

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Harry Iticovici**  
**August 24, 2010**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Harry Iticovici, conducted on August 24, 2010 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.

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## **HARRY ITICOVICI**

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Question: Good morning **Harry**. It's nice to have you here. Tell me what your name was at your birth.

Answer: **Harry Iticovici**.

Q: **Iticovici**, or iti –

A: No, let me tell you about this.

Q: Yes.

A: My father names was **Ithzeekovitch**(ph). **Ithzeekovitch**(ph). The letter in Romanian, a **T** with a little comma under it, a **C**. And when they asked me my name, I forgot about the little comma, so that's why I said **Iticovicz**(ph). But it was **Ithzeekovitch**(ph).

Q: **Ithzeekovitch**(ph).

A: See, **Ithzik**(ph), it's a Jewish name from **Isaac**. And there are people in **Israel** now by the name – with the name of **Ithzik**(ph), **Ithzik**(ph).

Q: Now di – did you, many years later, did you take your father's first name as your middle name?

A: Yeah, yeah, exactly. When I became a citizen here, when I naturalized here, I took my father's middle name because I had no middle name and everybody was asking me about the middle name.

Q: I see. So you thought you should have one?

A: Yeah.

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Q: And how do you pronounce your father's first name, is it **Newman**(ph)?

A: **Neuman, n-e-u-m-a-n.**

Q: I see. And when were you born?

A: I was born in June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1922.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family, and – you had a – a y – an older brother, or a younger brother?

A: Younger brother.

Q: A younger brother. And what – what did your father do?

A: He was a businessman, I mean he – a merchant, you know. That's what he was doing.

Q: And what – what was he a merchant of? Was it shoes?

A: Shoes and originally was leather, from what I understand, but then it was shoes.

Q: And your mother, did she work?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Now, I was told that when the communists came in **Romania**, she worked as a custodian in the school or something. But not when – when I was a child there in **Romania**. She was just a housewife, you know.

Q: How do you remember your family life, when you were growing up?

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A: Well, we were privileged, I think. I was privileged in many ways because the time of the **Romania** was, after first World War, and the economic situation was good, and my father business was good, so I didn't have to work. So th-the only thing I had to do is to go to school.

Q: And what sort of a – did you live in an apartment, did you live in a house?

A: No, we only lived in an apartment.

Q: Uh-huh. A-An apartment that your parents owned, or that they just rented?

A: No, rented.

Q: Was it a big one? Did you have your own room, for instance?

A: When I was an adolescent, yes. That's another one, we had the – I had the – my own room where I could study, you see. There was a lot of studying in the high school in **Romania** that time. And of course we had to learn lots of foreign languages. We learned French in school, then the Italian in school, and then privately I learned English.

Q: And why did you privately learn English? Why was – did your parents think this was an important thing to do?

A: Well, because if – the idea was – part of it was that when you – in **Romania**, if you leave there, and you are a s-specialist, either you are an engineer or an architect, or a doctor, you have to travel. So if you have to travel, you have to know languages.

Q: So did you become fluent in French and Italian –

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A: Now –

Q: Yeah?

A: In French I had to become fluent, because there was an exam in French. You see, th – we have the – they had the high school in **Romania** is like in **France**, you have to pass the baccalaureate, you know. And there is an exam in French, and the French teacher is talking you in French. But th-the – talks about literature, and what else? And so I – I took some lesson in conversation in French.

Q: And what about your Italian, was there an exam in Italian?

A: Italian, no, no, there was no examination in Italian, you know, just is a – I didn't want to take German. Most students took Germans, but I – I didn't like the German.

Q: And how come?

A: Because of **Hitler**.

Q: I see, so you were very conscious –

A: Oh yes.

Q: – once you became a – a –

A: Oh yeah, we were very conscious when I was in high school. Let me say this about this. In **Romania**, there were at least two political party that was very – that were very anti-Semitic. And when you were growing up in high school, and reading the newspaper, you were aware that there was a certain amount of anti-Semitism all the time.

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Q: Mm-hm. Wer – did you have non-Jewish friends as well as Jewish friends in – in high school, or was this mainly a Jewish school?

A: No, I went to high school, a state high school, which was in – more or less in the Jewish district of town. And ma – ther – about half of the class was Jewish, half of the class was not Jewish. But we had Jewish friends. I had Jewish friends.

Q: You had Jewish friends, as well as –

A: Not –

Q: – not Jew – non-Jewish friends.

A: Well, we had one guy that we played soccer with, that was not Jewish, maybe.

Q: But mostly you had Jewish friends.

A: Jewish friends, right.

Q: Were – were your parents religious? Was your home a religious home?

A: No.

Q: It wasn't.

A: They were not religious. Except that my father used to go to the synagogue primarily for what they used to call **yutzat**(ph) you know, for –

Q: Mm-hm, memorial.

A: – for memorial things, yeah, for his mother and father or something. He used to go to a small synagogue, which he didn't go to the high –

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Q: To [indecipherable]

A: – high holidays, no, no.

Q: So you didn't go to synagogue growing up?

A: I had a Bar Mitzvah.

Q: You did? Did that seem odd to you, given that your parents were not very religious, or did that seem –

A: Well, let me say this about it. According to the Romanian constitution, in high school – you see, the high school was not like here, everybody goes to the high school. You had to take an exam to get in the high school, it wasn't compulsory high school. And according to the constitution, every student had to have religious education. There was a mark for religious education, you had to be in the class. And I took Jewish religion in the high school. We had the rabbi who came in and talked to us.

Q: So were you required to – to be the religion of your parents, or could you have decided to go to another class altogether?

A: No, no, you –

Q: You had to do it.

A: You have to do a religion. Of course, I was Jewish, so I – so I-I – I went to the – to the special classes, the rabbi who came in.

Q: Right, right.



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A: And then the rabbi was involved with the – I think it was – not an Orthodox, Reform –

Q: The Reform movement.

A: – Reform synagogue, and then I took the Bar Mitzvah in the Reform synagogue.

Q: I see. But the Bar Mitzvah was not required, right?

A: No, no, it was not required.

Q: No, you – did you decide you wanted to do it, or did your parents decide, do you think?

A: No. I don't know, everybody was doing it, so I did it.

Q: So you did it. Was there a party?

A: No party.

Q: No party, you just did the Bar Mitzvah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you like it? Did y – was – were you –

A: Well, I took lessons again.

Q: Yes.

A: Some Hebrew lessons, some you ha – also in the Bar Mitzvah, you had to give a little talk, mostly to thank your parents for what they did for you and so on.

Q: Right.

A: So I learned a – a Hebrew little talk

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Q: Uh-huh. In Hebrew?

A: In Hebrew.

Q: Ah. And who translated it for you? Did you – did you write it in Romanian?

A: Oh no, no, I took Hebrew lessons.

Q: Oh, so you could do it.

A: Yeah. Not only that, but during the Bar Mitzvah, we were four students, and you had to go to the Torah and I think that we read a little of the Torah aloud.

Q: I see. Right.

A: So you had to learn the – how to read the script.

Q: The script from that Torah, right.

A: Yeah.

Q: So what kind of a child were you? Were you very serious? Were you a problem for your parents, what were – look at that look on your face.

A: I – I don't know. I think that the influence of my mother was that – you see, my parents didn't have an education. So I had to have an education and I had to be what they used to call the liberal profession. Which mean either a lawyer or a doctor or an engineer or something, you know. And there was a certain pressure to become a –

Q: A professional.

