

Good morning, we're going to continue with the second tape of Mr. Henry Landsberg. Today is Monday, November 28th. That was quite a pause in between the two sections of the story. Actually, we did continue on November 9th, which is almost three weeks ago, but due to technical problem that came up we decided that we will go ahead with the real second tape today. And I want to thank you for returning. When we were interrupted, as we concluded the first tape, you were beginning to tell a story about an officer and a rickshaw. I believe it was in Warsaw.

That was the Warsaw ghetto, almost at the end of the ghetto. But there was nobody around anymore in the buildings.

That would have been when? 1940?

That was 1943.

1943.

Right. I was driving a rickshaw, and one of officers that I was driving with, I usually wait for him at the entrance to the ghetto. And we had a group of people that went to the houses and took everything valuable that they-- like furniture or jewelry or whatever they could get out of their houses, they sent to Germany. And that group that I was with used to go to those houses with a German soldier and whatever they pointed out we took it down to the court, and that was picked up later on by somebody else. But our job was to just bring it down.

Well, we went to a letter factory, and people that owned that factory lived in the same house. And we were told not to take anything. Well, after we done with the job, the soldier lined us up and searched everybody they didn't take anything.

At that time, I was behind my rickshaw where the officer was sitting, and the soldier was looking everybody, searched his pocket or whatever they had. And he approached a guy, and the guy was wearing a knapsack. And in the knapsack he had this silver cup, like a goblet, a little silver cup. Well, without saying anything, the the soldier took his gun out and shot the guy in the back of his head.

The guy fell, but he didn't kill him, but the guy was just moving around a little bit on the ground. So the guy tried to shoot again but apparently he didn't have no more bullets. So he went to this officer that I was standing with and he asked him for bullets. So he refused to give him anything. He said no, I don't have it, I don't want to give you or whatever. I don't remember exactly what he said, but he didn't give me anything.

So the soldier turned around and went inside a door inside the court. And I don't know where he got it from, by he picked up an ax, like a hatchet, and he chopped the guy's head off-- decapitated him. [INAUDIBLE] they left him laid there and they just went away. And I took my rickshaw with this guy and went away.

And this is--

Didn't happen--

--what you kept on seeing?

Yeah, among other things.

Then during the break I remember you were telling me something about a friend from Warsaw whom you met in Majdanek?

Yes, that was when I was in Majdanek. They were very bad conditions there, and some people were getting hurt and whatever. So we had a little Red Cross station.

People had diarrhea and all that kind of stuff. They're cut or injured, very minor things. So one day I went up there-- I

don't know why, I just thought I saw something familiar that works in that little station. So good enough the guy come out and say hello and this and that.

And he took me on the side, and he said, now you got to get out of here, because they're going to have a segregation. And if you can get to some place safe, or volunteer to work or whatever, you don't know, you might be safe. Well, I think a couple of days later there were some officers came over and segregated people. And I volunteer to go with them.

So they took about I don't know how many guys, how many people, quite a few people that looked fairly strong, fairly good at that time. And they took us to Jaworzno-- Majdanek-- no, Jaworzno from Majdanek.

Did you know what you were volunteering for?

No. They just were looking for people to work. But I didn't know where and what and how until we got there, until we got to Jaworzno.

All right, let's-- I think we ought to check on something. The story you told about the rickshaw and the officer was in Warsaw?

That was in ghetto.

That was in spring? The end of the ghetto was about April '43?

That was end of April, yes.

Yeah. Now, according to what we were discussing, you were in a number of camps. You were in Birkenau, and you got there it seems something like in May '43?

Right.

And you stay there I guess about a year or so?

Maybe less than a year, yeah.

So maybe--

I don't remember exactly.

That might have been spring '44 when you came to Majdanek? Spring '44?

Right.

All right, so you are in Warsaw before going to Birkenau?

Yes, I was in Warsaw till--

Until May '43?

May 5th, 1943.

Yeah. So this is how-- this is the development over here. Actually, from Warsaw you want to Treblinka.

Treblinka, right.

And then--

That was--

Fortunately, you were able--

Fortunately I was picked up.

