

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Jack Baum
December 16, 1995
RG-50.030*0424**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Jack Baum, conducted on December 16, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview 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.

JACK BAUM

December 16, 1995

Question: Jack, will you begin by telling me your name and when and where you were born?

Answer: My question is would you like to know the name now, when I changed the name or would you like to know my original name from Poland, from Warsaw?

Q. Why don't you tell me both.

A. My original name was -- as they called me in Poland, Yackob Svibaum, was it in Poland, as they called me. My Jewish name in Poland they call me Yankal Svibaum, Yankal in Jewish. I had a very large family in Warsaw.

Q. But your name today is?

A. My name today -- I changed my name. Why did I change my name? When I arrived in the United States, I arrived in Buffalo, New York. My mother-in-law made an agreement with her cousin, with furriers, they used to be furriers in Buffalo. She made an agreement they had to put down about \$5,000 I think and I should work for them. When I arrived in Buffalo, I wanted to join the Jewish Community Center to register and they asked me my name and I told them my name Svibaum. "Svibaum, that's a very hard name. Why don't you change your name?" I said, "Look I was in a lot of places in Europe. I had no trouble to change my name. Why should I change my name? Suppose somebody wants to look up to me, trying to find me." I wouldn't change the name. "Oh, don't worry about it. They'll find you. Take away the Svi and leave the baum. So one person tell me that and another person tell me that and I did. That's what I did. I changed my name from Svibaum into Baum. That's when I arrived to Buffalo.

Q. That's Jack Baum?

A. Yes, Jack Baum. From Yackob came -- you know in the United States they changed the name, yes I changed it to Jack Baum. So, my name now is Jack Baum and before my name was Yackob Svibaum.

Q. What was the date you were born? What was your birthdate.

A. 1918, July the 9th.

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born in Warsaw. I was born in Warsaw and I left Warsaw in 1943, as I told you before.

Q. Tell me a little bit about your family before the war?

A. Before the war, my family was a beautiful, nice family and a popular family and people I should say with money, not poor. They used to say in Warsaw, "If you can afford to buy fish for supper to eat fish on Friday night and serve it, means that you are not a poor man." We had a lot of poor people in Warsaw. Usually on Thursday, the poor, the beggars they used to go from door to door, from store to store to give them a few pennies. That was every Thursday. In fact they used to come to my father's place on Thursday and he was ready for them, you know to give everybody some money. My family was a religious family. I should say that my family was in those days an orthodox family, the whole family. My father was, I should say if he would come to the United States he would be a good cantor. He had a good voice. He used to dom for his friend in the shobots and you know on the holiday. He used to help my uncle, which actually that was my father's uncle. We call him the _____ in Jewish. _____ is an uncle. And he used to dom a lot of holidays and his apartment he had the people and they used to come and my father used to help him out and I was a good singer too, which I used to sing in

the synagogue in Warsaw for the _____, the greatest cantors we ever had in this world.

And I used to sing with them and I was a good singer. Some holidays I had to take off and go with my father and my brother too. We used to help my uncle as a choir. So, that's what happened in that time. It's a fact that one of my second cousins I should say, and the first cousins, I didn't know that they went to Australia in that time before the war. A lot of Jewish people before the war went to Australia. Why? They didn't have to pay anything. Australia was looking for people at that time. A lot of people went from Warsaw. I didn't know this but I find when I went to Australia to visit my cousin, I find a lot of people from Warsaw and that synagogue and that Saturday I was invited to be at the bar mitzvah. I didn't know about this. I wish I would know about it that time and I wouldn't have had to be in concentration camps and the Warsaw uprisings and I would go to Australia too.

My whole family if you want to know what my family did, I should say almost --about 75 percent of my family was in the furniture business, salesmen or in the business. We had a street in Warsaw. The street name was Bugner. The Bugner Street was a very popular street as a furniture business street. If somebody needed something, to buy a piece of furniture or antiques or to remodel to restyle furniture, they went to the Bugner Street. My father was there, my aunts -- I had two aunts. They were there in the furniture business. I should say that my family occupied maybe half the street of the furniture business, very popular.

Of course my father's name was very popular. In my neighborhood everybody knew Shyet Svibaum. Shyet Svibaum was a very popular man. First of all, he was a president from _____ hasidic not far from the street where I lived. _____ hasidic means that that was an organization that they sent to sick people for overnight. They call it _____,

a Russian _____, you know, to take care of the sick people for nothing, no charge, freely. My father was president there and he was a very popular man. Even his friends were very popular. In Warsaw, maybe people through Warsaw they know this. In Warsaw, my father had long hair. He was blonde. Our family, almost everybody was blonde. Only my brother had dark hair. I don't know why. My mother was blonde. My father was blonde. I was blonde and my father had a tough time with his hair. His hair, it used to stick on. Whenever he put on a Jewish hat, a yamakah, or he put on the -- the yamakah was not bad, a hat, a regular hat, it always used to stick out, his hair, here in the front. So, in Warsaw they give him a name. _____, why they called it _____, it comes from Polish. It's a Polish word. _____ means if the hair is sticking out here, whatever you're doing the hair comes out. So, he had a lot of friends and his friends every one of his friends had such a nick name. That's how it was in Warsaw. They give everybody -- if it was Levin they give him another name, whatever.

So, and then we had I should say, when I started to work -- I was 13 years old when I started to work. I started to work as a furrier for Maximillion at that time. His name was Maximillion Applebaum. When he arrived in the United States the Applebaums, he had a different name. He put up for business a different name, Maximillion first, which is in New York, Fifth Avenue. I used to work for him for three years to learn the trade and I didn't get paid a penny. He didn't pay. First of all, it was hard to get into his place. It was a strictly union place, but I had a cousin and the cousin knew Maximillion very well, a woman, and she asked me, "Would you like to work for him?" I said, "Yes, let's start to work. Let's learn a trade." So, when I finished my public school, and I used to go evening courses, I take, the name was _____. _____ means "school," _____ means where they teach you business. I used to take the evening classes. I finished at that time my public school

and I went to learn this trade. I learned for three years there. Then finally, I learned something, I changed the place. I couldn't make money there you see. They didn't pay me. So, I had to look for a job and I started to look for jobs and I went from one job into the other and the

_____ was very good at that time. It's not like as it is now here in the United States.

The _____ is going down in the United States. So, I went from one place to another.

I went to a place as an operator already, a machine operator. There was a fellow, a cutter, we call it cutters, people cutting the furs, and I was an operator on the machine. The cutter gave it to me operate. We had a cutter in that shop and our bosses name was Stigel, that was a German Jew. He was the boss. He was the owner from that fur business. He was a very popular man in a very popular beautiful area. I should say that Warsaw was before the war so beautiful that they called Warsaw the second Paris which people don't know about it. That's how beautiful Warsaw was. But I want to finish with that fur operating.

That fellow who was the cutter, who gave it to me to operate the stuff, his name was Daniel Swartzfooter. That's Daniel Swartzfooter's family was one I should say of the wealthiest people in Warsaw. What they did, they used to sell materials for suits, English materials for suits, for the men you know, for the women and they were very popular in Warsaw. A big family. They lived a few blocks away from me, and that particular Daniel Swartzfooter before the war started, before the Germans occupied Poland, that I should say was between 1936 and 1937, he asked that Stigel, our boss, Mr. Stigel, would you like to go to Australia with me? He said, "No, Daniel. I'm an old man already." He said to Mr. Stigel, "Mr. Stigel, I tell you there's going to be a war here and who knows what's going to happen with you." And Mr. Stigel says to him, "Look Daniel, whatever is going to happen, I don't care. I wouldn't go to Australia now and open a business at my age. I'm an old man already," he says. And he says, "Whatever is going

to happen, if I have to die here, I'm going to die. That's it." That Swartzfooter quit the job. I didn't know about it but after I find out -- that Swartzfooter was so popular in Warsaw that I am a theater lover and I am a cantor lover myself. I love cantors but good ones, popular ones. My daughter knows that. If I come here I'm looking for a famous cantor so she takes me there. And that Swartzfooter had a lot of friends, Jewish actors the most popular actors, what we had, and it's a fact that Swartzfooter married a Jewish actress from Warsaw. She was a dancer. She was a very popular actress. I forgot her name. And, he after he got married he moved to Australia. I didn't know this. I find out later on that he went to Australia.

Now, what would you like to know now, about my brother?

Q. Well, did you have brothers and sisters?

A. I had one brother. We are two kids, that's all. He was a furrier too. He was a different kind of furrier. I should say that he was one of the best mechanics in Warsaw and the best furrier I should say. Why? He knew how to make a garment, and he knew how to finish a garment as a finisher too. It means he could make a garment from the beginning to the end, to finish.

Q. Now, you went to a public school? You didn't go to a Jewish school?

A. Yes, I went to a Jewish school before, to a Hebrew school. The fact that my teacher was one of the best teachers Poland had. The owner from the Jewish school, from the Hebrew school, lived in my apartment building where I lived. My apartment building was a very popular apartment building. They called it _____ Street. In Polish it's _____ number 24, and this was a very popular building. That's why we had wealthy people living in this building, very popular ones. We had a lot of business people from the street which they lived in this building. The owner from the Hebrew school lived in this building. His name was _____ Clapper they call it in Jewish. It was a popular Hebrew school.

We had _____ rabbi, a very popular rabbi lived in my apartment building. It's a fact that we had like -- that man they call it _____. _____ was a very strong, popular -- one of the strongest people of Europe. He used to appear in different cities, maybe overseas and he used to make from steel, from iron, he used to make different kinds of flowers in his hands and all the kind of things, he was very, very strong. Every Friday he used to come to that _____ rabbi, to my building, every Friday and he used to ask that _____ rabbi that he should pray for him that nothing should happen to him. If he appears to make the flowers or you know, he used to hit with nails. Different kinds of things, very strong, very popular. That's what he used to do. Every Friday night he came with an open car, a beautiful open car with a leather jacket and a leather hat. He was a very, very popular man. He had a brother, but the brother wasn't as strong as he was and living in a different city.

