

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with David Pollack  
February 6, 1990  
RG-50.030\*0182**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with David Pollack, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on February 6, 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 interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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.

## **DAVID POLLACK**

### **February 6, 1990**

Q: Could you tell me your name please?

A: My name is David Pollack.

Q: And where and when were you born?

A: In Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1922.

Q: Tell me something about your parents and the town in which you grew up please.

A: My father came to Canada in 1913 from Russia. He was an indentured worker. Someone paid his fare across and he worked off this fee and then had a few hundred dollars and asked the man who had brought him over to find a place in Canada where with \$300 he could buy a business building, room overhead where he could live and enough money left: over to bring in his fiancée. The only place in Canada where that would qualify was a little village called Kenistino (ph), Saskatchewan, a village of 400 people then and I think 400 people now, where there happened to be a store with a room overhead and the whole thing including my mother's air fare, air fare - sea fare, was less than \$300. So my brother and sister and I were born and brought up in this little hamlet in northern Saskatchewan.

Q: What was it like growing up in that town?

A: It was very healthy. It was a simple childhood. You, you were concerned with the weather and wheat and trying to, my father trying to sell the merchandise that in his little tiny store. Most of it wasn't actually sold. Most of it was bartered because money was rare in the 30's when I remember the store. The farmers would bring in butter and eggs and cheese and furs and and roots so they would dig up herbs. I remember one called seneca root (ph) which you could make into some kind of over-the counter drug, and my father would look at these things and say they're worth such and so and then that person would take the groceries and my father would send these things then on to Prince Albert which was then a city we would call it of five thousand, and so the family survived and my brother and I were sent to University of Saskatchewan and my sister when she graduated from grade 12 was sent to New York to my mother's sister so that she could marry a nice Jewish boy, of which there were none in Kenistino. We were the only Jewish family there.

Q: What was it like to be the only Jewish family?

A: Since I didn't, since I didn't know anything else it seemed perfectly normal. Everybody was the only family there the only Ukrainian, the only Slavic, the only whatever. People had to get along. There was no fire system. There was no police system. There was a municipal doctor, which meant he had an enormous territory to travel so it wasn't wise to have, to revive old world animosities of religion, race, color or creed. People of course couldn't

eliminate their prejudices, but everyone tried to get along, and so while my father would tell me you are Jewish and you must behave and not do things that will not be right, I didn't really know what that meant until I left Kenistino at age 17 to go to the University of Saskatchewan, which was in a city called Saskatoon, and I really have not encountered anti-Semitism in my life. I can't say I've never because it's impossible not to encounter, but it's been minimal, perhaps because I don't think in those terms. I guess because of my childhood, so I knew I was Jewish but I didn't really know what that meant and it didn't trouble me. And certainly doesn't trouble me today.

01:04

Q: You went to University. Was that: a radical change for you?

A: Yes. It was a big change because this little village, Kenistino, had minimal infrastructure. It had no running water. It had outdoor outhouses and in twenty below and thirty below and forty below, the typical prairie winters, something that I'm glad I don't have to do to this day. Electricity came into Kenistino when I was in junior high. Before that we studied with coal oil lamps and we, with little felt wicks, and there were no such a thing as television of course. The radios were poor. We had no newspaper. So University was an amazing change as the studies let alone the city of Saskatoon was a major change for me. So I spent two years there and then I enlisted at age 19, just going on 20, because everybody was doing that and it was, as we now would call it, it was a good war and of course Hitler was something that the the Jewish people would talk about a lot in the prairies. I might just say a word about the Jewish community. Since Saskatchewan is a very large province, peopled, dotted with tiny hamlets and towns and villages, the Jewish people would meet once a year for the high holidays in one village or another, by some pre-arranged system and hold the services without a rabbi but with a local cantor. And they would pray and then they'd meet in the one Jewish woman's house

01:06:00

and they'd eat and the men would talk politics and talk about Zionism and play cards and go home. So although each village had one or perhaps two Jewish families, they retained a sense of being Jewish without having Cheders or anything. I was bar mitzvahed but it was rather odd. My father sent me to another village twenty-five miles away every Friday night to memorize my bar mitzvah ceremony. I didn't know what I was saying but I said it. My dad and mother cried copiously and everybody was happy and so there there was a sense of Jewishness but it was an arms-length sense.