--to be moved out. You're one of the people whom going to Birkenau was good, because Treblinka was an out and out murder camp for the people coming from Warsaw.

Absolutely, one in, you're right.

And you went to Treblinka, quickly to Birkenau. You helped build Birkenau?

Right.

And when that was finished you got yourself transferred to Majdanek?

Mm-hmm.

And that's about the spring of '44. And then you went to Jaworzno. Now, when would you say you came to Jaworzno? If you are in Birkenau till about the spring of '44, then you are my Majdanek. How long were you in Majdanek?

A couple of months, maybe two or three months.

OK, for two or three months, and then so we're still in 1944.

Right.

It's either late spring or summer? And you're into Jaworzno? Where is Jaworzno?

Jaworzno is I would say southeast, I don't know exactly. I forgot to look it up. [? in a map ?] but it's in Poland.

And you think it's in-- you suspect it's in southeastern Poland?

Yeah, southeastern Poland, right.

All right. So what kind of a camp was Jaworzno?

Well, just they had a coal mine. A lot of people work in the coal mine. I was one of them. I used to go to work on the railroad. I used to lay railroad tracks. I used to go in the field doing all kind of hard labor work.

So you were working?

We were working, right.

And in Majdanek?

Most every people working.

What was Majdanek?

Majdanek just you were working, but nothing constructive. You just chopping up stones. They bring you from place to place and you just floating around. They just kept you there and they tried to get rid of--

Majdanek was also a murder camp?

Yes.

But Jaworzno was not?

Well, Jaworzno, that was almost the end of the war. People I guess they knew what was going on, and they were maybe easy on any prisoners. But still they wake you up at 5:00 in the morning, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning. Any time they want to they push you in front of the barracks and you were standing there for hours.

I remember it was wintertime, and people just dying right in front of you. It was cold, you didn't have proper clothing on you. And you stayed and you wait until they kept on continuing counting you, how many people they have. While they count, people people were dying just from cold or not having enough food, of weakness. And I remember I was saying to a guy, I turn around, before I know it he was on the floor.

Did you get any impression as to who was able to survive the cold and who keeled over and died because of the freezing weather?

Some people were stronger, some people were weaker. Some people-- I really can't tell you that. It just--

It wasn't necessarily age?

No, not age at all. Everybody were young people there. There was no older people in this camp. All the people basically taken out of the ghettos, all the people-- they were killed. But the younger people that still tried to escape or his in bunkers until the last minute, they also have young people. They were segregating, continuously segregating who they can use to work. The older people were killed.

You are aware of that?

Yes, sure.

Now, how--

There is nothing you can--

--how would you compare the three camps that you are in so far are Birkenau-- we won't count Treblinka since you were there such a short period of time-- Birkenau, Majdanek, and Jaworzno. How would you compare the three?

Well, I would say Jaworzno was the easiest. You had a chance to work, you had a chance to go out of the camp, and maybe you could find something to eat. Some people worked in the coal mine had deals with the civilian people that worked, and somebody used to get a piece of bread or whatever.

I remember once I was in the field working on a railroad there was an older soldier, and he knew what was going on, and I was pretty close to him. He was having lunch, so he had a piece of bread. So he had inside the soft part of the bread, and the crust he left on the stone that I was sitting on. So I think he left it for me, so when he went away I went over picked up that piece of bread and ate it.

Or we work in the field and there was something growing there, something that I picked and ate. It was very sweet. I don't know what it was, some kind of root or whatever, I don't know what it was.

So they brought in Polish people from town to work with you?

No, there was Germans. Oh, well--

The fellow who left the--

--in the coal mine they used to bring Polish workers. That's where like in charge of the work. But there usually were SS men, guards in the coal mine and they was watching you. You couldn't stop, you just had those big shovels. You load up the wagons with coal and you couldn't stop.

The fellow who left over the crust?

Yeah.

Who was he?

He was a soldier, an older soldier.

A German?

A German soldier, right. He wasn't SS or whatever, he was just-- they had those people watching being under construction or whatever as guards.

Was this unusual that a German soldier would--

Very unusual, yes.

--help?

