

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Solomon Klug  
March 13, 1990  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Solomon Klug, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on March 13, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## SOLOMON KLUG

### March 13, 1990

[FIRST 3 MINUTES OF INTERVIEW ARE MISSING ON VIDEOTAPE]

Q: Would you tell me your name please?

A: Solomon Klug. I was born in small town, Krzepice, Poland.<sup>1</sup> And I lived there till the war broke out with my family.

Q: Tell me about your family.

A: My parents was very religious and... (PAUSE)

Q: You had siblings?

A: Yeah. One sister and three brothers. Four of us. So two brothers were married. Each one had two children. One...one was not married. My sister left in 1938. She went to Israel. And then in '39 the war start, so they took my brothers away. One they killed in the back of the house, with my mother. And then they went...

Q: Tell me about it.

A: ...'39 they went and took him to camp. And then in 1940 they took me to camp. So...

Q: Can you...can you slow down just a minute, and back up and tell me about what happened? Describe to me what happened when the Nazis came and they took your parents.

A: Oh, yeah. When they came in... First of all, they took all the men out of the house, you know, and put them in one of them--I don't what you would call here. It's like a fire station, you know. But it was a big hall. They kept all the men there (cough) all night; and in the morning they made us go out to work, you know. Clean the streets, clean the...clean the stables you know. They brought some horses in, you know. And they kept the horses in the synagogue. They tore everything out from the synagogue, and kept the horses in there. And we had to go and clean and do all kinds of work. And then a lot of houses were demolished from the bombs, so we had to go and work. Kept us all day working. And then at night, they kept us again in the in this fire station, in the big barn--whatever you call it. And that went on and on and on like this, 'til then they start taking the men to the camps, the work camps. And I was still home. And one day - I was trying to run away, to see maybe I could ...

Q: Excuse me. You're going to have to stop again.

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<sup>1</sup> Located near Cz\_stochowa.

A: Too fast?

Q: No. You're fine. TECHNICAL CONVERSATION Can we start it back again? Tell me a little more about the work you did. You were in this fire house...?

A: Yeah. So they they kept us there at night and in the daytime they took us out you know to clean up the ruins from the houses and what they bombed the houses you know. On all kind of work, whatever's got to be done you know like clean the stables ...

PAUSE

Q: Tell me about working from the fire house. You were in a fire house at night?

A: Yeah. So every morning we went out, they took us out you know to do all kind of work you know like I said, to clean clean up the ruins you know and working for them you know, the Germans. So that was going on for day after day you know and then they start taking men you know to the camps. Send them off to camps you know. Every time they just picked out you know the...I was the youngest you know so...and then later - that was in '39 when it was the war broke out - and in '40 I was trying to run away somewhere to hide, but there was no way to hide. There were just, you were thinking that if you ran away they may not catch you, but they caught you and everywhere, so I was away maybe ten, twelve kilometers - that would be about eight miles - so I got caught inside a little town. They caught me right away there. Put me in there in a fire station; and they accumulated until they had enough people, you know. They brought a bus and take us to camp. But I was trying from there to escape. So I walked out, say a hundred...maybe a hundred twenty feet...yards away from there; and I heard a shot. So somebody there mentioned to the Germans that I am trying to escape. So I heard a shot. From then, I heard to say, "Halt!" That means "stop." So I was afraid the next bullet would be me; so I just turned around and just walked back. And then the bus came. They load us up in the bus, and he put me right next to the driver. That was a German. So he told him to watch me, because I was already trying to escape once. And they took us to Annaberg.<sup>2</sup> That's this first camp there. Got over there. We worked in the autobahn.<sup>3</sup> I'm sure you have heard of the autobahn. We worked there; and worked all day, came home, got a little something to eat. So that was in the beginning, in...in the work camps. So they gave us a little you know, a piece of bread, a little soup, you know. And that was for next day already...you ate it up in the evening and next day you was working all day long. When you got home, you got again a little piece of bread, you know, ration. So...and it was going on. And then (cough)...

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<sup>2</sup> **NB:** St. Annaberg. Forced labor camp for Jews, located in Annaberg, Upper Silesia.