Q: OK. You enlisted in the army when? In what year?

A: I enlisted in the Air Force in 1942. I was then 20. I enlisted when I was 19 but I didn't actually enter until I was 20. And I spent the first year and a half in Canada. I enlisted in Air Crew but I washed out because I wore glasses and my coordination with a helmet on wasn't

good, and at that time in the early 40's, if you enlisted in Air Crew and then couldn't make it for reasons of of such a nature, you were given the first option to enter this new and secret world of radar. The reason was that you could advance more rapidly and it was a little bit more exciting than being ground crew and just repairing air planes and doing ground duties. So I was allowed, I was offered the course in basic radar and I liked it very much. My mind works along lines of mathematics and I was commissioned after my eight months of of study and sent to an island off the west coast of Canada at the southern point of the Queen Charlottes. There's there's an island about the size of a city block on which the Canadian's authority, military authorities, had put a radar station. From Alaska to Boca (ph), California, the Canadians and Americans had interlocking circles such that the Japanese ships, submarines, and aircraft, if they came towards the coast, would be spotted by this radar system.

01:08:20

And the one I was sent to was part of this interlocking grid of radar networks. And I was the junior of two officers. I was what is called a pilot officer. It's equivalent in the Army to 2nd Lieutenant, and the commanding officer who was a flying officer of 1st Lieutenant's rank, and I were, constructed and put into operation this radar system. We had 40 young Canadians absolutely isolated from civilization in a rock in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. No women, no movies, no liquor, no nothing. Just a radar station. It wasn't, it wasn't exactly what I thought a war would be. Nothing every happened. The Japanese didn't come so it was boring and yet we we were supposed to keep these 40 young men up to operational efficiency at all times, when their thoughts were on other things -wine, women and song - I know because I had to, I had to what is the word - read their mail to make sure that they didn't pass on any secrets, but they didn't talk about radar. They talked about other more basic things. Anyhow, after six months I thought you know this is ridiculous and I volunteered to go overseas and so I arrived overseas and spent about a year in England before D Day. My work in England was mostly on radar-controlled anti-aircraft. We were trying to shoot down the buzz bombs or the V-1 bombs by radar and also of course when the German bombers would come over. And also I spent six months in the North

01:10

Sea out of Yarmouth on what were called HSL's - high speed launches. The RAF and the American Air Force, the Canadians were always part of the RAF or attached to the RAF, would go out to bomb in the morning and afternoon and come back and there would be these fights over the North Sea and when one of our air craft was shot down, if someone in our bomber could get a fix, a coordinational fix back to the intelligence headquarters in London, that person would look on a big map and see where we were anchored in our launches, and then send a a message by radio - there's an aircraft down or going down in your quadrant. try and find it. And if it was daylight the skipper with his binoculars would would go towards where he thought the bomber might be. If it became dusk and we were getting close then it would be my job to turn on the radar which had a very high frequency low scan so that we

could we could see into the water's edge and the job was to find these aircraft and pick up the pilots which were very rare vintage because they were very rare commodity. They were being shot down so quickly by the Luftwaffe (ph). So for about a year I was in England doing these things on the land with buzz bombs, shooting down buzz bombs, or on the sea trying to find aircraft and and pilots in their lifeboats with my radar. And that was my job until D Day when - dates are a little fuzzy now in my mind - but I would say perhaps a week or ten days after D Day, I was asked, or not asked, I was told to go across the channel with a mobile radar unit to set up a mobile transmitting station as close as possible to Berlin. The reasoning was as follows. Radar was very primitive 45 years ago. Instead of having chips and the little tiny things we have today, they had huge what used to call them bottles, big tubes, glass tubes, and great big power packs. I mean you'd need a room this size to power the transmitters in those days because they were so primitive. So inefficient. That being the case the closer the radar unit was to the aircraft that they were sending their impulses to the more accurate they'd be. I guess I should just explain that word impulse.