Very unusual, very, very unusual. But it probably felt sorry all the people-- they probably felt sorry for us. And they couldn't do much about it, because if they tried to do something for it they were killed. Those SS men were watching like hawks, you couldn't do anything. There were some soldiers that wanted to do something, but just they couldn't.

Now, you were moved so far three times. You were moved from Warsaw to Treblinka.

Right.

From Treblinka to Birkenau is the second time, and from Birkenau to Majdanek is the third time. So to Treblinka once, to Birkenau the second time, to Majdanek the third time, and it's four-- and to Jaworzno the fourth time.

Yes. And then to--

How did you get moved all those times?

Well, sometimes we walked. Sometimes we rode on trucks, and sometimes they put us on trains-- box trains.

OK, let's take it one at a time. From Warsaw to Treblinka, how did you get there?

In the trains, in the box trains, those cattle trains.

The cattle cars? How long did the trip take?

To Treblinka? Quite a few hours.

And what were the conditions in the train?

The people were packed like sardines. They were so against each other that they couldn't breathe. There were little kids

that people were just passing out.

So this was a real cattle car that you keep on talking about?

That was a real cattle car, right. Terrible conditions.

With no plumbing facilities, no water?

Nothing at all. Nothing.

And how did the people conduct themselves in the cattle car?

They were crying, carry on, and it didn't-- there was a terrible, terrible scene. It was awful. People couldn't breathe. We were trying to reach that little window on the top, but the window was small. And then they had wires. Some people tried to get out, but it was impossible.

And how long were you in Treblinka?

I would say maybe two hours.

Quickly they moved you?

Yeah. They--

How many did they move with you?

I think there was a few hundred people.

And they were strong, young people?

Well, they picked the youngest and the strongest people, young men, yeah.

So you came-- how did you move from Treblinka to Birkenau?

The same wagon, same cars.

The same cattle car?

Yeah, same cattle car.

And the conditions?

Well, the conditions were not that bad because there was only 20, 30 people in the car. So we could sit down, sit against the on the floor, and just relax a little bit.

And how long was that trip?

I think we drove overnight.

Drove in the train?

We rode in the train overnight, yeah.

Overnight? But it really isn't that long a trip that it should take you overnight?

No, no. But all the time that was spent--

Because Treblinka from Warsaw is on the way to Birkenau, really. You're moving in the direction of Warsaw to Birkenau to begin with.

Direction of Warsaw?

Yeah, in other words Birkenau is near Krakow.

Right.

And Treblinka is not far from Warsaw. So you weren't out of the way really when you went--

No, not really, no. Everything was kind of close.

Yeah.

Everything was still in Poland.

Now, the trip from Birkenau to Majdanek is longer, I believe?

It's longer, right.

Yeah, how did you make that trip?

I think we're partially on trucks and partially on the train.

And what were the conditions then?

But there wasn't a train. They weren't those cattle boxes, they were I think regular trains.

And these were people they wanted for work?

They wanted for work, right.

So that trip you don't remember as being such a terrible trip?

No, no, no. The worst trip was from Warsaw to Treblinka. That was--

When they had everybody?

That was the worst. That was unbelievable.

All right, now, now what about the trip from Birkenau to Majdanek, the longer trip? That was with trucks, you say?

That was partially trucks and partially trains.

Yeah, and now Majdanek to Jaworzno, what kind of a trip is that? How long is that?

I don't remember. I just don't remember.

Do you remember how you made the trip? That's the trip you volunteered for?

Yeah, I volunteered to every time I had a chance--

Every time you got changed?

--to volunteer, right.

And in retrospect you think that was a good action?

I think so, because people that they couldn't work, that were left in the camp, they got rid of them.

You don't recall at all Jaworzno Majdanek to Jaworzno? Majdanek to Jaworzno, how did you make the trip? You don't recall.

Oh, I don't remember. I think it was by trucks and the train.

Yeah.

I just--

All right, now comes-- now we're at a time in the war when things are going very poorly, very seriously wrong for the Germans, right? They're losing the war. That's when you got out of Jaworzno?

Right.

When did you leave Jaworzno, do you recall?