<sup>3</sup> According to Arolsen, this would have been the Reichsautobahn Breslau-Kattowitz--e.g., from Wroc\_aw to Katowice.

Q: What was it like in the camp among your friends? What was it like? Tell me a little more about.....

A: In there, nothing. Just...there was nothing to do. Just... I mean, you went out...we went out to work every day. And in the evening, you came home. You were so tired you wouldn't...you didn't even feel like talking or doing, you know. Just went and laid down. And you...think that...so that on. Then when the war broke out...the Russians, when they went in, so they took us from this camp and they sent us a camp a few miles away from from there because they brought in the Russian war uh PL... No. War...war prisoners they brought in there to this camp. And so we went out to work in the same job, you know, on the autobahn; and they worked over there too, them Russians. And that went on. They took us to a camp by the name of Markstädt.<sup>4</sup> That was the third camp there. And there we worked on the...this autobahn, too. You see I worked with this...this firm, Schallhorn.<sup>5</sup> And they were doing the bridges you know and the planning you know from the...and then in '40...1943, they made concentration camp. 'Til '43, it was the work camps. And then they came in one day, everybody had to strip their clothes. It was the winter, January. About two or three feet snow, frost. They took us in one barrack. Take off all the clothes. We had to run to the other barracks, naked in this snow and freezing cold. And they gave us them stripey uniforms. I'm sure you've heard from them, uniforms what we were wearing. And that's all we wore in the winter and the summer. No warm clothes. Just them stripey cotton uniforms. And then it got to be real tough. I mean, tough. Rain or snow, we stayed out there and worked hard. And they went around with the like umm - what what did the policeman... What did you call them?

Q: \_\_\_\_\_, whips?

A: No, the whips. Yeah, but they were special whips. Some rubber hose and some wire in it. When they laid it on you, you felt it. They went around and just beat and make you work. Work you to death. One time, I mean...and the food - one evening I was so desperate, so I was trying. And everybody was asleep; I was trying to get around the kitchen to get in the dumpster, you know, to find some potato peels or something. And they spotted me there. Guard there, night guard, you know. So I went back to the barrack. I thought they didn't follow me, but...but they did follow me. And they came in. So they said, "Who was out there?" So I was afraid if I don't come out, they're going to take all - there was around three hundred people in the barrack - they would take all of them out, you know, and beat every one of them. So I just got up. And they got the living Hell out of me that I thought that I will not get up next morning. But I don't know - it's like you say, I got...I had nine lives. It's a few incidents I had like this, and I pulled it through. So...and then...

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<sup>4</sup> Forced labor camp for Jews. Located in Lower Silesia. Opened March/April 1942. Prisoners evacuated 23 Mar 1944 to Fünfteichen, a subcamp of Gross Rosen.

<sup>5</sup> This was the firm of Julius Schallhorn, based in Berlin.

Q: Tell me about the Nazis

A: ...after this got through, after they got through beating on me... In the morning, the...luckily, there--whatever you call it--you know, the one in charge of the block, came in and say again, "Who was out last night?" So the same thing again. I was afraid he was going to be beating everybody, so I went up to him. So I thought after the beating I got that's he going to have a little mercy. Didn't have no mercy. He gave me another one. And I could barely walk; but I tried my best to get to work. Because so soon if you said you're sick, they took you in that uh clinic and you didn't come out no more. This...that was sure thing; that if you went in there you didn't come out, no matter what. So I just pulled it together and went to work, you know. And we held together on the same thing every day again the same. Then they took us... Oh, yeah; from this they took us to Fünfteichen<sup>6</sup> from Markstädt, you know. There where they had the electric wire around, you know. And all this, I mean, real. Then when the Russians start coming in to Poland closer, you see, because we were close to Poland. Them camps that we...that I was, they took us from this camp; and that was...I remember it was in...in January.<sup>7</sup> They took...picked out some people; so we didn't know what they picked for. Because of the time when they were picking they were picking for the gas chamber, you see, so everybody was afraid but you didn't have no choice. You had to go when they say. So they took us down to the camp uh...that's all I know is the name of the camp. Wolfsberg,<sup>8</sup> you know.