Q: That's OK. I mean here we ...

A: Well but it might explain what I was doing. The Americans were bombing Germany by daylight with a bombsight called Norden (ph). You actually looked down and the bombardier controlled the airplane in the run in over the target. You looked at the target and twiddled knobs and you controlled the projectory of the airplane. So the Americans would bomb Germany in daytime. The British and the Canadian and the Polish attached and the

01:14:

Australians and the New Zealanders attached to the RAF bombed at night. And the way they could see see in quote marks the target was as follows. The heavy bombers the Blenheims (ph) and the Wellingtons the big bombers carrying the bombs would go out in units of I think it was ten or twenty. And in between waves of the heavy bombers would one or two aircraft that were called mosquitoes. They were made out of plywood and they flew at thirty thousand feet at three hundred miles an hour. They had no bombs. They had a radar set that you could see and hear and from the ground we would control that navigator in the mosquito such that when he came Over for example the suburb of Berlin, we'd press a button, knowing~ where he was on our screen on the ground in England. He could hear and see what the signals we were, the impulses we were sending to him, and the bomb was dropped - not a bomb - a thermite (ph) bomb was dropped from the mosquito on a parachute, and that~ thermite bomb was brilliant, would, would stop "x" thousand feet above the ground and remain suspended in the air and then five minutes later this wave of ten or twenty bombers would come over and bomb the thermite flare. So you had had what was called twenty-four hour service. The Americans bombing in day, the British bombing at night, and the radar controlling the British night bombing. And the farther you were from the aircraft that you were sending the impulses to, the weaker were the impulses and the more likely you'd get distortions on the screen or in the headset. So that's why they sent our mobile teams across the channel after D-Day to get closer and closer to Berlin so that we could guide the night

bombers from England on to Berlin while the Russians were coming in from the other side. So I was sent with this mobile radar unit. I think we were twenty or thirty or forty people, with the with the radar equipment, and we set course towards Berlin - I don't remember the cities. I remember Aachen - A - A - C - H - E - N. I remember Dueren (ph). I remember Weimar and I certainly remember Mons (ph) in Belgium where we bivouacked. And we were on our way to I don't know where, when an American came towards us on a motor cycle, an MP I 10 guess, and I was in the lead jeep with my flight sergeant. I was all of 23 then. 1945. And I guess my sergeant was the same age, and this American comes up side and he said you guys ever seen a concentration camp? I had heard the phrase, but I thought being rather ideologically simplistic - I was from the prairies. I had had two years at University and then I was in the service, so I really hadn't thought about such things. I'd read whatever newspapers I was given, but I thought that they were our propaganda system and their propaganda system, and we had stories about camps and tortures and so forth, but I hadn't really given much thought. I said to the sergeant, let's see what he means by this phrase. And the American said its "x" kilometers down the road. It's called Buchenwald. And that's how I came to enter Buchenwald I think a day or half, a day or two days after it was liberated by, if my memory's correct, the American 3rd Army, I think. But that's how I came to Buchenwald.

Q: Tell me your impressions as you walked through the gates? What did you see?

A: Well, there were inmates milling around. There were some soldiers. The inmates, there was a triage system under way. Those who clearly were beyond any hope, or those who were dead or those who were clearly beyond any hope, were, were in one part of the camp. Those that seemed quite in decent health, in good health, were being sent out as quickly as they could get trucks to take them out And in the remainder were, were there with doctors coming in 1:0 to look at them and see what they could do. I saw the piles of, of dead bodies. They were stacked in the way you stack beer bottles in the in the refrigerator. You know, you put the head and then the bottom of the bottle, and then the front of the bottle and the rear of the bottle so that you can, they'll stack without rolling over. They were stacked with legs spread apart and heads put in so that you could get bodies, a large number of bodies in a pile. There was a furnace with one of the doors open and the remains of a body in it. There were scaffolding and piles of bones and of course the inmates themselves. I went into one building where a number of men were lying on the ground, on the floor of this building, which was very dirty with excrement. I was then smoking and I had this sweet cappel (ph) cigarettes which was a British cigarette in hard paper cover with silver foil, and I was smoking cigarette after cigarette because the smell was, the stench was very strong, and one of the inmates who was lying on the ground signaled for ;I cigarette and I had three left and I sort of tossed them and I didn't want to get too close because I didn't know about typhus or I, I didn't know about the medical side of things, and they took out the three cigarettes and divided them and then they began to have a little jostling for the silver foil. I guess it represented something of value after years of no value. It was a very, very disturbing sight to, to see them wanting this little piece of paper just because it seemed to have some value, monetary value Anyhow they would make V signs to us, and they smiled, those who had strength. They, I took photographs. I took a number of photographs, which I've given

