

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**  
**RG-50.030\*0684**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Jack Mondschein, conducted by Ina Navazelskis on February 15, 2013 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Los Angeles, CA and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

**JACK MONDSCHIEIN**  
**February 15, 2013**

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Jack Mondschein**, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, in **West Lake Village, Los Angeles**. Thank you Mr. **Mondschein** for agreeing to meet and talk with us today.

Answer: You're welcome.

Q: I'd like to start like I do in all interviews –

A: Okay.

Q: – from the very beginning. Tell me what your name was at birth, if it's different from now.

A: Oh, my – my – my birth name was **Jakob(ph) Josef(ph)**.

Q: **Jakob(ph) Josef(ph)**, uh-huh. And –

A: I was born in January 13.

Q: Date, year, do you remember?

A: January 13, 1923.

Q: Where?

A: I was born in **Chzanów(ph)**.

Q: **Chzanów(ph)**?

A: **Chzanów(ph)**, yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Shall I spell it for you, or –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: No, that's okay. Or actually yes, please do spell it for us.

A: The – the city called – spell it **C – Chzanów**(ph), I – I wrote down that I – **c-h-z-a-n-o** with a point, **w, Chzanów**(ph).

Q: Is it a big city?

A: It's a small city, was a population – population was maybe – Jews was like maybe 20,000 Jews or 25,000. The rest was Polish. It's 40 kilometer east of **Kraków**.

Q: Ah, so it's clo – sort of in the south of **Poland**.

A: Clo – clo – clo – clo – seven kilometer from **Auschwitz**.

Q: Oh, oh. What –

A: **Birkenau** and **Auschwitz**.

Q: Bir – that's very close.

A: Very close.

Q: Excuse me just for a second, our camera person asked, could you put the envelope down, okay?

A: Oh, okay.

Q: Yeah. It's the sound, it catches, it catches.

A: Yeah, okay.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Who was your father, tell me a little bit about your family, what – who were – you were born into. Your father, your mother, the people that you grew up with.

A: Oh, I grew up – I don't remember my father.

Q: What was his name?

A: His – his – his name was **Chaim**. He – he was in the World War I, and he w – he took – they took him to – he was in the Austrian army, and they took him to bene – in the war they took him – the Russian took him to **Siberia**. He was a – he was a –

Q: Prisoner of war?

A: Prisoner of war, you know, he spent four years there. And then he came and he marry mine mother – my mother, her name was **Rizel**(ph).

Q: Her name was **Rizel**(ph).

A: **Rizel**(ph) **Friedman**(ph).

Q: **Friedman**(ph). And your father's name, did you tell me –

A: Was **Chaim** –

Q: **Chaim**.

A: – **Mondschein** was his name. And I was a year old when he died. He died, he was 37 years old.

Q: Oh my. Oh my, what did he die from?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Well, he came back and they used to – he used to have a partnership with – with his brother, they used to sell horses. And we used to have a farm in – in – in **Chzanów** there. We used to – we used to have a little farm, he was partner with his – with his brother, they were selling horses, and –

Q: It – with his brother?

A: Yeah. And they used to – when they – they got the attitude when they sell horses, they have to – they have to drink you know, they have to drink vodka, you know, to make – to make the guys get numb, to buy the horse, that's what I – this what they did, you know? Not cheating, but that's the way it was, and – and he –

Q: Kind of make the customer happy.

A: Yeah, customer happy, and this was, I think he got a heart problem and he die in a – in a heart attack. And he was – this what my mother told me, I – I never remember my father. I know him from pictures just.

Q: How sad. Were you the youngest child, the only child?

A: No, I got the older brother, his name is **Ulrich**(ph), and –

Q: How much older, when was he born?

A: One year older. He was one year older from me and – and when the war broke – broke out, th-the second war, there's janu – September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, the – **Germany** came in –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: We'll get to that –

A: Yeah.

Q: Right now I want to find out more, but –

A: Yeah, this, yeah.

Q: So, **Ulrich**(ph) was your older brother, and there was you, and your mother.

A: Mother.

Q: And so she was left with two babies.

A: Two babies, yeah, and the – and the uncle who got partner with my father, they separate completely, you know, and we live in th – in this little farmhouse, belonged to our grandma.