A: A professional, right.

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Q: Were – did you resent it?

A: No.

Q: No, you didn't. This was okay with you.

A: No, no, no. Well, again, we were lucky, we didn't have to work. And the only thing, when I was in high school, I did a fair amount of sports, and you had to pass an examination, you know.

Q: Right. So what sports did you like?

A: We played soccer.

Q: Uh-huh. And you liked that?

A: We played soccer when we were 13 - 14, and then later on we played volleyball and basketball.

Q: And basketball?

A: Yeah.

Q: And your brother, your brother was younger?

A: Five years younger.

Q: Five years, oh, that's a big difference.

A: Yeah.

Q: So were you close with him at all, or not?

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A: Well, when he became older, we already had the problem with – with the Jews and he couldn't go to the regular state school. And he had to go to a Jewish school. And –

Q: This is even before high school, yeah.

A: No, in high school.

Q: In high school.

A: In high school.

Q: I see.

A: He couldn't go to the regular school, the ji – state school. You see, i-it was very important to go to state school, to be able to pass that – the examination, the baccalaureate, because that gives you rights to go to university and become an officer in the army and so on. The baccalaureate was very important in the – in the – with the – with the numerous [indecipherable] you know, and they started saying that the Jews cannot go to the state school, so the Jews formed their own high schools. Now, I understand from **Radu** that later on they recognized those schools, you see, after the war, you see, in the – they went back – my brother went back to the regular state school.

Q: I see. But that was after the war.

A: After the war, yes.

Q: So, in 1933, when **Hitler** takes over, you're 11 years old, are you very conscious that – that – I mean, is there an affect in **Romania** at this time?

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A: A li – a little – as I said again, there were all the time, I was very conscious that there was a certain amount of anti-Semitism in the – in the – **Romania**, you know?

Q: So you grew up with that?

A: Oh yes, no question about it.

Q: Did you join Jewish – any Jewish groups at the time?

A: I – I was – only for a short time when we – we used to play basketball and volleyball – well, that was later on, I was member of the **Maccabee**, that was a sports group, Jewish sports group.

Q: So you didn't join a Zionist political party or anything –

A: No.

Q: – or a group.

A: Now I had friends, my friends that I used to play soccer in the street when I was young, later on they joined the **Betar**, and they were on **Struma**.

Q: Uh-huh. And they were killed.

A: Killed, right.

Q: Mm-hm. So you get your baccalaureate, is it 1940?

A: Right.

Q: And your – so you're 18.

A: Right.

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Q: Right. And – and by then there – there is a clear Nazi influence in **Romania**, is that right?

A: Well, it started – this is probably – you see, there was a lot of resentment in **Romania** in the – because **Poland** was divided in 1939, you know. And the western powers didn't interfere. And the king felt that he cannot rely on the western power, so he made the compromise and let the Germans come in. And he also made another compromise, because he appointed the government with these anti-Semitic groups. And the – the influence of Germans, and the influence of the government, they started this that the Jews cannot have business, the Jews cannot go to universities, and so on and so forth.

Q: Wa-Was there also some law against citizenship for Jews?

A: That's right.

Q: So did you lose your citizenship?

A: Now, no.

Q: No, okay.

A: Now let me tell you about this. There were a number of laws in **Romania** that allowed the Jews to become citizens. In the – my father was a soldier in the World War I, and he got a citizenship because of that. But then they – they withdrew it, or they review it or something and he had to go to court again to get it back.

Q: And did he get it back?

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A: I think so, yes.

Q: So did that make you safer?

A: No.

Q: It didn't.

A: No, because when they introduce this **[indecipherable]** and it seems that you could not be – have a business on your name, or you cannot go to state run school, or you cannot go to universities. Was a matter of religion, not of – of citizenship. See –

Q: I see.

A: – because you see, when the things got bad, everybody got the passport, you see, and a – and wher – I got – I had a Romanian passport, my parents, especially my father, didn't want to leave.

Q: Oh, he didn't?

A: No. He was not a **[indecipherable]** and he was in the war in **Romania** and he felt that his place is to stay in **Romania**.

Q: But he couldn't have his business any more, is that correct, or not?

A: He – I don't remember what happened with that. Most Jews in business, what they did, they had the **nom de plume**, you know what I mean? Just a Christian guy name, and they were running the business, see?

Q: I see.

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A: But I don't know whether he did that or not, I – I didn't hear about it.

Q: I see. Well, how – how did it come – it must have been awful in **Romania** at the time.

Were you – were you, before you left, in some sort of a camp?

A: Oh yes.

Q: During – was this during the day, or you were sleeping there as well?

A: No, I was during the day in a big camp called **[indecipherable]**. Was a camp with thousands of Jewish adolescents, and we were building some target – you know, mounds of earth on both sides, so that the soldier can shoot targets, you see. And there is no equipment to bring the earth up to make this **[indecipherable]** you see.

Q: So you were digging.

A: So you had two guys, a different level, moving earth. There was a tool – I don't know what you call that in English, I don't know what you call it in eng –

Q: Not a shovel?

A: Shovel, right, yeah.

Q: A shovel. There were – there were no girls in this –

A: No.

Q: – there was just adolescent boys.

A: There were only **[indecipherable]** boys. This happened after I finished high school.

Q: So this was 1940? '41?



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A: '41

Q: '41.

A: I spend the whole summer in – in that camp.

Q: Was that horrible?

A: Well, I got sick there twice. They had detachment, and the detachment was run by a lieutenant and the sergeant and I had – I had no trouble with them, you know.

Q: Uh-huh. And did they feed you?

A: No.

Q: No food at all during the whole day?

A: You had to bring your own food, and – but you could go home in the evening, you know.

Q: I see. So – so did everybody eat at the same time when they brought food? Did – was there a break, or you just ate when you –

A: No, no, I – I – I don't remember exactly, I think that there was a period of rest, so to speak, you know, I mean.

Q: Uh-huh. And then you went home in the evening.

A: Yeah.

Q: And were you in two camps?

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A: I was in one camp, and they discharged us from the camp because the weather you know, snow and s – and then, during the winter, they called us back because they wanted the – the parks cleaned up of snow for traffic or something.

Q: Right.

A: So we went for short time, 10 days only.

Q: Right. So let me – when – did you make the decision by yourself to leave, or did you talk with your parents?

A: I wanted to leave, but I didn't know how to leave. And so what happened was that my – one of my father associates had a son, and he was apparently in this group that they were organizing this trip. And so my father asked me if I want to go to those meetings, so I went to the meetings where they were organizing the trip.

Q: I see. We have to change tapes, so hold the story for a moment.

**End of Tape One**

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**Beginning Tape Two**

Q: So your f – your father asked whether you wanted to – to leave, or to go to these meetings.

A: So I went to these meeting, and he fel – you see, this – the son of **[indecipherable]** was an architect, and he was older than I was, you see, in the 30s, and I guess he felt that he is going to take care of me or help me, because I was just 19 –

Q: Right.

A: – when the meeting started.

Q: So how long did it take – you – you had decided beforehand that you had wanted to leave somehow.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Right. And your father knew that.

