

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,500

2
00:00:06,500 --> 00:00:09,500
[MUSIC PLAYING]

3
00:00:09,500 --> 00:00:40,500

4
00:00:40,500 --> 00:00:41,440
Good afternoon.

5
00:00:41,440 --> 00:00:42,820
My name is Bernard Weinstein.

6
00:00:42,820 --> 00:00:45,180
I direct the Kean
College Oral Testimonies

7
00:00:45,180 --> 00:00:47,880
Project of the Holocaust
Resource Center.

8
00:00:47,880 --> 00:00:51,060
We are affiliated with the
video archives for Holocaust

9
00:00:51,060 --> 00:00:53,580
testimonies at Yale University.

10
00:00:53,580 --> 00:00:58,980
We're privileged to welcome Mr
Henry Ricklis of Cranbury, New

11
00:00:58,980 --> 00:01:03,060
Jersey, who was an observer
at the liberation of Dachau,

12
00:01:03,060 --> 00:01:05,670
and has generously
volunteered to come

13

00:01:05,670 --> 00:01:09,240

in today to give us testimony
about his experiences

14

00:01:09,240 --> 00:01:10,860

and observations.

15

00:01:10,860 --> 00:01:12,690

Welcome Mr Ricklis.

16

00:01:12,690 --> 00:01:15,780

I'd like to begin by
asking you to tell us

17

00:01:15,780 --> 00:01:21,400

a little bit about your own
background before the war,

18

00:01:21,400 --> 00:01:24,600

and what you did during the war.

19

00:01:24,600 --> 00:01:27,900

Before the war, I was a student.

20

00:01:27,900 --> 00:01:33,180

And then I was drafted
into the military.

21

00:01:33,180 --> 00:01:36,330

And going through
basic training,

22

00:01:36,330 --> 00:01:37,580

I ended up at Fort Knox.

23

00:01:37,580 --> 00:01:39,330

Are you a native of
New Jersey by the way?

24

00:01:39,330 --> 00:01:41,840

Yes.

25

00:01:41,840 --> 00:01:48,520

And I ended up at Fort Knox,
where I took a basic training

26

00:01:48,520 --> 00:01:50,260

in the Armored Force.

27

00:01:50,260 --> 00:01:54,760

I went into the ASTP program,
which was the army college

28

00:01:54,760 --> 00:01:56,950

program at that time.

29

00:01:56,950 --> 00:02:03,210

And when I deserved that, I
went back to the Armored Force,

30

00:02:03,210 --> 00:02:04,935

and after a short
while we went overseas.

31

00:02:04,935 --> 00:02:07,560

32

00:02:07,560 --> 00:02:11,700

And you were stationed where?

33

00:02:11,700 --> 00:02:14,950

In Europe or in this Country?

34

00:02:14,950 --> 00:02:15,450

Yeah.

35

00:02:15,450 --> 00:02:21,390

Well, we landed in Lahav
on a bitter cold morning.

36

00:02:21,390 --> 00:02:24,150

We were glad to get there
and get out of the trucks.

37

00:02:24,150 --> 00:02:28,650

Have never been so cold in
my life before or since.

38

00:02:28,650 --> 00:02:32,040

It was almost a blessing
to land finally,

39

00:02:32,040 --> 00:02:34,500

in the middle of
the winter there.

40

00:02:34,500 --> 00:02:38,280

Then we started with
a trek Eastward.

41

00:02:38,280 --> 00:02:40,170

Eastward to--

42

00:02:40,170 --> 00:02:45,240

We went through Holland,
through Belgium, and eventually

43

00:02:45,240 --> 00:02:48,540

into Germany itself.

44

00:02:48,540 --> 00:02:55,320

And you were at Dachau in 1945.

45

00:02:55,320 --> 00:02:56,250

All right.

46

00:02:56,250 --> 00:03:00,150

Would you like to tell
us about your experiences

47

00:03:00,150 --> 00:03:02,940

or observations there?

48

00:03:02,940 --> 00:03:07,620

Well, I had heard

about the camps.

49

00:03:07,620 --> 00:03:11,370

No one knew to what
extent they existed.

50

00:03:11,370 --> 00:03:17,370

No one believed really,
I mean, they were there

51

00:03:17,370 --> 00:03:20,680

people who had lived through
it, who had survived through it.

52

00:03:20,680 --> 00:03:24,570

Those who managed to escape
somehow told about it.

