

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Jack Moss**  
**March 23, 1995**  
**RG-50.030\*0463**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Jack Moss, conducted on March 23, 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 MOSS**  
**March 23, 1995**

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: Well, do you have things you want to start with?

Answer: Well, first of all I'd like to show my veracity.

Q: But nobody's questioning veracity, so I don't understand what -- what it is that you think you have to prove. I mean, what --

A: What -- what I -- what I like to do is start -- in order for my testimony, my recollections to be meaningful to any future researcher, there should be no doubt in whoever is going to go through it mind, that the person that states these things had real access and is the person he represents himself to be. Now you say you don't doubt who I am. You still don't know me from Adam. As far as I'm co -- you're concerned, I could have -- I can be anybody. I could have [indecipherable] in the books. What proof do -- what -- you have no knowledge except my word that I am Jakuv Mozelsio, that I was born in Łódź 1924 and so on. But if I present you with documentation, then you are my witness, as far as the future researchers are concerned. You follow my meaning?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay. All right, I can start off by showing my birth certificate.

Q: Did you have this during the whole period?

A: What?

Q: Your birth certificate?

A: No, I obtained that from Łódź, a copy actually, in 1969.

Q: So it's Jakuv, J-a-k-u-v?

A: Right.

Q: M-o-z-e-l-s-i -- s-i-o.

A: Correct.

Q: Mozelsio?

A: Correct.

Q: And it's 4 - 11 - '24, which -- and Rolfe is your father?

A: Correct.

Q: Okay.

A: There's a similar birth certificate of my sister, who is still alive, and she is -- right now is out in Los Angeles with her husband.

Q: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And she is --

A: About three and a half years older.

Q: Marion is three --

A: -- right.

Q: -- Marion Mozelsio, and born 16 - 4 - 1921. Also in Łódź.

A: Right, and as you see, the most important thing, which makes me so unique, is my father's occupation. Because without my father's occupation I wouldn't be right now here, sitting talking to you. This is the key to my uniqueness.

Q: Garbadz?

A: Garbadge.

Q: Garbadge.

A: A leather tanner.

Q: And you said there were what, three leather tanneries in --

A: Ba -- there were basically four -- Łódź was a textile center. We called the -- Łódź was called before the war, the Polish Manchester. And the tanneries were really a minor industry, the Łódź. There were four of them, all three Jewish owned -- no, all four Jewish owned. Three of them specialized in what they call upper leather, supp leather, one specialized in sole leather only.

Q: In s -- in --

A: Sole leather. Shoe leather.

Q: Oh, ah, ah, ah, sole.

A: Sole.

Q: Yes.

A: My father's tannery was the supp leather, upper leather. Although he was a master tanner and he could produce any type of leather.

Q: Did you work in that -- in the tannery also?

A: No, I did -- no, I wa -- I was b -- I was born in the tannery. We lived --

Q: Really in the tannery?

A: Ah -- oh yea -- well, it was a compound that was in -- it was a -- that consisted of the tannery and a housing complex. The housing -- the hou -- apartment house was occupied by partners and family only. So I was actually born in the tannery, on the same yard. And the tannery was a -- my playground, considering that we lived on the outskirts of Łódź -- in Poland there was no such thing as suburbs, a city just gradually tapered out. And it -- a leather tannery being a smelly and pretty dirty business, was by necessity located somewhere where -- pretty far out, away from the center.

Q: How does one get the -- the leather? The -- the skins?

A: I'd say it's a very complex process. You start the -- actually, leather is a -- they're two separate words. We start out with the hide, and when we say hide, we mean a skin of an animal beginning from the time when it's removed from the carcass up til the tissues are saturated with some chemical that will stop it from deteriorating or rotting. That means -- we call it a hide. That part of process -- and i -- it's a -- it's a length -- it takes even today with modern methods, it takes anywhere from four to six weeks to process a hide into a finished product. And the reason I say today because in 1946 - '47, I worked in a leather tannery in Philadelphia, for two years. And the process was virtually identical. Matter of fact, the machine I worked, I -- I was assigned to, the particular machine, was identical with the machine that we had back home, there was virtually no difference. The same machine, same thing, same way, same method. So, ou call a hide all the way up to the tanning process. The minute it's tanned, that means the tissues are permeated with some chemical, from then on it's leather. And all consecutive stages of it, we talk in terms of leather. The tannery was my playground because there were only the Jews of Łódź resided in the city, in center city. And as you went out to the peripheries, there were less and less Jews. The peripheries were populated by blue collar Gentiles. Especially that the native Poles were a minority in Łódź. Łódź had close to a million population, something like 800,000. There was about 250,000 Jews, about a hun -- 200,000 native Germans, which was termed in German the Volksdeutsch. So the Poles were really a minority. They were hi -- and there were streets in the city, when we talk about the city, where -- apartment houses where the only Gentile was the janitor. The entire apartment house complex was part -- occupied by Jewish families. For instance, the friend of mine with whom I'm staying right now in Silver Spring he lived on Piotkowska 20, which is center city. And it was a gigantic apartment house, two courtyards, house at least six, 800 apartments. And the only Pole was the janitor.

Q: And was this typical of the way in which the groups lived, that there was mostly separation between the groups?

A: Yes, yes, very much.

Q: So you had no Gentile friends, or [indecipherable]

A: Well, well, in my case, there were on the -- to the best of my memory, I lived on a dead end -- you know, it would help us, you have that map, it'll be a great help if we could kind of --

Q: This is the ghetto, so --

A: No, this is the -- this is Łódź.

Q: Oh, that's Łódź.

A: Right. Now keep in mind, I didn't make that for you, this is a --

Q: Right, right, this is --

A: Matter of fact, this is part of a collage. This is one half of a collage that I made for my children.

Q: So this is where the tannery was [indecipherable]

A: Right, this is the -- this was the tannery, and this is the ghetto boundary, the future ghetto boundary. The Jews really occupied densely, the area from Balloot mart -- market -- going this way, which would be -- this map is very wrong. This is north, okay?

Q: Right, right, so going north.

A: Going north. The center of the city was the s -- [indecipherable] is Freedom Square [indecipherable]. And that -- the densely populate -- the poorer Jews lived between Belt mark -- market and that's [indecipherable] more or less here. That -- that was Balotte, or Balote. This is the old part of Łódź. And the new part of Łódź was centered more or less around Pietma Center Piotkowska with all -- the sizes are not shown, this densely [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: And this was all Jewish populated. So you see us who come out here, that was very scarce.

This little street -- we -- I live on a dead end street, and our factory compound was actually closing the street.

Q: Uh-huh. And how do you pronounce that? Quid --

A: Kwizinska.

Q: Kwizinska.

A: While the Poles were very hard Polanizing, actually the original name of the city -- of the street was feesh -- the Germans named it during the 1917 occupation, Fishagossa. And then the Poles called it Walitsa Fishaira. Apparently Fisher must have been the man that started the [indecipherable]. But the Polanizing pressure came on, and everything got Polanized, so they done away with Fisher, and they -- up til '39, a lot of people, Jews especially, still called it Fishagossa, not Kwizinska.

Q: And why is there a number one to five here?

A: Because that's my legend. The legend is --

Q: Oh I see, I see, right.