Q: Will you tell me... Tell me how you got there.

A: Where? To the camp?

Q: To the camp.

A: Oh, they took us in...in...in them cars what they transport animals, you know. Cows and horses, you know. In closed up cars. So the trip was miserable, because every...people going for two days in this train and every morning when they start, they just took out dead. You were slee...you were laying overnight and in the morning you got up, you realized you were laying on dead people. So they took them out you know and then they took us out of the train and they marched us to this camp over there. So they took us, they start, when they took us another place so we thought we're going to the ga...gas chambers. It was a disinfection place,

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<sup>6</sup> Subcamp of Gross Rosen. Located in Lower Silesia.

<sup>7</sup> He appears here to be referring to the evacuation from Fünfteichen. According to Arolsen, Fünfteichen was evacuated 21 Jan 1945.

<sup>8</sup> Subcamp of Gross Rosen. Administered through Wustgiersdorf Subcamp. Located in Lower Silesia.

to disinfect us you know. We had to go under under the water you know. Come out. Glad we came out alive again. We kept going, but everybody was afraid that's already, that's it, because we knew that they take you from one place to the other it's most likely that they take you to the gas chambers. So they took us to this camp over there. And we worked there a short time, and again the Russian came closer. And closer they came, they took us further into Germany, you see. So from Wolfsberg, they took us to Pölitz.<sup>9</sup> That was a murder camp. I mean, lucky we weren't there too long, because I wouldn't be here. Because there was...we were there in a short time. We worked there. And one day, a cement truck got stuck. And it wasn't a cement truck like here, like on wheels and so on--I mean, rubber wheels, all things. It was just a regular cement mixer. And muddy. And they made us push this. And it was ha... half of the wheels was in the mud. And we were standing over the an... the ankles in mud, and we had to push this. And how could we push it? And he went around, this German went around with one of them clubs, just beating on the head; and I seen stars. And thank God we got this thing out of there. Back at the...in the camp. And so then...and that was...if you heard from Stettin [**Pol:** Szczecin], you heard. And we were on Pölitz. So we were on this side of the Oder; and we could see the Russian cannon on the other side of the Oder, you see. And all night, they were knocking in them factories that. They were producing oil, whatever they were producing there. At night. Because in the daytime, they knew we were working there--that they got the people from the concentration camp working--so they didn't hit. But at night, all night, they were bombing them places. So they took us from there, and transported us to ...I mean, to ship us further in. But they stopped us in Bergen-Belsen. In Bergen-Belsen, we were there ten days because another day or two we couldn't make it. Because they was had so filled up, the place there, that that we were standing all day, all night. Just like sardines, standing \_\_\_\_\_; because they were bringing people in and shipping them out. And that's all you got over there is once, one time a day, a cup of soup. And if you were lucky, if somebody walked by and pushed you, your soup were gone. So your food for the whole day was going. So we stayed there only a few days. Then they took us from there, because they came closer. They took us to Barth-am-der-Ostsee<sup>10</sup> over there; and there we were were building bunkers. Did I say bunkers? Excuse me--where they had them planes--the Germans, you know. So they could hide them planes in there. And then it started. They came and start bombing. Bombing. So they took us out from there and gave everybody small loaf of bread with a little jelly, and walking.<sup>11</sup> No more transportation. We walked there three days. At night, they put us in some barns; you know, at the farmers. We started the same thing again in the morning. We got up. We realized we were laying just on dead people. It just took your \_\_\_\_\_. And the ones that could walk kept marching. We walked there three days. So we ate up...the first day, we ate up; because you were hungry like a wolf. So you

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<sup>9</sup> **Also:** Stettin-Pölitz. Subcamp of Stutthof. Located at Pölitz (**Pol:** Police), near Stettin (**Pol:** Szczecin), in Pomerania. Evacuated 18 Apr 1945 to Ravensbrück/Barth.

<sup>10</sup> **Or:** "Barth on the Baltic." Subcamp of Ravensbrück. Located in Pomerania, on the Baltic Sea.