53

00:03:24,570 --> 00:03:26,310

Those who had gotten
out earlier perhaps,

54

00:03:26,310 --> 00:03:28,930

but I had wanted
to see for myself.

55

00:03:28,930 --> 00:03:31,260

I had a personal interestness.

56

00:03:31,260 --> 00:03:33,180

I knew that I had
a lot of relatives

57

00:03:33,180 --> 00:03:36,270

that were from Lithuania.

58

00:03:36,270 --> 00:03:39,210

I know that we hadn't
heard from them.

59

00:03:39,210 --> 00:03:42,490

My father hadn't heard
from brothers and sisters,

60
00:03:42,490 --> 00:03:44,370
nieces and nephews.

61
00:03:44,370 --> 00:03:50,300
And we had a lot of family
there, a sizable family.

62
00:03:50,300 --> 00:03:53,870
I found out many years
afterward on a trip to Israel

63
00:03:53,870 --> 00:03:58,250
that none of them had
survived, they were all--

64
00:03:58,250 --> 00:04:00,320
they were all done away with.

65
00:04:00,320 --> 00:04:03,650
I don't know where, and
then how, and what manner.

66
00:04:03,650 --> 00:04:11,090
At the time you came upon the
camp, had you known anything

67
00:04:11,090 --> 00:04:15,140
or heard anything or
read anything about what

68
00:04:15,140 --> 00:04:18,773
was going on, or anything
that could have prepared you

69
00:04:18,773 --> 00:04:19,940
for what would we would see.

70
00:04:19,940 --> 00:04:21,110
No, not really.

71
00:04:21,110 --> 00:04:23,180

Not really.

72

00:04:23,180 --> 00:04:26,870

I mean, we had heard
of the death camps

73

00:04:26,870 --> 00:04:30,230

or the concentration camps.

74

00:04:30,230 --> 00:04:31,880

They were the
Germans, of course,

75

00:04:31,880 --> 00:04:33,260

had many different
types of camp.

76

00:04:33,260 --> 00:04:41,240

Some were labor camps, some
were annihilation camps, some

77

00:04:41,240 --> 00:04:42,810

they had slave labor there.

78

00:04:42,810 --> 00:04:47,720

I guess they had different
categories of camps.

79

00:04:47,720 --> 00:04:51,940

I don't know whether they
all had the crematoria,

80

00:04:51,940 --> 00:04:57,730

but those that did were
prepared to do away with people

81

00:04:57,730 --> 00:04:58,990

on a mass production basis.

82

00:04:58,990 --> 00:05:01,640

83

00:05:01,640 --> 00:05:08,300
Can you give us a sense of what
your first impressions were?

84
00:05:08,300 --> 00:05:13,820
Well, my first
impression at the time

85
00:05:13,820 --> 00:05:17,090
that we had gotten there
the camp had been liberated

86
00:05:17,090 --> 00:05:23,120
by our division by other troops,
and the Germans, the Nazis,

87
00:05:23,120 --> 00:05:26,150
and all of their
underlings, I guess

88
00:05:26,150 --> 00:05:29,540
were frightened off those
that hadn't been captured.

89
00:05:29,540 --> 00:05:32,620
When we got there and there
were still trains there,

90
00:05:32,620 --> 00:05:36,320
they dreaded death trains
that carried people

91
00:05:36,320 --> 00:05:40,520
into the camps that would
carry in their live cargo,

92
00:05:40,520 --> 00:05:44,760
and left empty to
get more cargo.

93
00:05:44,760 --> 00:05:48,230
And the first thing
that was there,

94

00:05:48,230 --> 00:05:51,860
were a couple of carloads
of people that were there

95

00:05:51,860 --> 00:05:56,330
apparently, whether they had
suffocated or died or just

96

00:05:56,330 --> 00:06:00,710
been left to rot in
these boxcars that was--

97

00:06:00,710 --> 00:06:05,830
they were on a railroad
siding to go into the camp.

98

00:06:05,830 --> 00:06:08,340
That was the first thing.

99

00:06:08,340 --> 00:06:10,206
And then.

100

00:06:10,206 --> 00:06:15,210
Then as you got into
the camp, you saw--

101

00:06:15,210 --> 00:06:17,250
it's hard to describe
them as human beings.

102

00:06:17,250 --> 00:06:21,450
I mean, they were faceless,
they would look at you and they

103

00:06:21,450 --> 00:06:22,740
didn't--

104

00:06:22,740 --> 00:06:26,190
I don't think they realized
what was happening.