to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, of the furnace, of the scaffolding where they would hang people, of the bones, of the people stacked on the ground and being carted away in some kind of truck or horse-driven carriage. I don't remember which. I remember that the men's thighs were so thin that you could almost put~ my hand around it, it was just bone there. The flesh had literally melted away. You could put your hand around the tops of their arms. Their faces were this wax, this yellow waxy face. The skin was drawn so tightly around the skulls that they almost just looked like, like skulls with tissue paper around them. It was a very shocking sight. particularly my sergeant threw up. I didn't throw up. I guess it was because it came as such an amazing blow you might say. I, I repeat I was ideologically very simplistic. I had never thought about such things happening. They hadn't entered my mind in Saskatchewan and in the early years of the my war time activity which were very occupied with technical problems and then drinking beer and going out with women. I didn't I didn't think about ideology and philosophies of government and the racial thesis and things like that. So it was very, it was like somebody had struck me, but I, I, I wasn't as physically upset as my driver who wasn't Jewish and I guess it wasn't until the next day when the enormity of the thing came to me. I had a little diary that periodically I'd enter things, and I entered a couple of pages, which I think I've also given to the Memorial li...library. But clearly it was a very mammoth and, and disturbing event to a young, young kid. A young greenhorn you might say. Greenhorn for that kind of, of thing.

Q: What did you do in the camp?

A: Well, I, I had to go on. I wasn't a flea agent. I had my orders to be at such and such a point at such and such a time, but I wanted to do something and since I only spoke English I found a prisoner who spoke many languages and I said in the RCAF, Royal Canadian Air Force, attached to the RAF, the British Royal Air Force, officers have the right to send a little blue V mail, air gram letters, and when we sent them they'd go by air to where ever. Enlisted men might go by air or might not go by air depending upon space, so that was a privilege that British officers had. So I said to this inmate who spoke many languages, look, I can't remain here long, and yet I'd like to do something. If you will find some prisoners, some inmates who have friends or relatives around the world, if you will give me the inmate's name and his friend or relative's name and address, I'll send a little one paragraph, two sentence letter saying I have seen your friend or relative. He will soon be at a displaced persons camp in such and such. Send him money or passports or food or clothing as soon as possible. That inmate lined up a number of people. I don't know how many because I did this twice, once at Buchenwald and once a week later at a DP camp that I subsequently passed. And I would say I wrote between one and two dozen letters -I'm not sure on the number all over the world, to Turkey, to what was then Palestine, now Israel, to England, several to the United States, one to Canada which I'll mention in a moment, simply saying I have seen your friend or relative names so forth. Send help to him care of DP camp - I've forgotten the name of the DP camp where I was told they would go - it was in Belgium as quickly as possible. And then in each case I put, my address is Flying Officer D. H. Pollack, C29272 - that was my number - RCAF overseas. You can reach me at that address. I would be interested in knowing whether you have reached your friend or relative. So the whole letter was one paragraph with a little footnote. And away those letters went. And two weeks later some more went from this DP camp that I visited. Some years later - I kept the names and addresses of some of them, and 25