A: Well, you see, there was a problem where are you going to go. And in – in those days in **Romania** there was a very strong French influence, you see, and – and you – actually, in the – I was supposed to go on summer vacation to one of those summer courses in – in **France** you see, but was cancelled because of the war, and you couldn't go there. The only other place you could go was **Switzerland**, and the problem was with **Switzerland** was that you had to deposit money in advance that you are going to have enough money to finish your school. So, we didn't do that.

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Q: Were your – since your father didn't want to go, was your mother and father upset that you wanted to leave?

A: My mother was – he – she felt that the – she was concerned that if I stay there, I'm going to go in trouble.

Q: Because you were going to get into trouble, or because the Germans are gonna do something – cause th-the German –

A: No, no, I – I – I would – I – he wasn't – in those days you are – you see, there was also something else that happened in **Romania**. When **Antonescu** became pri – pri – premier, he – and the king left, you see, there was – he brought in the Iron Guards, which was an extremely radical group who was also anti-Semitic. And there were stories of the Iron Guards going in homes and picking up people in the streets and so on and so forth, and my mother was very c-concerned that I'm going to get in pogrom – in a pogrom, and she got – now, my father felt that if I leave, I'll leave forever, you know that, he wasn't really keen about that.

Q: But your – your mother was more protective of you in a certain way, so she wanted –

A: Yeah.

Q: – so she wanted ans –

A: My mother was – if I went in the evening to – you know how boys are, they go out in the evening? She would stay at the window to watch me coming home.

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Q: Cause she was worried.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Yes. So what – what were these meetings like, that you – when you went to these meetings?

A: Well, these meetings were primarily – my understanding about this was that these people, there were originally I think 10 or 11 or something, they decided to buy a boat from a Greek person who built this boat as a sailboat for races – racing. This was a racing sailboat. And I think he was in importing and export of grain, th-the Greek guy. And they decided, th-that they are going to – to buy it, and so they were organizing the – they were talking, where are we going to get the maps, the boat head, a small engine. One of the guys was supposed to be a knowledge of mechanic, and he was supposed to take care of the engine. And then where are we go – th-the – what kind of luggage we can take, you know, we're not supposed to take luggage because there was no place, just socks, you see. And then there was a lot of talk about, if we leave in the winter or spring, the rail – you see, this boat – and this is why we had trouble with, had a big mast with sails. And to keep the mast up you have to have a keel under – under the boat. And the question was, how are you going to use the sail if in the winter when the rail where the sail goes up and down like a zipper is going to freeze, you see? So they were talking about all these things, you see?

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Q: And did you have a particular skill that they were going to use, or you were just going

—

A: No, no.

Q: No, you had no skill?

A: I — there — there — as I say, there was one guy, a mechanic, and there was another guy, I think, who had some experiences with — with boats. No, they made a decision right away that they are going to take captain and the sailor that na — as navigators and that's what they did.

Q: Now, let me ask you something: did you know what was going on in terms of the actions against Jews in **Romania** at that time?

A: Sure.

Q: You did. And did y — did you want to leave just because you thought it was going to get bad, or did you — did you want to leave because you thought you actually could get killed?

A: No, I wanted to leave because I wanted the different life, where — whe — where — let me — let me kind of give you an example. I-In **Romania** that time, if you were a Jew, and you needed some papers, you had to pay money to some intermediary and he will give you the paper, or he will give you a passport [**indecipherable**]. He had connections, see? And — and he continuously was — for instance, to give you another example: the Jews

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were supposed to give money to the government, you know, some kind of a like a special income or something like this, income tax or something like this. My father didn't want to go and argue with them, and I went with – with my mother in front of this – and this was Jewish people who were trying to get money from the Jews. Also, there was a question at that time about moving Jews to **Transnistria**. You know about **Transnistria**?

Q: Ta-Talk about it a little bit.

A: What? **Transnistria** – where the Germans were in – in **Europe**, you know, they controlled **Europe**, at one time in th – this was also the Romanian government, there was an area over the **Dniester**, you know, which is – actually, there is a small republic there called **Moldavia** during the – during the Russians – i-in the **Russia** before, and they wanted to move the Jews there in **Transnistria**, the rumors were that also.

Q: So all of these things, in-including the life even before the influence of the Nazis, and their **[indecipherable]** you – you wanted –

A: Well, you see, it was a combination of the Romanian government, be-because they a – they accepted the German **[indecipherable]** without fighting, and these anti-Semitic groups like the **Legionnaires**, that they adopted the German policies against the Jews.

Q: Did you talk to your brother about leaving, or not?

A: No.

Q: He was too young.

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A: I thought about that, but he was 14 year old when I left, and I tell you frankly, I didn't want to take the responsibility.

Q: So you didn't want to take him.

A: No, I felt that I can risk my life, but why should I risk his life?

Q: So, who bought the boat? Everybody who was going –

A: Everybody contributed some money. There were some people who contributed a little more, a little less, I don't know what was the – the deal. I don't – my father never said something, but he paid some money for that.

Q: He paid some money. It's expensive to buy a boat. No?

A: I guess so, I don't know. I don't know how much it was.

Q: You're not sure, uh-huh.

A: He never mentioned how much it was.

Q: So you have to – you had a passport already, right? So –

A: We had a passport.

Q: Okay.

A: And we had the destination visa, you had to have that too. And so there was a consul from some South American – honorary consul from **South America**, and again for some fee he will give you a visa.

Q: So you had a visa to some South American country.



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A: Yeah, yeah, and the passport.

Q: How did you get to **Constanța**?

A: By train.

Q: By train. Did you all go together?

A: No.

Q: No. You went by yourself.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was that difficult to leave everybody?

A: I don't know, I just went by myself.

Q: You just went. Do you recall the day that you ha – left and said goodbye? Do you remember that?

A: My – my father and my brother took me to the train station.

Q: Uh-huh. So you don't remember what your emotions were at the time?

A: No.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The only thing that I remember is that when we came to the quay, you know, in **Constanța** and I was looking for the boat, I ha – I had to go to look down on the way because the boat w-was a race boat, was very, very low.

Q: I see.

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A: You see, the boat didn't – didn't have a rim or anything else, was very, very low. So I remember seeing that.

Q: Were you concerned about getting seasick or anything on this boat?

A: No. I – I was a little seasick, but not bad.

Q: Not bad.

A: There were other people much sicker than I was.

Q: And the boat is pretty small, I guess, huh?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so there were 12 of you, or – do you remember?

A: Actually, I think there were – I think there were cert – y-you know, the whole – there were 11 originally and they – there were two guys that appeared on the boat that were not at the meetings, they came in later. And there were also the two – the captain and the sailor.

Q: Now, were all there boys, men?

A: No, there were two couples – three couples.

Q: Three couples?

A: Three couples, and one of the ladies was pregnant.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

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Q: And the rest were – were m-men?

A: Men.

Q: The rest were men. So where did you all stay on this boat? On the top?

A: There were – there were two cabins i-in front, and the married people took the cabins. And the – then there was some kind of a storage area in the back, with boards and all the others were just staying there.

Q: So you just stayed on top of the boards and slept?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you get sunburned?

A: What?

Q: Did you get sunburned?

A: No, no, this were inside.

Q: Oh, it was inside?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what about food?

A: They had food.

Q: They did?

A: They had food for a few days.

Q: But this was going to be a very long trip, no?

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A: Well, there – at the meeting all the time their question – things that – oh, they are going to stop in **Turkey**, in **Istanbul** and get maps – we didn't have maps –

Q: You didn't –

A: And they're going to get food and stuff and so on.