105

00:06:26,190 --> 00:06:30,000

They were emaciated,
they were bags of bones

106
00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:33,550
really in their
striped uniforms.

107
00:06:33,550 --> 00:06:35,260
And--

108
00:06:35,260 --> 00:06:38,200
Were you able to approach
any or speak to any people?

109
00:06:38,200 --> 00:06:41,590
To a few of the people they
would come up toward you,

110
00:06:41,590 --> 00:06:45,550
stagger up toward
you, and these people

111
00:06:45,550 --> 00:06:49,390
would talk in Polish
or Yiddish, or whatever

112
00:06:49,390 --> 00:06:52,180
was their native tongue.

113
00:06:52,180 --> 00:06:54,490
And I spoke Yiddish.

114
00:06:54,490 --> 00:07:00,040
So of course, I understood
some of what was said to me.

115
00:07:00,040 --> 00:07:02,530
Some of these people
were not coherent really.

116
00:07:02,530 --> 00:07:06,780
I mean, I think they
were not just abused.

117
00:07:06,780 --> 00:07:11,500
I think they were dazed and it's
hard to describe these people

118
00:07:11,500 --> 00:07:12,000
really.

119
00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:15,060
I mean, they were,
they were hardly

120
00:07:15,060 --> 00:07:16,695
human beings at that stage.

121
00:07:16,695 --> 00:07:19,350

122
00:07:19,350 --> 00:07:22,220
These were the ones
who were mobile?

123
00:07:22,220 --> 00:07:23,465
Able to able to get around?

124
00:07:23,465 --> 00:07:24,840
They were people
that were laying

125
00:07:24,840 --> 00:07:27,690
in bunks, who were not mobile.

126
00:07:27,690 --> 00:07:30,610
I'm sure many of them died.

127
00:07:30,610 --> 00:07:34,830
I was not in there that long,
just enough to get a glimpse.

128
00:07:34,830 --> 00:07:38,348
And some of the soldiers
that I had spoken to

129
00:07:38,348 --> 00:07:39,390
had gotten into the camp.

130
00:07:39,390 --> 00:07:44,550
Now many of these servicemen
were so-called veterans,

131
00:07:44,550 --> 00:07:49,890
they had seen sights and sounds
and been through a great deal.

132
00:07:49,890 --> 00:07:52,350
And many of these soldiers
when they saw this got in there

133
00:07:52,350 --> 00:07:53,940
and reached.

134
00:07:53,940 --> 00:07:56,770
I mean it was beyond belief.

135
00:07:56,770 --> 00:07:58,410
I spoke to a number
of these people,

136
00:07:58,410 --> 00:08:03,970
and these were people
of various faiths.

137
00:08:03,970 --> 00:08:08,820
And whatever their background
they just couldn't comprehend

138
00:08:08,820 --> 00:08:11,700
the sights that they saw.

139
00:08:11,700 --> 00:08:15,150
In other words, nothing that
they had seen in war itself

140
00:08:15,150 --> 00:08:16,920

had prepared them
for this kind of--

141
00:08:16,920 --> 00:08:18,020
No.

142
00:08:18,020 --> 00:08:19,060
-- consequence.

143
00:08:19,060 --> 00:08:20,700
I don't think there
is any preparation

144
00:08:20,700 --> 00:08:25,980
for this type of visual sight.

145
00:08:25,980 --> 00:08:30,450
I mean, fellows had
been killed whether they

146
00:08:30,450 --> 00:08:34,762
were in accidents or
bombardments or shellings,

147
00:08:34,762 --> 00:08:35,970
but it wasn't quite the same.

148
00:08:35,970 --> 00:08:38,610
Nothing that any
of these fellows

149
00:08:38,610 --> 00:08:40,559
had seen, and on
the scale that this

150
00:08:40,559 --> 00:08:44,430
was where this was to
be a mass extermination

151
00:08:44,430 --> 00:08:46,130
of an innocent people.

152

00:08:46,130 --> 00:08:48,693

153

00:08:48,693 --> 00:08:50,110

People who have
done nothing other

154

00:08:50,110 --> 00:08:54,400

than being born incorrectly.

155

00:08:54,400 --> 00:08:59,290

Were these primarily men you
saw or women, or children?

156

00:08:59,290 --> 00:09:00,550

I saw no children.

157

00:09:00,550 --> 00:09:03,820

I don't recall
seeing any children.

158

00:09:03,820 --> 00:09:07,330

Really honestly thinking back,
I didn't see too many women.