Q. Let me ask you, you lived in a Jewish neighborhood?

A. Yes, our neighborhood was strictly, strictly, a Jewish neighborhood. It's a fact that on a Saturday every store was closed. You couldn't have an open store. You couldn't see an open store on our street. You could see just walking very religious people with long coats, the _____ and with the Jewish hair and the black hats, to the synagogues, walking a lot of people. Strictly the sabbath and every store was closed in our neighborhood. It's a fact on my street, I lived farther _____ 24, _____ 6 was a very famous _____. The _____ synagogue has a lot of history. That's why the _____ synagogue is the only synagogue left from Warsaw. The only synagogue which the Germans I guess didn't have the chance, didn't have the time to do something with that synagogue to destroy that synagogue. That's why the Russians, they were after them when the Russians started to occupy Poland they used to fly. They had to leave.

This synagogue first of all, what I wanted to tell you about later on maybe about cantors, which I used to sing. When I sang in that _____ in the choir, it was one of the best choirs we had and _____, the very, very famous cantor, very famous, the most popular I should say in Europe at that time was _____. And _____ as I remember that _____ has the last service before the Germans closed up that synagogue. They closed it up for a reason which I find out. The reason was they made from that synagogue a warehouse. The warehouse was, the Germans took away, they went from door to door with the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians they used to help them out. They went from door to door from apartment to apartment, they cleaned out furniture. They took away diamonds from the people, everything, clothing, and they put in that particular synagogue. That's what the Germans used for a warehouse. It's a fact that before the Germans left, they used to make auction sales in that particular synagogue to sell this stuff to the poor, the Polish people, and the rest they give it to the army for nothing, whatever was left over. After that, as I heard that they left Warsaw, the Germans, they had to go -- as I told you before, the Russians, they were after them. That's why that particular synagogue is still there, but in very bad shape. They didn't bomb that synagogue. They didn't destroy that synagogue, but the Polish people didn't take care of it and we didn't have Jewish people there anymore there so nobody -- they didn't have a chance to take care. I find swastikas on the walls when I visited three years ago Poland.

Q. Let me ask you, you lived in a Jewish neighborhood, did you have any contact with Christian Polish people?

A. The contact with the Polish people I had -- what happened in Warsaw. The Germans they put signs on the street all over. IT's a fact that in 1940 the Germans they start to build the fences.

Q. I'm talking about before the war?

A. Oh, before the war? Before the war I actually didn't have contact with the Polish people, only in the place where I worked, they used to come in as customers and I used to talk with them a little bit. Otherwise I had one friend, a Polish friend, we used to work together in the shop and he was a good singer. He used to sing songs, this and that, and I used to like him. That's why he was a very close friend to me. And I had another close friend, which he lived in the same building where the _____. He used to live there. We used to play soccer together and he was a very close Polish friend to me too.

Q. Now, before the war, did --

A. This was before the war.

Q. Were you aware of much anti-semitism?

A. Yes, Poland had always anti-semitism, as long as I know. And I know from all those years but it wasn't that bad. They didn't kill people just -- you could hear them speaking against Jewish, against synagogues, against cantors and they were jealous of the Jewish people. That's why the Jewish people were big business people. They had the biggest businesses in Warsaw. They had theaters, all theaters belonged to Jewish people. Movies, they used to belong to Jewish people. It's a fact that mine grandpa was in the furniture business too. He used to fix the chairs for the movie theaters. When he finished the chairs, he used to take me with him and deliver the chairs to those movie theaters. The movie theaters were on a street, the most beautiful street in Warsaw. The name was _____. _____ was a very famous street in Warsaw which we had the most movie theaters up there and they used to belong to the Jewish people. And the Polish people were very, very jealous. They'd buy nightclubs, popular

restaurants, nightclubs, everything was in the Jewish hands, I should say, ninety percent was in the Jewish hands.

Q. Did you ever experience personally remarks or any anti-semitic attacks before the war?

A. Not attacks. I didn't see attacks during the war, not attacks. But a fact is say my bunker, they call it the bunker, when I was in the underground, before I went to the underground, how do I organize? I organize a few furriers --

Q. We should get to that later, if you don't mind.

A. I used to belong with _____, the fellow who actually organized the uprising in Warsaw. I should say he was actually from the beginning that organized the uprising. I was with him in the same organization. The organization's name was _____.

Q. We're talking before the war?

A. Before the war. He was a young boy and I was a young man at that time and then I used to belong in _____, another organization. I used to belong to _____, which I was a soccer player at that time and _____ they called me Bealus. Why did they call me Bealus? Bealus is a Polish word. I was blonde, so they called me in the team, they called me Bealus.

What I used to do in that time, I used to help, I was in the _____. That's an organization that's still in Israel. What I used to do in that _____ I used to pack, I used to mail boxes, mail from Poland into Israel. I was one of the packers with another fellow, which he taught me how to do it and he was a Hebrew talker, speaker, but we would talk in Jewish. So, I used to belong to those organizations and I used to play in Soccer against the Israeli _____, that one time.

So, those are the organizations that I belonged. But before I used to belong, with another friend, he's in New York now, we organized a soccer team, which the name was _____, a Hebrew name. What kind of balls I had? I used to make balls from my father's stockings, socks. I used to roll them up and make balls. That's how we started to learn how to play soccer.

Then we started to play with different kinds of teams.

Q. Tell me, how much did you know about Hitler and what was going on in Germany before the Germans occupied Poland?

A. I didn't know a lot about it. I didn't hear a lot about it. I just hear before when they start to occupy Europe, when they started in Austria and in Czechoslovakia and in Europe and other countries, then they came to Poland. Then they occupied Poland. They started earlier with the other countries, with the other European countries in the world. Then they came probably -- I think maybe Poland was the third country when they occupied.

Q. But you didn't know too much about what they were doing?

A. I didn't know.

Q. You didn't have refugees coming to Warsaw?

A. No, I didn't hear a thing about it too much. What they did, what we start to hear then what they did with Jewish people. They send them to concentration camps. They kill them. Different kinds of things. They took away their families, they separated families, that's what I heard.

Q. When did you hear that -- you mean later?

A. I heard this, yes, before they started to occupy Poland I heard already what they're doing.

Q. Do you remember the day that the Nazis occupied Poland?

A. If I remember? Yes, they occupied in 1939. They occupied Poland.

Q. What happened?

A. In 1939 they start to make trouble. They jumped down from trucks and they call it _____, in Polish. They drop people from the street and they put them on the trucks and they took them away. Then we found out at Treblinka that they took them to Treblinka and they started to take them to different kinds of concentration camps. Then they start to build more and more concentration camps.

Actually the concentration camps, what they did, they made the concentration camps from camps, from different kinds of army camps, they made the concentration camps for the Jewish people.

Q. Let's go back a little bit. They didn't take people to the camps right away did they, in 1939?

A. They started to take people from the streets. They made trouble for people. They closed up business.

Q. Immediately?

A. Immediately.

Q. Did the troops actually come marching into Warsaw?

A. The troops?

Q. Yes.

A. Yes.

Q. Where were you, what were you doing?

A. What I was doing?

Q. At the time?

A. At that time I was working on the job. So, what happened, I figured out the Germans were looking for furriers and tailors. It's a fact that they opened a shop on the street where I lived, and I start -- that wasn't in the beginning. In the beginning what was actually little by little they started -- they close dup businesses. They didn't let the Jewish people be in the businesses. They closed up the stores. They took away merchandise. They emptied the stores. They took away -- they find out where the lawyers are, where the doctors are. They are the first ones that they liquidate. The first ones, doctors, lawyers, rabbis, stuff like that. They start to kill so that we shouldn't have some people to give us help, to tell us what to do, advisors, professors, directors, teachers. They were the first ones that they were looking for to liquidate them.

Then in 1940 they started to build the walls.

Q. Okay, let me stop you here for a moment. I was trying have you describe to me what actually was happening in the streets when the Germans came in. What you were doing, where you went, what was going on. Do you remember that?

A. Yes. That time I'll tell you what happened. Right away they took people from the street. This was the first thing and they started to look up for important people. Rabbis, teachers, professors and stuff like that. They were the first ones that they took away.

Q. Immediately.

A. Immediately we didn't know what happened with them, what they did with them, where did they go with them.

Q. Did they come in with tanks? Were there any bombs?

A. I actually -- some of them came with tanks, some of them, not too many tanks. The tanks they left on the outside of Warsaw, like in _____, an area where they left the tanks.

We didn't see a lot of tanks. We did see a lot of trucks coming with soldiers. They jumped from the things. They grabbed the people, stuff like this.

Q. Now, did you run home? Did you hide somewhere? What did you do?

A. Yes, I tell you what happened. When I was in the apartment, my apartment, usually what they did, the Germans, they had a lot of Ukrainians helping them. The Germans didn't go to the apartments. The Ukrainians came to the apartments looking for people and take them out. They took away stuff, but first looking for the people to take them out. What I did, I told my mother -- she said go to a closet and she would cover herself up with the coats, with whatever and to be quiet. I left. I told her what's going to happen that the Ukrainians are going from home to home, from apartment to apartment, and they're taking out people. What they do with them I don't know, I said to her. So, you stay here and cover yourselves and be quiet and you'll see what's going to happen. I went to work.

Then, when I came back, she told me that people like the Ukrainians, they came and they knocked at the door, they opened the door and they started to look for people. I was quiet and they were sitting around the tables and looking at the ovens and the top of the ovens, inside the ovens and like the chimneys and they were looking for people. They couldn't find me, she says. I heard when they were sitting around the table and they would step out already. They were thinking maybe somebody will show and come on out, you know, from the hiding places, but she knew this was a trick, that they were still sitting at the tables. Then, they left. Then she came out from the closet. That's what she told me.