Q: So they figured that they would stop?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But it didn't work that way.

Q: I bet. So, you start sailing and you have a captain and a navigator?

A: The captain and the sailor.

Q: The captain and the sailor.

A: The captain was the navigator. I think he had a compass, but I am not sure.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: I hope he did.

A: I think yeah. He – you see, the way he navigated by he knew where the lighthouses are.

Q: Oh.

A: On the coast of the **Black Sea**.

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Q: Right.

A: And he knew from the lighthouses also how he navigated the – towards the **Bosphorus**.

Q: Right.

A: And I remember waking up the next day and the lighthouse from the **Bosphorus** was there. You see, **Turkey** was neutral, so they had the lighthouses, but I think there were lighthouses also o – in – on the Bulgarian coast.

Q: Uh-huh. And – and you traveled close to the coast –

A: Yeah.

Q: – as you were going down to the **Bosphorus**, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Would – did you feel safe in th – the Romanians didn't try to stop you, right?

A: No, no, but let me say this: when we went in **Constanța** before going on the boat, we have custom house – custom i-inspection. And there was one or two Germans who took pictures of the boat. Soldiers, I mean, German soldiers.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: You see, by that time – that's another thing about – before I left, when the – I told you the government decided to let the Germans in, there were Germans in the streets of **Bucharest**. And they were living in one of the – those hotels. And also Italian soldiers.

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Q: But it wasn't an occupation at that time. They were just there.

A: They were just walking in the streets, right.

Q: Right.

A: And I must say, the German had very good clothes, you see.

Q: Right.

A: Cause was winter, and –

Q: So what did you take with you when you got on this little boat?

A: Just a few clothes, you know.

Q: Clothes. A-Any books?

A: Yeah –

Q: What'd you take?

A: – I had th-the dictionary of – English-French dictionary.

Q: Really?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did you have anything to read?

A: Newspaper, French. That's –

Q: That you purchased right before you got on the ship – on the little boat?

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A: Well, you see, we used to read the “**Journal de Genève.**” You know about “**Journal de Genève?**” It’s a Swiss paper in French and it used to come to **Bucharest** and I used to go downtown and buy it, and I used to read it.

Q: So you took that with you?

A: I took some wi-with me. I still read newspaper now.

Q: So you went through the **Bosphorus**, then you went to the **Marmara Ereğlisi**, yes, and then the **Dardanelles**.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you’re going down the coast of –

A: **Turkey**, I told you, yeah.

Q: **Turkey**, yes. And then you – there’s an accident that happens in **Çeşme**, or near **Çeşme – Çeşme**.

A: In **Çeşme**, yeah.

Q: What happened?

A: Well, I think probably I can relate this. First, before [indecipherable] **Çeşme**, the sailor didn’t want to go down south.

Q: Oh, just – okay.

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A: He decided he was afraid that he being Romanian, he's going to be interned, you know, being an enemy alien. And he took the little dinghy boat that we had, we had a little dinghy boat, and he went to the **Chios Island**. Those islands –

Q: Right.

A: – were occupied by the Germans, they were Greek islands, you know? And I think that one of the thing that he was supposed to do, because of the keel, was to throw in a gadget that it's like a string with a weight, by which, before the boat goes in the harbor, he finds out the depths of the water. And we d – he wasn't there to do that any more. I think that's what he was doing –

Q: I see.

A: – before. And the captain should have asked one of the guys to do that, you see. And what happened is that the keel, which was about three or – feet or four feet deep, went between rocks in the por – **Çeşme**, and then the boat started shaking like this, and everybody got scared and we left the boat and we went on the Turkish coast. And then we stayed there for, oh, I don't know, maybe 10 hours or something like this. And then there was a Turkish boat that rescue it. I mean, they were – they had some long sticks and pushing the sticks to the bottom and at the same time the boat, pulling it, you know? So they got it out from the ro – between the rocks and **inflated** it, and put it back on the water, you know [**indecipherable**] water. Then we went back on the boat.



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Q: So how did you get off the boat? The dinghy wasn't there any more. Was there another one?

A: I think that the Turks – the Turks had – had a dinghy. Some people from the harbor came in with a dinghy.

Q: I see. So then you were just s-sitting on the coast there.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was there a town or were you on the – just on the beach waiting?

A: Yeah, just – just on the coast.

Q: On the coast, just waiting. So then you go back to the boat?

A: Yeah.

Q: Well then what happens?

A: Then the saving – the saving boat took out the mast as a guarantee that they're going to be paid for their saving – salvage.

Q: You mean this th – because they save you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – they took the mast so you can't move.

A: Exactly.

Q: Right.

A: So we stayed there for about four months.

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Q: On the boat?

A: On the boat.

Q: Was that horrible? Was that horrible?

A: Well, you know, it was – some of it, you know, wasn't so bad, you know. And there was a man from that area who used to come every day with a sack of food. I don't know who paid for the food. This was near **Smyrna**, you know. Now, there is a British consul in **Smy-Smyrna**, there was a – an American consul in **Smyrna**. Either the – there – I read somewhere that the **Britisher** took care of these boats. I don't know who paid, but somebody p-paid for the food. Also –

Q: Wait, you ha – we're going to have to hold it just one moment, cause we have to change the tapes.

A: Yeah, yeah.

**End of Tape Two**

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**Beginning Tape Three**

A: Oh, I wanted to say, one of the things that affected my mother particularly was that when **Antonescu** became prime minister, he had the Iron Guards with him, and then there was the revolt of the Iron Guards against **Antonescu**, and the army took control, and arrested the – the Iron Guards. And we lived on a boulevard not far away from the security – the country security offices, and there were machine guns in the street.

Q: Really?

A: Oh yes.

Q: So your mother was very nervous about this?

A: Oh yes. Th-Th-There are machine guns in the street [**indecipherable**] you know, like maybe hundred meters, 200 meters from the building, you know, they had machine guns in the street.

Q: Did it bother you?

A: No, but it – it makes you –

Q: A little nervous.

A: [**indecipherable**] it, you know. The machine guns were, of course, the army. You know, the army took over.

Q: Against the Iron Guard.

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A: Yeah. See, the Iron Guards, it was originally a group of [indecipherable] wrote a little book about these Iron Guards, with the – they were students and they're terrorists and they killed a few of the prime minister of **Romania**. And of course, the-their leader was killed and buried, and th-the place where he was buried was covered with concrete, so that nobody can take his body out.

Q: So this was clearly not a good time in **Romania**.

A: No, i-i – not when we were adolescent, this happened after 1936.

Q: Right. So, let's go back to – you want to go back to the boat –

A: Yeah.

Q: – a little bit. You don't know who provided the food for you, you just got food every day.

A: No, no. Also, there were boats coming from **Cairo** to take Greek – Greek men to form a Greek legion in **Alexandria**, you see. This is during the war. And all this trip was during the war, you see.

Q: Right, right.

A: Yeah, and one of our men was a very good swimmer, and he used to swim to these boats and get cans of food, put them under his trunks and bring them over.

Q: Sounds difficult.

A: Yeah.

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Q: How did you wash on this boat? Did you wash during these four months?

A: No, you wash in the sea, in the water, in the sea, everybody –

Q: Including your body?

A: Yeah, everybody was going in the water, including me, I di – wasn't a swimmer –

Q: Right.