159

00:09:07,330 --> 00:09:10,750

That was primarily
men that I saw.

160

00:09:10,750 --> 00:09:13,990

Very gaunt looking men.

161

00:09:13,990 --> 00:09:16,300

Did any of them
ask specific things

162

00:09:16,300 --> 00:09:18,160

or specific questions of you?

163

00:09:18,160 --> 00:09:19,750

Or did they--

164

00:09:19,750 --> 00:09:20,590
Who are you?

165
00:09:20,590 --> 00:09:21,520
What's happening?

166
00:09:21,520 --> 00:09:24,070
Is the war over?

167
00:09:24,070 --> 00:09:26,150
Are we free?

168
00:09:26,150 --> 00:09:27,920
Some were looking for food.

169
00:09:27,920 --> 00:09:31,840
Some of the servicemen
with all good intentions

170
00:09:31,840 --> 00:09:34,840
would start feeding some
of these emaciated people.

171
00:09:34,840 --> 00:09:38,980
And I think this in itself
killed some of these people.

172
00:09:38,980 --> 00:09:43,600
I mean, their bodies couldn't
take that type of nourishment,

173
00:09:43,600 --> 00:09:44,230
all at once.

174
00:09:44,230 --> 00:09:48,610
These were people who had
been starved without food.

175
00:09:48,610 --> 00:09:53,860
Any sort of real food,
for God knows how long,

176

00:09:53,860 --> 00:09:57,760
and suddenly they were giving
them D Rations, chocolate bars,

177
00:09:57,760 --> 00:10:00,290
cans of rations.

178
00:10:00,290 --> 00:10:04,570
I don't think their
systems could take this.

179
00:10:04,570 --> 00:10:07,520
I guess in itself may have
killed a number of people.

180
00:10:07,520 --> 00:10:10,180
I've heard that many
developed typhus

181
00:10:10,180 --> 00:10:14,140
as a result of being fed
certain kinds of foods

182
00:10:14,140 --> 00:10:16,240
that were too rich for
their bodies to absorb.

183
00:10:16,240 --> 00:10:17,320
No.

184
00:10:17,320 --> 00:10:19,570
Yeah.

185
00:10:19,570 --> 00:10:21,243
Yeah, how long did you--

186
00:10:21,243 --> 00:10:22,660
I can't give you
a broad overview.

187
00:10:22,660 --> 00:10:23,950
I mean, I can only give--

188

00:10:23,950 --> 00:10:25,330

What you saw.

189

00:10:25,330 --> 00:10:29,950

A limited viewpoint from
what I saw as an observer

190

00:10:29,950 --> 00:10:32,170

for a short time.

191

00:10:32,170 --> 00:10:35,260

I can only imagine what these
people who lived through it.

192

00:10:35,260 --> 00:10:38,050

Or I tried to
imagine at the time

193

00:10:38,050 --> 00:10:43,390

how they could have survived for
all the years that some of them

194

00:10:43,390 --> 00:10:46,090

were subjected to it.

195

00:10:46,090 --> 00:10:48,310

How did the overall
impression of what

196

00:10:48,310 --> 00:10:53,020

you saw in the few minutes
or so that you spent there,

197

00:10:53,020 --> 00:10:56,680

how did that affect
you personally

198

00:10:56,680 --> 00:10:59,230

beyond those moments?

199

00:10:59,230 --> 00:11:01,150

Well, one of the things

that I thought of

200

00:11:01,150 --> 00:11:05,570

was Germany at one
time was considered

201

00:11:05,570 --> 00:11:10,280

a highly cultured, very much
advanced in the sciences.

202

00:11:10,280 --> 00:11:14,650

After all, they've turned
out a lot of philosophers

203

00:11:14,650 --> 00:11:18,660

and scientists and great minds.

204

00:11:18,660 --> 00:11:24,530

I was a young kid
at the time, and I

205

00:11:24,530 --> 00:11:28,780

think I matured a great
deal in a few minutes.

206

00:11:28,780 --> 00:11:31,910

I mean, what went
through my mind

207

00:11:31,910 --> 00:11:35,220

a few times was how
people supposedly,

208

00:11:35,220 --> 00:11:38,480

as civilized people, could
subject other people,

209

00:11:38,480 --> 00:11:40,322

innocent people.

210

00:11:40,322 --> 00:11:41,780

Have they been
guilty they wouldn't

211
00:11:41,780 --> 00:11:44,143
have been subjected
to this type of thing,

212
00:11:44,143 --> 00:11:45,560
have they been
guilty of anything.