Yes, in January.

January '45?

'45, right.

Now, as everybody is running for safety.

Everybody is running-- one night they took us out, and they gave us a loaf of bread and a blanket. They put you in line, and then we start marching.

This was the death march?

That was the death march, right.

What do you recall of the death march?

Well, I recall right at the beginning of the march I was at the end of the column that I was marching. And one of the soldiers called me, and he had his bicycle. And there was a lot of suitcases hanging on his bicycle. And he asked me to carry this bicycle with all this luggage.

There was a lot of snow on the ground, and I could hardly walk myself. So I carried his bicycle for a little while, and then I noticed that he went up front. And as soon as I lost him, I couldn't see him anymore, I dumped the bicycle in a ditch and put the blanket over my head and went through the column up front. I just took that chance. I couldn't carry the bicycle. He couldn't find-- he never saw--

If you would have remained with the bicycle what would have happened? I would probably stay behind the column and probably somebody else would probably come over and kill me. I couldn't carry that.

And you were the only person who was honored with carrying a bicycle with suitcases?

Yeah, of the few hundred people, maybe 1,000 people, he picked me. It was unbelievable. Maybe because I was at the end and I look more capable of carrying this bicycle for him. So I never saw him again, he never saw me.

That was January though?

That was January. It was winter, it was cold.

Was there snow on the ground?

Snow on the ground.

How much snow was on the ground?

There was enough snow to build your wood shows up with snow. You could hardly walk. You had to every so so long you had to scrub the snow off the soles of your shoes.

As a matter of fact, some people used to lose their shoes. They put rags around their feet so they road could work. So a lot of people died on that march. A lot of people they died because they were weak, they couldn't walk. Or they were killed because they were standing behind.

But the people were all reasonably young in years?

They were reasonable young in years, but they were weak. You see the people that were there it's unbelievable. All they were just skin on their bones.

Including you?

Including me. I was liberated at about 90 pounds.

And what did you have-- did you have anything to protect you against that cold?

Well, we were in regular stripes and some underwear and a shirt and a jacket and a blanket.

What kind of a jacket?

A striped jacket.

Well, what kind of weather was it?

They didn't care what kind of weather was it. What they have they give you, that's it.

It would seem to me in spring it might still be cold.

In spring was still cold. Yeah, but what did they care?

In a bitter winter?

There was no difference with them. Winter, what they-- I remember I worked in the coal mine. We were chained, we had a big rod going across about 12 people chained to that rod on each side, and we worked.

Rock, did you say a rock?

We work.

Yeah, with a chain?

Yeah. There was a chain in the center and each side of this big rod. There was a rod. And we were chained with one wrist to this rod.

Rock?

To the rod, the medal rod.

Rod, oh, yeah.

That's the way we walked to the coal mine, to the coal mine and back from the coal mine, chained.

Yeah, and the purpose of the being chained was?

So nobody would run away. It was very difficult to walk because like I said, we wore those wooden soled shoes and the snow was piling up. Sometimes when one of the guys tripped the rest of them that were behind him fell right on the top of him.

On him?

On him, yeah.

And he was on the snow?

He was yeah-- we all were on the snow. And then the guard came over and start to whip you to get up quick, quick, quick. It wasn't pleasant.

Did you ever figure out why they marched you back? They could have left you over?

Left you where?

In Poland., in Jaworzno.

They wanted to get--

What did they gain by taking you?

The purpose of everything was to get rid of you. Any way they couldn't kill you the way they used to because it was the end the war. People were a little afraid or whatever, the Germans. They didn't burn you anymore, but when you were dead they put you in a grave, in a ditch.

I remember in Mauthausen one evening the soldiers came into the barracks where I was, and they took out about 12 or 15 people. They gave them these rubber boots and some gloves, and they took you out. And you marched maybe a mile or so.

And there was this big tremendous like a grave, big hole in the ground was about, I would say, I don't know, about 100 feet by 60 feet. There were dead people in it piled up. Because the workers used to come out, dump the people in the ditch. There was a big pile.