A: – but you put the – what you call the –

Q: The – the safety –

A: – safety belt –

Q: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah, right.

A: – and then you go in the water.

Q: And you – and you washed there?

A: Well, not too – soap was something that this –

Q: Right. So you didn't mind this. Did – did you like the people who were on the boat? I mean, did you –

A: Well, I never had any problem with, there were other people who had problems. I never had problems. No, I – I never had problem with anybody.

Q: What – what other sorts of problems, people had personality conflicts, or what?

A: Personality conflict. One of my – there was another student there, and he had some kind of a problem with one of the men – men in there, I don't know.

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Q: So did – did the captain intervene? Did somebody intervene and try to make people –

A: No, the captain – the ca – y-y-you see, the – while th-the – there was danger and so on, everybody was quiet, you see, there wasn't much problem.

Q: Mm-hm. It was just when it got quiet that people started –

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you think that these conflicts were silly? Or y – or you didn't pay much attention to them?

A: I didn't pay attention to them.

Q: Uh-huh. Okay. So, you're on this – the – boat for about four months?

A: Yeah, and then somebody paid the money to this rescue boat, you know, to the salvage boat. Now, there were rumors then that there was a collection of money from between – in the Jewish community in **Istanbul**, there – that contributed. Some people said that the money came from **Romania**. Some people – some places it's written that again the Britisher apparently contributed. I don't know, I do – I never found out th – I don't know who contributed. But the money was paid to the salvage boat, and they gave us back the mast.

Q: So once you got the mast you could – you could go again?

A: Yeah. Then the captain left, because he was afraid again to go down south, said he's going to be interned, so he remained in **Turkey**, the captain.

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Q: So then who becomes your captain?

A: They got an Arab, an Arab c-captain who knew the coast, and he took us all the way down the coast.

Q: Did this surprise you, I mean, the captain and this other – the sailor knew that – where they were going before they left **Constanța**, yes?

A: You see, there was a bad time in **Romania**, and these guys had families, and they wanted to get money for their families, so they –

Q: I see.

A: – th-they take a chance you see?

Q: Right, right.

A: And the idea was that they may get out in **Istanbul** and so on. Now, the rumor which I heard was that they – the boat came **Istanbul**, or in – near the coast in the **Bosphorus** there. And the – the Turks told them, just keep sailing, we don't want you here.

Q: Mm-hm. Really?

A: That's the way I was told, yeah.

Q: I see. So then you get this new captain, and you're going around the coast of **Turkey** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and **Syria**?

A: Yeah.

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Q: And then you're supposed to stop in – in **Lebanon** and **Beirut**?

A: The – we stopped in **Beirut**.

Q: You stopped in **Beirut**.

A: And then, when we stopped in **Beirut**, the – a British security officer came, and the – the people on the boat asks did they want to go to **Palestine**, you see? And he came the next day and said the British government decided you people have to go to **Cyprus**.

Q: Not to **Palestine**.

A: No, exactly.

Q: Was the intention to go to **Palestine**?

A: Yeah.

Q: It was.

A: Now, at the meetings that we had in **Romania**, the meetings, there was one lady there who had some connection with the Zionist organizations. And she – either she worked for the Zionist, I don't know, but she was talking about **Palestine**, that she wanted to go to p – and everybody agreed with her.

Q: Uh-huh. Including you?

A: Yeah, well –

Q: Why not?

A: I-I – I just wanted to get out, you know?



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Q: Right, right. So you go to **Cyprus**? And how –

A: So we – now, the boat was towed, it was hooked up to another boat, and then we went – it's not far away, it's about 60 miles, you see, we went to **Cyprus** in [indecipherable].

And then everybody was put in some kind of a quarantine center, because they were afraid of diseases or something. And we stayed in quarantine there, I don't know, for a week or 10 days, or maybe a little longer, maybe longer.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then they moved us to a hotel in **Pedolas(ph)**. **Pedolas(ph)**, it's in the mountains, it's a resort, and they have hotels there and we moved in the hotel.

Q: And how are people reacting to – to this? Are people okay?

A: Yeah.

Q: So people are not complaining or yelling, or –

A: No, no, no.

Q: No. So how long are you in **Cyprus** then?

A: I was in **Cyprus** – '42, '43 – maybe a year, or 10 months or something like this.

Q: And what are you doing?

A: Well, we – first of all, the British sent a – a teacher. There was a British teacher to teach English.

Q: Really?

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A: So we had English lessons. And believe it or not, we had a play, in English of course, **“The Barretts of Whimple Street.”**

Q: You’re kidding me. Really?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And did you – you played a role?

A: Yeah, I played the role of a doctor there. So, it was a very active English teaching thing.

Q: Right. Well, that’s interesting that the British would send a teacher, no?

A: The British – the British have – I knew this before, because the British have the – I can’t remember the name of it, it’s called the British council or something. They had an organization of teachers that were sent all over the world to teach English. This is before the war. I ge – I can’t reme – there was a lord involved in this, Lord **Cecil**(ph), I think. I think this young man probably had something that he couldn’t be a soldier, or he couldn’t be an officer or something. And he was sent in to this **[indecipherable]** he was teaching English.

Q: So you were – you were occupied?

A: Yeah.

Q: So it wasn’t boring for you, just to be there?

A: Well, also we wrote letters.

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Q: Uh-huh.

A: I tried to get in the British army, I wrote one letter. Then I wrote a letter to the American university in **Beirut**. Then to my surprise, the health officer – oh, wait, we – there was a **Cyprus** health officer around also. He came to tell me that you are going to leave the colony. And that I was admitted to – as a student in the American university in **Beirut**, you see, and I left on the airplane, a small airplane.

Q: On an airplane?

A: It was a small airplane –

Q: I bet.

A: – that came from [indecipherable] to **Cyprus** and to **Beirut**, it was going around like this.

Q: Right.

A: And one engine air – airplane, you know, and that's the –

Q: So all because you wrote one letter? Did nobody else –

A: I wrote – I wrote a letter and I sent copies of my grades from the baccalaureate from **Romania**.

Q: You had those with you?

A: Yeah.

Q: Really? And where did you copy them? There were no co –

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A: I didn't – I didn't copy them, but I had – I had the copies with me, so I send them over.

Q: I see. I see. Did you also write to your parents and your brother? Or you didn't?

A: You couldn't write. The only thing that I – I received through the war were certain letters from – small letters, really simple letters; we are well, and so on, from the Catholic – the Catholic – the **[indecipherable]** organization, you see, they were doing this, they were sending let-letters, but I never answered them because I didn't know how to do that.

Q: So you didn't hear from your parents and you didn't – you – I mean, there was no way to communicate with them.

A: Oh, they send me these little notes.

Q: The – the little ones, but you don't know –

A: No.

Q: Yeah. Were you worried about them?

A: No.

Q: You weren't. You didn't think things would happen in **Bucharest**?

A: Well, I don't know. I think the reaction, it's some kind of a psychological reaction that you worry about yourself, so you don't have that much worry about other people. I don't know, I think it's some kind of a selfish way to react.

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Q: But you must have been really happy to get the news that you were going to go to the university, no?

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah. But you didn't know anybody there.

A: In **Beirut**?

Q: Mm.

A: No.

Q: So you took this plane, with your little sack of clothes and your dictionary –

A: That's right.

Q: – and you went to the university and what were you going to study there?