213
00:11:45,560 --> 00:11:48,410
Here were innocent
people who were subjected

214
00:11:48,410 --> 00:11:52,340
to this type of thing, and
it was inconceivable to me

215
00:11:52,340 --> 00:11:57,170
of the man's inhumanity to man.

216
00:11:57,170 --> 00:12:04,340
Were you able to speak to
anyone of your peers or others

217
00:12:04,340 --> 00:12:10,010
about these things
immediately after seeing them?

218
00:12:10,010 --> 00:12:12,010
Or did it take a while
before this could gestate

219
00:12:12,010 --> 00:12:13,060
or before it could--

220
00:12:13,060 --> 00:12:15,670
Yes.

221
00:12:15,670 --> 00:12:20,710
I think it took me
a couple of days.

222

00:12:20,710 --> 00:12:24,360

I mean, I think I was
in a state of shock

223

00:12:24,360 --> 00:12:29,490

for a short period of
time just having chanced

224

00:12:29,490 --> 00:12:30,600

on this because it was--

225

00:12:30,600 --> 00:12:33,220

226

00:12:33,220 --> 00:12:36,730

I don't think the mind could
conceive of this type of thing.

227

00:12:36,730 --> 00:12:39,520

That's why it was
understandable that people

228

00:12:39,520 --> 00:12:41,080

back in the States,
even people who

229

00:12:41,080 --> 00:12:45,760

had relatives there could not
conceive of what was going on.

230

00:12:45,760 --> 00:12:49,090

It just-- I don't think the
mind could imagine this.

231

00:12:49,090 --> 00:12:52,520

232

00:12:52,520 --> 00:13:00,490

And how did you pursue
what you had discovered

233

00:13:00,490 --> 00:13:03,220

or what you had

learned subsequently?

234

00:13:03,220 --> 00:13:08,890

And what way did you use
this information or knowledge

235

00:13:08,890 --> 00:13:09,970

that you had?

236

00:13:09,970 --> 00:13:12,070

Since that time for a
number of years now,

237

00:13:12,070 --> 00:13:15,520

I have been involved with
Holocaust observances.

238

00:13:15,520 --> 00:13:22,450

I have tried to perpetuate this
both to people, through people

239

00:13:22,450 --> 00:13:25,630

who have lived through it,
many who were reluctant to talk

240

00:13:25,630 --> 00:13:30,130

about it, and to younger people
who had no knowledge of this.

241

00:13:30,130 --> 00:13:32,080

Unfortunately, I don't
think enough of this

242

00:13:32,080 --> 00:13:37,570

has been disseminated through
education to the young people.

243

00:13:37,570 --> 00:13:39,620

Now they apparently
seem to be doing this.

244

00:13:39,620 --> 00:13:44,020

But at the time I got

involved with Holocaust

245

00:13:44,020 --> 00:13:49,840

observances it wasn't really
that prevalent situation.

246

00:13:49,840 --> 00:13:56,650

And I've tried to awaken people
to this in my own limited way

247

00:13:56,650 --> 00:13:58,300

where I live
presently, I've been

248

00:13:58,300 --> 00:14:00,400

involved with
Holocaust observances

249

00:14:00,400 --> 00:14:08,140

where we have many people who
are survivors who take part

250

00:14:08,140 --> 00:14:12,850

in an annual observance of
this as a remembrance of this.

251

00:14:12,850 --> 00:14:18,100

And in a small way I
guess it keeps it alive

252

00:14:18,100 --> 00:14:22,570

what happened, so was
people do not forget.

253

00:14:22,570 --> 00:14:28,170

When you speak of
reluctance or withdrawing

254

00:14:28,170 --> 00:14:32,790

from the reality
of it, why do you

255

00:14:32,790 --> 00:14:38,350

think people have responded
that way at least in the past?

256
00:14:38,350 --> 00:14:39,600
You're referring to survivors?

257
00:14:39,600 --> 00:14:45,970
Survivors and others.

258
00:14:45,970 --> 00:14:48,320
You know why I guess
you can understand

259
00:14:48,320 --> 00:14:52,920
that, it was the
type of a nightmare

260
00:14:52,920 --> 00:14:55,650
that I guess many of these
people who lived through it

261
00:14:55,650 --> 00:14:57,840
and finally survived.

262
00:14:57,840 --> 00:15:01,720
However, they survived, and you
don't know how many survived.