My father, this was in 1941, I was waiting for my father to come into the apartment. He didn't show up. So, I didn't know what happened with him, but a friend of his, he lived not far from me, was at that time on the street and he told me that a truck with Germans, they jumped

from the truck. The truck was on the street, and a few Germans jumped down and they grabbed my father and they put him on the truck. Since then, I didn't know what happened to my father. He disappeared. So, that's what happened. My mother was at that time still alive. What happened with my mother, I was walking on the street. This was in 1942. I was walking on the street with my mother and holding my mother on the arm, and walking with her and a German soldier, whatever he was a captain, a sergeant, jumped from a truck and came over to me and took my mother away from me. I started to cry. When I started to cry, that German officer whatever he was, says to me, "Look if you'll cry we're going to take you too." And he took away my mother but I should say that was about three blocks away from me, and they put her in a group which there were more people in her age. Then I heard that maybe an hour later I heard a machine gun was shooting and this is where they killed the whole group, and my mother was there too. This was about three blocks away from me. The street was Miller. The name of the street was Miller. And on that Miller Street, the uprising started.

Q. So, you were --

A. This is what happened with my mother and what happened with my father I told you before.

Q. Now, you were describing that after Warsaw was occupied, little by little the Germans were taking away your rights and they had help from the Ukrainians. What about the Polish people? Did they have help from them as well?

A. The Polish people?

Q. What were they doing?

A. What happened to the Polish people? They didn't do anything. They didn't anything absolutely. If they found out they were Polish -- first of all, they separated the Jewish people.

That time they made the ghetto, they put fence, walls from concrete, sometimes from bricks and they started to close up the ghetto.

Q. When was this?

A. This was -- they built the ghettos already in 1940 and 1941 they started to build the walls. I moved from one street -- I had to move to the other street to live in a different apartment building. Then little by little they stopped everything. The Jewish people, they took away their rights. They took away the businesses. You couldn't work, especially when I was a furrier, I had some connections with the Polish side, with the other side. I made connections and the Jewish women they couldn't wear fur coats any more. They give a spot, there was a certain spot in Warsaw which they had to deliver all of the fur coats, all of the Jewish people. The Jewish people had to deliver the fur coats otherwise they could take them to the concentration camps or they could kill them if they didn't -- you know what I mean. There was a certain date and we had lines with people staying there with their fur coats in their hands to give away the fur coats.

What I did in that time I took a chance. I put on the attic in my apartment on the left floor there was an attic, I put up a shop there with my brother. I put up a shop and I took a chance at that time. They could kill me for it if they would find out. If they would find a piece of fur there and find out I have a shop they would take me away, but I took a chance with my brother. We used to make remodels, to remodel for the furriers which they were on the other side fence, on the other side walls, and I made a lot of money at that time. I took a chance, if I made a fox for somebody or whatever, I put it on my stomach around, underneath and that's how I smuggled the stuff on the other side. I took a chance, I took off my Jewish star from the armbands and I looked like a Gentile. I didn't look like a -- I was blonde with a little nose like this. Now I have a long nose already.

So, I took a chance and the guard he looked at me and looked at me but he didn't stop me. I took a chance and I give the fox there to the Polish people. That was the Polish furriers I was dealing with. He gave me the money and at that time I had a lot of money. I just didn't know. We couldn't get so much for the money. Food was the most important thing at that time. A lot of people started to die from hunger. That's why they didn't have enough food. We couldn't buy -- they closed up all the stores. We had to smuggle. We had to get the food from the other side to get connections with Polish people and they give us the flour, bread, whatever, from the other side, and I had to give them the money. First I had to give him the money and then he give me the sugar, flour, whatever we needed. I had a lot of food at that time. I had plenty. What I did, I used to help my family, wherever I had to my family. I used to help them out. From the table where I used to nail the furs, I made a dining room table and I invite all, wherever I could find my family people, and we used to cook and eat and give them to eat, at that time. I wasn't hungry. I had plenty.

Q. Now, let me ask you, was it easy to get in and out of the ghetto?

A. Yes. That's what I did. I took chances and I went out from the ghetto to the other side. To the Irish side I call it.

Q. How did you get in and out?

A. I was walking. I took off the star and the guards, they knew my face already, and I took a chance.

Q. Where did they think you were going?

A. He didn't ask me questions, nothing. He didn't ask me. I had connections already with the other side with the people. I told them, "Look I'm going to ten o'clock here at this spot.

Eleven o'clock wherever." And the people were waiting for me and I gave them the stuff and they gave me the money.

Q. So, you just walked out the gate?

A. I just walked out.

Q. Tell me a little bit about the life in the ghetto?

A. The life in the ghetto was very tough. It was miserable, very tough. I for instance, I had money and I organize myself with food and I was all right. I could help my families, my relatives to give them food and give them to eat. I was all right. Look, I complained, it was tough. I could see what's going on. It was getting worse and worse and worse. People were dying on the street from hunger. They couldn't get food and you could see on the street laying -- almost on every street you could see some people laying dead from hunger and they looked like skeletons. So, that's what happened. It started to get worse and worse and worse. They started to close up more and more and more -- the Germans they started to move the walls, closer and closer and closer. People from small towns from Poland, they would think that they were going to save their lives in Warsaw that's why it's a big city, so they came over to live in Warsaw and to save themselves. This was a trick from the Germans. That they throw them out from the small towns from the small that they should go to Warsaw, that they have them all in one place. They should be able to finish them up.

It was very bad. After that, on my street where I lived, I had to move to another. I moved three times. I had to move that's why they closed up the ghetto, closer and closer, to have the people as I told you in one place. I started to work for the Germans. They needed tailors and furriers. I was one of the first ones with my brother to go there. That's why I lived on the same street, I moved, where they put up the shops, the Germans for tailors and furriers. I worked there

with my brother. They give us to eat, you know, meals. So, we had enough to eat. I wasn't such afraid as the other ones. That's why I was working for them. We made fur gloves and fur vests before they started to go over to the Russians. So, they prepared themselves. Russia was cold. They needed it for the army, gloves and vests. That's what we did.

Then they closed up the shop. They closed up the shop and we didn't work there any more.

Q. When was that?

A. We found out something was going to happen here. The people they start to build bunkers underground. This was before the uprisings.

Q. I want to ask you a few more questions about ghetto life before we get there. The people who couldn't get food, were there soup kitchens, was there any way to try to help people? Were there orphanages? What was going on? Did they set up different organizations within the ghetto?

A. There was only one organization, they called it the _____. That was on _____ Street. We had like a Jewish community, like a community center. They were trying to help the Jewish people there, but the Germans didn't let them do it. Then, what happened, they closed up this place altogether. This place they kept only _____, if they gave orders to the Jewish people in Warsaw, you have to give away your fur coats, or you have to do this or you have to do that, it was only in that particular spot and that had to go there and you know give the fur coats away. Wherever they told us to do it, that was the spot, like a Jewish community center.

Q. Were there efforts to help people maybe that were illegal, that were maybe underground?

A. The underground we start to build after it started to get very bad. We could find out what's going to happen. They start to look up for the Jewish people. They want to try to find them and take them to the concentration camps. At that time we started to build -- and that was 1943 already.

Q. Actually, I have a few more questions before we get to 1943. Now I guess I read somewhere that in the Warsaw ghetto that there were you know maybe underground schools for the children. That there were symphonies, there were concerts --?

A. They liquidated everything. They didn't give a chance to the Jewish people to organize themselves and to do something. They started to close up everything.

Q. So, none of this was happening in the hiding?

A. The hiding was tough. In the hiding we had to organize for food. We organize for food let's say for one year food. Our bunker had for one year food. We bought it from the Polish people. The Polish people, they actually were the builders for the underground. They built it, bricklayers, and we had to pay them a high price for that. And then what happened on the end, they showed the German people where the Jewish people are laying, where they have the underground. That's what happened in the end.

Q. Tell me a little bit about the organization within the Warsaw Ghetto there was a Judenrot, yes?

A. Yes.

Q. Who were they? What did they do?

A. The Judenrot they tried to do something for the people but the Germans didn't give them a chance. They took away the people that represent the Judenrot. They took them away. They didn't give them a chance to organize nothing. The Judenrot wasn't worth a dime. Nothing.

They couldn't accomplish a thing. The Germans they made it comfortable for themselves to make the Judenrot, wherever they give orders to the Jewish people of Warsaw, we should deliver everything there to that particular place. Then what happened they took them away and killed them and put them in a concentration camp, the whole Judenrot. It was nothing.

Q. Was there a time when the Judenrot had any power or no?

A. No. They didn't give them a chance. I tell you why. For the people they should think wherever they needed it, they give them, do it this, put signs, do this. That's why it was the Judenrot. It wasn't worth a thing.

Q. So, it wasn't a matter of the Judenrot being good or bad people, they didn't even have a choice, is that what you're saying?

A. They didn't give them a chance. It was as I told you, if you have to go to the Jewish Community Center and go there to take care of your stuff that's what they did. They called them the _____, actually. That was in one spot, one street.

Q. What about this _____?

A. The _____, are you talking about the Jewish _____ or the Polish _____?

Q. Jewish.

A. I didn't hear about that.

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

Q. So, you're telling me about the ghetto?

A. About the children, they just took away families. The families, you have the children with them, but what happened in the concentration camps, they took away the children from the parents. They separated them and then put them in Treblinka. They put them in the ovens. They didn't need children. They didn't want the children. They had no use, the Germans, for the children. They were nothing. Young people they took to work. They picked the young people, the strong people to work and the older people, they finish them up. They put them into the ovens and to Birkenau.

Q. Let's stay in the Warsaw ghetto a little bit longer. Were the conditions getting worse and worse? Were they taking people out regularly? Were they burning things down? What was happening?

A. That's what they did. They used to take people from the streets, and they used to take them out from the apartments, from the buildings at the same time. But this was a job which the Germans left it for the Ukraines. To show the world maybe that the Germans, they don't do that. That that Ukrainians do that, they worked together. This was actually a job for the Ukrainians to go from house to house, from apartment to apartment and take out the people and put them on the trucks.