So all those people that they took out of this barracks, me included, we had to go down into the ditch and try to

straighten the pile, make it even. Put the people in one grade, grade it out, make it straight. And then after that they put some lime on the layer and they put another layer on top of that, and just keep on going and going.

It was awful. Some of the guys, when you walk on the dead people you walk all over them. And sometimes you step on a stomach and this sound comes out-- that was scary, very, very scary.

The reflecter all around you so they can see where you are, what are you doing. And like I said, those wagons came over and a couple of guys dumped the bodies in the ditch, and we had to pick it up and lay it out like sardines in a can.

This was on the death march?

That was after the death march.

That was Mauthausen?

That was Mauthausen, yeah. That was in Mauthausen.

You arrived in Mauthausen then in January '45?

Yes.

And what did you do then?

In Mauthausen we didn't do anything. Some people used to work like I worked. We just hang out, just sit there and we didn't do much. There was nothing to do at that point.

Do you have any idea how many people started on the death march?

I would say maybe around 1,000 people.

1,000?

Yeah, just about 1,000 people.

So it wasn't that many?

Pardon me?

It wasn't that many? I mean, I imagine some of the others had bigger crowds.

Yeah, but maybe more.

Do you have any idea how many arrived in Mauthausen?

Mauthausen? I would say about a couple hundred people.

A couple hundred? Does that mean 200?

200, just about 200 maybe, or maybe less.

You mean they got rid of 800 out of the 1,000?

People were dying. People would die. Trying to escape they were shot. Just there was-- the purpose of this was just to get rid of the people.

What were the conditions that you found in Mauthausen?

Well, like I said, we didn't do anything. We just hang out. They give you some food, give you a piece of bread and some kind of soup that was just some water and some lettuce in it. I don't know what it was in there. You just exist.

And then there was still no rhyme or reason to what the Germans were doing?

Reasons? They didn't-- they wanted to get rid of the Jews. That was their idea.

There were some non-Jews there too?

Yes. There was in Jaworzno there was a lot of non-Jews.

Was there a difference in the treatment of the Jews as compared to non-Jews?

No, it's same treatment. Well, I would say, there was a better treatment because some of the non-Jewish used to receive packages from their families, where the Jews didn't have nobody to receive from.

Well, they were in Poland at the time?

Yeah, Jaworzno was in Poland.

So they could get from Poland. Now, when you were in Mauthausen, there was a difference between the treatment of the Jews and the non-Jews?

No, I don't think so. I wasn't in the main camp. There was a second camp built out of tents-- canvas tents. That's where we were. So I don't know what was going on in the upper camp.

And where you were was only Jews?

Yes.

And you were there how long?

Until I was liberated May 5th. So we were there till about end of April, and then they took us to Gunskirchen, which was another camp only a couple of miles away from Mauthausen.

What was the purpose--

The reason--

--of that move?

That was the last stage of the people that they thought that in that camp they might get rid of some more people.

You mean that they should perish?

Perish, right.

So you think that the people who were moved--

I think they had a gas chamber there or whatever. I don't know.

Where was a gas chamber?

In Gunskirchen.

Yeah, but you thought that the purpose of moving people from Mauthausen to Gunskirchen was to get rid of those people?

I think that they get rid of these people, yeah. Because I think the people that were in the barracks, they were still there. That was my impression.

They were still were?

They were still in the barracks in Mauthausen.

In what camp? In Mauthausen.

Still Mauthausen, yeah.

Where were you?

I was also Mauthausen, but a different area.

Oh, you were in a tent, not--

In a tent, right.

Not in the barracks, right. So they moved the people who were in the tents?

Right. That was the worst part of the whole thing, because really there's nothing there to do. Just people were laying on the ground and dying.

In Mauthausen?

In Gunskirchen.

Oh, in Gunskirchen, Gunskirchen was the worst place?

It was the worst place, yeah. Well, you didn't do anything. You didn't have no help from anybody. It was almost the end of the war. We knew it, we expected that.

As a matter of fact, a Red Cross truck came up with some food, but very, very few people could get to it. Because the strongest people that could-- some guys in charge they went up there first and they took whatever they wanted. When I got there there was nothing left. But next morning there was end of the war.

