

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Asa Shapiro**  
**July 7, 2007**  
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## **PREFACE**

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## **ASA SHAPIRO**

### **July 7, 2007**

Question: Could you tell me your name please, and where you were from.

Answer: The name from now, or the name from -- from Koretz?

Q: Let's do both.

A: Huh?

Q: Your name in Koretz.

A: In Koretz. You spell it A-j-z-y-k, Izak Shapiro, S-z-a-p-i-r-o, that's in Polish.

Q: And in English?

A: In English, A-s-a, Asa, S-h-a-p-i-r-o.

Q: And you're from Koretz?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about Koretz that you remember before the war?

A: Yes. Come from a very small town, very happy town, not too many people. Nobody left over there right now, but we were there and we were very happy. We didn't have nothing, but was hap -- we were happy.

Q: How many Jews were in the town, do you know?

A: I would say about 3,000.

Q: 3,000. And how large was this -- was the town?

A: Huh?

Q: How large was the town, total?

A: Altogether, including the Polish people and everything else, probably about six.

Q: So 50 percent you think, were Jews.

A: Yeah.

Q: And how large was your family?

A: How large?

Q: Your family.

A: Yeah. I have a -- a brother and two sisters.

Q: And what are their name -- what were their names?

A: Their name, my f -- my brothers -- my fir-first name, Sara, the sister, my older sister. My brother was Shunya, and my younger sister were Judith.

Q: And your parent's name? Your parent's names?

A: Rachmil, my father, and Haya is my mother.

Q: And aunts and uncles, cousins?

A: Yes, we have uncles over there. Used to be, but not there any more.

Q: How large do you think the family was?

A: The family was about 25 people, in different dir -- different places there.

Q: But all near Koretz?

A: Yes.

Q: And -- and how many survived the war?

A: Survivor was myself, and my sister. Three.

Q: Three. Did you come from a religious family?

A: Well, in between.

Q: Mo-Modern Orthodox?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. So your father didn't have a beard and pay -- pay --

A: No, no, no.

Q: Well, what was a -- what was a Friday night like in -- at your house?

A: On a Friday night we [indecipherable] together, on a Saturday, we ha -- have been to s-synagogue, all the time.

Q: And do you remember any holidays that --

A: [indecipherable]

Q: -- Pesach? [indecipherable]

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah, big.

Q: So you would have --

A: My mother was a real good cook, and she made a -- she would -- there's a lot of people all the time.

Q: What did your father do?

A: My father was -- was in the cattle business.

Q: So he had non-Jewish customers?

A: Ah, what?

Q: He had non-Jewish customers?

A: Oh, a lot of them, yeah.

Q: And w-was there ever any trouble with -- with them?

A: With them? No. We had gotten along very good til the end. On the end we have a fellow that he was my brother's best friend for 22 years. And when the Germans came in, he became a policeman. And he is the one -- the first one that came into the house and liked my mother very much, and walked into the house as -- dressed up as a policeman, he says, open up the closets over here. She opened the closet and he takes out a -- a suit that my brother used to wear, and he

put on the suit, how'd it fit me, it's okay, then took the coat, it's okay. Then took my brother and killed my brother.

Q: He killed your brother?

A: Yeah. [indecipherable] His -- my next door neighbor, the best friend ran away. He was doing it to a lot of people. [indecipherable] us, we were very shocked at that time, the family. So after the war, my sister was on the underground. She had about 500 people working for her. She came back to town, to mine town, to my Koretz, she became the mayor on that time. As she was going out to Kiev, she was there in the Kiev and a lot of people come in to the place to make out passport to go away someplace else. As she walks in, in the hallway she sees a lot of people sitting. And she sees the guy what killed my brother sitting over there. She walks into the mayor, says, what's the guy's name? So the guy comes in, what's your name? Ivan Ivanovich. That's [indecipherable] name. And my mother -- my sister, sitting there, she says, you are lying. You are Mitzka Zavaruha. You killed my brother. He starts shaking. And right away they got a police, put some handcuffs on him, they arrested him, and they brought him back to my town, to Koretz. He came into Koretz, was a lot of [indecipherable] where they came back from the army sa -- one without a leg, one without a arm, and everybody knows what he was doing to the Jews over there, he was in jail. They brought in his wife, his wife was standing right there, says, well, what would you do for him? She says, kill him. She says, I begged him not to do it. You people were our friends, you know, and he done some things. Ev-Everybody started doing something to him. This one put a knife, this one punched him, this and that make -- in the long run, they made sure he killed -- is killed [indecipherable] it's not an easy thing to talk about it, but [indecipherable] yeah.

Q: You went to school in Koretz?

A: Where?

Q: You went to school?

A: Me?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was it a public school?

A: I'm -- yes.

Q: So it wasn't a -- it wasn't a cheder?

A: No, I was -- I go in both, I was [indecipherable] Hebrew school, even was going there, and I was going a public school, Polish.

Q: So what would -- what would a typical day be like for you when you were young, when you were a child?

A: That -- the -- the name?

Q: What would a -- what would a typical day be? How would you -- you get up in the morning and what would you do?

A: What I was doing when I got up in the morning? When I was younger [indecipherable] take me to go to school, yeah.

Q: And then when would you go to cheder?

A: The cheder, going for about an hour, an hour and a half. Then I used to have a tutor come into the house, too.

Q: So this is after school?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you had a tutor, so he would ask you questions of --

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Were you Bar Mitzvahed?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember when the Russians came in?

A: 1939.

Q: Where were you then?

A: In Koretz.

Q: You -- you were living in Koretz?

A: Yes.

Q: What was that like when the Russians came?

A: It was no [indecipherable]. They walked in, we were just a mile away from the -- from the border. So they walked in, was no shooting, no nothing, they just came in and everybody was happy. They made us -- made us happy, you know. So, pretend like it -- nothing happened, in the first couple days.

Q: But then what?

A: Then start up more to find out that's not -- not so good. So being over there, the first thing they drove in over there was cars, and I was [indecipherable] bike, driving my bike, and the guy comes up to me, would you like to sell me the bike? I said I don't want to sell the bike. I bought a bike, cost me t -- 10 dollars. [indecipherable]. Then they walked in with the rubles and they said to me, sell me this. I said, I don't want to sell it. So he takes out and shows me he's gonna give me 150 for it -- for the bike.

Q: Rubles?



A: Yeah. Rubles, but I didn't know what a ruble is worth. So I sold it for 150. I came back and show it to my father, I got 150 dollars. He says, that's a lot of money, maybe the money's worth nothing, he says. So I got scared, so I went out to bought a couple other bikes, and I paid 10 - 12 dollars, and I ride back and start selling them [indecipherable]. Some I sell for 150, some 200, you know [indecipherable] money, I could see the money is nothing, but shows pretty good like I'm a -- a big man already, I got five - 600 dollars.