A: Well, I wrote them that I want to go to medical school, and they have a medical school with very few students, you know, like 40 students a year or something like this. And they wrote me that I – because of my – the baccalaureate exam, you know, that I'll be admitted to sophomore science. So I stayed there and took sophomore science. And then I went to junior, and in junior you have to take a major, major in biology and a minor in chemistry to be able to go to medical school.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: And I was sick that year.

Q: With what?

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A: Yellow jaundice.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. Everybody got jaundice that year. The rumor was that the Indian troops from, you remember **Rommel**, and the Indian troops from **Africa**? Came in for reha – or rehab or something, and they brought with them hepatitis and everybody got hepatitis including me.

Q: Well, that wasn't very pleasant.

A: Oh no, they put me in the hospital for a few days. They used to treat you with **I.V.** with sugar.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: So did you get better in a few days?

A: I got a little better, yes, but then I had to go and find out food outside there, and I found a family and the lady used to cook spaghetti. And again, you couldn't eat any proteins, you know, you had to eat only carbohydrate. That's the way they used to treat the –

Q: Really?

A: What?

Q: Is that still true?

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A: No.

Q: No.

A: I mean, I don't know, the idea was behind that, if you eat proteins, the liver has to work harder, you see.

Q: I see.

A: So they – they eat – eat only sugar [indecipherable]

Q: So you had a lot of spaghetti, huh?

A: Oh, I had spaghetti for a few months.

Q: Yes. And you liked it?

A: Well –

Q: Was that – that wasn't the first time you had spaghetti?

A: No.

Q: Mm. So were you out of school now for a f – for a few weeks or a few months, or what?

A: Well, a few weeks.

Q: For a few weeks?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you were able to catch up?

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A: Oh yes. It was not easy because in those days they used to give a big embryology course in the junior year. You know now, it depends, nowadays they give them sometimes in medical school, you know, first year. But this teacher was, I think, from **John Hopkins**. He gave the course in embryology, and it's a tough course because they give you boxes of slides, and microscopes and you just have to – to study.

Q: It's tedious.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you went back to school, and you didn't have to go to the first year of college, you went to the second year in the – in these courses, right? Is that correct? The sophomore –

A: No, I took sophomore, then I got promoted to junior. And in junior – from junior you can go to medical school –

Q: Oh, you can?

A: – if you make the grades, yeah.

Q: You don't have to wait until you're a senior?

A: No. But I'll tell you how they do it.

Q: Okay, how do they do it?

A: Was accelerated program.

Q: Uh-huh.



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A: So from the junior you go to first year medicine, and at the end of first year medicine, they give you a college degree.

Q: Oh, I see, that's clever.

A: Colle – college degree.

Q: Right.

A: Arts – college of arts in medicine, it's called, college degree.

Q: So you got your baccalaureate in **Romania**. And then you got your college degree in **Beirut**. Right?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you start medical school, what happens?

A: I continue medical school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Second year and first semester of the third year. But that time it's 1948.

Q: Oh, so it's late.

A: Pardon?

Q: It's late.

A: By that time, things are bad in **Middle East**.

Q: Right.

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A: In January 19 – sometimes in January 1948, the president of the university called the Jewish students in his office. There were seven Jewish students, and told them that he cannot guarantee their safety in the school, and that we should leave. Now, he gave us a piece of paper, which is in the file of the museum, you know, where he said that the [indecipherable] government requested the school to get rid of the foreign Jewish students. Not the Jewish students from Arab countries, but s – the foreign Jewish students. And – but he told us about the safety. Now, what happened was that when this happened, most of the Jews that we had in school came from **Palestine**, and so they went back to **Palestine**.

Q: Uh-huh. So y – when the war ends in 1945, did you think about going back to **Romania**, or you didn't?

A: I'll tell you about that. The – I had, of course, problem with money [indecipherable]. And they couldn't help me from – my family couldn't help me. My father wanted me to go back to **Romania**: he – he wrote me a letter. And I didn't want to go back in **Romania**.

Q: And did your mother write to you also, or not?

A: My mother was saying always, live your own life, you know. Do whatever you – don't worry about us, and so on and so forth, you see? But when this thing happened with the meeting with the president of the American University of **Beirut**. Now, you have to

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know something about this also. This originally was a Presbyterian Missionary school, and then later on they made it an international college. And the teachers, they were Americans that came [indecipherable] to Presbyterian institutions from **Columbia** University and from **John Hopkins**, you see? And they were very sympathetic to my problem. And they wrote letters to **John Hopkins**, and to people from **John Hopkins**, and that's the way I got admitted to University of **Utah**.

Q: I think we have to change the tapes.

**End of Tape Three**

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**Beginning Tape Four**

Q: You know, I never asked you the name of this little boat that you were on, the sailboat, what was the name of it?

A: **Euxin**.

Q: **Euxin**?

A: Yeah, is the name of the **Black Sea** in the Latin, called **Euxin**.

Q: Uh-huh. So that's **e-u-x-i-n**?

A: Yeah.

Q: I see, okay. Tell me something, di – were you, when you were in **Beirut**, going to school, were you also a translator on the radio? Or did you do that separately?

A: Both.

Q: Both.

A: I did translator and speaker.

Q: And you were going to school at the same time?

A: Well, this I did it only in the evenings, about three times a week. Let me tell you the background of that. In **Beirut** there was a commercial attaché. I think his name was **Berkovitz(ph)**, or something like this. And when the war started, he started this program on **Radio [indecipherable]** which is the radio in **Beirut**. And you see, at that time, beru – **Lebanon** was a French protectorate. And when the – after the **[indecipherable]**

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collapsed, these people in – in French colonies, the protectorates, bec – affidavit to **de Gaulle**, so it became **France Libre**. And Dr. **Berkovitz**(ph), who was [indecipherable] embassy was running a program in **Romania** from the Radio [indecipherable]. And he had another gentlemen then that I don't know what happened, he got sick or something, and then he asked me to do this three times a week, or something like this. So I used to go there and get the news, translate them, and deliver it.

Q: Before this, when you were going and getting your – your essentially the Bachelor's degree, when you were going to college in **Beirut**, before you started your medical school; the war is still going on, so are you hearing a lot of news, or there's not – there's not much news? What is it like for you?

A: Oh –

Q: So, from '44 to '45, I think, right? Or from '43 to '45.

A: We – we had – I mean, in – as far as telegrams that came into the radio station, is that what you –

Q: No, I'm talking about before, so y-your – your – you're doing the translation from 1944 to 1945? Is that correct?

A: Well, I had this job, right.

Q: Yes. So, you are getting all – are you getting a lot of news about the war at this time?

A: Yeah.

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Q: And you – do you know what’s happening in **Romania**?

A: No, I didn’t know exactly what – **Romania** and I didn’t have – there were – there were once – there were not many Romanians – the **Berkovitz**(ph) family was – there was the doctor, the wife. He was a doctor in business or something, you know, he wasn’t a medical doctor. And he – and there was a son there who was a student in medicine at the French school. See, in **Beirut** there was a Jesuit French university also, and they had a medical school. So this guy, his name was **Zaporta**(ph), he went to that school. So I knew him, I – I – we’re kind of friendly. But there were not that many Romanians there.

Q: Did you find out about the Nazis killing so many Jews in concentration camps and death camps? Did you find that out during the war or after?

A: No. After.

Q: After. Was that extremely shocking to you?