Q. Was there any religious life left in the ghetto even underground?

A. In the underground?

Q. In the ghetto at all during this period?

A. In the ghetto as I told you what they did, they destroyed all Jewish synagogues which the only synagogue as I told you was the _____, which is still left. They left the only synagogue. We had very popular synagogues with the greatest cantors like the -- they call it the _____, they call it in Jewish, the _____. So, then there was a Temple Sinai next to the Macabe on the same street, but the organization where the _____ I told you, the same neighborhood there was a Temple Sinai. They destroyed all those synagogues.

Q. This was during the ghetto period?

A. This was the ghetto period, that's right.

Q. Now, did you practice the religion at all while you were living in the ghetto? Did you observe the sabbath?

A. No, we had no more synagogues.

Q. But in your homes?

A. In my house, oh yes, I could do it for myself, yes. If people there religion is enough, you know what I mean. To do it, they didn't care so I could do my service in my apartment, yes.

Q. Did you?

A. Yes, why not.

Q. What about holidays?

A. Holidays, you couldn't go out anymore for holidays, and to do actually the holidays. You didn't have synagogues anymore. They liquidated them. Privately, only I could make a service in the underground, the short time that we have, that's all. Otherwise we had no chance, but people they stopped to be religious at that time. They're afraid for the death, that they're going to get them. That they're going to take them out. They stopped doing it. The very religious people,

very, they would maybe do for themselves and pray to God that nothing should happen to them, but you know.

Q. What was the general mood in the ghetto?

A. The general mood in the ghetto was very, very bad. We could see that it's getting worse and worse from day to day. Less food, more deaths you could see. More dead people on the streets laying around. They took them away. They made Jewish police, the Germans. They made Jewish, the guards, and everything Jewish. That's what they did.

Q. Were the Jewish police good to the community or not?

A. They were good to the community but they were trying actually to work for the Germans, you know what I mean? To get close with the Germans, they were thinking maybe they're going to save their lives with that. But it didn't happen. They took away the Jewish police. They shoot them. They kill them. They took them to the concentration camps. In the end, there was nothing. I was in a concentration camp. I had two Jewish people for kapos, the guy, like a manager who took care of my block, were Jewish people from Warsaw. They used to kill the Jewish people in the concentration camp. You couldn't do this. You couldn't do that, otherwise they killed them. Jewish people killed the Jewish people. We had a policeman, a very famous policeman in Warsaw, very famous. He was very famous, a fighter, a boxer. He used to help the Germans, to save himself, to save his life. It didn't help, they took him away too.

Q. So, you were starting to tell me that towards 1943 you knew the situation was very bad and with some other people you decided to go underground; is that right?

A. Yes. I took a few furriers with me, which I knew the furriers, and I give some money, everybody give some money to the Polish builders, to the bricklayers, and they actually built our bunker in the underground. We had to pay a high price for it. But what happened in the end?

They told the Germans where the people were living, where their bunkers are, where the undergrounds are. They came, it was impossible, -- my opening, where it was on the sidewalk, was impossible to find an opening to our bunker. Impossible. You couldn't see a thing, but the Germans came right away to the spot and they opened. They knocked and we had to open. Then they used to hold the hand grenades, ready to throw in the hand grenades. Come on out or you'll die, and we had to come out. That's what the Pollacks, they did. They helped the Germans.

Q. Tell me a little bit about this underground activity. Who was involved, how many people, what you did?

A. How many people, I had about 12 people in my underground, furriers. I was there, my brother was there with me. My brother was still with me at that time. A mother I didn't have, a father I didn't have, and what happened with the rest, I didn't know. One didn't know from the other what happened. Everybody started to get selfish. Everybody was trying to help themselves.

We organized food. What happened. We used to pull numbers every time. I had to go say tonight. Another one had to go the next one and to pick up the food from the Pollocks, which we were dealing with them. If you give them money, they give us the food. That's what we had to do, to take chances. When we left, we opened the door and to go out, the Germans could find us and kill us too. So, we took chances on that. That's why we had to change, we pulled numbers. You have to go tonight, you have to go tomorrow. That's what we did.

Q. Was there any leadership to this underground movement?

A. The leadership what we had -- actually we didn't have leaders I should say. Everybody was a leader for himself. Every bunker was a leader and we had to take chances and organize ourselves. We had some weapons which we organized. What wasn't enough, it was like a play,

like a game. There wasn't enough weapons. We couldn't get so much. We had the money, but we couldn't organize too much. Most of them we organize from the Polish soldiers, which they used to steal and bring over to make the money.

You couldn't fight a German army. You had to give up. It wasn't enough. There was a street next to my street, _____. The street's name was _____. So, what we did, we went up on the third floor there with hand grenades and we opened the windows. We saw the Germans passing by. The Germans were passing by on motorcycles or in the car. We used to throw the hand grenades and some of them we used to kill. We had to run down fast, as fast as possible, to go back into the bunker.

What happened maybe a half hour later, Germans came to this building with bombs. They destroyed it. The whole building went down a half an hour later. That's what happened.

We couldn't accomplish a lot. IF somebody will tell you this, it was nothing. It was nothing. In the end what happened, the Pollocks, they told them where the Jewish are. They're laying here, that's why they built those bunkers. They knew the spots. We had to come out. They went to every place. They knew exactly where every place was and we had to come out otherwise they killed the family. Why do I want to tell you this, it's a fact --

Q. Tell me a little bit about your bunker and what your plans were and when you went into hiding?

A. When I went into hiding? I went into hiding it was in the beginning of '43. We built that bunker and since then we had to go into hiding. We had to do it. We organized ourselves, wherever we could. We had plenty of money, but we didn't know we couldn't use the money. We couldn't buy so much food. We couldn't buy anything. We had just the money and that was it. We were laying underneath and everyday the same routine, the same thing. There was no end

to the war. We expected the war to be finished but we couldn't see the end of it. Then the Germans did find us as I told you.

Q. Tell me a little bit more about the bunker. Who was in there with you? Were there women? Did you have weapons?

A. The women, yes, they were there. They used to cook dinners and everything there. It was hard. It wasn't easy. To use the toilet, you know, it was very hard. We had to wait long. It was tough, it was very tough. We knew that we had to do it. Otherwise we'd be dead. This was the only solution. The only thing to do it, but that didn't help either. You had to come out.

Q. So, in other words, you actually had a -- what did it look like? How much did you really have underground?

A. We had plenty of room. We had where to sleep, we had a toilet. The Pollocks, they built pretty good. We paid a lot of money for it. In four years, we had money at that time. That's why our trade was very good. We got money. We were pretty good organizers, and we had the money. What the others did I don't know. In some areas you had very poor areas. What they did and how they organized themselves, I don't know. It was very tough.

Q. So, you were all independent?

A. Yes.

Q. What was your plan?

A. As I told you, a time came that you couldn't even save your own family. The selfishness from the people. Everybody was trying to save themselves. That's what happened.

Q. What was your plan when you went into hiding?

A. My plans? Nothing. My plan was as long as I am able to be there, I will be there. That's it. I know. I had a feeling that something is going to happen. It's not going to be forever, and

that's what happened. I didn't trust the Polish people. I said to my friends that you know something I'm afraid maybe the Pollocks they will tell the Germans where we are.

Q. But was your original plan to try to wait out the war underground?

A. Yes. We had the food. We organized the food and what we had to do. I was sure they wouldn't find us. I used to go out. I had to look for myself to see the entrance into the bunker was right on the sidewalk made. The same color, the same -- you couldn't see a thing, but they find us. That's what we figured. The Pollocks they told the Germans where we are.

Q. Did you have weapons in the bunker?

A. Yes, most hand grenades we had. The hand grenades were very easy to -- we got it from the Pollocks, from soldiers, which they were stealing. They were stealing. They wanted to make money. They got good pay for it. So, we had the hand grenades. That's what we had.

Q. What did you do with them?

A. Nothing. They were left there in the bunker when we had to go. What happened to everything. We had gold there laying. We had a lot of things laying there. We had to go. We had a chance. We hardly had time to put shirt and pants, you know, to come out.

Q. You were telling me, and I don't think we recorded this yet, you were telling me that there was a time when you were actually leaving the bunker and trying to drop these little hand grenades on German soldiers?

A. I think what we did was with the building only, as I told you.

Q. Tell me again because I'm not sure we recorded that.

A. We went to the building that was next to us and we went up to the third floor. We opened the windows. We figured we're going to stay there and wait until the Germans who pass by, and they'll pass by on motorcycles and we throw some hand grenades and we kill some of

them. Then we start to run down fast, you know, we are afraid. We went into the bunker. About a half an hour later, they came back. They found the soldiers on the street with the motorcycles and they destroyed the building. We heard the bombs. What kind of bombs I don't know what they used, but the whole building when down. They were thinking that the people were inside.

Q. What did you do every day? How did you spend the time?

A. Nothing. Nothing. We just organized food and that's it. We would eat and lay there and wait, what's going to happen.

Q. So, what did happen?

A. What happened, they find our place as I told you. We had to come out and they took us right in the middle of the street. We were waiting there and then they destroyed old buildings at the same time. We were standing right in the middle and everything around me, around us, fire from the buildings that they destroyed. They destroyed the ghetto at that time. I know about my area. What happened on the other side, I don't know what happened there, but I know what happened around me. I see fires from the bombs. That's what they did, and then they put us on the trucks. They put us on the trucks and we traveled a few miles away from that spot and there was a train. There were trains waiting for us. I was thinking I was going to Treblinka. They were Polish trains, and then they took away my brother from me. They put him in a different group across the street. They asked who is a tailor and a furrier and I was standing together and I raised my arm and I said "I am a furrier." And he raised his arm too and he said I am a tailor. They took him to the other group. They said that this group will go to work for the Germans. Going to have a shop and the tailors and furriers are going to work for them and I was here. Here's what they did, they separate one brother from the other, a sister -- you know what I mean. They separated them. They took them away, they separated them. Then my brother says to me,

come on, come over here. Come to me. How could I go to him. I was surrounded with the German soldiers with weapons. How could I jump over to his group. How could I do it. He was thinking that he heard that this train goes to Treblinka. If this train goes to Treblinka he knew that I was going to be dead. And I knew that he was going to be alive. That's why they're going to work for the German government as tailors and furriers. Then they changed their minds, the Germans. Instead of going to Treblinka, they took us to another camp, to _____.