Q: On your mother's side?

A: No, on my father's side. She let us live without – we didn't pay any rent, we just support her for taxes to pay, that's it.

Q: Did she live with you?

A: No, no, she has a separate place she lived, not far away from us.

Q: Uh-huh. And –

A: Her na – her name was **Lya**(ph).

Q: **Lya**(ph). Do you remember her?

A: Oh yeah, I was – she die in 1939 after the occupation, she died.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Oh, oh. Tell me about her. Did she tell you stories about your father?

A: Not much really. My mother told me about my father, the – how he was a prisoner, he came back and he brou – he-he was a shoemaker in **Siberia**. And he brought a lot of gifts when he came back, you know. I don't know where he got those things, but he brought back. He was doing business over there.

Q: Well, he – he was in **Siberia** during such a turbulent time.

A: Yeah, he was four years there prisoner, and he came back and –

Q: You mean, there was – he probably was prisoner of the tsar, and then the tsar is knocked down and there's the **Bolshevik** revolution, and all that.

A: Yeah, and then – yeah, all of that, yeah, he went through this whole thing. I don't know where – oh, he went through the – yeah, he must go through the **Bolsheviks**, there was **Lenin** ki – **Trotsky** come in '18 or '17.

Q: '17.

A: 1817.

Q: Yeah. So, tell me about your mother then. What kind of a person was she?

A: Oh, she was a nice person, very nice. She was a nice person, she – where we lived she opened a little store for her, you know, grocery store. And – and that's the – she didn't pay any rent to my grandma, and –

Q: So it was in town, the house was in town? Or it was on a farm –



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: No, it wasn't on a farm, it was – was in town, but back, like – like here, you know, it wasn't in the middle in the town. We was living back, we used to walk to school, it took us like a – maybe a half an hour to go to school, to the private school.

Q: Oh. Was there a state school as well?

A: Yeah, there was a school there, and vi – vi – after the war I – we go – we gonna come back, I visit the school over there.

Q: Oh, then we will – yes, we'll come back and talk about that.

A: Yeah, I visit the school with my brother there.

Q: Was it a Jewish school or was it –

A: No, we used to go – there was – the school was for C-Catholics and Jews, but we used to have a – a Jewish – a Jewish teacher, who teach –

Q: Religion?

A: – Jewish religion, and they Christian religion. Do you know, we used to have – but we used to be –

Q: Together.

A: – together. Not with girls, the girls were separate.

Q: So this was a boys' school?

A: Boys' school, yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Uh-huh. And when you were going to school, that's from the very first, from the very first class, you attended this particular place?

A: Over there was different. Here, they go to pre-schools.

Q: Yeah.

A: Over there we went to the Hebrew school. When we was – when we was five years old, six, we went to a Jewish Hebrew school, every day we went, if you learn Hebrew. We learn pray and we learn to be a Bar Mitzvah, you know, everything. And then we started the – the public school we start like when we was eight years old, over there, I think. I don't –

Q: Mm-hm. Do you have memories of either school?

A: Oh yeah, I do.

Q: What are some of those memories?

A: I have me – what is?

Q: Well, let – what are the things that you still remember to this day? Any events that happened in the school?

A: Oh, I was – the school wi – I was very good in other things. I was good in history and arithmetic, and we exercise, you know. And – and we used to go with the – with the school we used to go to – when I was, I think, nine years old, or 10, we used to – we went to **Kraków**, you know, city. Over there they called the – the

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

[**indecipherable**] where only kingdoms lay there. I jus – just told my son this story, and we used to go over there with the school, and we used to visit there.

Q: Who was the most fa – who was the most famous king that was buried there?

A: The king? **Moleska**(ph) **Hobra**(ph) used to be one. There used to be a lot of kings i-in **Poland**, you know?

Q: Did you learn about – were – were you – when you say you were very good in history, was it Polish history?

A: Yeah, Polish, Polish his –

Q: Polish history.

A: We learned Polish history.

Q: Was there a king named **Yagauwel**(ph)?

A: **Bolesław Chrobry**.

Q: **Bolesław Chove** – **Chrovai**(ph).