years later I came across a folder with these, with some of them - oh no, I think, I'm sorry - my mind now is getting clear - some of them replied to me. And I kept those in a folder. That's it. And they simply said in varying degrees of, of excitement I received your note. I did contact my friend or relative. Thank you very much. In varying degrees of, of, of enthusiasm and warmth and emotion. And I didn't do any...you know, what would one do. I, I did what I could and I and I didn't I didn't want to intrude on people's lives, but twenty-five years later I came across this folder and decided to write to two or three of them to say I've just found your letter to me of 1945. It's now 1960 whatever, '63, '68. I'm curious to know whether the person that you told ME you had located is doing all right. Something like that. And I got two or three very fascinating letters. One if you'd like I'll tell you about. Evidently one of the persons, who couldn't speak English, said I have a relative in Windsor, Ontario, but I don't know his or her address. His name was Eisenberg (ph), I now find. I wrote to the Chief of Police in Windsor, Ontario, saying I have met a prisoner in whether it was Buchenwald or the DP camp I've forgotten. He or she, he needs help immediately and doesn't know his relative's address. Could you try to locate a mister, I think it was Hiam Eisenberg (ph). The constable or the Mounties, I don't know who, put a little note in the Windsor newspaper and through that newspaper note, they located the relative who got in touch with Mr. Eisenberg in Europe and they wrote to me from Windsor saying thank you. We've, we've seen your letter from the Chief Constable of Windsor and we have made contact and bless you and, and that was that. Many years later I decided to write and see whether Mr. Eisenberg was still in Windsor and lo and behold, he replied, saying I have never forgotten you because first of all you were an Ally, secondly you were an officer, thirdly you were Jewish, and for me this was, this was momentous. And I'm now in Windsor and I opened a little air conditioning store and I married in Europe and I have three Canadian children and we're doing well and we're very happy. When the Holocaust Memorial Museum found out about the photographs that I had taken at Buchenwald, they asked if I had other mementoes additional to the photographs. And I took out these letters and sent them; including Mr. Eisenberg's and then I thought I should tell him I've done this, because after all it was a letter to me. He said of course you can send them to the Museum. Then he wrote me a second letter, which I've also given to the Museum saying I must tell you of an odd occurrence in Buchenwald he said. I was handy with...I was working in a some kind of foundry. My number was, and he mentions his six digit number in the letter, but he said when I forged the new one I put the letter P, capital P, in front of it because I had noticed that prisoners who had a P in front of their number were less likely to be killed than those who didn't. He said I wasn't killed, and to this day I think Lt had to do with the letter P which I think meant either political or Polish. I received that letter, sent it on to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, and ten days ago driving from Ottawa to Washington, my wife and I get these reading tapes - you put them in your car and a book is read to you - and this particular book was about a woman who had been in Auschwitz, Dachau and a third concentration camp. And she mentioned the letter P as meaning political or Polish and being sort of a talisman (ph) so what Eisenberg had suspected as a thesis in fact was correct and so his life presumably was changed by this, this quirk of fate. I called the Holocaust Memorial Museum to say I was sending them this fascinating letter and suggested that they write to Mr. Eisenberg to get that little ID with the letter P on it. On such minuscule quirks one's life depends. It's really sort of mind boggling. (Pause) Well, I have received letters from people in London and Turkey and in Israel. I have a beautiful letter from someone in Israel - two, two letters from what is now Israel, one from New Jersey,

one from the Bronx. Several from England. And I've kept them. And I think they're now all in the custody of the Museum and that was the little contribution that a, that a young kid was able to make to, to this Holocaust.

Q: Can you tell me about the letter from Israel?