A: -- one to five, fall 1924, til winter '39. And then January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to October '45.

Q: To October, right, okay.

A: Because I left --

Q: You just -- you left the places in this [indecipherable]

A: Right, I left the -- I was born there, and I occupied a little of the premises til November, December '39. Then I relocated [indecipherable] 10 in the ghetto. And eventually, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, when I was liberated by the Red Army, I just went back home.



Q: Right.

A: And I spent, again, the period between January 20<sup>th</sup> and October '45, or when I left Łódź and Poland permanent. I was again at Kwizinska in my original home.

Q: And is your father here most of the time, or is he -- is the tan -- is the tannery moved?

A: As of right now?

Q: No, no, no. I mean, when you moved here [indecipherable]

A: Well -- wa -- what -- wa -- wa --

Q: Or maybe we should go back farther.

A: Well, what happened was the tannery was -- my father was a person with no formal education. He only attended a chaidar, traditional chaidar. However, he was self educated in his -  
- in his teens, he -- he was born into a very religious Orthodox family. My grandfather was a Hassid, a follower of the Alexander [indecipherable] which makes him a real Hassid, he made annual pilgrimages to the court of the rabbi. I don't know whether you're familiar with these things, are you?

Q: Well --

A: I -- I mean, I'm -- I'm talking, but I don't know whether I should say these things --

Q: Sure.

A: -- because you know them, or whether --

Q: No, no, you s -- just explain.

A: And so my grandparents had -- my paternal grandparents had about eight, nine children. I believe five boys and -- six boys and two girls. And the boys were of the pretty independent mind, and my grandfather was a very strict person. Especially that -- back then -- we talk now about the late 1800, beginning 1900, children were considered a labor asset. So as soon as the

kids reached an age of let's say eight or so, my grandfather put them to work. And they worked for him til they reached the age of reason, which would be something like 12 or 14, and at the age of 14, they simply disappeared. My father himself was the second born, and he run away from home at the age of 14. Pretty far, too. He run away all the way 300 miles away. And he stayed away til he was 19. At the age of 19 he was -- at the age of 14 he was self supporting. He had the trade that he learned between the age of nine and 14 from my grandfather, in my grandfather's shop. He was so good that he was hired as a expert, or experienced worker. And he didn't come home til he was 19 where he could stand up to my grandfather.

Q: And all the boys did this, they all --

A: And all the boys except the youngest one, did the same thing.

Q: Was he physically rough on them as a [indecipherable]

A: Well, corporal punishment was normal and expected and accepted. In addition, this is the period when you're going to look at it this way, that really Poland was feudal. Renaissance and the Napoleonic era did not come to Russian occupied Poland at all. So Poland was basically feudal. However, the Jews, western Jews and Russian Jews, embraced a movement called the Haskallah, if you're familiar with it.

Q: Why don't you explain.

A: Enlightenment. They felt that the future is in aligning themselves with the new era that went along with the -- Napoleon's armies of education, of reaching for more material aims. So my father, while I guess he was absent from home, he did embrace the Haskallah movement, the enlightenment and he taught himself how to read German, how to read Polish. He read -- was wi -- he read a lot Polish -- in Polish, a lot in German. Whether it was -- I don't think there was

much choice, you read whatever was available. Even in my time, I read anything that was available. I was not particular.

Q: Tell me, did your father's sisters run away too, or was it [indecipherable]

A: No, th-they stayed home. And then I think when my father was about 18 or 19, he embraced the Tolstoyan philosophy. He became a follower of Leo Tolstoy. As you know, Leo Tolstoy was not also a auth -- not also -- not only an author, but he also formed a specific way of life. I think there's still a foundation somewhere upstate New York that was run by his sister -- fa -- by his daughter, sure. I wa -- I passed by Binghamton and I saw si -- a sign on the outskirts of bir -- Binghamton, something about Tolstoy and there is the foundation still there functioning. And that's why my father, for example, ne -- was not a smoker. My father did not smoke, that was part of that Tolstoyan way of life. No whiskey [indecipherable] just didn't drink, either way. He was not a glutton. That's again the Tolstoyan principle, don't overeat. Eventually he -- while he embraced it in his formative years, therefore it -- some of it, some principles of it stayed with him for the remainder of his life. It also involved some intangibles like honesty, like forthrightness. It's a -- it's a way of life. Tolstoy formulated a complete way of life, to lead a clean life, both ways, physically and philosophically. Eventually my father became a member of the bund, that was the Jewish Socialist Worker's movement. And he was capable, while my father's ancestors, that's my grandfather, I imagine even people before my grandfather, were all leather tanners because in the medieval times, tanning was one of the few trades -- [phone ringing] -- Is this going on?

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Oh. I didn't know, I thought we were just talking preparatory.

Q: No, no, no, no.

A: Tanning -- I don't know whether -- a-again, you know quite a bit about me because I sent some materials. I don't know anything about you. I don't know how much knowledge and what areas of Jewish history is your expertise. So I'm really --

Q: You have to tell me everything, because you're not just talking to me. When you put something --

A: But a -- but a -- I don't know how much am I repeating myself and it sounds to you like old -- old story.

Q: No, you misunderstand something. When you do something for an interview, even if I know things, like what Haskallah is, it's very important that you explain, because you never know who is going to listen and what they understand. So you must explain as if I know very little. That's the point.

A: All right, let's -- let's make a deal.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: When I use a word like -- a term like Haskallah and then offer an explanation, if you know about Haskallah, and you don't think that my explanation of [indecipherable] me stands for, correct me, cause I don't want to sound like a fool. So if you do know about Haskallah from other sources, am I correct in the way I presented it?

Q: Yeah, I think it's a ger -- I mean, I'm not -- I -- I -- I mean, I'm not an expert in Jewish history.

A: Well, it translates into --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- enlightenment, yeah.

Q: Enlightenment, right.

A: Anyway, going back to medieval times as we just should do, the medieval girls did not accept Jews, and there were very few trades available permitted to the Jews. The Jews were limited to money changing, trade, some thing -- whatever. But not skilled craftsmen. One of the few exceptions in crafts and trades was leather tanning. It was dirty, was filthy, the way it was done in medieval times, and it required a great amount of skill. And apparently the medieval Gentile had no inclination either to get himself all dirtied up with filthy rotting rawhides, nor put his mind to the comp -- to the complexities of tanning, converting a raw hide into a finished product. So that was one of the trades open to Jews, and my grandfather was a medieval leather tanner. However, he did not make a go out of it in his adult -- young adulthood. And he had to support his family by other means. My grandm other descended -- dese -- is a descendant of the first settlers in Łódź. My grandmother's name -- maiden name was Lieverman, however there was, because there were so few Jews in [indecipherable] intermarriages in families were common, and her stepfather's name was Hanoch Łódzki -- Łódzki. Łódzki means, of Łódź. Therefore, if we go back to let's say 1820, when Jews only had the -- the given names, and they had to be identified by some kind of a surname or a handle, this was Hanoch from Łódź. Łódzki is an adjective.

Q: How do you spell it?

A: Well, the word -- the letter L --

Q: L with a slash.

A: -- with a slash is pronounced ew, like a W.

Q: And it's sky at the end?

A: L-o-d-z-k-i.

Q: K-i.