<sup>11</sup> According to Arolsen, Barth was evacuated 30 Apr - 01 May 1945.

could eat anything, uh you ate it up. And the morning, again start marching. The third day, in the afternoon, we were marching. We realized that some of them guards, the SS, disappearing. There were woods we walking. They were disappearing; and so we said to each other...I say, "Boys, I think it's over." But we couldn't do nothing so long as still was some around, you see. So slowly they were disappearing, disappearing; and when nightfall came, so I said to some boys, I say, "You know, why don't we sneak in in the woods there, in the bushes. And just lay down and just wait what happen." We went in there, lay down there. Stayed in our overnight. And in the morning, we heard some horses running. And we looked up and we see some Russians. So we got up. And they seen us, you know; and they knew who were...we were. And they say, "You're free. Go where you want. Do what you want." And that was April the 30th in 1949--I mean, excuse me, '45. So what do you...do you do first? You go and look for something to eat. So we went in some houses. The Germans, you know, they seen us; they got scared. They gave us what we wanted. And sometimes the Russians came with us, because they see how we looked. I weighed eighty pounds when I came out. So they came with us to the ho...the German to the houses you know. Try to find us some food, you know, and some clothes. The only thing I found a pair of pants. They went around three times. (Laughter) I just wanted to get rid of this uniform, you know; but that was it. So like they say, a cat got nine lives. And I had; because I had a few incidents what I didn't think I'm going to make it.

Q: How about describing it?

A: One time, I was trying to get me some water to wash myself up. They caught me. They beat the living hell out of me, just because I was getting a little water to wash myself. Because you never had a chance to. So for any little thing ... I mean, it's... (Pause). Yep.

Q: OK. Let me go back a little. I want to know more. Can you go back a little ...

A: Yeah. Just ask me about...

Q: Yeah. About some of the different experiences. I want to go back to the ghetto a little bit.

A: I have not been in the ghetto.

Q: Let's go back to your town.

A: You mean home?

Q: Your home, your hometown. And tell me about when they came for your parents.

A: When they came in, they first...the first thing they did... You've seen the picture of my father, had the beard. You know, the religious people had beards. First thing, they get any Jew with a beard, they took with the knife and cut it, you know. So right away then, people...everybody had their...shaved their beards off. Because they seen you with the beard,



either they beat you to death or different things. Or they took the knife, you know, and cut the beard, you know. And they did anything they could do to the Jewish people there. And they... I mean, they made work. I mean, impossible things. I mean, it's...it's hard to describe. It's very hard to describe; because, you know, for survival everybody will do anything. You know, to survive. And so...and this, and this what we had to do. Nothing else. They took out, you know, the men. At night, they went in in the houses and raped the women, them soldiers. And if any little incident, they could take out a bunch of people, put them against the wall and just like dogs. Shoot them down like dogs, you see. So one time, somebody was trying, to...to a German, tried to do something to him; so they took out some people. They just, it was - I mean, we weren't humans. We were dogs, you see. Worser than dogs they was treating us, you see; because to kill some people, it was nothing. It was...it was like you kill a fly today. That's all. And it's... I mean, it's...it's hard. No matter how...how you tried to explain all this, it's kind of hard, you see. It's hard--the details and so--because if you want to start with details, you could stay for days and days. There wouldn't be an end, you see.

Q: We need a little more, though. We need some details here today.

A: From what the...you mean, from the camp? From the camps?

Q: Let's... I want to find out... Tell me again about your parents, because... What happened to them?

A: OK. The parents...when they took me to camp, my father was still home with my mother. Yeah. And so they took my father to the camp. This I find out, you know, when they took people from one camp to the other, you know. And some from my hometown came and say; so they were telling me that they took my father down there. And my brother, he...when the war broke out, he had a nervous breakdown. So he could hardly walk. So they took my brother and my mother, and they shot them in the backyard. Buried them there in the backyard. And my father went to the camp. And then somebody came to the camp where they...where my father was; and they told me that he died over there. So...and the same with my brothers. I heard from there, you see, that they... they were in the camp. And, of course, my two brothers, they were very religious; and they didn't eat, you know, when we got the soup. And so they didn't...they wouldn't touch the soup. The only thing what they ate is just a piece of bread. So they they didn't make it too long, you see. So...and, yeah.