They changed their mind. So, from _____, I was there and from _____ they put us to Maidonik and from Maidonik we went to Auschwitz and from Auschwitz we went to Buchenwald. I was in four camps. In Buchenwald I was liberated.

What happened with his group, they were supposed to go to _____, too, his group, but to work for the Germans.

Q. How did you know about all these camps beforehand? You said, "I thought they would take to Treblinka."

A. Yes.

Q. How did you know about all these places?

A. We had conversations with the people there.

Q. With the Polish people?

A. Yes. We had the conversations that this train will go to Treblinka. So, then I was lucky.

Q. But you already knew from your Polish contacts what Treblinka was. How did you know what Treblinka was?

A. We heard about it. We found out what Treblinka is from before, that Treblinka is a place where they put them in the gas chambers, and Birkenau too, they have the gas chambers, next to Auschwitz. Birkenau was connected with Auschwitz. But it's a fact that I didn't see it before. I

didn't see the ovens where they put the people into the ovens, how they killed them there. I just find out after the war when I was in Poland. I visited Poland and I went to Auschwitz and I saw these ovens. We couldn't see it. When I was in Auschwitz I couldn't see those ovens. They didn't show them to us.

Q. You were lucky.

A. I'll tell you something else that they did in the concentration camps when the people arrived to the concentration camps. They took away the children from the mothers from the parents. There was a French commander, they call it. They call it a French commander, from France they brought him over. They used to wear French berets, red berets, red shoes. Those are specialized, -- they give them the job to put the children in the ovens to burn them. That was the French commander's job.

Q. Which camp are you talking about?

A. This was a Maidonik. They did the same thing in Auschwitz. This was their job to do it. The children taken away from their parents. With the women, they took away the women from the men, say it was a husband and wife. All the women they took away and they put them in separate blocks and they use them as prostitutes. They made prostitution places in the barracks for the women, which the soldiers they used them.

Q. In Maidonik?

A. Yes, in Maidonik, and in Auschwitz too. It's a fact that some days they came to us, they invited us to go to those places if we want to we can go to Block Number four, and we can have a good time there. We can use the women. Every one was like a skeleton, he couldn't walk. You had no power to walk to go to a woman to use a woman. It was a joke. But they used them, the soldiers used them.

In one camp, in Maidonik, they had the Jewish from Warsaw, the kapos where I told you, the Germans they made a party in our block. In our block they made just a party, you know, to drink to eat for them, and there was a boy -- I forgot his name, he was supposed to be hanged. They were supposed to hang him up for something and then they asked the people from our, you know, who could sing. I could sing. I sang in a choir. But he started to sing, that boy that was supposed to be hanged and he started to sing you know the song "Mama --" an Italian song, and he was singing so good that the Germans started to like it and the Germans said to him, you know something we're not going to hang you for that. You are a good singer and we like the song and you know something from now on if we will make a party you'll come to our party and you will sing songs. That's what happened and he saved his life this way.

Q. Which of these camps were you in the longest?

A. The longest camp I should say I was in Buchenwald, but I was lucky in Buchenwald. Why was I lucky? They were looking for a tailor and there was another man, a little older than I was, a tailor. We were laying on the beds and they said "Who is a tailor, raise your hand, raise your arm." I raised my arm and the other fellow raised his arm. But actually I wasn't a tailor. I'm not a tailor, I am a furrier and I was afraid. If I tell him I'm a tailor I figure I'm afraid maybe he'll tell me "Look can you make a pair of pants for me or can you take in a jacket or something." I didn't know this. I took a chance -- they could hang me for that. And he picked me and said, "You, you come out." And I went out and he explained to me what I have to do. You see when the people are going out to work, you go to every bed and see if the blankets have a rip or an opening and you close it up. Oh, that's good. That's a good job and since then I had good in Buchenwald. I didn't go out for the countings, we used to go out in cold weather to count the people. We used to count every day the people and they used to hang every day the people.

Before I got this job to stay in the block, not to go out, to fix the blankets, I used to go out, you know. And I used to go out when they hung the people. We had to salute, you know. To salute means we had to take off the mitten, these berets that we used to wear and to stay straight and to salute. We had 12,000 people at that time in that camp and I forgot, I concentrate on something and I forgot to take off that mitten. An officer comes over to me and he tells me look, see everybody here? Twelve thousand people, look, you are the only one that didn't take off the mitten. I said, "Look officer, I was concentrating on my mother and my father, you know. I was thinking about them and I just forgot. I'm sorry." He says, "Look, after we're finished here the things, this is my office there, you see, you come into the office." I said okay. I went into the office. There was a kapo, the guy with the red hat, the red shoes and holding a stick, a heavy stick in his hands and he says he should give me -- I had to drop my pants and go into a special table, to bend down, and he had to hit me 50 times over my back side. They had the rules at the time, the regulations the Germans that if they broke a stick they should stop it. He broke the stick on 25 on me, that kapo. And I was thinking I'm done. He says to him take another stick and finish off on him fifty. So, he took another stick and finished to 50. That happened after that I got this job in the barrack and I had what to eat and I met that cook there and everything, he gave me soups. I was all right.

Q. You were in Buchenwald how long?

A. A few months. Maybe eight months, all together I was in those camps short times. They send me from one camp into the other.

Q. Which was the worst?

A. Maidonik.

Q. Why?

A. In Maidonik for every little thing they could kill you. Some people some survivors, for little thing they tell them to run all around. He was running so long until he fell and he collapsed. If he didn't collapse they finished him up, not with weapons, but you try things, they beat him up until he died. So, Maidonik I should say was a very, very bad camp. In Maidonik, - Dr. Mengala came to Maidonik. He picked the people. He was the expert on who was strong and who was weak. Who was good for work, who is not good for work. He picked -- he looked at the faces. He walked by -- everybody had to come out and he picked _____, _____, _____ to die and _____ to work. He picked me to work. I was strong at that time.

Q. How did you know it was Mengala?

A. I heard the name. It was Dr. Mengala. He was the expert on picking strong people and who is strong and who is not good to work, and he picked us. As in one camp I could see with the children what happened too, which we're not supposed to look out, to open a window to open a door to see what the French commander did to the children. That was about two o'clock at night. I looked out and I had seen how they took away the children. They put them on trucks, the French commanders and they took them away.

So, in Buchenwald -- actually I was liberated in Buchenwald, in 1945.

Q. I want to ask you a little bit more about the other camps because this is really important information to have.

A. Maidonik was a very, very bad camp. One of the worse camps was actually Maidonik and Maidonik was actually where they separate the women to make the prostitution houses for them. That was in Maidonik.

Q. In terms of the general conditions was the food or the crowdedness or all of that the same in all of these camps?

A. Almost all the same. They give you a piece of bread. A piece of bread was enough for the whole day. They gave you one soup, a bowl of soup. That was actually good for the whole day. We had the Hungarians in the camps. What they did, the Hungarians, they saved the bread -- we had smokers, they smoked cigarettes. They went to the toilets, to the men's room and smoked cigarettes. But if they didn't have cigarettes, the Hungarians were organized and they had the cigarettes. What the people did, they didn't eat the bread. They wanted to smoke so they went to the Hungarian people, went to the toilets, like a black market. The guys were watching if the Germans are coming to the area. They made a deal. They used to roll the tobaccos. They'd say, "How much? I'll give you a piece of bread and you give me tobacco." He said, "How much bread are you going to give me." So the guy says, "Look, so much." "Such a little piece of bread for tobacco. That's not enough. I want more." So, they got a guy says, "Look until here, another piece, okay?" And they made a deal. Cigarettes for bread or bread for cigarettes. There was a black market in the men's room.

Q. This was in Auschwitz or where?

A. What?

Q. Which camp was this in?

A. This was in Maidonik and in Buchenwald too.

Q. With the Hungarians?

A. Most of them were Hungarian people, most of them. I could tell in the Jewish speaking, I find out that they were Hungarians. I was sleeping with the Hungarian people, with a few, in the camp, together in one room.

Q. The first camp you were in, how long were you there?

A. Where?

Q. The first camp you were sent to?

A. A short time. Everywhere I was but a few months. The longest camp was Buchenwald where I was liberated. It was the longest camp as I remember. In Auschwitz I was a short time. They put the numbers on me when I went to register even in Auschwitz. To register I had to go up the steps there on the second floor to register. The guys with the red hats standing on the steps and beating the people going up. A lot of them died on the steps from the hitting. They collapsed. Then they put numbers outside -- there were tables, you know. A long line of tables and they put the numbers, the tattoos on my arm.

Q. What is your number?

A. 127965 was my number. They put the needles under the skin. After that, we registered. They didn't call us by the names in the concentration camps. They called the numbers.

Q. When you went to a different camp, did you get a new number you had to wear or something or did you always go by this first number?

A. No, no. This was the number. They didn't give other numbers. This was the number.

Q. So, when you were in Maidonik or Buchenwald, you went by the number you had from Auschwitz?

A. Sure. They used -- they didn't use names at all.

Q. But you never got a new number in each camp?

A. No, this was the number for all concentration camps. They called the number.

Q. So, the first camp you were sent to, this _____?

A. _____, yes.

Q. Tell me a little bit about it.

A. _____ wasn't bad. It wasn't bad. We just went to work. We carried stones, we carried bricks. We used to carry pipes on the shoulders. They used to make the underground canalizations, the pipes for toilets and different kinds of things. That was the work. It wasn't too bad. The worst two camps was Buchenwald and Maidonik. Maidonik I should say was one of the toughest. Buchenwald I had good.