A: And always a -- with a slash on top which makes it a U. Łódzki. Just like Jakuv could be spelled two ways. I can spell Jakuv with a U, or in Poland I did not spell Jakuv with a U. In Poland we spelled Jakuv with an O with a vertical slash above it. Poles use the U two different ways. So his name was Łódzki which definitely puts his ancestry way back into the first settlers of Łódz. And he was quite -- and her family was quite prosperous. Apparently my grandfather's family was not prosperous. He was born in a little town of Skierniewice, somewhere within I would say 20 - 30 mile. It's a hamlet. And the marriage must have been a brokered marriage, as all the marriages back then were. A usually young man went for the dowry. I mean, let's call a spade a spade. So apparently my grandmother's family was capable of offering a sizable dowry, and to satisfy the [indecipherable] family of my grandfather and the marriage took place with the condition that my grandfather will move from Skierniewice to Łódz where her family will kind of see to it that they will be able to become economically viable. And they opened for him, or purchased for him, a grocery store somewhere -- Staramiasta, somewhere in this area. Barlutai was farther down, Staramiasta was coming up. My grandfather was not successful as a businessman.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: He was very strong minded, and he did not appreciate his wife's family interference. So he picked up his wife and kiddies and went back to Skierniewice to get out from under his wife's parents' thumb.

Q: Wait a minute, I just want to check something. Why don't you just talk for a moment here.  
Just --

A: Okay.

Q: Okay. Want to just say hello?

A: Hello.

Q: Yeah, that's fine. Okay. All right, so he leaves, and went back to the he --

A: And went back to Skierniewice, and all he could do there is pick up the leather tanning in that hamlet. And somehow that didn't work out either, economically. So --

Q: Is that because all the sons left?

A: No --

Q: No.

A: -- because it just -- either he didn't produce good enough leather commercially, he must have been behind his times in the product. So he came back into Łódź and started a upholstery shop. And that's where his boys were trained in upholstery business. And that's was my father's occupation or trade at the age of 14 when he ran away from home. He was a experienced upholsterer. He was hired to run a shop at the age of 14. That must have gone on til the war broke out, the first World War. I don't know about the future wars, but in the past wars, the one I know of, which is the first and the second World War, the minute the rumor of war starts, leather becomes gold. And as soon as the war started, there was a scarcity of finished leather and my grandfather went back to the original leather trade which all a sudden became very profitable. And I heard tales that he used to tan the hides in my grandmother's kitchen, if you can imagine the kitchen. Well, it was illegal, because all this was black market, what we would call it in modern terms. Back then it was just forbidden by authorities, so was -- you would buy some hides off a peasant and --

Q: Now is your dad working for him at this point? Does he come -- now he's come back home --

A: No.

Q: No.

A: My dad came back si -- sometime in that -- at the end of that period, that means around 1916 - '17. And he joined my grand -- the -- the leather trade. The demand for leather was so great and so profitable that all sudden all the sons engathered, and they all started producing leather. And all of them became knowledgeable in leather tanning. However, my father had the greater expectations of himself and he single-handed made the leap from medieval to modern leather tanning. He taught himself German, and he read -- studied German biochemistry books, because there are no book that relates specific to tanning. Maybe right now there are because we live in specialized times, but back then if you want a formal education in that particular profession, you had to go into it by chemistry. And the only biochemical -- biochemistry available was in German. And I still -- in th -- our house, my father continued try to improve his methods, he continued to receive from Germany, German textbooks in biochemistry. And he became -- he made that transition from medieval to modern process. He became a master tanner, one of the best known master tanners in all of Poland.

Q: Now when you say master tanner, is that --

A: All be like a boss. A master tanner would be somebody that knows the process, both ways. The particular chemicals that -- and the -- the proportions, the mix of chemicals applied to each stage, and there are many stages, because you start off with a hairy piece of hide. First you got to get rid of the hair -- the hair, then you got to -- this -- and all si -- all this is done with a specific chemical. Some of these chemicals permeate the tissues, and before the next chemical is applied, they had to be flushed out. So it is a complex knowledge, which he had to learn himself out of German textbooks.

Q: Now, when you were born in '24 --



A: I was born in '24.

Q: Your father by then is a master tanner, or a ser --

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: So by 1919, when the war ended, they -- my grandfather and his sons, two sons, three sons -- no, two sons -- my grandfather and two sons became wealthy enough from this semi [indecipherable] war time production of leather to acquire the property on Kwizinska 14, which was a factory building. And installed in it modern leather tanning equipment imported from Germany.

Q: And when does your father get married, and to whom does he marry?

A: Oh, wait a minute, that was -- that was like in 1919, and because originally -- and originally there's -- the plant was owned -- established and owned by my grandfather and my two older uncles, Israel and Simon. However, my rel -- my father's was [indecipherable] that's right, excelled in the knowledge, both my grandfather and his brothers, so they hired him to become the master tanner, in charge of the production. And you say -- asked me before what it was -- mean to be a master tanner, master tanner means the -- being a -- the chemist, knowing the chemicals, the mix, the application and so on. In addition, the master tanner also has to know, and be able to instruct -- hired workers who had no skill in that trade, how to use the mechanical part of it because there were also machines that processed the product at different stages in different ways. Some of them shaved it, because basically a hide is too thick, has to be more or less brought down to a specific thickness, especially that after tanning, the tissues do tend to swell. So if you start off with a raw hide, let's say like a quarter inch thick, after it's tanned, it's three-quarters of an inch. Well, you can not use a finished product three-quarter of a inch thick

for a upper shoe, or for a pocketbook or a belt or anything else. So this had to be -- the thickness had to be reduced by mechanical means, or shaved on a power machine. And then there was a machine that would soften the leather because at some stage of the process they were coming out as hard as a board, and they have to be like, flexible. And that was done by a machine. And then the final glaze was not a paint, but was applied again by heat, by a steel roller striking the face -- the grain of the leather that was prepared before with some type of preparation and that will produce a glaze. So it was a mechanical process, therefore, a master tanner had not only be -- had to be not only knowledgeable in the chemical -- in the chemistry of it, but also in the mechanical in order to instruct or pass judgment on the performance of the workers. So that's a nutshell, is a master tanner. The man in charge of the entire production, knowledgeable in each phase. And by 19 -- I believe '21, my father earned enough -- saved enough money. My father married, I believe in 1919, something like that, because my sister was born in 1921. And -- and around 1921 - 1922, my father brought himself into the partnership. And moved into the factory complex. Up til then, while he was employed, he did not live on the premises. The premises there -- the apartment building within the compound was restricted to owners only. As long as he was not an owner, not a -- a matter of fact, he lived right on the corner, in an apartment on the corner of the middle street. That will be 107 Demillaskaga. That's where my sister was born. That's the way I'm kind of trying to get the chronological data because I know my sister was born on Demillaskaga 107 in a high -- rented apartment, while I was born three years later already on Kwizinska on the premises of the compound. And by then my father became a partner to the [indecipherable] to the factory. And there just very few Jewish families, and I remember them well. There was at 111 Yumanoskaga, which is just a few houses down, there was some kind of textile product plant, again with living quarters, owned by a family named Friedlander.