263
00:15:01,720 --> 00:15:06,240
It was a matter of surviving
any way that you could.

264
00:15:06,240 --> 00:15:10,440
I imagine I have since spoken
to many of these people.

265
00:15:10,440 --> 00:15:14,520
And to survive for another
day was their only goal

266
00:15:14,520 --> 00:15:16,020
in life at that time.

267

00:15:16,020 --> 00:15:19,200

And I imagine once
they came through this,

268

00:15:19,200 --> 00:15:21,120

they just wanted to put
it out of their mind.

269

00:15:21,120 --> 00:15:27,570

was a nightmare that maybe they
didn't believe it even existed,

270

00:15:27,570 --> 00:15:30,720

it was all a nightmare
and just that.

271

00:15:30,720 --> 00:15:32,460

Finally, I think
many of these people

272

00:15:32,460 --> 00:15:36,240

have realized that
after they've gone there

273

00:15:36,240 --> 00:15:38,160

is no one to talk about this.

274

00:15:38,160 --> 00:15:42,150

And it's only the people who
saw and the people who survived,

275

00:15:42,150 --> 00:15:45,921

who are still alive today
who can talk about it.

276

00:15:45,921 --> 00:15:48,390

It's the only way
it has any sort

277

00:15:48,390 --> 00:15:51,810

of meaningful appreciation.

278

00:15:51,810 --> 00:15:53,970

If you can call it that.

279

00:15:53,970 --> 00:15:57,990

Initially did you find that
perhaps even to this day,

280

00:15:57,990 --> 00:16:03,960

do you find that people who
were not directly involved

281

00:16:03,960 --> 00:16:07,800

or are not directly
eyewitnesses resist

282

00:16:07,800 --> 00:16:13,028

or reject what you might want
to tell them about these things

283

00:16:13,028 --> 00:16:13,570

that you saw?

284

00:16:13,570 --> 00:16:17,740

285

00:16:17,740 --> 00:16:18,940

Very difficult thing to say.

286

00:16:18,940 --> 00:16:22,390

I mean, people are individuals.

287

00:16:22,390 --> 00:16:25,540

People who did
not survive or who

288

00:16:25,540 --> 00:16:29,260

didn't have any interest in
this in one way or another,

289

00:16:29,260 --> 00:16:32,710

who had no relatives
perhaps regardless

290

00:16:32,710 --> 00:16:35,920
of their ethnic background.

291

00:16:35,920 --> 00:16:38,830
Well, it's not my problem,
it's someone else's.

292

00:16:38,830 --> 00:16:42,280
I mean, I hate to think of
it that way, but perhaps

293

00:16:42,280 --> 00:16:45,100
I've encountered
people as you say who--

294

00:16:45,100 --> 00:16:48,910
well it's a long time ago and
it's best forgotten about.

295

00:16:48,910 --> 00:16:52,740

296

00:16:52,740 --> 00:17:00,480
Did you find evidence
or concrete information

297

00:17:00,480 --> 00:17:02,760
about your own relatives,
because you said

298

00:17:02,760 --> 00:17:04,619
that you had many relatives?

299

00:17:04,619 --> 00:17:05,579
Yes.

300

00:17:05,579 --> 00:17:07,800
I found that
afterward, many years

301

00:17:07,800 --> 00:17:14,800
afterward when I had gotten

to the Yad Vashem in Israel.

302

00:17:14,800 --> 00:17:19,470

There were names
of people by towns,

303

00:17:19,470 --> 00:17:21,960

and a number of my
relatives, aunts

304

00:17:21,960 --> 00:17:25,319

and uncles and first cousins,
who were listed there.

305

00:17:25,319 --> 00:17:28,530

And they have the
archives at the Yad Vashem

306

00:17:28,530 --> 00:17:34,830

for those that are familiar with
it, and they were listed there.

307

00:17:34,830 --> 00:17:37,830

At that point, I found
the complete listing

308

00:17:37,830 --> 00:17:42,790

or as complete a listing as
they had gotten together.

309

00:17:42,790 --> 00:17:46,480

I imagine knowing even
though it was painful,

310

00:17:46,480 --> 00:17:49,720

it must have been a great
source of relief for you.

311

00:17:49,720 --> 00:17:53,130

Well, if you can call
it relief, at least.

312

00:17:53,130 --> 00:17:58,830

At that point, my
father and his sister

313
00:17:58,830 --> 00:18:04,170
were no longer alive, so there
wasn't even anyone to tell.