A: I wonder if I could read it. I have it here. it really is a touching letter. (Sure) it goes into much more detail than, than Mr. Eisenberg's about broader issues. I, I hope I can locate it. , I know I have it here and it is very (pause) it is very graphic. Dear Mr. Pollack. This is from Hiam Grossman (ph), 48 Street, Tel Aviv. Dear Mr. Pollack. I thank you very much indeed for your kind letter of July 31, and I hasten to answer it as I was extremely pleased lo hear from you again. I had written him in the late 50's. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Sarah , was saved from Nazi captivation after she had been thrown into the extermination railway whence the American liberators extracted her. In September '45 she arrived in Israel and thanks to good medical care and substantial nourishment, she slowly recovered from those terrible impressions. By chance I learned of the address of her son and his family whom my sister-in-law met unexpectedly for the first time at the Palestine Office in Paris. Together they went to Israel where they are now living in Haifa. The son is a government official and his nice little daughter Ruth is now seven and goes to school, So Ruth now is 25 years, later, so she's in her mid-30's. She is the only member of the family upon whom the dreadful past did not leave any trace. My sister-in-law, despite her unusual vitality and her strong desire to enjoy life, cannot forget the past and reconcile herself to the loss of her dear ones. Naturally we try hard to make the last years of her life pleasant and we actually often wonder where these people found the physical and the emotional strength to survive the sufferings they have had to undergo. Obviously only the help of people like yourself has encouraged them to go on and to have faith in the future. It is said in the Torah, in quote marks, "Anyone who saves a single soul, has saved the world as a whole." And you may be justly proud to be one of those. I am very glad that you have afforded me this opportunity of thanking you from the bottom of my heart in my own name and in the name of my entire family for all you have done to save my sister-in-law's life to whom I am forwarding this letter, your letter, so that she can write to you also. I did not get a letter from her. I was glad to learn that you got married in the meantime and I am wishing you and Mrs. Pollack much luck and happiness. It would be extremely nice to meet you both personally. You probably know that our small country attracts many visitors from all four corners of the globe and perhaps you will also consider once to spend a short leave here. Wouldn't that have beer interesting? It is needless to say we would be only too pleased to offer you hospitality. I hope to hear from you again. For us the war was not terminated when the 2nd World War ended and my own grandson who was seventeen was among the first victims of the war of liberation. But we feel that the sacrifices were not in vain, as after 2000 years of dispersal, we gained our homeland. It is our hope that our children will be granted a better world than this of today. Who would have believed in 1945 that today the Germans are again allowed to sit in the family of nations as among equals. With the very best wishes and greetings for yourself and Mrs. Pollack, I am very truly yours, Hiam Grossman. I mean this is an example of another letter which was if have it here these are copies - that that the originals here all gone to, to your library, to your Museum but one here - no I don't have it. From, from (pause) Mrs. Cutler in, in the United States, but I, I

don't have it handy. Oh, oh here is the 1945 letter, August, so that's, that's the first one - that the next on~ was some :20 twenty years later. Dear Mr. Pollack. Words fail] me to thank you for your very kind letter of 17th just received. In the meantime we have received several letters from my sister-in-law, Mrs. Sarah as well as a cable giving us her address as quote, "Displaced Persons Center, M , Belgium," dated 19 July '45, but as it was impossible to communicate with her at the above address, we sent her a cable to the quote "Palestine Office" unquote, in Brussels. So that's, that's their reply to my air gram. (Pause) Well, this is an illustration.

Q: What happened, this communication obviously this has gone on for all these many years. Let us go back a little and ask what happened to Flying Officer Pollack at the end of the war?

A: Well, I came back from the service in 1945 and finished my final work on a Bachelor. I had, had two years when I enlisted and I took another year and a half and got a bachelor's degree from the University of Saskatchewan, and then was given a scholarship to study at the University of Chicago in the United States where I took my Master's and all of my Ph.D. excepting the thesis, and then was offered a, a, a job with the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction Development here in Washington, and worked there for a couple of year; and then joined the United Nations Secretariat and had a thirty year career in Washington, in New York City, in Mexico City, in Santiago, Chile, and in Geneva. Then I came back thirty years later. I married when I got the U.N. job, had three children and on taking early retirement in 1980, returned to Ottawa, which was my wife's home, and I've been a professor at Carlton University in the School of International Affairs ever since.

Q: What effect has all of this had on you do you think? The experience in Buchenwald, certainly the correspondence afterwards.