Q: You were in that work camp \_\_\_\_\_ for quite a while?

A: Yeah, yeah. 'Til... 'til beginning '43, 'til they changed it to concentration camp. You see, all them camps where I was, they were branches of Gross Rosen. I don't know if you heard...you heard of Gross Rosen. All them camps that I was, they were branches from Gross Rosen. And it started Anna...Annaberg. And they give all them...they belong to Gross-Rosen. That was the main camp, you see; and...and we were in them little camps because we were on the autobahn, you see. So we worked on the autobahn. And that's why we ... And later, when they couldn't work no more because the Russians closed in, so they took us in

there to the other camp, and got us away from there.

Q: You said in '43 that things changed. What camp were you in then?

A: In '43, I was in Markstädt. Then they came and they took us to Fünfteichen.<sup>12</sup> And there where they took us...you see, 'til then we were wearing uh civil clothes, you know. And then they took the old clothes; we had to take off, and they gave us them stripey clothes. Took us--that was not far away from Markstädt--they took us in this camp. And that was already you know, electric wires. Them other camps were just, you know, the barbed wire. Over there, that was already the barbed wire with electric wires on it, you see. You couldn't get close to it. You'd just touch it and that was... And many people did commit. They jumped and they throw themselves on there, because they couldn't take it. I mean, it wasn't things... They'd throw themselves on the wires just to get it over with, you see. But I just don't know. Now I'm just thinking... I mean, I don't know how I did go through it. Was a lot of them dead. A lot of them dead.

Q: Can you tell me about a day, a typical day at Fünfteichen, when it changed? Tell me about a typical day in the camp.

A: Even day and the year and so. That is hard. I know it was in the winter time. It could be either January or February could it be, when they took us from Markstädt to Fünfteichen there.

Q: What did you do in the morning in Fünfteichen when you got up?

A: In the morning? Went to work. Went to the same spot. You know... I mean, this...there we worked in the ammunition factories over then when they started Fünfteichen. We worked in ammunition factories there. So we got up in the morning, dressed, and out; and marched a few miles. I mean, to the work, you know. So...and then we were working. There were some offices, too, where people were working. So at lunch time, you see, you had a half an hour rest, you see. So right then we worked in the office around. Some time people will throw out the piece of a sandwich, you know. That's all. And this what we do...did in...in Fünfteichen, when it changed. And we were guarded; I mean, stricter than...than in the work camp, you see. And there was Hell started. Real Hell...real Hell started in the concentration camp. For any little thing, they took you right and...you know, and either they made a transport they sent to Auschwitz. You know, they picked out weak ones; you see, the weak what couldn't do the...produce the work like they wanted, you know. They took them all, you know, and either send them off or just made them disappear... See my wife. She has more; because she was in Auschwitz, you see. She has more to tell about it than me ... Doesn't sound so bad, but went through it. That was real bad.

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<sup>12</sup> This took place 23 Mar 1944.

Q: Can you tell me what was working, what did you do in the ammunition factory?

A: Uh, the I was in the things where we were concrete work, concrete you see. We were building like concrete blocks, all kinds of concrete--cement, you know. Was doing this over there.

Q: And what were working conditions like in the factory? What was it like in the factory?

A: Not...not in the factory. I was outside, you know, making all the concrete work, you know. And some people working inside, you see; but I was outside always. You know, first on the autobahn and building on the bridges; and then I was in the same...with the same company. See, this company was just uh mason... I mean...yeah, mason, you would say. Know concrete. And so they were just doing like building the walls, you know. Building the building. Mixing the things. So...

Q: When you went to Pölit, you said...

A: Pölit.

Q: ...Pölit, you said things were very bad there.