Q. Let's stick with this _____ first. Give me a little bit more description about it in terms of the barracks, the other people there. Can you just tell me? I don't know too much about this camp, that's why I'm asking you.

A. No, I tell you it wasn't -- there we had the meister, meister means "the boss," a German. He was good to us. He wasn't bad to us. He was good and he just told us to do the work, when to finish the work. But there's a lot of Jewish people but we were working together but they were no good. They were no good one to each other. One is jealous. He didn't want to hard. He told somebody else to do this. I mean, it was a selfishness between the workers themselves, with the Jewish people themselves in the concentration camps and a lot of places.

Q. Did you have any buddies?

A. I had, I should say, two people, which I had arguments with them. Working with them, they were trying to be close to the meister, the boss, and they shouldn't work. They walked out from that hole, from that digging and they left me to dig. You know what I mean. There was a lot of selfishness and some of them they were no good. Some from different towns. I don't want to mention actually the names from the towns, but I know the town was from Poland which the people were not so good. I don't want to mention the towns.

Q. Did you also have good relationships with some of the other prisoners?

A. Yes.

Q. You had some buddies?

A. Yes, I had good relationship in Buchenwald. I was sleeping with another guy. He received packages from the Red Cross. I think he received from Sweden and he gave it to me, a lot of bread he gave me to eat and he helped me. He was very good to me. He was a very nice guy. I had in some camps, you know, everybody suffered the same way. We had to stick together.

Q. So, you helped each other?

A. Yes, we helped each other, but he helped me. That's why he received the packages. Not me, I didn't receive anything. One time I remember we traveled to Buchenwald to the Czechoslovakian border, was on the Czechoslovakian border on open trains and the Czechoslovakian people are very nice, very good people. And they were standing there with an open train and they threw packages, food, to the trains to us they wanted to help us, you know. The Germans didn't let them do it. They started to scream go away, go away. That's it.

Q. Was there much violence in _____?

A. Violence, I would say no, but I heard in talking about _____, no as I know I didn't experience the violence there. What I didn't like in Maidonik those two Jewish couples the way they were treating the Jewish people. They were Jewish too. They were thinking they were going to serve themselves and they were working with the Germans together.

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. Yes. I don't know if I have to say the names, maybe they're still alive. Who knows.

Q. If you remember their names it might be --?

A. _____ was one name. The other name was _____ they call it.

Those two names.

Q. Now, in Maidonik was there a lot of brutality?

A. In Maidonik? Maidonik was more tough, you know, than say _____ or the other camps. Maidonik was in Poland. _____ was in Poland. Auschwitz was in Poland. The only camp which wasn't in Poland was Buchenwald.

Q. Tell me a little bit more about Maidonik. What kind of work did you do there and how long were you there?

A. I did the same kind of work, you know, cutting stones, pipes, things like that. Digging, the same kind of work, but not in the camp, outside the camp. When we came into the camp, there was music, an orchestra at the entrance, a German orchestra, German music and they played those melodies, which sometimes I hear those melodies on German shows and that reminds me. Those melodies coming back from work, they said to us at the entrance we should work to the music and _____ like nothing happened. That's how we had to march into the camp, back into the camp from work, and the music was playing.

Q. Were the musicians Jewish or German?

A. German music.

Q. Played by Germans?

A. Played by Germans. It's a fact if I have to tell you, how my cousin find me when I was in Israel. I left both names. The name from Poland. His name was Svibaum, too, in the family. I left in _____, they have registry there. They have computers there, a big computer system and I left my two names, the name now in Cherry Hill where I live, Jack Baum and Yackob Svibaum. That's why I figure maybe if my brother would look up for me, maybe that's

going to help me. Let me put both addresses, both names. And my cousin went to Israel too and he was looking for Svibaums. He wanted to find somebody in the family and he find me in that _____ computer. He called me up right away to my house. "Are you that little boy who used to help my uncle to sing at the services?" I said, "Yes." "And what happened to the other little boy?" It was my brother, he used to sing too. That's how he find me. He came over. He came from Australia to visit me twice and to my house. Then he made the bar mitzvah, his boy, he invited me. He said, "Jack, I think it's about time you should visit me." So, I went to Australia to visit him. And I find another second cousin there.

Q. We were talking about Maidonik. How were the living conditions?

A. What do you mean the living conditions?

Q. The living conditions?

A. It was tougher than the other camps. Maidonik was one of the toughest camps.

Q. Physically, can you describe it?

A. Physically they give you the same thing, the same food. A piece of bread, you know, a bowl of soup. About the same thing in every camp.

Q. What about the barracks?

A. The what?

Q. Were the barracks the same?

A. The barracks? The same thing, with the same beds, you know, the same build.

Q. I wasn't there, so you have to describe this for me.

A. You would sleep in like double beds, you know, like the double beds. Sometimes I was sleeping on the first bed in some camps the second bed. We used to talk to each other. That's it.

Q. Did you have to share your bed with someone?

A. Yes.

Q. One person, two people?

A. One person. Two people in a bed.

Q. Was it pretty crowded?

A. It was pretty crowded. See, they built new camps, the Germans. They didn't have enough. In the beginning they took away army camps from the armies where they occupied the countries. They used them, then they built other camps. They didn't have enough.

Q. What about illness in the camps? Were people sick?

A. Sick? Sure people got sick. People got sick. If you start to complain they finished them up right away. If you had to go to the hospital, he didn't come out from the hospital any more.

Q. Did you every get sick?

A. If you went to the dentist, if you had some gold in your mouth, they took out the gold teeth.

No, I was trying not to be sick because I knew what could happen if I got sick, if I go to a hospital. I was lucky that I didn't get sick. I was pretty strong. I was a soccer player and I was pretty strong.

Q. Was it in Maidonik you were telling me there were hangings?

A. Yes, they were hanging people. They were hanging a lot of people. For a little thing, almost for nothing they could hang a person, for nothing. Or they beat him up until he died. They beat him up. They let him run and run and run and those Jewish kapos, what I told you. That's what they did. They let the people run and run and they hit them until they died. They were trying to save themselves, but I heard that after the war, at the end of the war they find one

guy I don't know which one, and they hung him up on a tree. The Jewish people, they hung him up.

Q. Did you ever get beaten yourself? You told me about that one time you were punished with a stick?

A. Yes.

Q. Any other times when the guards were abusive?

A. No. I was watching myself not to get beaten, not to have trouble. I did the best. I did honest work. I did my work and everything and that's it.

Q. So, how long do you think you were in Maidonik?

A. I was a few months. Everywhere I was -- I was late. I came out in 1943 from the uprising. In 1945 was the end of the war. In 1945 in May I was liberated.

Q. Tell me a little bit about Auschwitz. What were you doing there?

A. In Auschwitz I did the same thing what I did in the other camps. The same kind of work they give you to carry pipes, digging, stones, carrying, bricks, you know.

Q. Did it seem to be useful work?

A. Useful for them, to help them. I was in _____. _____ was another camp. When I was in _____ in _____ they call it, when I was in _____, the Germans they start to build the _____ they call it, and I was working there. Every time we build up something, the English planes, from England, they start to bomb. We couldn't finish this job. And the _____ it's supposed to be the biggest German factory in Europe. That's what they're supposed to build. But the English I remember what they used to say, the _____, and they used to come every time and

bomb. They couldn't finish this job. Then the Americans actually after the war the Americans they took over the _____.

Q. Did this give you encouragement when the English was bombing?

A. I was running away. I just run away. They were running away too. The Germans, too, they're trying to save themselves and I was trying -- we were trying, the workers. We were just running away.

Q. But when you saw these British planes, did it make you think that maybe the war will be over soon?

A. We couldn't think about it. We were thinking you know that that's going to help, you know, that they bombed them. How long is it going to take. We couldn't figure out that. We were trying to do the best we could to save ourselves. That's all.

Q. What kind of a factory was this going to be? Was it a chemical factory?

A. Yes, a chemical factory and what they used the chemicals to make bullets, bombs, that was supposed to be the biggest in Europe. Hitler says that's going to be the biggest in Europe. They never finished it.

Q. So, is this -- when you talk about Auschwitz were you talking about Buna or was that a separate experience?

A. Buna is something else. They are separate, but actually, Buna -- this camp was in Poland too. The most suffering, the Jewish communities, people don't know, I don't know about what happened in Hungary. I do not know what happened in Sweden. I do not know what happened in France. They all suffered, but the most suffering -- the Polish people had the most suffering in Poland. It was the worst spot.

Q. What I was trying to understand is you were both in Auschwitz proper and also in Buna?

A. Yes.

Q. And in Auschwitz were you in Auschwitz or the Birkenau part?

A. I was in Auschwitz. The Birkenau part was more deadly. In Birkenau you had the ovens, which I didn't see them. As I told you I just saw after the war when I visit Warsaw, then I looked at these ovens, but I didn't see them before.

Q. Is there anything that really stands out in your mind about Auschwitz?

A. About Auschwitz? Auschwitz was a very bad spot, what can I tell you. A very bad concentration camp. Some people it actually was the start for them when they put the numbers. They finished them up there too. They started and they finished them up. They didn't come out. You had to be lucky, actually, to come out in one piece. The other camps were not bad. The _____ were not bad.

Q. But when you say it was especially bad for you --?

A. For me I was trying to do the best by whatever they told me, I was trying good to talk nice to them, you know, to the kapos. For instance in Buchenwald, two days before the war --.