Q: And you were how old at this time?

A: Pardon?

Q: How old were you?

A: 16.

Q: Di -- had you heard of Hitler before?

A: Hm?

Q: Had you heard of Hitler? Did you know what was happening in Germany?

A: At that time, was nothing, was just started up. No, I didn't know. I know [indecipherable] the papers about anti-Semitism's going on, everything else, but not -- not for sure because we were very out of it.

Q: But you -- and the war had started. What did you think when the war started?

A: What I think? I didn't like it, but it was there, the war.

Q: Did you think it would come to -- to Koretz?

A: To go back to Koretz?

Q: Did -- did you think the war would reach Koretz?

A: [indecipherable] the war?

Q: Well, the war started and they invaded Poland.

A: Yes, that's the course, they invaded right -- I -- I was Poland, I was there.

Q: But you were -- but you were a Soviet. You were a Russian.

A: That's Russia, the Russia, yeah, that's where the Russians came in, yes.

Q: Did you think the war would come in -- into Koretz when the --

A: No.

Q: And what about your parents, did they feel the same way?

A: My parents? Everybody was shocked, n-nobody knew it, surprise. We got up in the morning and it's a different con -- a different country already, yeah. But was no shooting, no killing, nothing.

Q: And you -- you continued to go to school?

A: Pardon?

Q: You -- you continued to go to school?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you ever encounter any anti-Semitism in school?

A: No, not in my school.

Q: Did you play soccer?

A: Yes.

Q: So you had friends from -- you had friends from soccer and --

A: At that time, yes.

Q: Did you go to their houses?

A: Yes.

Q: And they came to your house?

A: A lot.

Q: Did you eat at their houses?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah.

Q: At non-Jewish houses?

A: No.

Q: You wouldn't eat there.

A: What would I do?

Q: You wouldn't eat at the non-Jewish houses.

A: I did eat.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh. Good.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay.

Q: And nothing changed when the Russians came that you can remember.

A: A change in what, in the regime, or what --

Q: Well, was it -- were there changes in day to day life?

A: Yes, a big change. We didn't know what to do, we didn't know what to do. How do you start up to make a living or something? Everybody was afraid to do something. So we were waiting, and as we were waiting, I got in the -- in the black market, I was young boy, got in black market, and I got caught. They put me in jail right away.

Q: And -- and what were you doing in the black mar -- how were you -- how were you involved in the black market?

A: Well, at that time I was -- I was doing different things. As a young boy I figure whatever I do, they wouldn't do nothing to me, any -- but I do ha -- did have the guts to go and do certain things. Because when I was a little boy, I used to follow my father everyplace, and I see the way he was doing the buying, selling, and I was trying to do the same thing. Didn't go exactly, but I tried at least.

Q: So what were you selling?

A: That time I was stealing -- we were on the border with [indecipherable] Poland and Russia. We were only a mile away from the border. I had my mother's sister was eight miles away from us, eight, 10 miles. So I start going [indecipherable] told me that -- cattle, I used to buy some cattle. So [indecipherable] little boy, I used to buy three, four cattles, go out in night, the middle of the night, deliver it over there, sell it, and we buy horses over there, come back on the horses. Two horses, you know. And sell the horses back in -- in Poland, yep.

Q: Anything else?

A: Yeah, then I got in -- material was very hard to find. So we went on to my mother's sister over there, we find out what to buy material. So I bought some material over there, and I brought it back to Poland. As I'm going back to Poland -- I bought that time horses, and a ru -- buggy, and put some hay, and I put the material underneath. And I pass by, the policeman stop me, what you got? I says, nothing. A young boy [indecipherable] nothing, then go. As I'm going, they follow me back, stop it, turn around back the horses. I came back, took out the hay, they find out a lot of material there. So they put on the handcuffs on me and put me in jail.

Q: You frightened?

A: Huh?

Q: Were you frightened?

A: Yeah.

Q: And where did they take you to jail?

A: The date.

Q: Where?

A: Oh, they take me in Koretz. I was 10 miles away from the -- where they caught me over there, so they brought me back to Koretz, and they put me in jail over there, and I stayed there, and they tried to make -- take me to court, and as I'm going to court was a lot of people who were coming in. So they told us, let's make less people, because it's a lot of people come in there, my [indecipherable] is gonna be higher. They want to have less people. So we had people waiting outside, my father and my mother tell people, don't walk in, you know, but some people walk in anyhow, to go in to see what's going on. So ta -- two or three times it took [indecipherable] finally they got me in the area, and they show for the whole town, everybody should know that the guard that caught me as a black market and they had to put me in jail. They put me in jail for five years. So --

Q: So they wanted to make an example of you?

A: Example for everybody to see it.

Q: So five years sentence in Koretz, in the jail in Koretz?

A: No, they send me to Rovno.

Q: To Rovno.

A: Rovno -- Koretz jail was just a small -- not big enough, so the big jail was in Rovno. So I was there for three months. [indecipherable] over there [indecipherable] send me to Siberia.

Q: Where in Siberia? Where?

A: Par?

Q: Where in Siberia?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: And was that a prison as well?

A: It was a what?

Q: A prison?

A: Yes.

Q: Or was it a camp?

A: A camp -- a camp that they put you to work. So you have to go to work, you have to go to the forest and cut trees. And you have to produce so much. If you produce so much, then you get so much bread. But I was a young boy, I weigh [indecipherable] 80 pounds, so skinny like this. And everybody, all the big guys over there, they were cutting the trees and everything else. And then I used to go out to get my dinner. We used to all ha -- bring something [indecipherable] soup. As I'm getting the soup I seen a guy over there and the guy looks at me and I look at him, I don't know who he is. Then he walked up to me, where you from, and I tell him. What was your father doing? I tell him what my father was doing. He said, oh my -- my brother's doing the same thing, he's in the cattle business. He tells me his father's -- his brother's name, this a good friend of my father's, we deal together. He says, he is -- he is in jail already for 10 years this guy. He was caught in black market, and he was doing the cooking. He was a cook. Now, to be a cook, you make like a millionaire over there. So then every day when I come to find my soup, he gives me a little extra soup. And later on at night he brings me a piece of bread.

Q: What was his name?

A: Dilvert -- Dilvert, I forgot the last name.

Q: So you survived because of his --

A: Th-Th-The -- the help and him -- the food was a big help, because the rest of the people, they were dying just like flies over there.

Q: Dying of what?

A: Of food. Not -- not enough food.

Q: Starvation?