They were very wealthy. Must have been a very successful plant. Then going ho -- there was -- but there were no boys my age, there was a girl my sister's age, a daughter, and my sister was friendly with her. Then going farther toward the outskirts, at about 137 - 140 Yumanoskaga was another textile processing recycling plant, owned by a Jew named Osher. The reason I'm naming these names is because by the -- by the oddest quirk of fate, I came across these people many, many years later. I came across the name of Osher, Heinrich Osher in the chronicles of Łódź ghetto, that the -- put it in context, that there was a Heinrich Osher who married a Gentile woman, and lived outside the ghetto, and that Pruschidsky puts together some kind of a story about it. And I knew the man because the head of the family, Mr. Osher was a widower and he had two sons of the first marriage, Heinrich was the youngest son of the first marriage, and they had two children, a son and a daughter after the second marriage, and the son and daughter of the second marriage were my age -- the son was my age, and the daughter was my sister's age. So that was another Jewish family when my sister already had two friends, girl friends, Jewish girl friends. And I had at least one playmate. I would say up to the age of three or four, I played with Gentile kids because Kwizinska was an odd street. There were only six residential properties on the left side. The right side was a big fence with a wild garden behind it. So you're talking about six properties, maybe 30 - 40 Gentile families, and us, the Jewish family, closing off the dead end street. And I played with the Gentile kids my age til I was about three or four. But once they reached the age of three or four, five, they already became permeated with the anti-Semitism at home and church and they -- I became ostracized. They wouldn't play with me any more. And from then on I was leading a pretty solitary life. I had no playmates except when I would venture out to see that fellow Osher, his name was -- his name was Solomon.

Q: Solomon?

A: Yeah, we call him Sollik. He's alive and kicking in Israel [indecipherable] I heard about. And out of necessity -- now my -- now we talking [indecipherable] we talk about my father. My mother, in contrast to my father was a well educated person. My mother did not -- family did not originate from Łódź. They were immigrants from Ukraine. And they came from a little town in ukra -- western Ukraine named Schwub. My mother was born in Łódź. The Russian and Ukrainian Jews were much -- were not Hassidic, and were much more for enlightenment education. Therefore my mother attended a gimnasium, which is equivalent to high school, and graduated from a gimnasium. The gimnasium and the lyceum, that's the two additional years preparative for college. My mother was fluent in Russian, both in speech and writing. My mother spoke accentless Polish, and wrote perfect, correct Polish, while my father never managed Polish at all and spoke broken Polish. My father's native language was Yiddish. He would navigate in Polish, but it definitely was not the grammatical Polish.

Q: Did your mother speak Yiddish as well?

A: My mother no -- well, in addition to flawless Polish, perfect Russian, good German, not so much in language as in reading and writing, she spoke Yiddish in two dialects. With my father's family she spoke in Łódź Yiddish. With her family she spoke Litvok, Russian Yiddish. So my mother, out of -- I guess out of desperation having this kid four year or so old with no playmates, and I must have been pretty bright for my age, she taught me how to read. And I was reading fluently at the age of five. And I spend my ti -- in Poland's first grade -- there was no kindergarten, first grade started at the age of seven, not six. So between five and seven, I spend my time between reading whatever was available, and using the plant, the factory, as my playground. And early on I dif -- developed an affinity to hang out in the machine shop. And I must have a inclination, inborn inclination to work in mechanical things. Early on I achieved

dexterity in mechanical capabilit -- whatever mechanical. Because of all the places in the shop, and the -- the -- we employed about 20 some employees, it wa -- wasn't a great big factory. And everybody knew me because they -- th -- the workers, that was not much of a -- what would you say, leaving and hiring, the workers are permanent. A matter of fact, I had a picture here of a di - - end -- entire factory group, the crew, with three men that knew me -- Gentile Poles that knew me since day I was born. And that picture was taken in 1946, so you can imagine there were -- once you got a job in a -- in that factory, in -- especially in -- in my f -- in a -- in a factory, in a place of work that was supervised by my father, you were never fired. You could quit. If you were fired, you were fired for -- you had to be a real bad person to be fired. My father did not believe in firing people, that's part of his Tolstoy principle. Matter of fact, to [indecipherable] and -- and leap ahead, about 1937 I believe, the Polish parliament passed a law outlawing ritual slaughter. I don't [indecipherable] but there was an anti-Semitic woman representative, in the [indecipherable] which is equivalent Polish to parliament. She put the bill, presented a bill to the -- saying that the ritual slaughter is inhuman. And the bill pass, and all the Jewish butchers went out of business. And my father on principle, even though we didn't need any more help at that time, hired, I think four ex-butchers, because after all, they lost their livelihood, and being butchers, they were at least familiar and [indecipherable] hide were not odious to them. So he hired them. So anyway -- and th-these Gentile workers -- we had Jewish workers, too, I would say there was about eight or 10 Jewish employees. Some Hassidic Jews, but [indecipherable] very specialized trades. And the rest was about 17 or so Gentiles. And I just toddled around between them, they all kept me out of trouble, seeing I don't wind up in a pit, salting pit and -- or in the jaws of a -- a machine. But of all the places that I liked best was the machine shop. Why the mechanic let me handle tools and do things and help him. I really loved -- I had an affinity to

mechanical things. And then by the age of seven, I was -- became of school age and in Poland elementary school was compulsory education. However, the Poles -- the Polish authorities preferably had s -- did not preferably -- would not mix Jews with Gentiles. So therefore, if you run into a survivor out of Poland who will say that he attended a school, elementary school or even a high school with Gentiles together, he -- or she is from a small town where there was not enough of a Jewish population for a segregated school. In Łódź, with 250,000 Jews, there was no problem whatsoever. Therefore, I was assigned to a all Jewish public elementary school, located on Ribna one-three, which is inside the ghetto some of -- one of the streets there is Ribna Street. Matter of fact, on Ribna there -- there -- it was so much oppos -- in the middle of the s -- of a center of Jewish population that there were really two schools, one a -- two buildings, separate buildings. One at Ribna one-three, and the other one was Ribna 15. Each one first to seven grade. Each one a converted, old, beat up apartment house. This in spite of the fact that as you walked down Kwizinska and hit the intersection with Yumanoskaga, across the street, directly across the street was a brand new, beautiful, elementary school, built specifically for school purposes. And I could have attended it with a five minute walk, but that was for Poles, for Gentiles only. So therefore I had to take a -- I lived up here, I had to board a trolley car and tr-travel I would say about 20 minutes on a trolley car to Ribna, which would be -- this is Balskirinik, it's somewhere right before Balskirinik, because it was during the war in the ghetto boundary. Well, the education in that school wasn't very good, because the salaries paid to the teachers were minimal. That was state funded school. And we did have in the city of Łódź, our own Jewish private school system. Unfortunately it was in town. And there was no way to send a seven year old one on three different trolley cars to go to school. So I spend my first two years attending the first grade, second grade in this school on Ribna, and by the age of 10 my mother decided I'm

big enough or bright enough or whatever, to be able to travel, take three different trolley cars, and I was signed in to a private Jewish school on Hermoska 48. It was a non-profit school by a -- operated by a s-society dedicated to spreading knowledge and technical capability among Jews. Therefore, it consisted of two separate schools. One wa -- was teaching first grade all the way to lyceum. That's the 12<sup>th</sup> year, classic, normal curriculum. The other section was technical and had two departments, textile and mechanical. Well I start out then dar -- the separation happened on - - was offered to the student who from -- graduating from sixth grade. The first -- the elementary school was just one type. So I attended the -- the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade elementary school in that particular school on Hermoska 48. I was doing very well in school. I was class president for four years running, and put in the public school system --