A: Over there, yeah. Very bad. You see, like I said, when they were bombing in the daytime they knocked them plants, them factories out. In the daytime, they took us out, you know, and worked on them to re...rebuild. I mean, to replace it, to rebuild it. Because they were desperate. They needed the...whatever they fabricated there, you see, they needed all this. But the next night, the same thing happened, you see. And that was going on and off, on and off, 'til they couldn't do it no more. Couldn't do nothing. So they took and shipped us out, because they've seen the Russians already closed in on them, you see. So they took us away and shipped us to Pölit. Was it Pölit? Let me think. I mean, from... This was Pölit. Yeah, from Pölit they...we went. Now I'm already confused.

Q: That's OK. (Pause)

A: Oh, yeah. We went to Wolfsberg there. Yeah. And Wolfsberg we didn't stay long either, and we didn't do much work over there. The same what we did there was mountains, you know. And there they were trying to make the bunk...bunkers for the planes there too, you see. So that what we were doing was digging...digging, you know, for them planes there. And the same thing we did in Barth. The same. Because, see, was going already to the end of war. And that's all they... with them planes, trying to hide them, you see. Because they were bombing. The Americans came in; and they were day and night, day and night. They didn't know where to go, the Germans, you see. So it was going to the end.

Q: What did you do? What did the prisoners do while they were bombing?

A: Oh, when they bombing, they went in the things. We had them...to lay down in them... How do you call them?

Q: Bunkers?

A: Not really bunkers. It was open on top. It's just ditches, you know.

Q: Trenches.

A: Trenches, right. So they made us all ran out, and... But they knew where they were throwing the bombs, you see. They hardly ever hit the camp. Never hit the camp, because they knew where the camps are. So they're only hit, you see... Like we were in the camp on them factories there, wasn't too far away. They knocked them factories out; but it didn't touch it, nothing \_\_\_\_\_ things. That's all we seen is just lit up. The camp was lit up, you know. So they never touched them.

Q: How did you get to Bergen-Belsen?

A: With a train. With a train, yeah. They took us from the... from Wolfsberg.

Q: A cattle car, or passenger train?

A: Yeah, yeah. That's the only thing. Passenger car, nobody's seen this. Didn't know what it was. (Laughter) In the cattle things.

Q: Can you tell me what you saw when you got off the cattle car at Bergen-Belsen? What was the first things that happened to you?

A: I wish I wouldn't see it. I've seen...we've got...I've seen that, you know, people when they're weak they take you to the... No. When you sick, where you taken? It's not a hospital, but in the...

Q: A krankenbau? A sick bay?

A: Yeah, sick...sick bay. Yeah. You seen people walk, barely walking...walking in. And in the other door, they took him, wheeled him out in the wheelbar...wheelbarrow. And dumped him on the mountain. There was a mountain of people laying; and that was going on all day. All day. Because you knew when you went in there, you didn't come out. They wheel you out. In luck, you didn't stay there too long. Just a few days. Because it was impossible to... This, then they took us, took us to Barth on the train again.

Q: Let's go back to Belsen. What else did you see in Belsen?

A: That's all you seen over there, is mountain of dead and nothing else. Because there they

didn't...we didn't go out to work there. We were just waiting for a transport to...we were just a transit over there, you see. So we didn't, didn't see much except mountain of dead and nothing else. And you didn't even want to stick your head nowhere, because it might have been the wrong place. So just kept your head in there. Because we knew that we just in transfer, you see. So I seen enough. Didn't want to see no more. (Pause)

Q: Can you tell me anything more? You've told me from the labor camps about some of the beatings you took. Can you tell me any other incidents in any of those camps, things that happened to you?

A: Yeah, it's ...(pause)... I told you about the ce...cement truck, but...I went out... (pause) Yeah. One time, you know...when we worked on the autobahn, we worked in the fields, you know. So one time, I got...we went through a potato field, you see. We...so I got me some few potatoes, you know, take in to the camp. And I got caught with this. So you know what you got. Went in. They took me in the room, you know; and I had to bend over and they gave me twenty-five. And you had to count yourself. And if you missed you had to start over. And you missed again. You had to start over. So lucky, I just missed one time. So... just for a few raw potatoes I brought in there. (Pause)

Q: Did you have friends in the camp?