A: **Chrobry**, **Chrobry**.

Q: **Chrobry**.

A: Yeah, was – was one or second, you know, they used to – there was a lot of kings in **Poland** til – til the – til – til thousand ninet – til – til **Poland** changed, you know. **Poland** was occupied by the – mostly by the Russians, you know.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Did – was there a kingdom **Yageawo(ph)**? That – a king named **Yagealo(ph)** – **Yajailo(ph)** or ja – ja **Jagailo(ph)** or something, does that recognize –

A: **Yasesh** – **Yazeshlef(ph)** was the name, no?

Q: No. No. It doesn't matter. He was from the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom.

A: Kingdom.

Q: So – the duchy, so I wondered whether or not that was one.

A: I remember th-the presidents what was – when I grow up, you know, it was –

Q: Who was that?

A: **Mościcki**.

Q: **Mościcki**.

A: **Ignacy Mościcki** was the president, and the general was **Józef Pilsudski**.

Q: That's right.

A: He – he bec – when he die, he became president in **Poland**.

Q: What do you remember of these – hearing about these leaders, these Polish leaders?

A: Well, **Pilsudski**, h-he was a hero, you know. What happened to him, he – the Russians came in like maybe a 5,000 Russians to occupy **Poland**, and he came with a army like maybe a hundred soldiers and he chase them out, you know, he start to scream and they ran away. This I remember we learn about **Pilsudski**, you know, he

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

– **Józef Pilsudski**. And when he die, they took his heart out and they buried that in **Wilno**. **Wilno** now belongs to – to the Russians, they took it away after the war, you know.

Q: How was he perceived in the Jewish community?

A: Well, Jewish community, they used to be [indecipherable] like Israeli [indecipherable] organization.

Q: It was strongly Zionist?

A: Oh Zionist, yeah, there was – there was one organization called **akhiba**(ph). This where my brother belonged. And I used to belong to organization called **Gordonya**.

Q: And what were they – what were they all about, these organizations?

A: About **Israel**.

Q: So they were youth organizations?

A: Youth organization, we used to go eat Saturday and celebrate. We were singing and dancing, dancing horas, and – and we used to meet the Jewish young people [indecipherable] we used to meet there. And we used to go in – in May. In **Poland** was beautiful weather, we used to go to the forest, Sunday morning, you know, we get the group, used to go out, take food and spend the days over there.

Q: So wa – was the purpose of these organizations to give a sense to young Jewish kids that their future was in a place –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Isra – **Israel**, yeah.

Q: Was in **Israel**. But **Israel** didn't exist then.

A: No, it doesn't exist, but it was already there. We used to have the picture about **Herzl**.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: You know **Herzl**, who was?

Q: Yeah.

A: He was the –

Q: **Theodor Herzl**.

A: And we – we used to have the picture of **Gordon**, he was a – they live in **Israel** there, you know, even – Israeli was – is – **Israel** was born in 1948.

Q: Tell me, what language did you speak in these meetings?

A: Jewish.

Q: Was Jewish Yiddish, or Jewish Hebrew?

A: No, Jewish, Jewish, not Hebrew.

Q: No – yes, but – no, okay, Yiddish then.

A: Yiddish, we speak Yiddish.

Q: You speak Yiddish.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Not Polish, Yiddish. Some maybe speak Polish, but mostly – mostly was Jewish, and was – we were singing Hebrew songs.

Q: So did you know Hebrew as a child?

A: No, I – I didn't know, but we learned the songs, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: We celebrate Saturday night, you know, we celebrate the – with songs and there was people, they got speeches about **Israel**, you know. To go to **Israel**, things like that, you know.

Q: Did your mother also belong to any of these organizations?

A: No, my mother, no, she – she was – she was a – she was being home, you know.

Q: She was too busy? Was she too busy?

A: Yeah, she got her little store, and she occupy and she took care on us, cook for us and take care me and my brother, you know.

Q: Did she have any help?