End of Tape One, Side B

### Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: The homeroom teacher was more -- had more activity, participated more with the student body than the homeroom teacher in the United States the way I know it, and I do know what the homeroom teacher in the United States does because my youngest daughter is a schoolteacher. The homeroom teacher will be assigned this particular homeroom, a group of students, and you would follow them all the way. That means if you acquired a homeroom teacher, let's say in the first year of high school, you had him til you graduated. And he knew you thoroughly. And he dealt with the student body through the class president. So my function was not just a title, but there was a specific activity. I was the go-between. The way the chain of command went, if a visiting teacher let's say, math, geography, whatever, had a problem with a student, he would first try to deal himself, or herself with the student. Didn't get anywhere he'd turn to the homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher would turn to the class president and say what are we going to do about this kid? And again the oddest quirk of fate, my homeroom teacher in high school was a man named Nahoum Blumenthal. And Nahoum Blumenthal is of [indecipherable] and Yad Vashem employment. I came across some monographs and some ar -- articles and I think couple books published by Yad Vashem with a Nahoum Blumenthal byline. Isn't that the oddest thing in the world? And I know it's him because we had terrific relationship the two of us for the two years running before the war, '38 - '39, and then he disappeared during the war. In 1945 sometime early summer I'm walking on Piotkowska, principle street, and I'm running into Professor Blumenthal, my teacher. And we stopped and we chatted and we remembered the old times when I was the pupil and he was the teacher, and I asked him what he is doing and he said he just arrived from unit -- from the Soviet Union where he survived the war, and he was working for the Jewish Historical Society, and the Jewish Historical Society was transferred



fairly recently to Łódź and he is -- he just arrived in Łódź and he's working for the Jewish Historical Society. So I pretty sure that anything appearing with the name of Nahoum Blumenthal out of Yad Vashem would be the same individual because eventually I imagine as -- I -- I don't think he stayed any longer than 1956 in Poland, because 1956 was when Gomoka opened up a -- the borders for the Jews, and a lot of Jews left.

Q: Okay. I'm going to suggest that we try to move closer to the --

A: Okay, let's --

Q: -- to the war, only because of the time --

A: Oh, okay.

Q: -- at this -- at this moment.

A: The war --

Q: So, the war.

A: -- the war. The war is at -- the war is -- how the war started. Because I kept no diary --

Q: Did you think about keeping a diary?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did you think about it?

A: No.

Q: You didn't?

A: No. Because -- because I kept no diary, why the events are very strong in my mind. As you see that my -- I got a memory like an elephant. I wish I wouldn't. I -- I wish to God that I wouldn't. I mean things are -- when I -- I -- I -- I-I -- I can see pictures in my mind like a film running. I spoke today -- this morning at breakfast, I spoke with my friend in Silver Spring, and I say to him, Henry, do you remember I -- no, said to him, "Henry, I finally pinpointed the

exact day of the -- the d -- exact date of the day of interregnum, when we spent the day together with the city laying dead in front of us.” He says, “I don’t remember.” And I say to him -- and because -- and I couldn’t -- I did prepare myself for this interview because of the chronological problems of events. I don’t want to confuse it. According to the Prusichsky, that’s the chronicles, the Polish army pulled out September sixth, evacuated. The Germans entered September eighth. Now that gives me the date that I spent with Henry. I spent with Henry the day of the seventh of September. He lived on Piotkowska 20, which is center of the city, and I lived on the outskirts. I remember it like now, was a beautiful, sunny day, cloudless. And the city was dead. No vehicular traffic, no trolley cars running, hardly any people in the streets. And I made my way all the way from my home, all the way down [indecipherable] down, down [indecipherable] up to Piotkowska 20, and I went up and we spend day together, went on the streets, we walked the streets, and I didn’t get home til about five o’clock, and my mother thought that I already am gone permanently because there was a drive to move eastward. And she thought that I met some -- with some fellows in town and we decided to go before the Germans enter. So that’s how the war started. There were rumors before the war about the -- the probability. I remember pikou -- I was always a voracious reader even though I did develop a social life, my primary entertainment and preoccupation was reading. I remember sometime in the summer of ’39, I came across a book called, “The Brown Book,” which described the atrocities committed by the Germans -- by the Nazis on the German Jews. Dachau concentration camp. With pictures. And I remember taking the book down the factory yard where my father was kind of circulating, and stopping my father in his work and saying, “Dad, take a look what I just picked up at the library.” And I showed -- opened it up and showed him the pictures and some captions, how the Jews are being maltreated -- German Jews are being maltreated by the Nazis.

And I say, "Dad, what's going to happen when the Germans will arrive? When the war starts, then Germans will come here." And my father's answer was typical of the [indecipherable] generations. "Well," he said, "I dealt with the Germans in 1917 - '18. You can do business with the Germans." Very significant.

Q: Tell me about this book a little bit. Do you have any --

A: I have no idea --

Q: You don't --

A: It was -- the title was "The Brown Book," had a brown cover --

Q: Published in Germany you think?

A: No, pu -- published in Polish.

Q: Oh -- mm-hm.

A: Could be a translation, pretty thick.

Q: And what year did you read that?

A: And profusely --

Q: It was '37?

A: -- illustrated. It must have been published at least around '37 - '38, for me to read it in Polish in '39.

Q: So you read it in '39?

A: Right.

Q: Uh-huh. Had you known about Kristallnacht?

A: Oh yes.

Q: And where did you read about that?

A: In newspapers. Radio, newspapers. The Poles were quite eager and exuberant, if you can use that term exuberant to announce publicly these news, how the Jews are being beaten up and -- because it gave them a more or less a moral excuse to mistreat the Polish Jews. After all, if the western, the civilized world, which goes to Poland, wa -- German, it was the western world.

Q: What did yo -- did your father respond to that differently, or your mother? That you're not --

A: I don't -- I don't think I discussed it with my mother. And that's where my father was wrong. How -- now once the war broke out, again I got to use somebody else's dates. After the Germans entered, the restrictive measures were announced against the Jews virtually immediately. And I have a date, September -- beginning September 18<sup>th</sup>, til -- til December 18<sup>th</sup>, there was a whole row, one after another of orders restricting Jews, beginning with curfew, not permitting Jews to use principle streets to -- to walk on.

Q: And how would you --

A: The Jews had to use side streets.

Q: And how was using --

A: Piotkowska was out of bounds for Jews. Matter of fact, Henry's house, which was facing Piotkowska [indecipherable] they had to break through the back wall, so there would be back entrance from a street parallel to Piotkowska. And then there was a ordinance about the Jews being identified first by yellow bands.

Q: Yellow bands?

A: Yes.

Q: Around the arm?

A: Armbands.

Q: Armbands.

A: The star came right after. The armband I would say was on for about two or three months and then the order was changed to a Star of David they wore on -- on the chest and the back. You know, you had to have it on a -- your shoulder too.