You were in Gunskirchen just a few days before the war ended?

In Gunskirchen? Yeah, only a few days.

How did you find out that the war ended?

Well, we got up in the morning--

Did somebody come in and announce it?

Huh?

Did somebody come in and announce it?

No, usually you saw guards walking around. We didn't see nobody else. And somebody came up, he said, well, there's nobody here, the war is over. Everybody went out, there was no guards, no anything. You didn't see anybody, just us prisoners there.

And then people start to walk different directions. Let's go this way, go that way. My friends and me went on a highway. We didn't know where to go, we just went.

This is Austria?

That was Austria, yeah.

So what did you do? Was there anything-- did you have a feeling of feeling good?

Well, we felt good--

Of celebrating?

--because we knew that the war is over. And now what we want to do is just live, just get something to eat.

Food was always in the mind?

Well, yes, you were always hungry. You were like a skeleton.

You were hungry for a few years?

I was hungry for quite a few years, yes.

That was the-- I don't know, was that the worst part of the experience? The hunger? The cold also.

The hunger and the afraid of being killed. You had that in mind all the time, all the time.

What about the cold?

It was cold, but what could you do? Somebody could take it, somebody couldn't take it. I remember on the way from the coal mine you went to your barracks and your clothes were stiff. You couldn't even take it off. It was raining, and snowing, and freezing.

So it was ice?

Ice, so it was all iced up. You put in we had a little stove there in the center of the barrack, and we put that in. It was standing up. We put it in front of that oven to melt the uniform. The next morning you had to work. People died from that.

So what happened to you and your friends after you discovered the war was over?

Well, we started walking on a highway and asking some people that lived off the highway for some food. Some give us food, some said they don't have it. I remember once as we were walking we approached a villa, and there was a guard on it, American soldier was there already. And we ask if we can go in, take a shower, or dressed, find something to--

The American soldier?

The American soldier, right. They say yeah, go ahead, do it. So we went to this house which must be very rich people lived there, because a lot of clothing. So we all changed clothes, put shirts on. And whatever we find, a suit whatever. There was nobody there, absolutely nobody.

We took showers, clean ourselves up a little bit. We got some clothing on and we walked out. We thank the soldier for letting us go in. He said all right, OK, whatever he said.

How did you speak to the soldier? What language?

There's no language. Just thank you, said in English or everybody knew a little bit. So we kept going. We walked about, I would say, about 100, 200 feet. And there was a lady and a couple of sons walking against us, right, in a different direction. And one of the kids says, hey mom, look at it, it's my father's jacket and pants or whatever.

So this woman start raising hell that we stole their clothing and all that. And so the soldier came over and told her to shut up get away, and told us to keep on going where we want to go. That was one of-- this how we got rid of our dirty clothing, the stripes and all that.

How long did you wear this clothing?

Well, we wore it for quite a bit, because we didn't have nothing else to wear, and that was pretty good stuff. And we kept on going. We came upon some farms here and there, and we asked the farmers we can stay there. Some of them didn't have the room, they had small houses.

We came up one that had a pretty nice house. We asked him if we can stay in the house. He said no, he hasn't got no room, but he said he has a big barn. If we want to use the barn, we welcome to use it.

So all four of us went into this barn and make ourselves comfortable, and relax a little bit, And he didn't have much food, but he gave us potatoes, whatever he could. He was a pretty nice guy.

But usually we used to separate, the four guys. Everybody used to go a different direction and ask for food from the farmers and people that were around. So we had enough food, we ate very good. We took good, we had some of the guys had diarrhea, I had diarrhea. But it took a lot of time to get adjusted to this better food.

How long did this go on?

This went on for a couple of months, I think. Maybe half a year, a little less.

So you had no plan of action yet at this point?

Well, no, we didn't know what to do, where to go. Then we find out that there is a-- what happened is I met the American soldier, an officer, that was in charge of a motorpool. And he was Polish, his parents are Polish, but he was born in the United States.

His mother was writing letters to him. He couldn't answer it. He had a pile of letters.

His mother wrote from the United States?

Right, I think they were in California someplace.

So she wrote him in Polish?