End of Tape 2

Tape 3

Q. Perhaps you can tell me a little bit about Buchenwald because that's where you spent the most time.

A. Buchenwald, a few days before the end of the war -- I didn't know that it was going to be a few days before the end of the war, but the manager our _____ what we called it in German, was Polish. He knew that it's going to take maybe two or three days it's going to be the end of the war. But the Germans they still be looking around for the Jewish people to pull them out and to kill them. There were a few mountains there. They put them into the mountains there with machine guns and they finished them up. Even at that time they knew it was the end of the war. So the Polish _____, the manager from the block came to us and he knew that we are Jewish people. We had a couple Gentiles there too, a few people. And he says to us, he knew that we were Polish Jewish people and he says to us, "Look, pretty soon a German officer will come in here to the block and he's going to look for the rest of the Jewish people to take them out and to finish them." He says, "I know that you are Jewish, Polish Jewish and I am trying to help you so now it's up to you. You have to decide what to do, to stay in the block inside or to go out and hide yourself." I decided to stay. There were two brothers, their names was Vina, two brothers and they had longer nose than I had. I had a short at that time little pointy nose. So, he says to them, "Look, I know the Germans they know that the Jewish people have long noses. And he will come into the block, the German officer, and he will look at you. He'll take you out. I don't want to be responsible. That's why I tell you that." That's what he says, the manager. It was nice for him to tell that. And they took a chance, the brothers and the others. All others were standing up, the officer came into the block. You had to stand in one

line, you know, stand up, and he started to walk, walk and look at the faces. He walked by me. He looked at those two brothers, into the faces, look, look, and he let them go. He walked by them. He didn't take out a single person from the block. They were lucky.

So this was one thing. Now a second thing. The Polish manager, the _____, said to us, "Look, it's going to be pretty soon the end of the war and you can do whatever you want. It's up to you. If they get you, they'll get you. Maybe somebody else will come in to look up to the people, to take them out." What I did, I went under the block, to hide myself. At that time it was raining and damp and wet underneath and I didn't eat, nothing. We wanted to see the end of the war. And I was laying there underneath and then a guy -- we couldn't get up. It was underneath. You couldn't stand up, nothing. You had to lay there and one guy comes to me on his stomach, comes closer to me and he says, "Show me your hand." And I showed him my hand and he started to do it like this and he started to do it like this, and I show him. He said, "You know something, I think I don't have a watch. We don't have watches, but roughly I would say about a half an hour we will be liberated." I heard this, I thought to myself, what he's crazy! How does he know. And it was I should say about a half an hour and I hear screaming, hurray and this and that and we came out. We came out. There were Hungarian people but they came over to that person who told me that in half an hour we'll be liberated. It came out that he was a rabbi from Budapest. They start to kiss him, to grab him, the Hungarian people. Then, came into the block, a rabbi _____, he was an officer in the Seventh Army. He wrote a book, "I Liberated Buchenwald." That was him, and he came to our block with two Jewish soldiers. They start to talk Jewish to us. Now he wrote that book, "I Liberated Buchenwald" and he was in my synagogue as my rabbi invited him, and he had a speech. He told the story that he liberated Buchenwald, what happened, and he said, "Is somebody here that was in Buchenwald?"

And I stood up and I raised my arm. He said, "Oh, come on up." I went to the stage and he says, "See, I have a live witness." I said "Yes, rabbi, you're looking pretty good, you look good and that time you looking pretty good I recognize you. You liberated my block. You came into my block and that was block number one, it says it right on the corner." And he says, "Yes." So, he was a guest in my synagogue.

So, this was at that time the end actually of the war. They find a lot of German soldiers on the towers. They took them off and they took them away. What they did with them, the Americans, that was very, very interesting. What happened, I was looking to do something, to go out. To do something, I didn't know what to do. And I walked, walked with the two brothers that were in the same block. We walked in the direction of _____ in the city where Hitler built his Nazi party there. I started to sing "Where shall I go, where shall I go." I started to sing in Jewish _____, and I started to sing this song and a German woman heard me singing and she pulled me into the house. She invited me, she wanted me to sleep over there, but I didn't want it. I didn't know what was going to happen here. We had to stay in the place, but she gave me to eat. At that time she says "You're singing very nice. I like your singing. What are singing?" So, then I had to go back. I went back and the Seventh Army organized us and then they put us on trains and we went to Landsberg, our group went to Landsberg, which that was before a German camp and the Americans took away from them. They should have a place where to put us in. So, we went there and we lived there and the room where I was I had about six or seven people sleep in there, two beds. That's the place where I met my wife, through somebody. That's the camp I was and I took, I had a job at that time, they give me a big job I should take care that the camp should be clean. I took over this job, to take care, to be the manager, that the camp should be clean. Clean the steps, rooms and everything.

Then I took over, which I have the picture I think with me. General Lucius Clay came into the camp and I started to look and he liked the job that I did, and there was a chief of police, which he didn't want to be anymore the chief of the police. He went to the United States. He went through the trouble to go to America. I took over as an assistant from him his job which Lucius Clay gave me the job. I have the picture here. I think I should have the picture here with another fellow, which he was a sergeant with me. We made a picture and the guy who introduced me to my wife. He was in the picture. He was in the police department. It's a fact that he's in Israel now and here I think a sewing factory. I was looking up for the other sergeant who I was with him, I went to New York and I came to the United States and I couldn't find him. I was looking for him. I couldn't find him.

Q. Let me ask you a few questions about your liberation in Buchenwald and then I want to ask you about Landsberg as well.

A. Yes.

Q. When you were liberated did the prisoners try to retaliate at all against the German guards? Was there any of that or were had they gone?

A. No, they grabbed a few of them. Actually, they didn't do anything. What could they do with them. They gave them to the Americans, to the Seventh Army, to the soldiers. Whatever they did with them, I don't know. They actually, they didn't kill them right away, right there, with machine guns. Whatever happens with them, they just got them and that's it, as prisoners.

Q. Did the American soldiers feed you? Did they give you medical --?

A. Yes. They took maybe not even an hour, trucks came into that camp with a lot, a lot of food, all kinds of food. It's a fact that people were eating so much that they would die and they would choke themselves and they died from overeating. That's what happened right there, right

in Buchenwald. That's how much food they got. They give us plenty to eat, plenty, from everything. Yes, they bring in medicines and everything, doctors, everything. It didn't take long.

Q. Did you go through a process. I mean did they clean you, did they delouse you, any of that kind of thing?

A. No, actually, not specially. They took us away. They give us in Landsberg, it was everything. In the kitchen they give us to eat, everything was organized there.

Q. How long were you in Buchenwald after liberation before you went to Landsberg?

A. A short time.

Q. A few weeks or a few days?

A. Not a few days, the same day they took us away. We didn't go back to the barracks to sleep. Oh no, it was finished. I don't know if everybody went to Landsberg. Some of them went to Salzheim, you know. They separated two groups I think.

Q. Do you remember how you were feeling when you got liberated?

A. Like I was liberated?

Q. How you were feeling?

A. The feeling was -- I had a bad feeling, I had nobody. I lost the whole family. That's what I was thinking. That was the first thing, that I was left alone. That was the worst thing to me. So, I suppose to go at that time to Treblinka on the train and you see I was one of the lucky ones, but how good is it that I lost a whole family. I was left alone.

Q. Did you have thoughts about trying to go back to Warsaw and find people?

A. Actually I wanted to go back to Warsaw to find out, you know, but I knew, I knew that I wouldn't find anybody. I knew what happened with them. They were all dead. The only thing that I was thinking was maybe go back to Warsaw and ask, maybe go to the government and

maybe they have some records or something, but my brother, that was the only thing. But I figured, who am I going to ask. You see, the Germans, they destroyed the documents. They destroyed everything. No records. So, I didn't want to go back, but I went back but it was with my group, with my synagogue, my rabbi. We went back now about three years ago. We went back to Warsaw and that's all.

Q. Before we talk about Landsberg, is there anything else you want to add about Buchenwald?

A. Yes. The last few days in Buchenwald before the end of the war, I had to go to work. They took me out to work and I worked in a certain place there and we had a guard, a German soldier with the machine gun watching us, we should run away. We were working there and one guy was sick and tired, he couldn't take it anymore. So, what happened, they had the rule at that time, the Germans, if you walked away from the place where you worked, say you worked in this area. When you start to walk away 50 feet the soldier had the right to shoot the person, to kill him. So, that guy, one guy was tired. He didn't care. He started to walk away from the place where he did the work. So, that German soldier who was watching us went to that guy. He walked about ten, fifteen feet away already and he wanted to start to walk, so he started to walk, so that soldier walked over to him and he says to him, "Why are you walking away from the place where you work. You know I have the right to shoot you if you walk 50 feet away from the place you work." He says, "I don't care. Shoot me. I'm sick and tired of it already. I want to die." He says, "You're foolish. The war will take another few days. It's going to be the end of the war. Why do you do this. Don't do this. Come back." And he walked back to the place. That was very nice from that soldier to tell him that. He didn't want to shoot him. He didn't want to kill him. It's a fact that a few days later it was the end of the war.

Q. Did you think the end of the war was coming?

A. If the war was coming do you mean?

Q. Did you think the war was going to end soon, did you think maybe finally?

A. That's what I heard, and I heard from that guy.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Landsberg, but first is there anything else you want to fill in from Warsaw?

A. If you want to know about the rabbis, I'll tell you what happened with the 11 rabbis. They were rabbis usually from Europe. They came, most of them, from small towns and they settled in Warsaw. You don't know those towns, if would be somebody from Poland I would tell them, from what of towns they settled in Warsaw. The rabbi who lived in my apartment building, he was there too, with the eleven. There were a lot of other rabbis, very popular rabbis in Poland. They're not the rabbis you have here. Here the rabbis in the United States, they have money. They invest in properties. They invest in land. All those kind of things. They live good. They have luxury homes. The rabbis in Europe, say in Warsaw, they were very poor, poor rabbis. They had a hard time even to organize some food. They had nothing to eat. So, if you came into a rabbi at that time into his apartment, his office, they were stinking -- it smelled from the books, from the things from the learning. They used to learn day and night, and poor. They had nothing.

So, what happened with those rabbis, they took them out from the attic. They told them to take off their clothes, all naked. They put them against that particular wall and they shoot them with the machine guns, they finish them up.