Q: How did you find out? How were the ordinances --

A: Oh they were printed in a form of a large poster. And there were special pre -- before the war they were like round structures, I'll say eight, 10 foot diameter by about 12 foot tall, made out of concrete, specifically for posters. And movie houses, movie theaters, whatever, was -- wer -- anybody was free to put a poster up. And --

Q: Do you remember seeing these? You remember seeing these posters?

A: The -- restricting the Jews? Oh sure. Was -- you just -- you went on the street and you stopped at this poster display and you read the -- the latest poster.

Q: What was going through your head at this time?

A: To tell you the truth, I was preoccupied. First of all, I was in love.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I was going steady with a girl, so war or no war, and maybe I was reckless, or I didn't realize what I'm getting into it, but all these ordinance I took -- I'll say -- I say okay, I can live with that. I mean, the curfew, I can live with that, I can adjust my lifestyle. Armband, I can live with that. Old --

Q: You are 15?

A: Yeah. Well, 14 going on 15. It don't stop me from dating my girl and dating -- and taking her to the movies, even though the movies already in the center city, the first run movies, were forbidden to the Jews. But there were a lot of small movie theaters, because movie thea -- movies

was the only entertainment available to general public. So movies were very popular, there was a -- a slew of movie theaters, third, fourth run.

Q: And these are western movies as well as movies from --

A: Western, they were mostly western movies --

Q: Mostly western.

A: -- yeah, there were hardly any movies made in Poland. Also -- all -- oh, I remember the first movies I saw was Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, Elmer Lincoln. The first Tarzan was Elmer Lincoln. I remember him right now. He had a beard. Imagine Tarzan with a beard.

Q: And these are translated, are these captioned?

A: Oh well, they had the captions, right. So I remember just taking these ordinances part of that's the way it is.

Q: So you forgot the book in some [indecipherable]

A: Well, I didn't forget the book, but I didn't relate to it because now -- now we've gone into the specifics. What happened with business, because even though I was only 14, I was raised on the factory compound.

Q: Wait a minute, let me -- let me stop this for a minute. I just want to --

A: So it wasn't like my father would go off somewhere to nowhere, leave the apartment or whatever and come back in the evening. Business and residence were always --

Q: Together?

A: -- together. My mother -- my mother participate in the -- in the business. A matter of fact, my mother participate very strongly because she was the only woman in the whole bunch that spoke flawless Polish. And the relationship between the Polish authorities, whether tax authority or whatever, and the Jews were, at the best, adversary. And if a Jew came with some kind of a

problem to be corrected into a state run office, if he spoke with an accented Polish, he was ridiculed, he was disregarded, he wasn't even given the proper attention. So my mother was -- any time there was a problem with any kind of state office, and the operation of the factory, my mother was delegated to go down and deal with the bureaucrats because her Polish was a flawless Polish. So -- now, therefore, I was present -- not I took any kind of active part in the business, but I was present and s -- I was -- I had the knowledge of the business subliminally, virtually by osmosis. And I knew that the business in the preceding months before the war was very, very dead, was virtually at standstill. There was no trade going on.

Q: [interruption] Okay.

A: Things were bad, and right after the Germans entered, all sudden things picked up. First of all there was a steady stream of uniform, green uniform Germans. I don't know their rank. They definitely were not privates, coming in and buying leather, in all kind of quantities, til they reached a point where the partners, my father and his brothers were limiting the quantities because when a German or two German uniformed would come in and say they want to buy skins, finished skins, leather, they would be offered two, or three, or four skins, with the usual explanation and I was witnessing it, you are not a merchant sir, you want for some kind of private use, is two good enough, or would you like three? And apparently they had all the cash in the world.

Q: So they paid?

A: Oh yes. They were polite, they were well behaved, they were -- they were not Volksdeutschen they were Reichsdeutschen. They were -- I believe they were, because of their green uniforms, they were regular Wehrmacht. The regular Wehrmacht were just decent, ordinary Germans, they were not Nazis. Cause the [indecipherable] Nazis would be black uniforms, either SS -- well, SS.

Whatever. They were Wehrmacht. And they came with -- money was no problem and all of a sudden business was booming. And there was this stream of Germans coming in, and I became inured to the fact that the German in a green uniform is in a way, harmless. Can you see that complacency?

Q: So you didn't -- you did not think about danger.

A: Right, cause I realized that we Jews are like a homeless dog, outside the law. Now no laws applied. I was at one time, some time I would say in end of September, some Germans came to the house, into the plant on a weekend when the factory was shut down. And they knocked on the apartment doors. And they wore civi -- civilian clothes but wore Nazi armbands, with the swastika. And they were looking for young men. And they grab me and escorted me, took me down to a nearby high school complex, and I was made -- German refugees from the eastern territories were arriving into Łódź because under the Soviet German pact, any German that lived wa -- east of Bug river, in the Russian occupied territory was free to leave with as much belonging as he wanted to. And many of these Germans fled. And they arrived, among other cities, they arrived in Łódź. And that's where the problem started for the Jews, in the center of the city because all a sudden, end of September, October, there are hundreds of German families arriving in Łódź, trying -- and the German authorities desperate to try to find a place for them to live, so the logical answer for them was throw the Jews out of their housing, and offer the housing to the refugee Germans. But they wouldn't go into Baloote, because the housing in Baloote was no running water, no indoor plumbing. So these Jews in Baloote, the poor Jews, they were left alone. And it was the upper scale Jews, occupying the new sections and the new areas that had running water, that had indoor plumbing, that were the first ones to suffer of being tossed out su-summarily out of their apartments. So I was taken down to that relocation center.



Germans were arriving and I -- there was a -- there was a group of Jews, young Jews, dragged in from God knows where. I didn't know anybody. And th -- we're told to -- they were arriving by trolley cars, apparently from the train station. And we were told to help them. So I carried the suitcases and bags from the sidewalk into the interior of the school, was [indecipherable] it was gym or something. And work for about two or three hours and then there was a break and -- in the transports, and I was invited to whatever I -- ask would want some refreshment. Just like the refugee -- refugees. There were the coffee urns, or whatever, and go ahead and have a sandwich, and so. But on the other hand, one day I was walking the street, I was grabbed by a German who had no identity -- no identification at all. I don't know even know whether he was a German. But he say, hey you there, grabbed me out -- by the arm and he said, "I need you." And he drive me to his house and made me move some furniture for him. I mean, we were like a homeless dog. But that still didn't stop me from --

Q: From moving around.

A: -- from moving around because these -- these things done to me, were not like an organized systematic, but we knew that we Jews can be treated anyway an individual German wants to treat us, but basically I was treated fairly decently. I was never abused, let's put it this way, even when they grabbed me for something. And this brings me to a very interesting point. That -- because that was the last time when I was permitted to travel the streets. From then on I became a prisoner in the compound. According to, again the Pruschidsky, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the Germans destroyed the statue of Kościuszko that was placed on Plac Wolności in the center of the city.

Q: That's Freedom Square, right?

A: Freedom Square, right. It was a horse mounted Kościuszko -- I think the horse was on two legs, two hind legs and Kościuszko the big saver, and this -- this -- the horse and the rider were

on top of a pedestal, like a -- I would say octagonal. A very large one, possibly 30 feet diameter.