A: We used to have a – we used to have a little house in our farm, they used to live in – so we give it away them, a Polish couple, her name was **Kasha**(ph). A-And she use – she used to come Saturday to us, and put the light on, you know, we wasn't Orthodox, but my mother was like that. And she put the fire on, we used to have a little **[indecipherable]** in her home, and she put the fire on for us, and we – we pay

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

her for that, you know. And she used to come – came each month and – and take care for the linens, you know. Over there was different, she washed it and then we have to go to a special place to –

Q: Iron it.

A: Not iron it, no. They call a mangle, that they will straighten out that special, and then she pressed it.

Q: That's a lot of work.

A: Yeah, it was a lot of work – there wasn't any washing machines there, you know. We didn't get any water in our houses that time. We used to have an – in our little farm we used to have a –

Q: A pump?

A: – a pump, where we used to pump water. And then later, like in – in '37 they – they just put –

Q: Water, yeah?

A: [indecipherable] you know, they – they start to dig in the streets and get connection of water, yeah.

Q: Did you eventually – in 1937 did you get it too, in your house?

A: Yeah, we did – we did get connection that time.

Q: That's huge. That's huge.



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah. We used to have a pump, and – and the winter over there was way – very cold, snow, is like in – like in **Chicago**, other places there. So we used to heat up the water, and – and defrost the pump, you know, to get the water out, but –

Q: You wanted to say something?

A: What is it?

Q: Did you want to say something?

A: No, nothing.

Q: No, no. What language did you speak at home?

A: Home we speak Jewish.

Q: I see. Did you know Polish as well?

A: Oh yeah, I used to – my oldest friends was Polish.

Q: Uh-huh. Tell me about them.

A: Oh, I used to have Polish friends, we used to play soccer with them. Winter we used to go skating. And my brother likes to skiing, so we used to have a – a barrel, you know, he took – took apart the barrel and he put some rubber and he – he was good – he was a good sports – sportsman, my brother, he was very good in that. Better than I am. I was skiing, you know, we were skiing on the snow, it's not like here. My mo –

Q: He took apart a belt, did you say, or –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: You know, they used to have a – a bucket, used to have bucket where we keep water inside. And it was bended thin like that, you know, the ha-ha – a barrel.

Q: A barrel.

A: Big barrel he took apart, you know, and –

Q: And he made skis from it.

A: And from there he was – we used to have little mountains there, he was – put some rubber or leather and he was skiing down, he's very good on that. He was very **sportif** my brother, he was –

Q: Did you look up to him?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Not much. We belonged in different groups, you know. We never went the same group, he got his group and I got my group. When we played soccer, we play against each other.

Q: Did you like each other, though?

A: Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: We li – we like each other. Sometimes we got fight with him, you know, but we like each other.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: That's normal, that's normal. Between children and certainly between boys, it's normal. Did your mother – tell me – you said she was very nice. Tell me a little bit more about her.

A: Oh, she was – she was working very hard, you know. We didn't got lot of money, but later, what happened, she took a lawyer, you know, and she was fighting to get from my father, that he was in – in the si – **Siberia** four years, she was fighting to get a pension. And finally she got – she got a pension from the Polish government, she got a pension that – she got a pension for me, and for my brother and for her. She got like – each one got 3,000 **zlotys**. This was a lot of – lot of money in **Poland**, and we put it in the bank, and it was a bank they call Polish bank, **Zaliczkowa** bank.

Q: **Zaliczkowa**.

A: **Zaliczkowa** bank, it was on – on the **Aleja Henryka**, you know, in **Chzanów**(ph) there. And –

Q: Was it a pretty city, **Chzanów**(ph)?

A: Yeah, it was nice. We – we lived not far away what the river used to go. I – I got the old book here from my brother. It's in Hebrew, and I got pictures there, you know. I show you later the book.

Q: Okay.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: When my brother die, his son give me the book. And I got a book in English for my town. Some – some of my friends wrote the book in **New York**, and I bought it like seven years ago, and I have it someplace here. I – I was looking for the book, it's in English, with pictures from my town in there. We used to have in – was a nice town, we u – we live not far away – away for – we used to go on river there. And we used to go swimming over there, you know, and meet th-the young people there.

Q: Did you have any best friends who were Polish?

A: Oh yeah. The friends what they lived with me were – there used to be a guy **Kazak(ph)**, and **Wlodek(ph)** and **Marisha(ph)**. And one was –

Q: Is **Marisha(ph)** a girl's name?