314
00:18:04,170 --> 00:18:08,915
And relief, if you can
call it that it's--

315
00:18:08,915 --> 00:18:09,540
Let's call it--

316
00:18:09,540 --> 00:18:11,880
At least I was aware
of what had happened.

317
00:18:11,880 --> 00:18:14,620
I don't think my
father or his sister,

318
00:18:14,620 --> 00:18:16,992
my aunt had any idea
of what had happened.

319
00:18:16,992 --> 00:18:18,450
I know they didn't
because they had

320
00:18:18,450 --> 00:18:23,580
lost contact with their brothers
and sisters prior to the war.

321
00:18:23,580 --> 00:18:25,320
There was no way of
maintaining contact.

322
00:18:25,320 --> 00:18:29,350

323
00:18:29,350 --> 00:18:33,760
What has been your personal

involvement in recent years

324

00:18:33,760 --> 00:18:38,650
with Holocaust commemoration?

325

00:18:38,650 --> 00:18:40,720
With Holocaust education?

326

00:18:40,720 --> 00:18:44,410
With Holocaust memory?

327

00:18:44,410 --> 00:18:49,210
Well, I had been
instrumental in putting this

328

00:18:49,210 --> 00:18:55,420
into the high school system,
the township where I live.

329

00:18:55,420 --> 00:19:00,550
I've spoken to groups, I've
spoken to the school group,

330

00:19:00,550 --> 00:19:05,650
I've spoken at
Holocaust observances.

331

00:19:05,650 --> 00:19:08,170
I've tried as I said
previously, I've

332

00:19:08,170 --> 00:19:13,830
tried to perpetuate some sort
of a remembrance annually.

333

00:19:13,830 --> 00:19:14,330
And--

334

00:19:14,330 --> 00:19:16,900

335

00:19:16,900 --> 00:19:18,640

Has this been a
single handed effort

336
00:19:18,640 --> 00:19:21,350
or have you have you had
cooperation from community?

337
00:19:21,350 --> 00:19:21,850
No.

338
00:19:21,850 --> 00:19:24,100
I have enlisted the
aid of many people.

339
00:19:24,100 --> 00:19:29,770
People who felt that there were
survivors in the communities

340
00:19:29,770 --> 00:19:35,090
I should say where I live,
there are three communities.

341
00:19:35,090 --> 00:19:38,120
There are a number of people who
are survivors at one point they

342
00:19:38,120 --> 00:19:41,030
were reluctant to come out.

343
00:19:41,030 --> 00:19:43,220
And then I guess for
their own sanity,

344
00:19:43,220 --> 00:19:46,370
for their own
well-being, I guess

345
00:19:46,370 --> 00:19:49,400
they felt it was time
to speak about it.

346
00:19:49,400 --> 00:19:53,900
There are a number of people who

have all sorts of tales to tell

347

00:19:53,900 --> 00:19:57,620
and how they survived, and
whether they tell it the way

348

00:19:57,620 --> 00:20:02,270
they survived or whether
they've changed it somewhat,

349

00:20:02,270 --> 00:20:05,210
the point is that they
did survive somehow

350

00:20:05,210 --> 00:20:07,067
through the grace of God.

351

00:20:07,067 --> 00:20:08,900
And they were alive
today to tell the story.

352

00:20:08,900 --> 00:20:12,950
And many of them are
willing to do just that

353

00:20:12,950 --> 00:20:19,460
How do you feel about the
present effort to incorporate

354

00:20:19,460 --> 00:20:26,540
Holocaust education into the
schools and into curricula

355

00:20:26,540 --> 00:20:29,660
of high schools,
colleges, and so on? --

356

00:20:29,660 --> 00:20:31,340
What

357

00:20:31,340 --> 00:20:35,300
I feel that it's a very
important part of--

358
00:20:35,300 --> 00:20:38,930
it happened in our lifetime.

359
00:20:38,930 --> 00:20:43,160
The lifetime of people
of my age group, and I

360
00:20:43,160 --> 00:20:47,150
feel that somehow if these
people, the survivors,

361
00:20:47,150 --> 00:20:50,030
the people who so
don't tell about this.

362
00:20:50,030 --> 00:20:53,300
It may cease to exist.

363
00:20:53,300 --> 00:20:57,860
It's been treated by many
as a fiction and as a hoax.