Q. Did you see this?

A. Yes, I saw it. This was when I was in the center street. I told them when they took me out, they took them out from the attic too, at the same time, and I watched it and I could see how they shoot them with a machine gun, all eleven rabbis. At that time people start to ask question "Where's God, where was God, where is God?" Highly rabbis, strictly highly rabbis, poor people. They would learn day and night and why did God let them do it. Why didn't God show a miracle at that time to save those rabbis.

Q. And Warsaw was burning all around you, or the ghetto?

A. Sure. Then they burned everything. The whole area was burning at that time. Then they took us and put us on the trucks and that was it. We went to the trains.

Q. Do you remember what you were thinking at the time?

A. What I was thinking? What could I think at that time? Nothing good. All bad. I was thinking what are they going to do with us next, you know.

Q. From Warsaw to the various camps you were sent to, at what place did you think that this might really be the end for you?

A. I didn't know that this is the end. I expect it's going to be very, very bad, after they took us out. We were fighting against them. What could I expect good here? Nothing. I expect actually the worst, but I didn't know what's going to be. I was thinking maybe they were going to take us to the gas chambers.

Q. Was there a time when you were more afraid than another time or not?

A. I tell you about the same. You could never tell what the Germans are going to do next, what they're going to do next. It was very hard to predict things like that. Nothing good. You couldn't predict nothing good. Everything bad.

Q. There was never an especially close call?

A. No.

Q. How was the life in Landsberg?

A. Life in Landsberg? In the beginning it was hard. I had to look around what to do after the concentration camp. I was poor. I had nothing, almost naked, nothing to wear. I had to look around what to do. So, you know, I came out from it. That's it. The only thing I was glad you know and happy to find somebody from my family, my cousin. I was happy really. I wouldn't believe that I'm going to have another Svibaum, my family. I find him -- actually he find me. I didn't find him. I would never find him. How could I find him. I changed from Svibaum into Baum. But he changed from Svibaum into Svibon. I would never find a Svibon into a Svibaum. I wouldn't find him, never.

Q. Was Landsberg well organized?

A. Yes. I organized a lot of things. First of all, in Landsberg, the camp was clean like a whistle under my management. Then he give me another job, Lucius Clay, the general. He came in. He liked it. He liked my job what I was doing, and it's a fact that I have papers from Landsberg which it's written that I am one of the best workers in Landsberg.

Q. Were there schools and training for people? Tell me a little bit about the camp itself, the life there, you know what I mean?

A. Nothing actually. It was nothing. They were eating and eating, drinking and eating and that's it. Everybody was trying to organize themselves. To meet girls, to meet boys, to get married, things like that. So, that's what happened. The Americans didn't send them to work. This was only a short time. That's why everybody was trying to find some way to make a living and to meet people.

Q. Were there vocational training schools or anything like that in there?

A. Actually what I know now I didn't see anything. They organized -- they made the police department. We should watch if something happens to the Germans to find, you know, some spies or whatever. There was the police department and the cleaning department. There was a big kitchen for the people together to eat. The Americans, they supplied a lot of food. That's all.

Q. Were you living in houses or in barracks?

A. We were actually living, it was actually I wouldn't say barracks. They were like apartments, the building. What they put a lot of people into one room and a few beds into one room.

Q. Who ran the camp?

A. The camp? Well, there was Americans, Americans they took care of it.

Q. Did people start celebrating Jewish holidays? Did all of this start taking place?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. That must have been a nice feeling?

A. Yes, it was nice but actually we didn't -- we organized a place where we should have a service, but we didn't know actually where the synagogues -- we didn't know those things yet.

Q. But you sort of did what you could?

A. It was a temporary thing.

Q. How long did you stay in Landsberg?

A. In Landsberg, not too long, about a few months or something like that.

Q. And then?

A. That's it. They had to empty all these camps, Salzheim, Landsberg. There was a _____ which they put people in _____. They had to empty it and give it back to the Germans.

Q. So, where did you go after Landsberg?

A. After Landsberg I went to Salzheim where I met my wife. From there I moved to Munich. I went to Munich I start to work, to make some money. I started to make coats, rabbit coats. The rabbit coats were in style at that time, grey coats. The American Army, the American soldiers, they met the German girls and I made the coats for them, and I made the coats for them, for the American soldiers. They paid me with scripts, the soldiers, they get scripts in the Army, not dollars at that time. I changed the scripts for dollars. That's what I did.

Q. How were your relationships were the German population at that time? Did you have contact with them?

A. I tell you after the war, I wouldn't believe it that the Germans could do something like this. I couldn't believe it. I met nice people, but I find myself nice people. I met nice people. They treat me nice and I wouldn't believe it that they could do something like this. Clean people and nice, and they all liked me and I used to like them. Nice and clean, it is unbelievable that they could do something like this.

Q. How long did you stay in Germany after the war?

A. After the war, I was until 1949. I came in 1949 in October, I think, I came to the United States.

Q. What do you think got you through all this? What gave you the strength to get through all these very, very difficult experiences?

A. I had very, very difficult experiences, which I don't believe myself that I'll be able to take it. The worst thing for me is that I lost a family. That is the worst thing for me and I had to hope and the way somebody told me when I went to Atlantic City -- I used to go to Atlantic City, there I met somebody sitting on a porch. I rented an apartment at that time. Somebody was sitting on

a porch and he asked me my name, from where I am, you know, and I told him. I described to him my brother, how my brother looked and everything. He was a furrier. He says to me, "You know something, the way you tell me about your brother, the way you describe him, I met a man in Sweden, and I think that this must be your brother. The way you tell me about your brother. He was a furrier. He was from Warsaw. And the way you describe to me the way he looked, his height and everything, that this is your brother, and I was talking with him. And your brother says to me, you know something, I don't like it here. I'm going to move from here. And he just went someplace. I don't know what happened with him." That's it. So, I was thinking that in the way that he was so sure that this is my brother that he's alive. And I started to look for him at that time. I started to search. The Red Cross and different organizations. You know, wherever I had a chance that's what I did, until now. He didn't show up yet. After so many years so I don't know what I shall say. I don't know if I could still find my brother after so many years. And the way I look for him, maybe he would look for me too, the same way.

Q. How important was religion to you throughout all of this?

A. Not so important, the religion, after all, after those things happened. I stopped to believe in that. First of all, how could God do something like this to let kill so many people, such high people, rabbis, distinguished people and good people. They didn't kill. They didn't rob. Why? So, at that time a lot of Jewish people they stopped just believing in God.

Q. Does being Jewish mean anything to you today?

A. Today? Look, I know I'm Jewish. I was Jewish for so many years, and I like to be a Jew. I have to believe. You have to believe in something, especially I had a very religious family, believers. They believe in God. I was seven years old and I used to go already with my father to the synagogue. When I was seven years old, and I was learning and I study Hebrew. I study the

Bible and I know a lot about it. So, I started to believe in it, but what I saw, you know, what I experienced, I just couldn't figure out what happened. How to believe in those things.

Q. But you do again. What you're saying is it's part of you? Was it difficult to begin a new after all of this, to start your life again?

A. After the concentration camps you mean? It wasn't easy. It was hard, but I find a job in Germany, I find a job. I lived in Frankfurt. Frankfurt was very close to Salzheim. When they closed up Salzheim, the camps, and the Americans I guess they made some kind of an agreement to give back to the Germans, I think, the camps. This was a temporary. I found a job in Frankfurt and I worked for a German furrier there. I wanted to make some money. So, he paid me in German money, not too much, a little bit, but anyway, as long as I find something to do. He was so friendly with me. He got so friendly with me that at lunch time we used to play ping pong in his attic. And when I left Frankfurt he says to me, I said I'm going to go to the United States. I am going to go to America. He says, "Look, when you will make \$100 a week, you let me know. You call me and I will close my business and I will go to the United States if you make \$100." When I made the \$100 a week in the United States, I called him up and I told him, "Look I'm making \$100 a week are you going to come to the United States?" He says, "I don't know. I changed my mind. I'm going to stay here."

Q. Let me ask you one more question. Have you thought about sort of what the long term effect of all of these experiences has been on your life. I mean besides losing your family, and i Know that's the most significant, but the way that you've lived your life since then, when you came to America, you had a wife. You had children. Can you think of ways that those earlier experiences effected the way you live now?

A. Yes, I tell you it's very hard to forget the experiences from the Holocaust. I will never forget that, and we shouldn't forget it. That's what we should do. It's very hard to forget the experiences from the ghettos, from the concentration camps.

Q. Because you think about it, I'm sure, daily, did that impact the way you did a certain thing, the way you worked, the way you raised your children? Is there ways that maybe you acted differently than somebody who didn't go through that, do you know what I mean?

A. The time I'm here in the United States, I say that the American people are just lucky people. They didn't live through that. They are really lucky people. It's a miracle I tell you what happened, that the Germans lost the war. The Germans, they almost occupied Russia and Stalingrad. Stalin actually I should say as bad as he was I think he saved the world. He started to push the Germans back from Stalingrad all the way to Berlin. If the Germans would occupy, they would take Russia, the world would be lost. So, the Americans are just lucky people, I tell you, that they didn't live through that and they didn't see that and didn't know that, what happened in Europe.

The worst spot was Poland, I don't know what happened in Hungary, but in the way I heard after I read the stories that Poland was the worst spot.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add?

A. What can I tell you? There's actually no end to it.

Q. Are there images that still linger with you after 50 years?

A. Yes, it's still in my mind.

Q. A specific image?

A. Still in my mind. I can never forget, you know. Those people, as long as they're going to live, I guarantee you, they'll never forget it. It's always going to be in their mind. A very bad,

very bad experience. And they shouldn't forget it, and we shouldn't forget that, and don't let it happen again. That's important. It could happen again. So, that's the story of my life. Not stories from the books or the papers, but stories of what I lived through, and I'm the live witness, as the rabbi said to me. He says, "I have here a live witness." And he liberated Buchenwald.

Q. Thank you.

Conclusion of Interview