A: Yes, to some extent. I – I never liked that culture. I didn’t take German in high school, and I didn’t like Germans, I never buy a German car or – ye – I – I – I – I – I was influenced by these things, yeah.

Q: So what – what happened made a big impact on you in some way.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. When – when you couldn’t stay in **Beirut**, and these professors wrote, these American professors wrote –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – to **Johns Hopkins**, did **Johns Hopkins** have a division in **Utah**? Is that why you went to **Utah**, or –

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Tell you the relation. You see, the – the people from – one of the people from teaching neuro-anatomy in – in **Beirut**, which I think he was from **John Hopkins**, I did some translations for him from Italian to English. Some research – he was interested in the pituitary gland, and I did some research – some translations for him, and I think maybe – maybe he was the guy who wrote the letters, I don't know who wrote the letters. But the way this happen is that one of the **John Hopkins** professor, by the name of **Maxwell Winthrop** – he was a hematologist, you know, at **John Hopkins**, became chairman of the department of medicine in **Utah**. Now why – how that happened was that **Utah** before the war had a two year medical school. And then after two years, they had to go usually to **Chicago** to finish medical school. Now, because of the war, they decided to make a four year medical school, and then they had to get chairmen – you know, professors. And they got this, the **Maxwell Winthrop** from **John Hopkins** as a professor of medicine. And I think that he was Jewish, and I think that they approach him, and **Maxwell Winthrop** had relation with the Jewish community in – in **Salt Lake City**, and

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the Jewish community there had a fund that was left by somebody from **Colorado**, a Jewish businessman or something, for scholarships or something like this, and they decided to give me a scholarship. And this is the way this [indecipherable]. But that's not only what happened. It's – to come as a student in those days to this country, not only that you had to have some kind of a scholarship, but there had to be a guarantee from somebody, that if you run out of money, they will contribute for your expenses in school and so on, so that you don't remain penniless. And they c – this was done by a family of eye doctors in – in **Baltimore**. They did the guarantee, but they didn't give me any money or something. The money was from that scholarship from the Jewish community in – in **Salt Lake City**. And I paid it back when I – after – later on.

Q: Had you wanted to come to the **United States**?

A: Yes, I wanted to come to finish medical school. You see, this is something – it's something that – once you start something, you have to finish it, and I – I – I started this and I had to finish medical school, you see, so it was very important for me to finish medical school.

Q: But you – if they hadn't said that you – they couldn't guarantee your safety and you had to leave **Beirut**, you would have stayed there.

A: Yeah.

Q: Probably, and perhaps made a life there.



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A: I don't think so.

Q: You don't think so.

A: I was never interested in **Middle East** culture. You see, this goes back to the background in high school. As I told you, there was a very strong French influence, and western – western interest [**indecipherable**]. I probably would have taken the medical degree there and gone somewhere in **France**, or somewhere else.

Q: I see, right. But you –

A: See, na – tha – that **Middle East** culture never attracted me.

Q: But it was okay to go to **Utah**. That was –

A: Oh yes.

Q: Yeah. Did that –

A: Yeah. You know, it's very funny, but when I left **Paris**, you see, because I went first to **Paris**, my friends there, Romanian friends said, how in the hell are you leaving **Paris**, which is a metropolis of the world, that you go out in the western **United States** where there is nothing there?

Q: Right, right.

A: But the situation in **Paris** there was not good. After the war, in 1948, the situation in **France** was bad. First of all, there were not – not much food, not – they were depleted.

And their feeling, a lot of European refugees, including Romanian refugees, they all bring

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that is going to be another war between the **United States** and **Russia**, you see? It wasn't a very good situation to stay there and study.

Q: So you went from **Beirut** to **Paris** in 1948.

A: Yeah.

Q: As a – as a way to go to **Utah**? I mean, that was –

A: No –

Q: You were –

A: I don't know, I – I – I wasn't sure whether I am going to go to school –

Q: I see.

A: – in **Paris**, or if I go – am going to get admitted to – to a school in **United States** –

Q: I see, I see –

A: – I didn't know about it.

Q: – you didn't know. So you went to **Paris** to wait to see what was going to happen.

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh. And how long were you in **Utah**?

A: I was in **Utah** from 1948 to 1950, two years.

Q: Two years. And you – and you met your wife there, is that correct?

A: No.

Q: No.

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A: That's another story. Where I was in – when I was a student in **Utah**, they have an intern there, an American guy from **Montana** or from some other western states, and we got – we got friendly. And he went in psychiatry, and came to **New York**, the **New York** hospital, **Cornell Medical School**, you know, to study psychiatry. So when I was in **Saint Louis**, an intern, and I came to **New York**, I came to visit him. And who was there as a resident in psychiatry was my wife.

Q: I see. So that's when you met. And did – did – did you get engaged and married very quickly, or what?

A: Oh, no.

Q: No? Took a long time?

A: About a year or more, you know.

Q: And did she come to **Saint Louis**?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: You see, I left **Saint Louis**.

Q: Oh, I see. And where did you go after **Saint Louis**?

A: I came to **New York**.

Q: Uh-huh.

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A: Now – now why did I come to **New York**? The reason was, while I was in **Saint Louis**, I had a problem with immigration. I had a problem with immigration before –

Q: Right.

A: – because I was a medical student, have [**indecipherable**] a student visa, you know here, and they were very tough then.

Q: Right.

A: And I was advised by people in **Saint Louis** that came from **New York** that I should go to **New York** because in **New York** they are me – there is more help with immigration, you know –

Q: Right.

A: – there are people that can help you, so – and I was trying to get a job in **New York**. So I came in **New York** and I went to **Cornell Medical School** to see this friend of mine, and there was this girl, you see, my wife.

Q: So you met in **New York**?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: Uh-huh. So you were in **New York** for how long? For a few years?

A: I was in **New York** for 15 years.

Q: 15 years, uh-huh. Where did you live in **New York**?

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A: I was practicing – well, I was a resident – I was a resident in – I took a year in just medicine, then I was a resident in surgery, and then I was in practice for 15 years in **New York**. [indecipherable]

Q: Right. So when did you go to **Houston**? After **New York**?

A: Then the things change in the profession you see, in **New York**. And it became the – the individual practice of medicine like we used to do became group practice. And I decided that I'm going to go to **Houston** to take a post-graduate training in heart surgery, you see, because thoracic surgery have changed from the lung, to heart surgery. And so I took this job in **Houston** for two years, a fellowship in the **Texas Heart Institute**. And my wife, again, the practice – she was in practice of psychiatry, became to such an extent that she didn't want to join a group, or something like this. And she decided to get the training in psychiatric administration. So she took a two year, went back to school, to a Master degree in public health, with emphasis on administration. And then she took the exams to be an administrator.

Q: And where did she do that work? She did that in **Houston**? Or –

A: At the University of **Houston**.

Q: **Houston**, I see.

A: Yeah.

Q: You never saw your parents again –

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A: No.

Q: – although they survived the war.

A: Yes.

Q: And – and you wrote to each other after the war –

A: Oh yes.

Q: – you spoke on the phone, or what? Did you also speak on the phone, eventually?

A: No, no, no.

Q: No.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: But you did see your brother –

A: Oh yes.

Q: – in **Europe** a number of times. But you never went back to **Romania**?

A: No.

Q: Do you think that the – the war affected you in some way?

A: Of course I think that this – sure.