A: Uh, yeah. I mean, but you see there was everybody for himself. Because nobody could help you. Everybody got the same food, you know. Everybody got the same...this little soup, you know, and this piece of bread. So nobody could help you. See, everybody was trying just to pass by the day, you know, and try to survive. Because actually nobody of us were thinking that we're going...that we're going to survive. It's just another day, you see. That's all we were thinking. Just another day. Another day. Because we weren't thinking that we survive; but when it got to around 1944, then when we've seen that the Russians closing in, then we were hoping we have a chance if...if we're still alive. Because of we've seen...they took us, and then they told us, "We're going to kill you even if you loose the war, or we win the war. We're going to kill you all, anyway." You see. So there you are. You knew it. But everyday it counted, and you survived, you see. So ... (pause)

Q: By the time you got to Barth-am-der-Ostsee...

A: Yeah.

Q: ...it was towards the end of the war.

A: Right. Was a short time we were there, yeah.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit more about what conditions were? About what you did?

A: Well, in there, what kind of work? Yeah. We were building the bunkers on the airfield, you

know, for the airplanes. And there we stayed...not in barracks, but it was military housing before, you see. So we stayed about four people in a little room, you know. So it wasn't... I mean, the housing wasn't so bad. But, fish. They give us fish every day. \_\_\_\_\_. (Laughter) So...and then one day, they came and they gave everybody a towel and a piece of soap. And everybody said now goodbye; because we knew if they send you to take a shower... 'Cause it looked too good to give you a towel and a piece of soap. In all them five years, I've never seen a towel and a piece of soap. So we looked at each other, and said everybody was scared to go first. But you had. So it was really to go and take a shower. It was already the last few days. They were already slacking down, you know. So, and then alar...I mean, the alarm sound. Everybody out. And gave us a little loaf of bread, little jelly and start walking. We walked a way, I don't think it was a mile, and this whole thing was up. They already bombed it right behind us. So...and we kept walking and walking. Three days, until we got to the end of the road.

Q: Tell me about liberation? Who liberated you?

A: The Russians. So they were nice. They were nice. They seen...seen how we looked. They knew where we come from. So they were nice. They took us, you know, around, so we can get some food to eat, and we kept walking. Just walking. We didn't know where we were going. Was five of us were together. One was from mine hometown, one boy. And three from somewhere else. So we held together. We kept walking. We didn't know where we were...we go. But we said, "Let's go towards Poland to go back home." OK. So on the road, we seen some Germans coming on with some bicycles. So we took the bicycles from them. And we start bicycling, you know, going towards... And then we hitch-hiked, you know, 'til we got to the border Poland. And I've seen some Jewish boy coming back. And I say, "What happened?" They say, "The Poles trying to take on to the Army." I say, "Oh, no. I never liked them before, and I don't like them now. So I'm staying right here where I am." Stayed in Germany. Didn't...didn't go back to Poland. Because I knew my whole family is gone, so I didn't have nothing to look for over there. So...and I wasn't ready to go to the Polish Army after the concentration camp. (Laughter) So I just stayed there in Germany; and then I stayed in a little town there in Germany, not far from one of them camps--Pölitz--what I was. So I went over there a few times to look at it after. And then I went to Berlin, met my wife.

Q: Tell us about that. How did that happen? How did you get to go to Berlin?

A: To Berlin? Because Berlin was the big city and I was young, you know. So I went over there, you know; and through somebody, I stayed with some people there in Berlin. And in the same house, two sisters were living there. They were in the concentration camp, too. So we start talking. So...and they knew, they were think... I think they knew my wife, that she was... And they introduced me to her. Again, so that...so we went together and then we got married. We had one child. Born in 1949. I mean, we were in East Germany; and from East Germany you couldn't go nowhere out to other country, except Israel. You see, I couldn't get no visa to America. None of the western countries. Only to Israel I could. So we went to Israel. But the climate wasn't good for my wife. She was sick all the time. So we had to look

for a way out. It was kind of hard, but we got out. We went to Switzerland. From Switzerland, we went through the border, you know, to Germany...back to Germany. And then I find out my cousin is here in America. And he sent me the visa. And in '55 I came here, to Atlanta. And there I am since.

Q: Is there anything more you want to tell us about the camps or about your experiences?