A: Yeah.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: And they used to push them, they used to go to the forest -- I came in over there, and I came in from the house, I had some boots, lined boots, you know. As soon as I got into jail, they knocked me out right away, the guy came and took off the boots, put on the boots on himself, and says, well, they fit me pretty good. And then they give me some rubber to put on my feet -- I mean the [indecipherable] that's what I put on my feet. So then another guy came in and he got out -- took a tire and took out -- cut a tire and made a piece of rubber, and I -- that's what I put them on, on my feet, and that's what I used to walk, on the rubber.

Q: How did -- how long did that go on?

A: This was going on about two years.

Q: Without shoes?

A: No, they give me that rubber, that does better than shoes. It was heavy, the tire.

Q: So you -- you were cutting trees down, is that the work that they gave you?

A: Yes, I was cutting the trees, and I have to produce so much, and I never could produce and were some other guys that tried to help me to put on to show that I cut so many trees. They cut it, but they show that I cut it, you know?

Q: Now, what was it like in the -- in the barracks?

A: Was it like?

Q: In the prison, yeah.

A: Pr-Pretty tough. We used to have one -- one [indecipherable] over there to cl-clean up the whole -- the whole room over there, 60 or 70 people in one room. And you come in everything is wet, and you want to dry out the stuff, so some days you dried it, some days you didn't dry it, you just lay down and sleep with the wet feet.

Q: Were you -- were you afraid of the other prisoners?

A: I was afraid of what?

Q: The other prisoners.

A: Yes. Was only a couple in there to be afraid because they were real tough, and they used to -- see, we g -- used to get packages from home. So they send in the -- they send you some salami, some whatever, some food, and the other guys used to bring the food and hide it for -- I used to bring the salamis and everything else and give it to the guy, the guy [indecipherable]. I said, take whatever you wanted, give something to me too. So he was giving more to me than he took for himself. The other people that were hiding, they took away everything with them, used to beat them up, you know. I was okay with that.

Q: So you had some protection.

A: A little, yeah.

Q: When were you taken to -- to the -- this camp?



A: Ren?

Q: When?

A: I would say beginning of the 40's.

Q: So, it was in the winter?

A: Yeah, yeah, it was real cold, and we got in [indecipherable] right away. The only thing you were praying to God you want to die, the same day you would like to die. And you want to go out and you want to do nothing, but then you go, and you walk in and you walk [indecipherable] to the police and he said to me, anybody makes one step behind is gonna be killed, you know? So a lot of people do it, they step 10 steps and the guy shoot them right away. So [indecipherable] you would go on, but you were shaking. [indecipherable] little bit more that I'll tell you later.

Q: Tell me more. Y-You mean people were committing suicide that way?

A: Pardon?

Q: They were committing suicide?

A: I would like to, yeah, of course.

Q: You told me that someone you knew was killed by a tree.

A: That's my wife's cousin. We were together over there in -- in -- in jail. I mean, we didn't go together, we're the same -- in the same room. And then he got out there, the tree fell down, he got killed. So I got excited, the only thing [indecipherable] say should happen to me. Didn't want to get excited [indecipherable] because you want to die yourself.

Q: So, in got that bad that you contemplated --

A: Oh yes.

Q: Was there disease there as well? Disease? Were people sick?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was the disease?

A: From the -- from the -- from food, no food.

Q: Just no food.

A: No food.

Q: Typhus, was there typhus?

A: No water [indecipherable] to the -- and then no water and we have to go maybe 10 miles to the forest [indecipherable] forest [indecipherable] of trees. And you go and you're real dry [indecipherable] the summer [indecipherable] and you want some water, there's no water, but there's a lot of wet over there. So you put your foot down like this, and the water comes, and you lay down and drink the water, the dirty water, I mean black like -- yeah.

Q: And what was the food like?

A: The food was real bad. You have to produce so much and they give it to you. But for -- if you done so much, they give you a bigger piece of bread. That's -- that's [indecipherable] good people, you know. So then the bread what they gave you was what do you call this, that da -- dry bread, real dry, it -- that you cannot bite the bread. You can never bite the bread, so -- and no water what to put on it, so excuse me, you have to piss on the bread, then eat it. Yeah.

Q: But it kept you alive.

A: Thank God I'm here.

Q: You have any other recollections of what s-some of the things that happened when you were in the labor camp, when you were in Siberia?

A: Yeah, what happened?

Q: Do you -- you would -- remember seeing anybody beaten or killed, or --

A: Yeah, beaten, I seen a lot of that.

Q: Were you ever beaten?

A: Not me, no.

Q: So what did you think tha -- what did you think was going on?

A: They [indecipherable] look for something that he have excess cigarette to make. They steal a cigarette from you, if you don't want to give the cigarette, you go into a fight. If you have an extra piece of bread, you eat, if the other one is hungry he grabs away from you and you don't let him, he beats you up, because he's the stronger one. And I didn't look for fights [indecipherable]

Q: And you were getting packages from your -- from home?

A: Pa-Packages, yes.

Q: From home.

A: Yeah.

Q: Still.

A: Some -- some was coming in the time, and some they got stopped before they came to me, and then we complain a lot to my friend lot -- the -- the one [indecipherable] I tell him that I supposed to get a package, the package didn't come in, so they'll start following up that the package was stoled. So they start looking into it, he says, if a package comes in you should get at the time.

Q: So he was very helpful to you?

A: Oh well, a lot.

Q: Did he survive?

A: He?

Q: Da-Davide?

A: Yeah, he was a -- he was there. I don't know, I left so I don't know what happened.

Q: So you -- you haven't [indecipherable]

A: When they took me out to the camp -- we were at camp, and they came in, they says anybody, Polish citizen could go if they want to do it, if you want to get out of camp you could go to the army. So I says, I'll go to the army.

Q: What made you think --

A: I was thinking this -- it wasn't -- it didn't bother me if I get killed, doesn't ma -- matter, to s -- sooner it's better. So I figure I'll go to the army so maybe I'll get killed in the army. So I was in the army for a few months, then I got shot over here on my back. That took me out for a little bit and then I felt better, they put me back, put me right in the front. So he's put me in the front, I didn't know how to shoot, nothing. So they give me a truck, should drive a truck, and I didn't know how to drive a truck even. So I was driving the truck and then I -- right after I got shot, so that took me off on this, and then they teach me how to shoot and they put me right on the front, fighting.

Q: Where were you?

A: At that time was in Latvia.

Q: In Latvia?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you fought the Germans in Latvia?

A: Oh yes.

Q: What was that like?

A: Oh, Latvia wasn't too bad. The people were real nice over there. I mean, we didn't fight the people what when you walk in, and you need something, you walk into the people and at that

time yes, I was still a truck driver, so I drive up to the farm. They need some gasoline, so I steal all the gasoline from the truck. [indecipherable] to give you some food. [indecipherable]

Q: You'd never shot anyone before?