364
00:20:57,860 --> 00:21:01,250
And those who saw it or
who lived through it,

365
00:21:01,250 --> 00:21:04,970
in one way or another,
know that it's otherwise.

366
00:21:04,970 --> 00:21:06,650
It was not a hoax.

367
00:21:06,650 --> 00:21:09,110
Whatever has been
said and documented

368
00:21:09,110 --> 00:21:10,580
is true, every last word of it.

369
00:21:10,580 --> 00:21:13,640

370
00:21:13,640 --> 00:21:18,740
I noticed that you brought
in some notes, some material,

371
00:21:18,740 --> 00:21:20,330
was there anything specific?

372
00:21:20,330 --> 00:21:24,290
Any specific message
or statements

373
00:21:24,290 --> 00:21:27,740
that you wanted to make
other than those I've

374
00:21:27,740 --> 00:21:30,110
tried to cover briefly
in these questions?

375
00:21:30,110 --> 00:21:32,400
That--

376
00:21:32,400 --> 00:21:36,540
Not really, I mean, it was--

377
00:21:36,540 --> 00:21:39,090
the only thing is
that I remember

378
00:21:39,090 --> 00:21:43,650
having traveled through
France and through Belgium

379
00:21:43,650 --> 00:21:46,420
through Holland, they had
all been touched by war,

380
00:21:46,420 --> 00:21:51,570
as we got into Germany, into
the Western part of Germany.

381

00:21:51,570 --> 00:21:56,880

Some of the towns and
villages had been torn apart.

382

00:21:56,880 --> 00:22:00,100

Railroad stations torn
apart and buildings.

383

00:22:00,100 --> 00:22:03,810

And as we got into
Bavaria, it was

384

00:22:03,810 --> 00:22:08,680

in the spring and everything
was green and growing.

385

00:22:08,680 --> 00:22:10,330

And it was beautiful.

386

00:22:10,330 --> 00:22:13,650

I mean, I can still
picture this even

387

00:22:13,650 --> 00:22:20,320

to this minute it was beautiful
rolling hills and fields.

388

00:22:20,320 --> 00:22:24,817

And then as we got
near Dachau, that's

389

00:22:24,817 --> 00:22:26,025

when the whole scene changed.

390

00:22:26,025 --> 00:22:28,820

391

00:22:28,820 --> 00:22:31,730

Again, as I said before it was--

392

00:22:31,730 --> 00:22:36,500

there's no way of describing

really what I felt at the time.

393

00:22:36,500 --> 00:22:42,950

Revulsion, sick in the
stomach, disbelief, I

394

00:22:42,950 --> 00:22:46,250

don't know how to
describe it much better

395

00:22:46,250 --> 00:22:50,250

than that, but in
my young naive mind,

396

00:22:50,250 --> 00:22:54,910

and I was 20-year-old
kid then, I just

397

00:22:54,910 --> 00:22:58,180

couldn't conceive of people
treating other people,

398

00:22:58,180 --> 00:23:01,570

treating animals that way.

399

00:23:01,570 --> 00:23:02,950

Let alone other human beings.

400

00:23:02,950 --> 00:23:08,440

Innocent human beings whose only
guilt was being born Jewish.

401

00:23:08,440 --> 00:23:12,280

402

00:23:12,280 --> 00:23:15,460

I think your dedication
and your effort

403

00:23:15,460 --> 00:23:25,200

is away by which we can
hopefully if not alleviate

404

00:23:25,200 --> 00:23:27,220

hatred and prejudice
in the future,

405

00:23:27,220 --> 00:23:31,020

at least understand
that it's there

406

00:23:31,020 --> 00:23:33,780

and understand what happened
and maybe some people

407

00:23:33,780 --> 00:23:37,170

will take steps to remediate.

408

00:23:37,170 --> 00:23:39,190

It's not an original.

409

00:23:39,190 --> 00:23:42,120

It's not an original phrase,
but those who forget history

410

00:23:42,120 --> 00:23:44,130

are doomed to relive it.

411

00:23:44,130 --> 00:23:47,550

So I think could
behooves us not to forget

412

00:23:47,550 --> 00:23:51,000

what happened 40 years ago.

413

00:23:51,000 --> 00:23:53,580

Thank you for giving
us your testimony.

414

00:23:53,580 --> 00:23:54,550

It's been my pleasure.

415

00:23:54,550 --> 00:23:55,500

Happy to have you.

416

00:23:55,500 --> 00:23:59,150

[MUSIC PLAYING]

417

00:23:59,150 --> 00:24:26,065