She wrote him in Polish. And I met this soldier, I talked to him a little bit. And he talked Polish a little bit, not much. So he asked me if I can translate the letters for him, and I did. And I wrote letters back to his parents.

How did you translate it? Into what language did you translate it?

To Polish.

Into Polish?

From Polish into-- yeah, in broken English.

So you knew some English?

A little bit, yes. I knew some English. I don't know how I picked it up, but I picked it up. And then I was telling him what the mother writes, this and that. She used to send him socks, warm socks and shirts. But he was wearing uniforms. We became very friendly.

As a matter of fact, my friends that was a camp, we found out there was a camp where there was a lot of guys concentrated there, a lot of guys that left the concentration camp. And they made provisions for them, barracks and all that.

Which town was this?

That was in Wels. And they went over there, and I felt very comfortable with this officer. So I didn't want to go to the camp, I had enough camps. And I was there for a while. It was quite a few months I was there with him. And we had good times.

I remember we used to take trucks loaded up with gasoline, go to the farms in exchange for whiskey all that. Then one day I decided to visit my friends. I went to the camps, and I stayed there. I went there Friday, I stayed over the weekend.

Then I came back to this motorpool, but there was nobody there. They disappeared, they went away to a different location, and I didn't know where they are or what they do, how to get in touch with them. Just that was the end.

That was the end.

That was the end.

So how long were you in Austria, and when did you come to the United States? How did that take place?

OK, from this place in Wels we went to Linz. There was an area called Bindermichel in Linz, and we were there. There was a complex of a lot of buildings that the soldiers used to live there, and we had rooms. Now, my friends and I had a pretty big room with four beds in it. We lived there. We used to get food from UNRAA.

And I was there till '46. At that time I was told that my brother was killed, my father was killed, I have nobody. As a matter of fact, right after the war I went to Poland, see if anybody is left there. I couldn't find anybody.

I went back to Germany to Linz again, and I walked down the street once and somebody came over and say oh, Joe, what are you doing here? And this and that, they saw me in Warsaw. And I said, hey, is something wrong here? So he said aren't you Joe? I said no, I'm Henry. They said, well, I just saw your brother.

What a story.

That was unbelievable. I said you sure, and I start asking questions. He said, yeah, I saw him in the Jewish center asking for you. There was a letter for you, whatever.

He's in Bindermichel?

That was in Bindermichel, yeah. So I went to Poland again.

Oh, to Poland.

Yeah I went to Poland again. That guy was in Bindermichel

Yeah, uh, yeah, and your brother was in Poland?

My brother was in Poland. So I went to Poland. I couldn't find him. They were telling me that he signed out in a kibbutz to go to Israel, because he didn't know that I'm alive.

So I looked for him practically all night until I came to a kibbutz and they told me that two hours ago he left on the way to Israel. They were smuggling people from Warsaw whoever came back or whatever to Israel. Now that I know that he's alive I went back to Austria again. And I met my wife there. She was on her way from--

In?

In Bindermichel. She was on her way to Poland from Germany. She worked in Germany. She was sent by a Polish friend of theirs to work in the German town Mecklenburg or whatever like that. I don't remember exactly the name.

Mecklenburg.

Mecklenburg, right. And she was working the fields. And there was a big mansion where retired officers used to live. She was in the field for a couple of weeks, and the lady in church picked her up because my wife was a very beautiful girl. She never looked-- they didn't know that she's Jewish.

And the lady took her in and another girl, and they had very good-- they had clean clothing and all that. They were like chambermaids.

They were cleaning the rooms after the soldiers. And they at mealtimes used to serve them food and clean up. She was pretty good. So the Russians liberated. And they end up in Bavaria.

So you met her?

I met her, right.

And eventually you married her? Where did you marry her?

In Bavaria, Regensburg.

And what year?

1948.

But you met her in what year? This is about 1946?

1946.

Yeah. What happened with your brother? How did you meet up with him?

When we were in the United States. We came to the United States.

He was here?

No, he was in Israel.

Yeah. Oh, but you kept being in touch?

I came to United States. Yes, after I came to the United States.

How did you find him?