It was a very massive pedestal. [indecipherable] support, but -- and each panel of the oc --

octagon depicted different feats in life of Kościuszko. And apparently this was made out of bronze, were bronze relief panels. And that was my -- ah, no -- so once I read this, the whole event came to my mind. I had a date, and I went with my date to the movies.

Q: This is the girlfriend, this is the same girlfriend?

A: Right, same girlfriend.

Q: What's her name?

A: I was going steady. Her name was Rainya -- my God, just told Henry.

Q: Well, it'll come back.

A: I met her in '38. So I met her and we went to the movies, I remember the name of the movie theater, Bika, which means fairy tale.

Q: What does it mean?

A: Fairy tale.

Q: Fairy tale.

A: Yeah, Bika in Polish is fairy tale. And we went to the movies, we saw the picture. It was somewhere on the outskirts, and must have been shortly before the curfew and I didn't take her home. We parted company one point, she went up, and I went up, and I tell you my way down again Nowomiejska, was Skerska and somewhere before I even hit Skerska, which is an extension of Nowomiejska, I get stopped by a uniformed German patrol. And they bring my back to Pazelnofscha and I see a group of people working at the Kościuszko statue. And I'm being ordered to take my overcoat off, this was November, pretty cold, put a pile of overcoats and join the workers. So I joined the workers, and there were some with [indecipherable] tools,

chisels, sledge hammers, were banging away and trying to separate these bronze panels away from the concrete. And I worked til about two a.m. At two a.m., I guess the Germans got tired -- and they were decent enough, there was a non-com -- it was a military unit, and it was a non-com in charge, and he said, "Okay Jews, go home, that's the end, the end of the day." And we said, "How we going to go home, it's a curfew and we will get arrested on the way home." And he was nice enough to get ahold of a bunch of slips and s -- write something in German and hand out to each one of us. Here, here. You show it -- anybody stops you, you show it to him, you'll be all right. So I went home and that was the end of my -- my parents withdrew permission for me to leave the factory compound from then on, that's November 11<sup>th</sup>, I was virtually imprisoned.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: You can imagine the [indecipherable], and -- and there was also already talk, gossip, that the Jewish businesses are going to be confiscated. So my father was looking for a tame or captive German to kind of be the front man.

Q: What word --

A: Be a front man.

Q: Yeah, I know, but what word did you use?

A: Captive, na -- tame.

Q: A tame?

A: Yeah, a tame German, yeah.

Q: Oh, a tame German, I see.

A: Tame, ye -- captive, yeah. And -- and again, an odd coincidence that in 19 -- between 1935 and 1938, my father did not work with his partners at this location, but around a tannery, in a -- a rented tannery in Erda Parbenietska, which is oh, somewhere in this direction.

Q: North. North of --

A: I -- yeah, there was Parbienietsa and there was Erda Parbenietska, two separate townships adjoining Łódź, with [indecipherable] running [indecipherable] platzi -- this was Platzia Monta. It's not marked, but this junction is called -- was called Platzia Monta. It was Platzia Monta, Plaz Baranik, Plaz Bowtski. At these two junctions the city -- there were two separate trolley car companies. One was inner city, had their own trolley cars, their own colors, and there was the suburban, which had their own trolley cars, different shape, different size, and different color. And they were running out of [indecipherable] Platzia Monta outwards. These were the junction points where you transferred.

Q: Right.

A: So my father worked in a rented tannery. And that tannery belonged to a German, wealthy German family, well known in Łódź, named Ranka. And one of their in-law, named Rudolf Stribel, he was kind of appointed to run that tannery some time in the 30's, I -- early 30's and he was not a tanner, he was a bookkeeper [indecipherable] bookkeeper, he was a bookkeeper. And he ran the tannery down the ground, and his in-laws shut it down. And it was vacant and my father teamed up with another merchant, and they rented the tannery, and started producing.

Q: So he -- so he's not running two tanneries, now, he's closed down --

A: No, he lets his brothers -- no, no, he left --

Q: I see.

A: -- he stepped out of the --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That was -- there were differences, serious differences between my father and his brothers and in 1935 he reached a point where he just chucked it.

Q: But you're still living in the compound?

A: But we -- yes, right, while he was not participating any more either in the production or the proceeds of the plant, we were still owners to the property and therefore we still occupied our apartment. So when they rented that tannery Erda Parbenietska, this fellow, str -- Rudolf Stribel, came around a-and introduced himself that he is the son-in-law of the owners of the property and he's a bookkeeper, and would we -- would my father need a bookkeeper? And my father and his partner said yes. Especially that he was skilled in that particular kind of bookkeeping because he was doing the bookkeeping for the previous operators of the tannery. So they hired him, and he worked for them for -- between '35 and '38. In '38 they quit that, gave up [indecipherable] ran out and they came back, both my father and his then partner, to the Kwizinska. Actually, what happened is that partner of my father bought one of my uncles out, and my grandfather. So there was a change in the make-up of partners. So at that point when some of the Germans that were coming in were kind of not nice, and there was rumors of being -- Jewish properties being confiscated, my parents -- well, the adults started looking for solutions, and one solution that became immediately apparent was get hold of Stribel and find out what he is doing. And they -- they found him, and there he is I would say two months into the German occupation, still walking next to his shoes. Apparently he did not benefit in the first eight weeks from being a superior German.

Q: What do you mean he was walking --

A: Next to his shoes. With holes in his soles.

Q: I see.

A: He was still pretty poor shape. Couldn't latch on anything, and at that point they offered him a job, that first of all he would be a front man. He will deal with the Germans. And he accepted it eagerly, anything, hey. And it was a -- going with mixed results because he really had no official standing, so some -- while most of the Germans would kind of act more s -- in a more subdued manner when they would deal with him, others were bolder enough to say, who are you and what are you doing, what are you, a Jewish servant? And it would even make the situation worse. So it was a mixed blessing, but it -- it worked to some extent, and business was good. I mean, money was rolling in like crazy. And then all a sudden some time again, I would say by November, the Germans established, confiscated officially -- there was a decree out of Berlin confiscating all Jewish property and establishing a special office to handle Jewish property. And administer Jewish property. It was called in German, De treuhand stellech. Treuhand means an honest hand, treu honest hand. And the administrators were named Treuhande. So the adults, the partners got on Stribel, and say hey Stribel, you better go down to Posum -- Posun, I -- which was the seat of the -- by then naturally, Łódź was incorporated into Bartigo and we became thoroughly Germanized, all the vestiges of pole -- Polish [indecipherable] were gone. We became a German city in Germany.