Q: How do you think it affected you? I mean, besides the fact that you – you ended up leaving?

A: First of all affected us, I think, that we went in medicine, you know? I think my wife the same way, you see that we went in medicine, it affected us in that way. And also, the

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fact that you had to do a lot of [indecipherable] changing and shifts, gears, so to speak, you know? There was a lot of that during the war, and you had to be very persistent to – to be ab – to – to get out of school with a degree, you know? And a lot of people advise me, why do you have to go up to medical school for so many years? Why don't you become a – a bacteriologist or a physiologist, or something and so on and so forth, you see? You had to be very persistent to get through medical school, and that took a lot of energy, no question about.

Q: Was it awful for you to be so alone? Or did you just make friends and – and accommodate them that way?

A: I don't know, maybe – I had friends, and I had a very good relation – see, I been married for 52 years, and I had a very good relation with my wife. And being both doctors [indecipherable] understand the profession and so on. And that, they are very helpful, of course.

Q: But before that, it had to be very difficult for you, to leave as such a young person.

A: Well, again – again, it was just very persistent to get through medicine and specialties and [indecipherable] examination, and so on. There are a lot of exams in medicine, continuously you know, and traveling to – to get the knowhow, you know.

Q: Yes. You – but you s – you did say something, that you thought the war influenced you even to become a doctor.

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A: Yes.

Q: And is that because you've – well, why – why – why di – why would you say that?  
Cause you seem to have wanted to become a doctor for a long time.

A: I don't know. I think that maybe the idea was that seeing – you know, there was another thing also that was when I was the – as I say, when I went the – to **Paris**, you know, waiting to come to this country, there were a lot of refugee camps in **Europe**, you know. And a friend of mine, a dentist who was – his family was in **Palestine** was going around these camps trying to convince Jewish people in the camps to come to **Marseilles**, so that they can emigrate to – to **Israel**, because by that time, the state was there.

Q: Yes.

A: And there – I don't know, there are a lot of bad situations around and I don't know, maybe I had the feeling that being a doctor you can help some people, or you can help to change some of the situation.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you practice – when you practiced medicine, did you meet people who called themselves survivors, who went through the war?

A: No.

Q: You didn't.

A: You see, in – no, most of those people concentrated around the Jewish hospital in **New York**, you know, like **Mount Sinai**, **Beth Israel** –



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Q: Right.

A: – and – and later on I had the relation with **Beth Israel**, but by the time I came to **Beth Israel**, it was late in th – it was a kind of a religious situation, it wasn't the – th-the situation of a war, you see?

Q: Right, right.

A: But the one thing which – which remains, and this has been said before by other people, now that this Nazi **Germany** produced a tremendous amount of shifting of people and population all around **Europe**, a tremendous amount of damage, you know.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yeah.

Q: We do have to change the tapes.

**End of Tape Four**

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**Beginning Tape Five**

Q: **Harry**, did – did you think of working in the **DP** camps at all when you – when you went –

A: No.

Q: You didn't, when you came to **Europe** –

A: No.

Q: – when you went to **Paris**, you didn't?

A: No. This friend of mine, the dentist, he went to some of those camps, and – trying to bring people to –

Q: To **Israel**, yes.

A: – go to **Israel**, right. Yeah, but I didn't –

Q: But s – so you didn't even think of whether you could work, even with the minimal amount of knowledge that you had as a two years doctors – medical student?

A: No.

Q: You didn't.

A: You see, this is th – is another thing that, probably now that you ask those question, I think that one of the reason I was persistent to get a medical degree in th – work as a doctor, was to give some stability, internal stability that you were somebody that has a purpose, and so on, instead of floating. Now, there were a lot of young men floating

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around **Paris** and floating around **Israel** in those days, you see? And being a doctor and having a definite profession, it gives you ce – a certain amount of inner stability, I think.

Q: And this was clearly a big concern for you, that you have something that was yours.

A: And something that this was, and something that you can concentrate on, and get some results.

Q: Right, right. So was – was the profession of being a doctor very satisfying for you?

A: Yes.

Q: It was.

A: Yeah. I – I – in spite of all this talk you know, with **Obamacare**, you know, all this talk about medicine and so on, I said well, I mean, if I had to do it again, I'll do it again.

Q: When – when did you retire from medicine?

A: After the **Katrina**. Well, let me – you see, after the **Katrina**, they closed the – I used to work in a clinic in **Charity Hospital** for many years, you know. I worked in the clinic and you see, I had the two appointments. I had – I was clinical associate professor in surgery at **Tulane Medical School**. I'm still there, I'm emeritus now. And I had, at the same time, a position in the cli – different clinics in **Charity Hospital**, because that's where I go – I was getting paid to, you see? But the work in **Charity Hospital**, you have to belong to the medical school, you know, it's one of those things.

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Q: I see, right. So you went to **New Orleans** after you'd been in **New York**, is that correct?

A: After I was in **Houston**.

Q: **Houston, Houston**, I'm sorry, right, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you were – you were in **New Orleans** for a long time?

A: Oh yes, from 1978 or something – I – I worked in **Charity Hospital** for 28 years.

Q: Wow.

A: [**indecipherable**] I was teaching surgery for a time – for a time. Then I worked in a walk-in clinic, then I worked in an anesthesia clinic. Last thing in the 2005, I was in anesthesia clinic.

Q: So you were still working in 2005?

A: Yeah.

Q: That's a very long [**indecipherable**]

A: And then they wrote a letter saying that the hospital is going to close, and if – it – my situation, after all these years, that I can retire, so I retire. Most of us who worked in that situation retired.

Q: Did that make you feel terrible that you didn't – you didn't want to retire, or did – were you glad to finally be free in some way?

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A: No, I like to work, you know, and I'm still interested in medicine, and I like to work.

But it was again one of those situations where my – once – one of the reason that I left, of course w-were, you see, I had two – two hits, you know. A hit was in 2004 when my wife died.

Q: That must have been difficult.

A: That was one hit.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then the second hit was **Katrina**, you see? And I had the impression in my age that I have to – to wait for a long time in **New Orleans** to change the situation. So then I decided I'm just going to come here, you see.

Q: To **Washington**.

A: Because was again a very bad situation in **New Orleans** after **Katrina**.

Q: So are you connected with medical societies, or with –

A: Where?

Q: – here in the area, in **Washington**, or what?

A: Oh I – I go once in a while to the [indecipherable] at **Washington – George Washington University**. I go to the library there also.

Q: Well, you've had quite a long career and history, and I thank you very much for being willing to speak with us.

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A: Well, I don't know, this may help somebody maybe, or maybe the – somebody gets some use for it.

Q: Well, it's certainly an interesting story.

A: This is what **Radu** said, if I had an interesting life.

Q: Yes, and he's right, absolutely right.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the **Radu** you're talking about works at the Holocaust Museum, for people who don't know, **Radu Ioanid**.

A: What?

Q: His name is **Radu Ioanid**, yes?

A: Yes.

Q: And he's your nephew?

A: He is my nephew, he – yes. He is the son of my brother.

Q: Right, right. Well, I thank you very much for being willing to come out.

A: Well, you're welcome for – for – as I say, he felt that I'm an interesting life, and that I should talk about it, you know.

Q: Right. Well, I'll have to thank him as well as you. So thank you again. Okay.

**End of Tape Five**

**Conclusion of Interview**