Well, my wife's brother that survived he was in the Polish army. And he was an artist, a painter. And he went to Israel, he was in Egypt, he had exhibitions all over.

And my wife knew where he is. So she wrote him letters, go find Yosef Landsberg.

And he did?

He did. He find his address and he walked up to his room. He opened the door, and he said he saw this soldier MP with a white thing with a gun, and he was afraid. He turned around, he wanted to go back. But they start up a conversation, and my brother-in-law told him that I am alive, that I'm in the United States.

Your brother told him?

No he's my brother-in-law.

Your brother-in-law told your brother that you're alive?

Told him that we're in the United States.

OK, so he got the two of you together.

Two of you together.

Now, let me ask you a few questions, because I think we're running out of time. When you came to the United States where did you settle?

In Newark, New Jersey.

What brought you to Newark?

A friend that we had in Regensburg. He had family in United States, family brought him over. And he said-- we're very close friends. He said, when I go to the United States I see if I can bring you over, my wife and me. I said, fine, in meantime, we sign up applications to come to the United States anyway.

Happens that his papers and the papers from the Jewish council came together. So we went on his papers, and he had the room for us in Newark. And then we end up in Newark.

And you became an electrician right away?

Well, I wasn't electrician, but it took very-- it was a matter of few days that my wife got a job in a sewing machine factory. And the boss was interested in what she's doing, was she's married, this and that. He asked questions, and my wife said I'm an electrician looking for work. He said, well, I know somebody that could use you. And that's how I start to work.

You adjusted rather quickly?

I adjusted very quick, yes.

Well, that was very good. Now, I understand that you have two children?

Yes. My oldest son--

Where do they live?

My oldest son lives in West Orange, where I live. It's only a couple minutes away. My youngest son lives in the city.

In New York?

About 35 minutes away in New York.

In Manhattan?

In Manhattan, right.

The one who lives in West Orange, what does he do?

He's a industrial consultant and what do you call it-- job replacement.

And the one who lives in Manhattan?

The one who lives in Manhattan works for a advertising agency. He's a copywriter.

Are they married?

Yes, both married. The oldest son has twin boys, and my youngest son has a girl.

Very nice. So you adopted a new country.

Absolutely, I'm very happy, and everybody is successful. We made a good living here and we love this country.

I have to ask you a few questions to conclude, as long as we have time. When did you start talking about the Holocaust and with whom?

Well, we start right away with people that lived through it. It was never finished, we still talk about it.

To your children?

Sure, my children know a lot.

Your grandchildren?

Well, my grandboys are three-and-a-half years old--

They're too young? Yeah, they're on the young side. All right, how has the Holocaust affected your outlook on life and your understanding of human nature? In other words, when you saw such terrible things that people did to other people. Does that have anything to say to you about human nature?

Well, there are different kind of people in this world. Some people that care about other people, some people don't care about other people. And I don't know what to tell you. It just--

But can you understand the hatred and the hurting of other people?

There's a lot of hatred in this country. That I'm very surprised a country like United States, they shouldn't have that. I think they should teach people and kids in schools what happened about the Holocaust, and make them understand about racist problem and hatred, anti-Semitism. And try to wipe it up somehow.

The last question, has the Holocaust affected your faith and religious observance?

No, not me, but my wife lost her faith in god. Because she lost a lot of people in her family, and they were good people, and they're religious people. And she just lost faith in it. Me, we were a regular Jewish family.

My mother used to light candles on a Friday night, but we weren't Orthodox. We didn't have a kosher kitchen. And we believe, of course, in god. And holidays we used to go to synagogue. But otherwise, we just normal people.

I believed in god all my life. I don't know, I think god helped me to live this through. I still believe in god, and I think it thanks to god I'm here. What I went through, all my experience, they were just unbelievable.

I was shot at. I mean, it's ridiculous, I saw dead in the front my eyes hundreds of times. But somehow I survived.

Your testimony today and three weeks ago is very important to us, and I'm sure it's important to your family.

Very important, yes.

You will have it, and we want to thank you for coming down and telling us about your experiences.

Thank you for having me here.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Doctor.