A: Well, the initial effect was very powerful, very raw and very emotional to a young kid, but I think the effect on me, an odd way to put it is sort of been an intellectual one. I, all my career both in the United Nations and teaching has been on how do systems work. What are ideologies of political systems and economic systems and how do they, how do you make them work, and the fact that the Nazis were able to design a philosophy and make it work so efficiently, there was based on extermination and torture and hatred and killing and superiority and inferiority of, of, of racial theories, the, the, the intellectual concept has stayed with me - how, how horrible it is and how easy it is to evolve systems that have such a blasphemous ideology and can be so efficiently run. This has stayed with me, so remember that my childhood was not that of a Jewish person, that is to say we were the only Jewish family and while I knew I was Jewish I didn't feel it sort of in through my chicken soup that Jewish children in a in a Jewish community would feel. I knew I was Jewish but I didn't know anything whatnot. So that Buchenwald had this first effect which was very raw as I say and it upset me. It just physically upset me, but afterwards it made me just aware of the horrors of being able to design and implement systems based on, on such a concept of human life and immorality and fear and hatred and finally this, this is what stays with me that Buchenwald proved that you can do it. Do it well, from that point of view. As a matter of fact, not; don't I don't use such emotional words when I'm teaching, but I

do tell students in my first class in the sessions when I teach development, the word development has been my life. And I say you know I, I do remember one thing. When I was a kid your age I say to the students, I'm, I'm fascinated how easy it was even for the Allies to take young people and put them in the same uniform, same haircut, same kind of shoes, same tie, and get them in a disciplined way to destroy, not with these horrible overtones of Nazis, but you can bring young people together to be disciplined to destroy. It's not hard. It's not hard to teach people to enjoy cutting down a big tree. But how difficult it is to get people to join voluntarily to build and to develop it, to plant trees. That thought has stayed in my mind all my life. Just that the Nazis carried it to a blasphemous and obscene result, but it is so easy to take young people and have them do things together in a tightly organized way, even though they, they want to be different. This has always been a big , a big paradox in my mind that it's easy to do to do that, so Buchenwald just made me think very deeply about this paradox of civilization. How we can be Dr. Jekeyl's one moment and Mr. Hyde's the next. I may just on a somewhat lighter note, if you don't mind, I'd like to tell you the story of the camera that took the pictures that that I've been talking about. in my childhood in Saskatchewan, it was quite common for teenagers to be given a rifle because we shot game, small game We would shoot crows because they would eat wheat, and we'd shoot gophers and bush rabbits because they'd eat wheat. So kids had a rifle, and I had a 22, and nobody thought about it. But when I was commissioned and went overseas the British gave officers in Europe, when we went across the channel, gave officers side arms. We were gentlemen. We had side arms. And enlisted men, men had these big rifles, 303's. On our way to as close as we could get to Weimar before coming to this incident with Buchenwald, we spent a night at one of the many German guest houses on the edge of the, the Black Forest. And there were these little round buildings where people would rest their arms and shoot at I don't know what, game of some kind. So I asked my Flight Sergeant if after dinner he would come with me and help me regain my use of a of a powerful rifle. Because I said you know if there are Germans hiding in the which we were told there were. It was the end of the war and many Germans had taken refuge, refuge in this big forest, being fed and protected by the civilians. If there are Germans there and if for some reason they decide to shoot at us, my little side arm, my little popgun, wouldn't be worth anything at ten yards. So I'd just like to practice again with a, with your 303, which is a big rifle. I think it was a Lee Enfield (ph). So he said OK, and after dinner we went out. It was six o'clock or seven o'clock. It was good light, and I took this big rifle. They, they have a recoil so you push them up against your shoulder ad I put my elbow on the little window and he said you see that tree down there - I guess it was ten yards or whatever - see if you can hit it. So I aimed and pressed the trigger twice, and whap, whap this these bullets - I, I hit the tree, and I turned to him you know with great pride saying you know, that just shows you I hadn't forgotten. And out from behind the tree come two German officers, who had been hiding. They didn't know we were there. We didn't know they were there. But they thought that we'd seen them and were shooting at them, and came towards us and one pulls off a dagger or a little short sword and hands it to the Flight Sergeant saying something in German which we assume was don't, here, this is a bribe, and the other takes a little icon camera off his neck and hands it to me. Then we didn't know what to do with these two guys, so we phoned and an American military policeman came and took them away with great joy and I ended up with a camera. And I got film and I think it's sort of fitting retribution that the pictures that I took and which are now with your

Museum were taken with a liberated German camera although it was humorous in the, after the event, but this, this was the way I, I got a camera to take the pictures that I did.