A: And over there, yes.

Q: But not before this?

A: No, no.

Q: So -- so what was it like, shooting --

A: The shooting was -- was pretty bad, but we were gone. It was the [indecipherable] that they were fighting against us. We had the partisans fighting them and fighting us. And then we were walking one day, and we see an -- a brother recognized each other. One was from [indecipherable] army, one was in the Russian army. And the guy walked up, says, how can you fight us? So they start fighting between each other and they killed -- one guy killed the other one.

Q: The brothers?

A: Brothers, yeah. And -- well, this was going on for -- for a long time.

Q: Did you ever think about how you could -- how you could get away?

A: Yes. I was always trying to see how do I get away to s -- to run away, and we help the other people run away, and they got -- we got caught. When they got caught, they got worse for them. So, I was fighting. I had one guy, a Ukrainian, a real strong guy in this. He was the one teaching me how to do it [indecipherable] where you go I'll go with you, let's see what we're gonna do. [indecipherable] if we got caught we got problems. So one night we [indecipherable] run away and he said to me, just forget about. So I didn't go no place.

Q: You just -- were you wondering about what your family -- what was going on with your family?

A: Yes, all the time.

Q: Had you heard anything about what was happening to the Jews?

A: Ah, and I was -- I was [indecipherable] summer, they find out about me, and I got letters from them, and I used to write letter every day, and I used to tell them I'm going out to the front and if I come back and I'm alive, I'll write -- I'll write you another letter. So when I came back, I wrote another letter. Three words on back [indecipherable]

Q: [indecipherable] change tape.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Had you heard anything about what was happening to the Jews?

A: In a --

Q: In Poland.

A: Yes.

Q: What had you heard?

A: What I heard?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, I heard they kill them in the concentration camps and home. I couldn't believe it, because I wasn't there, but we get a little piece of paper here and there, someplace a little -- somebody has a little radio, so you have a hundred people standing outside listening to the radio, you know.

Q: And -- and did you know that they had come to Koretz?

A: Did I what?

Q: That the Germans had reached Koretz?

A: The Germans?

Q: The Germans came to Koretz.

A: Yes.

Q: And you -- did you know that?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you hear about that?

A: What would I hear? I knew that they killed my parents [indcipherable] that my parents are killed, and my brother, and my sister knew, she ran aw -- she ran away from Koretz, and I used

to get letters from her once in awhile, til she find exactly where I am, when she know where I am, almost every day a letter.

Q: And she was in the underground?

A: The underground, yeah. And she had 500 people working for her, and then she got wounded. They thought she is killed already. So they passing by, she was laying on the floor, and the guys are passing by and this is wa -- she's dead. So the guy -- another guy wants to shoot another bullet. She put -- a bullet on the leg, you know, she was bleeding a lot. So the other one says [indecipherable] don't -- don't use the bullets, let's save the bullets, you know, she's dead. She was still alive. They left. At night somebody picked her up and they took her away about 10 miles and they picked her up by helicopter and they took her to Moscow. In Moscow -- Stalin waited for her and picked her up, I got pictures where Stalin picked her up and they put her in the hospital and she survived [indecipherable]. Then she came back to my hometown, they brought her back to my town, to Koretz. At Koretz she became the mayor from Koretz.

Q: After the war.

A: After the war.

Q: How did she know Stalin?

A: She didn't know Stalin. I says, they brought her in, Stalin wants to see -- to have a woman like that, she was wounded, to -- to see, so he was the one standing, watching when she came in.

Q: You didn't know any of this bi --

A: No, no.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: This was told by my sister later.

Q: Had you seen any evidence of the killing of -- of Jews?



A: Where, in --

Q: When you were in the Russian army.

A: No.

Q: You didn't come across any of the camps?

A: No.

Q: So you're first in Latvia?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then --

A: Then I'm sent to Manchuria.

Q: To Manchuria?

A: Yeah.

Q: From Latvia to Manchuria?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you -- you weren't fighting Germans there?

A: No [indecipherable] we -- we were [indecipherable]

Q: What was that like, being sent to Manchuria?

A: Was fighting to go over there, you don't know where you're going, you don't know what you're doing. And you ca -- driving up to the big hill over there, and you're a truck driver, and you have to drive it up and the truck cannot go up. Was not strong enough to go up. So they taught us back up the truck backwards, and you go up. So backing up the truck was much stronger, and we got up. And we start fighting, was not too much fights over there. We walked in [indecipherable] we see everybody was trying to be friendly with you in Manchuria. So I walked in one day and I get -- I need a dentist. I was -- toothache. So they take me into the dentist, they

walk in over there, they all run away because they see the Russians are coming in. I was there with another friend of mine. So we walk in [indecipherable] they run away. I need some help for my tooth, nobody's there. So I walk in, it's a lot of boxes laying around, big boxes. And I open up the boxes, there's all the things, gold -- gold pieces they put in for the tooth, you know? So I took the boxes, about 10 big boxes with the gold, and put in my car, and I left, okay? And then I kept it all the time in my truck. When I was going back to Koretz, I tried to take the gold -- gold as much as I can, and this survived me for another two or three years, selling a piece of gold, buy bread, milk, whatever it is. And that's was a survival til I started doing something for myself.

Q: So you were an entrepreneur from the --

A: Pardon?

Q: You were an entrepreneur --

A: Well --

Q: -- from the time you were 16.

A: Yeah, I was -- that's where the -- my -- my -- my older brother couldn't do it.

[indecipherable] was afraid of doing everything, so they send me out. My father used to stay to my brother, you have to go out take a look what he's doing, he's making money, you're not making nothing. But he was afraid, you know? I wasn't afraid, I don't know why.

Q: And when did you find out what had happened to your parents and your brother?

A: Right after the war.

Q: After the war?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So, during the war, what were you thinking? You --

A: Well, I was -- I was -- I was hoping they're alive and I hope I'm gonna go and see them.

Q: Oh. And had you heard of Auschwitz?

A: No, I -- I -- I --

Q: Had [indecipherable]

A: -- I heard ab -- I heard about, yes.

Q: So you knew the names?

A: O-Other names, yes.

Q: How did you find out about the camps?

A: How'd I find out? From papers. People si -- find a piece of paper, not -- it's not the paper you go to buy every day. Somebody else has a piece of paper and he give to this guy, the other one gives to this guy, and you read the paper or they talk about it. Or, like I said, one could have a little radio. You get a hundred people, everybody wants to know what's going on. It's no radios like over here, I mean, nobody has nothing.

Q: No iPods?

A: No.

Q: No. So you were a part of the Russian army in Manchuria. How long did that go on?

