocked. The friends, not the newcomers, but the American people we established such a good relationship with, friendship. We came to each other.

When I walk on the street, honest to god, people blow the horn. Mr. Praver, may I they take you home? Who is this? I don't recognize those people.

The people know us from the temple, from the shul. They recognize me, and I didn't bother because then I like to walk. Until today we walk. But it shows you if you're nice it pays in the long run.

And we decide to leave Little Rock. We were crying, but we have to go on account health of my wife.

Yeah, we're going to stop for a few minutes.

OK.

And we'll continue with the--

Continuation.

--rest of the story. Because I think at this point we've reached a very crucial point, and the tape is running out.

OK.

So let's stop for a few minutes, and we'll continue momentarily.