Q: Is there anything you want to add, anything that comes back to you ?

A: No, I don't think so. I hear in Canada and in the United States people saying it never happened. The Holocaust never happened. The concentration camps never happened and I know they happened, because I was in them albeit only for a few hours. I'm coming to the latter stages of my career and life and I have been involved with development I think perhaps as, well come to think of it maybe as a psychological antidote to destruction. Maybe if you think about these things and you're in very formative years you've spent three or four years destroying things and seeing such things as Buchenwald, you, you want to build you know. You feel a compulsion to develop things, not to knock them down. The war and Buchenwald stay in my mind because I'm an economist and I work on the link between economic growth and social equilibrium and political stability and I wonder whether we can maintain a world in which these kinds of occurrences, the war and the the Buchenwalds, won't happen again. So I think that it's admirable that your Holocaust Memorial Library will be a place where young people and not young people can see and hear and read these things and not, not for not for emotional reasons. I've tried not to be emotional today. I, I haven't used my folders or my letters. As a matter of fact nobody even knew they existed until Hiam Bookbinder found out about them from, from one of the few people who ever saw them. So my reason for being so happy to give what I have and tell what I have to the Museum is not an emotional reason, to arouse emotions and passions but to have people think about these things so they won't happen again.

Q: Fair enough. Before we break I realize there's one question we didn't ask you, and that is can you go back a minute to the DP camp that you were in and do you, will you tell us what you remember about it?

A: It's less clear in my mind than Buchenwald, and I think it was briefer. What I would suggest is I do believe that Mr. Eisenberg was in the DP camp because when he wrote in one letter, he, he refers to me taking out my little book in the, and I think he said in the, in Belgium. So if you have a chance to write to him or interview him, probably he would be better equipped to tell you. I really don't remember. You know it's 1945 is what - good Lord, 45 years ago, and lots of other thoughts have come into my mind since then. But whoever was there it was clearly in reasonably good health, so that the thing wasn't so tragic. There wasn't so much pathos as there was in Buchenwald where the triage system was so stark; in the these three groups of people.

Q: Thank you.

A: You're welcome.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Well this was one of the furnaces. it was out of course, although I vaguely recollect seeing

some embers, but I may be wrong. There's a body or bones - more seen in one side than the other. I did all of this very hurriedly so I am afraid I don't remember more than that.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Well these piles of bones were in various parts o~ the camp. They were also piles of shoes and belts and things. Someone said they'd seen teeth. But I didn't see teeth, but I, I did see this pile of just bones.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

I don't know how many bodies are underneath what you are seeing there. I, I assume now that there must be three or four layers and I don't know whether that's a truck or s horse 28 pulled wagon, but they were just taking the bodies away obviously as quickly as they could so that there wouldn't be gangrene or whatever medical problems would last (ph), but they were just carted away as quickly as, as they could get Something to put them in. Just like as I said, piles of beer bottles.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

I don't know who put the wreath up. I assume it ~as some one from the U.S. Army. Could have been a civilian but I don't know. The thing that is so horrible is the emaciation of the legs and arms and waists and of course the fact the faces all begin to look exactly alike. They just all look like skulls. The skin is drawn so tightly there's no fat or flesh anymore. They're just, they're just gone. They just evaporated. They're just tossed there. And you'll see how they're piled on top of each other so as to get the maximum number in a short, in a minimum amount of space. A really macabre sight. I - and it was all over the place too. Were not just there but all over the place.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Well, it's 45 years ago and as I mentioned I was just 23 years old, but they all looked so pathetic. There were just piles and piles and even the clothing - you see the striped pajamas - that they didn't all have that typical garb. They all looked so sad. They were these, you couldn't, they weren't human beings. They, they didn't look like people. They just looked like stacks of waxy things, and they just were, just rows of them.

PAUSE - TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

I think I had in the photographs somewhere the - I should have mentioned this and I didn't - the lamp.

End of Tape #1

Conclusion of Interview