A: Oh, with them probably about a year and a half. And then I didn't want to be over there, and tried to go away. So then they had the deal that said that Polish citizen can just go back to the Polish army. If you're a Polish citizen and you want to go -- instead to be in the Russian army, you could go to the Polish army. So I says, I'll go to the Polish army. And were quite a few of them like this, about 50 people, and they were taking us back to go to Poland. There's a lieutenant with us and I talk to him and I says, I would like to go, before I go to Russia, I would like to go to Koretz, to my own town, because my sister's alive, I would like to go see my sister. Going back and forth was very hard to get a -- to get a paper that you could go there. So he sees

me wearing an -- a -- a watch. So I took out the watch, I gave him the watch. So he gave me a piece of paper I could go see my sister. So I went to see my sister to Koretz. As I come into Koretz, was my sister -- they were trying to kill my sister over there, the Banderowcy, the people what they are against the Russians. The Ukrainian --

Q: Part -- partisans?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ukrainian party.

A: So, when [indecipherable] the paper, I says to my sister, I don't want you staying here, take a look, they just killed another sister, another girl that she knew, another guy that he was active in - with the Russians, and he sa -- I don't want you to stay over there, I want you to go with me. Let's run away and we'll go to Israel. She says, I can't. I got my work over here, in the town, everybody knows me [indecipherable] for now, find out that they killed somebody else that was a close friend of mine, she got scared. She says, okay, we'll go away, we'll go to Poland. At that time we -- we're still in Russia, we're gonna go back to Poland. So she said okay, so she went away, and I stayed yet a couple days, and I left, too. And I met her in Germany, actually.

Q: So the war was essentially over.

A: Pardon?

Q: The war was over?

A: Yeah.

Q: When you were in the army, did anyone ever say anything about your being Jewish?

A: It was remarks from certain people what you got [indecipherable]. Nothing that -- some people gonna make fun, that you're afraid of the army, you didn't go to the army, bu -- but no [indecipherable] not -- not too bad.

Q: So you didn't experience any -- they -- they knew you were Jewish?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: No anti-Semitism?

A: Yes. Behind the back they s -- they s-say something, they make songs, they make fun. I don't know, there always something.

Q: Did you have good friend in the army?

A: Yes.

Q: Non-Jews?

A: No, Ukrainian.

Q: Ukrainian?

A: Yeah.

Q: But non-Jewish Ukrainians?

A: No. No, I had a non-Jewish friend too, yeah, one. But that -- that wasn't -- the Ukrainian was real, real close with me, he was re -- older. He had -- he had the respect and he was always talking we gonna get together after -- after the army. As -- being with him in the army and we would -- he was a truck driver, too, backing up we used to hide the trucks under the trees at night. And backing up the truck, and he wants to be before everybody else. I was going -- what, we were kidding with each other. I want to back up the truck, he backs out the truck, he got explosion and he got killed right there, with the truck and everything else.

Q: And you were okay?

A: Yeah, thank God.

Q: When you moved across the border, yo -- well, you ended the war in Manchuria?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that where you were when the war ended?

A: Yeah.

Q: And how did you hear about the end of the war?

A: How did I hear?

Q: Yeah.

A: The same thing with someplace a paper, you know, people talk in radio with little things, but you got your -- a little bit here, a little bit there and you put together.

Q: Is it -- what was the first thing that came to your mind when the war was over?

A: How do I settle, where do I settle, what I do? But a young kid didn't care what it is.

Q: So did you think you're going to move back -- go back to Koretz?

A: In beginning I would say yes. And then when I see what happened over there, not too many left, that people this -- well, they came back from the army like I said before, this one was without a leg, without a arm, without a ear. Everybody had something, you know? So what I'm gonna see in Koretz? Nothing there. And the people, where they left, maybe a hundred Jews came back, maybe. Survived.

Q: Did they stay?

A: They stayed there for awhile.

Q: For awhile.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember any -- any -- any of the battles you were in when you were fighting the Germans?

A: It's if I remember? How can I forget?

Q: Well, tell me about them.

A: Like -- like what? Fighting -- it's -- it's -- that's a war, they were fighting against us. It's gonna be me or you, so I gotta fight you, right? So if I see something I keep shooting.

Q: So what was it like to be a -- to be a soldier, an untrained soldier? They give you a gun, and -- and then what?

A: Then I don't know what to do. [indecipherable] got to show me what to do, because I got a gun, what I do? So they took us out for a couple of weeks, and they took us in a forest over there, just show us how to clean the gun, how to shoot, and doing the best we could, that's all.

Q: And did you shoot anybody?

A: Yes.

Q: You know for sure you --

A: Pardon?

Q: You know for sure that you shot someone?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: And did any of your friends get killed while you were fighting?

A: No, not next to me. We were fighting let's say a lot, we -- over there. Yes, some of my [indecipherable] were shooting each other then.

Q: And the artillery, you remember the artillery? The cannons, the guns?

A: Yeah.

Q: The artillery.

A: Yeah.

Q: You -- did you -- you remember those -- those sounds?

A: Oh, I thi -- I -- I can't -- I can't forget those sounds.

Q: Well, are -- are -- ins -- are there sounds that -- that trigger a memory sometimes during the day?

A: No, not during the day, but during the night quite a few times, that you wake up and you think about it.

Q: You still have nightmares?

A: Oh yeah, it -- still, once in awhile.

Q: What sorts of nightmare? What kind of nightmares?

A: Well the -- the thinking. The thinking the way it was over there, th -- one way is to thank your -- thank God you're alive. Over there you didn't think about it, but -- to be alive, you were thinking how to be dead. You didn't want to be alive.

Q: Even in the army?

A: Yeah.

Q: Any particular moments that -- that come back to haunt you and -- at night?

A: A-Any particular what?

Q: Particular moments that you recall. A specific --

A: Oh, place or what --

Q: Place where -- an -- an event.

A: Well, yes, in Latvia we had a few things that very scary because we start talking and the guy says, well, we have to go out and get the Jews. You know, then you start getting prepared in case something happened, you should know what to do. So then you start talking the other guys. And when I have my friend, th-the Ukrainian, and he says to me, well if something happened, don't worry about, I'll protect you. You know, we're not gonna let -- you know, he says, it's [indecipherable] anti-Semitism, he says, got good people, and you got bad people. He says, I'm a



good guy, he said to me, I'm a good guy, you know. But with [indecipherable] you a good guy, so we will survive, and we will be friends for a lifetime. So --

Q: So there was some anti-Semitism?

A: Oh yes, yes of c --

Q: And you remember that?

A: Oh y -- I'll never forget it.

Q: Well, have you ever told your s -- your family about this -- your experiences during the war?