A: I think the most...the main thing is, you see another beating, another beating... It's...it's aren't things too much, all things. If you have to count all them beatings... I mean, it's like one time I felt my foot right here underneath had a sore; and it had gotten to be bigger and bigger. It had gotten so big I could put my finger in there. And I were limping. I couldn't walk; but I was scared to go to the doctor. So because I knew when I go... if you go in there, they make you disabled. And then you're disabled for good, you see. So I just held on, you know, to some friends when we went to work. You know, walking. Did the best I could. I mean, trying to hold on. And then it just start healing, so it was alright. Just luck, I don't know. It's just sheer luck. Like I say, some people got nine lives, and I'm the one of them. Yeah.

Q: You've described a lot of beatings.

A: Oh, yeah. I mean, there wasn't one came out without. I mean, for any little thing. If you moved your head wrong, if you turned wrong, you know, they went over. Because they walked around with billy-clubs. You see, they enjoyed it. And sometime if you did something wrong, they took you in the washroom--two of them. And the water were running; and they were beating on you 'til they carry you out. Lucky it didn't happen this incident to me. Because when they took you in the...in the washroom, you know, to beat, then that was it. They enjoyed it. So it's...it's... I don't know. I look back, I myself I couldn't believe that I am out after all this. (Pause)

Q: By the time you got to Belsen, you had been through an awful lot.

A: Oh, yeah. Belsen was already close...close to the end, you see. It was close to the end of Belsen. I mean, there... I mean, we couldn't...couldn't stay any longer, just a few days. Because there was an extermination lager \_\_\_\_ camp. Because it's all...when you looked around, that's all you seen. Mountains of things; and bulldozers, you know, digging and just pushed them in. That's all you've seen over there, you see. Because they couldn't ship to Auschwitz, because Auschwitz was already was going twenty-four hours a day. You know, the ovens were burning twenty-four hours a day. So whatever they could, they burned. But the others, they buried, you know.

Q: Did you go through a selection when you arrived at Belsen?

A: In Bel...no. No, no. This whole group we came, they just put in one thing. Just 'cause we were supposed to be shipped out, you know. So after few days, they shipped. (Pause) Because I don't think, I'm not sure but I don't even think that in Belsen they were working.

There was just working in the camp, you know. People were put there.

Q: What else do you want to tell us about the camps?

A: I think I told all I could. Main...main...main things. And so...it's rough, rough, and rough. That's all. Because then...because every time when they shipped a transport from one camp to the other, so many they shipped was always just... Arrived less and less from every transport, you know. Because right away, they picked out...you know, if they see you weak, you couldn't work. And so they just put them in the side. Since they always picked out the most looked a little healthy, you know, able to work. And so they picked them out and put them to work; and the one who couldn't work, was no use for them. (Pause)

Q: When you were in the labor camps, sub-camps, did you know what was going on at Gross Rosen?

A: We heard. We heard, you see. We heard; because always came in some people from one camp to the other, you know. So we heard what was going on in the war. We knew everything from the...from Auschwitz, from Dachau. We heard; because they switched around, you know. They took from one camp, shift over here; you know, from here over there. So we knew everything. I mean, we didn't hear no news or no papers we had; but from the people coming in, you know, we...we heard all the things what was going on. That's the only thing we knew.

Q: At the end, when you left your last camp and you started on the march...

A: Yeah.

Q: You were marching for how long?

A: Three days.

Q: Three days.

A: Three days. The third day, in the afternoon, the... I mean, the third day we seen already some of them SS went in the woods, you know. We could see they throwing their clothes off, putting some civilian clothes on. So we just ...late in the afternoon, we just disappeared then in the woods. Because we already seen what was going on, that they disappearing; so we was afraid if we not going to run and hide that they...some of them might kill us, you know, for evidence. Not to leave them evidence. So...but we went in; and at night it happened. In the morning, we had the Russians there. Because it...that was the only thing they would tell us. They were telling us all the time, "No matter we win or loose, we kill you all. And none of you will be alive." This...this...this song you heard every day from them. Yeah, but it changed.



Q: So...thank you very much.

A: You're welcome.