Q: [inaudible]

A: Bartigo, with Posun becoming the capital of the province. So we kind of -- the adults said, hey Stribel, you better go down to Posun and apply for the job of treuhande for this factory. And he kind of hemmed and hawed. I don't -- I don't know why he was timid about it. I -- I remember it because I was partic -- I wasn't participating, but I was present to the conversations. The space was limited. The office was the office, big deal. But he went off. He went off, he came

back I think two or three days beaming, with official papers, naming him that administra -- official administrator of the factory. At that point they sat down the partners with him and they wrote a private agreement where he recognize the current owners as the true owners and he will only act as their representative, while representing the German office. And he recognizes the right of the owners to participate in profits. It was like a private arrangement. At the same time, while this was going on and Stribel's presence became kind of more official standing, he could deal better with the -- whoever arrived to purchase the leather, and the Jews kept in the background. Being in Bartigo -- located in Bartigo, in a German city, because all vestiges of Polish rule disappeared. The cit -- there was the Polish police disappeared. The shupari appeared, they were imported. Shup is the [indecipherable] the law and order, all the German institutions, and then we had -- at same time were -- became aware that not all of occupied Poland was incorporated, that the Germans just took the western part and formed three provinces, us being the center one, Bartigo. However, the eastern part is called general government, and there is -- the Polish rule prevails, the Polish police, national police is still in charge in their navy blue uniforms. Polish schools are being active. Polish language is -- language is the official language. So all things be equal, we assumed that between -- that the Jewish fate in the hands of the Germans is going to be much worse in area incorporated directly into Germany, than in -- into area that is only temporarily occupied by the Germans for the duration of the war, with its fate decided after the war.

Q: Now how did you find out about what was going on in the general government?

A: There was travel going on, back and forth. Well, there was also i -- let's -- let's say that there was actually a four -- there was an exodus of Jews out of Łódź at least three -- three times. The first exodus was immediately following the Polish army as it evacuated. A lot of Jews left,

especially Jews with -- who were Communists or Communist followers. And -- because they -- we already heard that the Russians are coming in from the other side, and the first wave of the Jews that left Łódź, the young men especially, kept on going. And went all the way across the Bug river to the Russians, to the Reds. And the other part of the wave, the middle edge, were the ones that were cash liquid -- had liquidity and they left hoping that the Germans weren't [indecipherable] the Poles will at one point resist. So that the first wave. That right away reduced the po -- Jewish population of Łódź. And then there was the second wave, when Łódź was incorporated into Third Reich, and we became aware that eastern occupied territories are general government, so that was a second wave of emigration of Jews out of Łódź. Again, the ones that were cash liquid. You had to have liquidity to leave. So while we're sitting in the tannery, making hands over fist, we considered -- I'm talking about adults -- that the state is going to be temporary, and very temporary. That very soon we'll have to move on and being of a kind of a mind that looks ahead and doesn't wait for things to happen, just like the way we hired that German before we had to, we started looking for alternatives. It so happened that my mother's brother, who was operating a very successful establishment on the corner of [indecipherable] Nowomiejska. He had like a sweet shop, lunchroom, whatever, but very successful. He -- and he was able to pull out a lot of cash from the banks before the Jewish accounts were frozen. I remember him boasting, showing -- opening up a shoebox full with currency, high domina -- denomination currency, telling to -- telling my mother in my presence, "Don't worry about money, because in this box there's enough for both our families to survive the war." They were childless.

Q: They were what?



A: They were childless. He was a younger brother, my mother's younger brother and they were childless. So the adults somehow organized, I don't know -- I don't remember how, but organized an apartment, some housing in a town called Tomashuv Mazovyetski. And that was already rented through emissaries. And it was sop -- the component that's supposed to eventually occupy these premises rented in that town Tomashuv Mazovyetski was my mother's brother with his wife, a childless couple, my parents with their children, that means my sister and me. And my Uncle Simon with his wife and again, son and a daughter. The son was born in 1910, was 14 years older than I, he was already a -- part time into medical studies in Belgium. And his daughter was my -- about old as my sister. Not very much older. So that was the component that was going to go to m -- settle in Tomashuv Mazovyetski when things come to an end at the tannery. But somehow they didn't want to come to an end. The money was good and was still fairly safe haven. However, my uncle, the one that -- my mother's side, he was [indecipherable] at loose ends. He lost his business. So the decision was that part of the component will go off to Tomashuv, the ones that are not necessary. That means my father and mother will stay on, my Uncle Simon and his wife will stay on, and everybody, the youngsters, my sister and I in early teens and my cousins in their late teens or early 20's will leave for Tomashuv under the supervision of the two adults.

Q: Now, which two adults then?

A: My father's -- my mother's brother and his wife --

Q: Wife.

A: -- that childless couple.

Q: Right.

A: And there was already a truck hired, and I remember an afternoon some time in November, possibly mid-November or so, the truck was in the factory yard and the -- they [indecipherable] after the work stopped, being loaded with basic furniture, bedsteads, mattresses, and -- and bedding and all our spare clothing, winter clothing, I mean you name it. Just bare necessities left behind because everybody's already going and the only ones that are staying just for another few weeks, is my father and my mother, and my Uncle Simon and his wife, for as long as the business is good and can be milked. And once the truck got all loaded up with all the goods and now came the turn for the -- for humans to get loaded up and first my cousins hopped on, and then my sister went up on the tailgate, and she was in, and I was the last one. There is my uncle and my aunt standing, and my mother and my father, and naturally Uncle Simon and his wife. And I'm the last one to get on the truck, the tailgate, and my Aunt Ida turns to my mother and says, "Him I don't take. He's too nasty and he's too fussy, I don't want him. I'll take Mary, but I won't take him. I won't put up with him." And the truck went off without me.

Q: She hadn't said this before, how you --

A: No. Well, I was --

Q: Did anybody argue --

A: -- maybe that -- pardon?

Q: -- did -- did anybody argue?

A: There -- there was no point of arguing. I mean, she was a supervising adult, if she turned her thumbs down on me, that's it. And besides, it wasn't that critical, because after all, the bulk of the people went, and the bulk of the goods, it was the goods that -- and the leftover to follow would be only lightly encumbered, because all the stuff went.

Q: Now there's no problem about going, apparently, right? They're not -- they're not stopped?

A: Apparently no --

Q: Right.

A: -- and they arrived safe in Tomashuv, and it turned out that things in Tomashuv were terrible. The housing, the food, or whatever, the -- both the Gentile and the Jewish native population was resentful of the newcomers, and now I stayed behind. I was happy. I didn't want to go. I -- that was ma -- my playground, there is the plant, my factory and I was happy to stay behind. And that was sometime in de -- late December, or beginning of January. I was standing in the factory yard as usual during the day, and my father was standing in factory yard in the snow. And the gate opens up and my sister bursts through the gate and grabs my father by his neck and starts kissing him, saying "Tatish, Tatish, I love you." And behind her comes my cousin Manasha. And that's it, just two of them. And we start asking what's what, and Manasha, who was older, he was in his 20's already, he explained that things were unbearable at Tomashuv, there was a lot of friction among the -- the family itself, and friction with the neighbors, both Jews and Gentiles, with the indigenous neighbors and the newcomers. And finally Manasha -- Manasha took sick and there was no doctor up there and when he got well he decided to go back home. And my sister Mary decided to go with him; not his sister. And they made their way back, I would say about -- through the winter snows, at least 130 - 150 miles, hitchhiking or just walking, traveling along the highways. But they made it back home.

Q: So that's a little before --

A: The ghetto.

Q: The ghetto.

A: The people in Tomashuv did not survive. My cousin Mina died. None of them survived. We all survived. Manasha died in Sweden last year. That's the magic of the tannery.

Q: Magic of the tannery.

A: Right.

Q: Let's stop for a little bit and just talk, shall we?

A: Sure.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Conclusion of Interview