A: Ah yes. They -- everybody wanted to know, you know, when I came back. [indecipherable] everybody talk [indecipherable] so, a lot of stories. My sister was telling stories and I was telling stories. But if she was telling the stories [indecipherable] she was the hero. When I tell the stories, she was telling everybody, my bro -- my brother went through a lot of things.

Q: And who was the third s -- you said there were three people survived --

A: And a --

Q: -- the war. You and your sister and who else?

A: M-My -- me -- my s -- my sister, and a --

Q: And you said there was a --

A: -- sister -- I had a sister in Israel, another sister.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Annu -- Ann was in Israel since 1937.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She's still there. My younger sister was there, she died not long ago. My older one is 93 years old. She's thank God still alive.

Q: Where does she live?

A: [indecipherable], near Tel Aviv.

Q: So all -- all three of them live in -- all three live in Israel?

A: No, no. I -- two sisters lived in Israel, one died.

Q: Oh, and one died.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you came back to Koretz, you found your sister.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you talk to her about staying or going?

A: Yes.

Q: And what wa -- what was that discussion like?

A: Discussion that we have to run, we have to go, because every night was a different killing, to -  
- the few Jews [indecipherable] left over there, when they came back, so they tried to get rid of  
them.

Q: Did you hear about Kielce?

A: About?

Q: Kielce? In the city of Kielce the -- the pogrom after the war.

A: After the war? Yes.

Q: So you were afraid that that might happen?

A: Yes. We had pogroms [indecipherable] happen a few years back, too. I'm talking way before  
the war [indecipherable].

Q: Wasn't there a famous rabbi from --

A: [indecipherable] yes.

Q: [indecipherable] -- from Koretz?

A: Yes. Quite a few of them over there.

Q: Ah -- now, are they -- were they rebbes, H-Hassidic rebbes?

A: Were they?

Q: Were they rebbes? People who --

A: Yeah, yeah, they big, big rabbis.

Q: Someone named Rabbi Pinchas, is that familiar? He was from Koretz.

A: What's -- what's the name?

Q: Pinchas.

A: Pinchas? It sounds very -- yeah, it sounds familiar to me.

Q: And had you heard of the Munkatch Rebbe?

A: Huh?

Q: The Munkatch Rebbe.

A: Munkatch Rebbe?

Q: Cause his name is Shapiro.

A: Oh, is that right? No.

Q: A very famous Hassidic rabbi.

A: Yeah, re -- now?

Q: Well then, no, then.

A: Yeah, before.

Q: In the 30's. Wa -- was there a synagogue in Koretz?

A: Yeah, quite a few.

Q: And when you came back, what was -- what was that like?

A: Gone.

Q: They were all gone?

A: Yeah. [indecipherable] big synagogues. They have a Yeshiva too [indecipherable]

Q: And was that gone, too?

A: Yeah. It was a big, big place, and the rabbis [indecipherable] I never forget that, with the big beard and they came to cut off his beard, they cut him up and killed him.

Q: The Germans?

A: Yeah.

Q: And how did you hear about that?

A: Well, this was -- ran around because we lived right next door to them. My sister was there, I wasn't there.

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah. [indecipherable] they live at -- 10 feet apart from my house.

Q: You said your sister became the mayor.

A: Yeah, after the war.

Q: So you didn't leave right away, because she became the mayor.

A: No, this was after the war, when she came back.

Q: But you stayed in sh -- at least she stayed in Koretz [indecipherable]

A: Oh yes, yes, oh yes.

Q: How did she become mayor?

A: How did she come there?

Q: How did she come -- become the mayor?

A: Well, she's -- just [indecipherable] is a very educated woman, and she was a very [indecipherable], not afraid of nothing, ever since she was a little baby. And then when

everything was done, when she had to run away, she wants to go to Israel, she wants to fight over there. And that was [indecipherable] that I should go there, too. And I was going to go to Israel. I had a uncle and -- in Detroit that I never met, I didn't know, it's my mother's brother. He was single and he had six sisters. And [indecipherable] kept everybody going. He was a businessman, and he want us to come over there, so he used to write me letters, I want you to come. And every letter he used to send me five dollars. Five dollars was a lot of money. So I'm waiting for a letter all the time. And he talked me into go, so my sister, she said she would like to go to Israel. So I said, okay, you go to Israel, and I'll come later. I was in the trucking business, working for the UNRRA and so I [indecipherable] to about five trucks and I send her to Israel. So I figure when I come in over there, they told me it's a real good business. So five GMC trucks and I bought a Mercedes car, and a Dodge car and I send everything over there. They came in over there, my sister couldn't take them out because they need a lot of duty. I didn't know I have to pay some of the duty. She didn't have the money. I used up all the money to send it over there.

Q: Where did you get the money to buy the cars?

A: Over there? In Germany? In German --

Q: So you're in Germany at this point?

A: At that time in Germany, yeah.

Q: Where did you get the money?

A: Ah, back in black market.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: When did you leave Koretz to go to Germany? You left Koretz and went --

A: When I left K-Koretz, that was 1945, to go to Germany.

Q: Right after the war. Where did you go in Germany?

A: Near Stuttgart, called the Swasa Halfingen. That's was a zeiling over there, was a little camp for the DPs.

Q: DP camp.

A: Yeah, and we were staying over there.

Q: And you had met your wife?

A: My wife I met when I came back to Koretz. She was there, but that was just only a few days, and she was the only one girl left [indecipherable] from all the Jewish people. She survived. I knew her parents, because my father used to deal with them. And we start talking now [indecipherable] going back to Germany, I said I'm going to Germany, I have to run -- because -- because of my sister, I want to make sure we run away. So a few days later she came to Germany, to the same town I was at, and we got married four days later. Got a big wedding. We had four people.

Q: Four people.

A: Yeah.

Q: Who were they?

A: Huh?

Q: Who were they?

A: Huh?

Q: Who were the four people?

A: Ah, I was there. And the guy had a house, he let us stay over there with his wife and her brother. And [indecipherable] we brought in a rabbi and we had the wedding.

Q: How did you find a rabbi?

A: There was a lot of them coming around [indecipherable] was it a real rabbi or not, I'm not sure yet. But [indecipherable] paper.

Q: So that was 1945 you got married?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you --

A: Actually '46.

Q: '46.

A: '44 -- '45. [indecipherable]

Q: And then you engaged in black marketeering --

A: Say exactly, I didn't hear you.

Q: You -- you -- you were involved in black marketeering.

A: Yeah.

Q: So what happened when the plan fell through to go to Israel -- to go to Palestine?

A: What [indecipherable] but my sister told me that it's a good thing you didn't come over here, because then I have pay a lot of money take out the trucks. And it's hard to make a living there, in Israel right now. And my uncle wrote the letter to come over here. I didn't know what he is doing. He brought me into his house, you know, the big f -- big house, took me in and my wife, and at that time I came, I had my son with me. We stayed with them. It didn't work out too good, because he, my uncle, is -- his niece was a single girl. When they brought me in over here, they always had in the mind I'm going to come in, marry that girl. When I brought my wife, wasn't so -- they weren't too happy. So when I find out what it is, I decided to move to go someplace else. So a friend of mine was from my own town, and he knew that I'm not getting along, but no fights, just I know that it's not a good feeling there. So he said, move into my house. He has a

one bedroom house, and I moved in in the living room, we had a bed on the floor and we stayed together for a little bit. Then I got in -- I met a guy that is looking for a job, so I find out the guy has a [indecipherable], and his wife was my older sister's best girlfriend in Koretz. So when he finds I'm over here, so he can start talk to me, what do you want to do in America? I says, I will do anything, I just want a job. So he took me out one day, he drove around with me. He said, I'm building here and I'm building -- it was a big building. And then we pass by a lumber yard that says a -- a few Jewish people working over there, I -- I couldn't speak nothing in English, you know. He said, maybe you want to work over here, I says good. So, next morning I went to work over there. And I worked there for a few months, and before [indecipherable] he came into me one day, he says, everybody likes you over here. I want you to be the buyer to buy the lumber. I said, buy the lumber for what? I don't know how to talk. How do you gonna buy it? He said, well, I'll hire, I got a girl over here, a Polish girl, and she'll work with you together. You do the buying. I says, you're making fun of me. He said no. So, before I turn around they made me the foreman, then I started doing the buying in the lumber yard.

Q: What did you speak? What language?

A: Mostly Jewish, and Polish.

Q: But you -- so you knew Polish?

A: Yes.

Q: But -- but not English or German?

A: No, not enough English, nothing. So, we worked there for awhile, and came back Christmastime, and I couldn't go, I couldn't drive, I didn't have no license or nothing. So a guy used to pick me up all the time, take me back to work. And this was about 20 miles. But the guy was nice to doing it, because [indecipherable] the boss in there. But by about two years I was



working over there, and everybody find out with me I'm a good worker. And they don't pay me too much. As [indecipherable] pay me 50 dollars a week, seven days a week, and I didn't care, I make maybe [indecipherable] somebody else [indecipherable] 75 dollars a week. So I go back to him, I tell, Harry, I says 75 dollars. He says, Do-Don't worry about, I'll give you 75. And then I want -- had -- need a car, so I got -- I got [indecipherable] license, I bought an old car, and I have to pay for the car, it's 800 dollars. I haven't got no money. So they say, we're gonna loan you the money, and we'll take off 20 dollars a week for your salaries. Okay. So it goes by a week, two, three, they're not taking out the money. So I go back to him, I says, wait a minute, I can't afford it, you didn't take out the money. [indecipherable] the money, you're supposed to take it from the -- my salary. Said, no, no, no, you cannot do it. He says, you have to pay right now for the four weeks. Well, okay, I have to, I have to, take it all, the whole thing, you know. And then [indecipherable] he said no, don't worry about it, the car is a present for you. You know, that made -- made a -- a big deal, yeah. And [indecipherable] open up the lumber yard [indecipherable] the two partners. They fight -- fighting between them and he come to me and says to me, you know what? We closing up the place. I want you to go into business. You take over the place. I says, I'm gonna take over the place? I ain't got no money. Then he says, well, we'll work it out somehow. So, he went, he brought me another guy, he says, that guy's gonna go in partners with you. So another guy comes in the partners and start talking to me. He say, we're gonna go into business, does he have any money. I says no, do you have any money? He says no. So what are we going? Says well, the people what you deal with them with buying, go into Mr. Martin, tell him that you want to go into business. So I go and tell the guys they're gonna go in business. He says okay -- I-I -- I was buying for them. He says, show me your statement. I said, what's a statement? I didn't know nothing [indecipherable]. So I stayed with

them for awhile, then I stay with a partner, and going to the -- to the banker that didn't know me from somebody -- from the other people. I said the same thing, I want to go into business, but I need money. Said the same thing, give me a statement. So, I don't know what you're talking about. Make the story short, the guy gave me 3,000 dollars credit, [indecipherable] give me 3,000 dollars credit. And we got [indecipherable] in the business, had good customers, the [indecipherable] was a big builder and he paid me every week. So I got in business and that's -- I'm still in the same business.

Q: I need to change the tapes real quick.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Be-Before you tell me more about -- about Germany, let me ask you a different kind of question. Di -- do you remember when you heard that your parents had been killed?

A: Yes.

Q: And you were with your -- with your sister at the time?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were your reactions to th --

A: I [indecipherable], but what can you d -- th-they were dead. So they not the only one, but you know, this, the other one, every day a different story. This one got killed, the other one got killed.

Q: So gradually you heard about the whole family.

A: Oh yeah, slow but sure, I think I got to know about everybody.

Q: Did you ever think about religion, God, in all of this --

A: All the time.

Q: What did you think?

A: But what -- what I think?

Q: About God.

A: Was only one God and is -- God is good for everybody. You have to believe in it.

Q: But did you think why -- why God is allowing this to happen?

A: Yes. But there's still a God, and you have to believe in it, and we hope for the best, and it's gonna happen, someday, is gonna happen good, like when you're alive. If you're not alive, you cannot do.

Q: So you just thought, there's a mystery here and it's something you can't explain.

A: No. That very hard to explain. And sometimes when you ask the question it doesn't come out. But when you walk away and you drive the car, or you talk with other people about something, e-everything opens up.

Q: Like what? Tell me.

A: The s -- the same thing which it has before, and the things what happen, it's coming out, it's come -- it comes in the middle of the night, sometimes in the daytime, sometimes you got upset with certain things. Then you start thinking and say, what are you getting upset about it? Take a look. Thank God you're over here. Yeah. But I'm still getting upset.

Q: So it's -- part of you is still back there, is that right?

A: P-Pardon?

Q: Part of you is still back --

A: Back?

Q: -- back in Europe.

A: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I'm going right now back to Koretz.

Q: Real -- is this the first time?

A: Yes. Why I'm going, I don't know. The reason I'm going there actually, because my son is on my back, he wants to see where I was born. So he wants me to go over there, he wants to see the place. And no Jewish people left there, nobody there. There's the cemetery. And we build the cemetery. I gave a lot of money to do -- to make the cemetery there. And he was born in Germany, and he wants to go to the same place where he was born, to see it. So that's -- we decided we gonna go in September to go to that places.

Q: Now, he was born in the DP camp?

A: Yes.

Q: Are you -- are you anxious about going back?

A: Am I what?

Q: Are you anxious? Is -- are you nervous about going back?

A: No. No. I was before, then I stopped. And then, when you start talking to me, now I start thinking, well maybe to go, let him see, and then see for the rest of my grandchildren, have to -- to know what was going on.

Q: He knows your story?

A: My son, yes.

Q: And your grandchildren?

A: Does he have any?

Q: Your grandchildren, do they know as well?

A: Yes, yes, and they are very much interested all the time to ask questions.

Q: You think it's important to talk -- to talk about it?

A: The way they asking me, I think it's very important.

Q: Why?

A: Because if they want to know, they should know what was going on and not to believe in everything, and be alert [indecipherable] to know. That's my feeling.

Q: What do you think about all the attention the -- the Holocaust and th -- and Holocaust survivors have been getting --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- since the museum opened? "Schindler's List," --

A: Should they what?

Q: "Schindler's List".

A: Yeah.

Q: Lots of different movies.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Academy awards.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What do you think about all that?

A: Well, it's there, and everybody knows about it, and it's a true story, everything.

Q: So it's a good thing.

A: It's a what?

Q: Have you been to the museum?

A: Which one?

Q: In Washington.

A: Yes, quite a few times.

Q: You son is very active in it.

A: My son is very active in there, and is -- every time we goes, he makes sure we go over there.

[indecipherable] went there just a couple months ago. It was a big shindig at the time, with the candle lightening over there, so I was the one [indecipherable] candles [indecipherable]

Q: For the mem -- memorial service?

A: Yeah.

Q: A-And -- was in April.

A: Yeah, in April [indecipherable].

Q: Does it bother you to talk about it?

A: Depends what day. Sometimes yes, sometimes -- sometimes -- some place [indecipherable] ask a question, don't ask for nothing. And sometimes they ask one little question, I could go for two hours and talk.

Q: How do you -- how do you explain that?

A: That's -- it's all very hard to explain, like I just said. I say nothing but the truth. Some day you want to talk, someday you don't want to talk nothing. That's all.

Q: Have you spoken in schools or anything like that?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Have you spoken in schools?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: No, no.

Q: Have you done interviews before? Any interviews like this one before?

A: No.

Q: This is the first time?

A: Yeah, I never wanted to do it.

Q: Why?

A: Well, my sister done it in -- in Israel, and she wanted me to do it at that time. And then I say yes, and [indecipherable] they call me to go on to do it, I said, no, I don't want it. I was too busy, and I don't want no -- things to come back to my mind, and I should think about it all the time. And so I forgot about it, forget it. The same like I says to my son, I don't want to go. If I go over there and I'm not seeing nothing [indecipherable] my house is still there, but I don't se -- no friends, nothing.

Q: Mm.

A: I have a few Ukrainian friends who they were real close friends, they were 10 - 15 miles away from us. And we are find out that they're not alive. And [indecipherable] even I -- if I go to Israel -- I used to go there oftener, the last 10 years I wasn't there. Every time I call up and I ask for somebody, they say, oh he is dead six months ago. Oh, he is dead two years ago, you know? So 90 percent of my f-friends, they're not there. I don't want to go there.

Q: You said you -- you didn't want to think about it again, bring it all up.

A: Yeah -- no, no, not think at all.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: [indecipherable] what we doing today, I supposed to go to Washington, and my son is on my back before we go, I want to see everything, to bring it up, whatever you feel like doing, talk. If you don't want to talk, don't talk.

Q: Isn't it always with you anyway? Isn't it always there with you?

A: Who?

Q: Your experience. Don't you always --

A: Oh yeah, the experience is there.

Q: -- think about it at some level? What is that like? I mean, to -- to occasionally s-suddenly stop and have something come back from --

A: I don't know. Maybe next day I'll tell you so, right now I cannot tell you yet. For sure, it's going to be a lot of [indecipherable] things to talk [indecipherable] things were to ask me, things what I'm talking about. It's [indecipherable]

Q: Is there anything you want to conclude with, you want to s -- anything you want to say to your children or grandchildren on the tape?



A: That -- if I want to say to them?

Q: That you want to conclude with.

A: Oh, it -- I always do, when they ask me with something. They were never too much interested, but the few times when I told one grandson and he asked me, he was very enthused -- he's working for me for the summer. And I take him out to lunch once in awhile [indecipherable] Grandpa, so how did you survive? What did you do, how did you do? Just start talking to him. Then you talk to the other one, the other one came to me, he says, well, you talked to David, and you never tell me, I'd like to find out, too, from you. I said, I cannot tell you today, I'm not in a good mood. And I didn't tell him that day, and he goes back to the mother, says, I asked Grandpa, and he wouldn't say nothing to me. So they pass by another month or two, and it happened we talking about something, and I say, okay Michael, you asked me about something before, and I could tell you right now. Nobody's here, it's a quiet place. And I start talking to him. But he asked me to tell him that day, no. Now the same thing was -- today [indecipherable]. 15 years ago my sister begged me to do it, I said well, maybe I'll do it someday. And somebody asked me to do it, the rabbi. I says, I-I'll do it, I'll do it, don't worry about it, never done. I didn't want to bring it up even.

Q: What brought you to Detroit?

A: Who?

Q: What brought you to Detroit?

A: I just me -- my -- had an uncle over here, and he wants me to come here, to Detroit. I never knew nothing about Detroit, and I didn't care. He's the one who brought me, so I'm here.

Q: So was it either Detroit or Palestine, is that what it was --

A: Yes.

Q: And you decided on Detroit?

A: Detroit, because my sister said to me, let's you stay there and I'll stay over here. You'll come visit me, I'll come visit you, and that's what we're doing. So she got married over there, she was doing pretty good, and her husband got sick and died. Then she was sick for a long time, and she died. My younger sister.

Q: Your younger sister. If you had to think of one mo-moment in your Holocaust experience that stands out more than anything else --

A: Yes.

Q: -- what would that moment be?

A: What would that --

Q: What would that moment be? What would that event be? Just wa -- just one that stands out in your mind more vividly than anything else.

A: The -- the Holocaust?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes. Well, it's always -- the Holocaust always on your mind something. It's always some -- comes with some -- you remind yourself little things and big things, it -- it comes to your mind and it's -- a -- a -- a prif -- pretty bad story sometime.

Q: So they all blend together?

A: Yeah.

Q: They all come together?

A: Yeah.

Q: So no -- no one -- one moment that stands out more than any of the others?

A: Oh yes, a lot more. A lot more.

Q: Okay, well thank you for doing this today.

A: Huh?

Q: Thank you.

A: Thank you. All set?

End of Tape Three

Conclusion of Interview