A: What is that?

Q: **Marisha(ph)**, is that a girl's name?

A: A girl's name, yeah, **Marisha(ph)**.

Q: Yeah, mm-hm.

A: There used to be two girls and two boys and we was like friends, see. They – my mother used to go out someplace in the evening. I invite them and they stay with us, company, you know, that – to – not to be afraid, you know, there.

Q: Did your mother ever have any other male suitors or boyfriends?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Well, what happened when my father die, you know, we was like almost 12 years ago, or 11, and she told us she likes to get somebody – to meet somebody, and we wasn't for that, you know. But later on we give in, and – and somebody introduce her to a – to a man, he was – his name was **Salamon(ph) Mailler(ph)** was the name. And he was a handicap, he got – he got – he lost one hand in the war, sit – the first war, and she married him. I think she married him just in – in Jewish, not in – in –

Q: She married him in the synagogue.

A: By a rabbi, but she didn't marry him – she didn't use his name, second name. She didn't marry in a – in, you know –

Q: In a civil way.

A: Civil way, you know.

Q: Uh-huh. Did she like him?

A: I know that – yeah, he was very nice. He was very nice. We used to go out to each Sunday a soccer game in – in **Chzanów(ph)**, we used to walk over there. It used to be like here they have the – like here they have a name. We used to go out, he was nice, and – and he got – he got two daughters and a son, and they live in **Berlin, in Germany**. He was married in **Germany**, and he got divorced there. I –

Q: Were his children older than you and your brother?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Oh yeah, I got here pictures from her someplace here. He got one daughter was name **Ava**, and the – the – the sister was **Helen**, and her brother was **Herman**. And they came to visit from **Berlin**, you know, when **Hitler** wasn't completely in – in the power.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they visit us, and – and my mother, they bought them – they bought them dresses here, some – they – over there, they didn't bought dresses, they went to a **seamster**, and they made for you dresses. So we knew him, and it was nice – nice people, but after the war I never – I never heard from them, you know.

Q: Do you think he survived the war?

A: I don't think so. I don't think so.

Q: Did he make your mother happy?

A: Yeah. She likes them, you know. You know, she – she likes – she likes me, my brother more than them, but she li – they were older than we are, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: They was in the 18.

Q: Yeah. But I meant him, did he ma – as a husband?

A: Yeah, she likes him, but she always talking about my father. She always keep close from him –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: I see.

A: – anything, books, you know, she always talk about him. He was – she was crazy lot of times. He was – he likes to play cards.

Q: Your father?

A: Second father.

Q: Second father, mm-hm.

A: And she didn't like it, he used to lose lot of money, you know. He used to get a pension too, you know, and he used to have a license for – to selling beer, you know, where he was a invalid, they give him license to sell cigarettes and beer, you know. He was a heavy smoker from cigarettes, you know.

Q: Did he speak German with her? Or did they –

A: Yeah – no, Jewish.

Q: Yiddish, too.

A: Yiddish, but he speak good German, because he live in **Germany**. He got –

Q: Was he a German Jew, or a Polish Jew?

A: No, he was a Polish Jew, and he marry – he marry in **Berlin**. She divorce him, you know, I – I do – I think that he lost his arm or something, she – I don't know, I don't know the particular there. But I know she divorce him. And – and he – he used to – each Friday he got – he was selling fish. You know the Jewish people,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

they came on Friday, they bought fish for Shabbat, you know. So he got a little – we used to have a little place there, only a little place where there used to be fish for sale. Not himself, but [indecipherable] of fish, you know, he was – each Friday he was selling fish, and he brought home fish for us, and we – my mother cooked fish and she make Shabbat, you know, and holidays. And we used to go eat Saturday to the synagogue, always.

Q: Ah, I was going to ask you, I was going to ask you. So you did go –

A: We used to go Friday night, she closed the store. Friday night she closed the little store and she didn't open Saturday. And Friday I used to go to the synagogue with this – with the stepfather. And the womens didn't went in the evening, but Saturday morning she got dressed beautiful. I have a picture [indecipherable] here, here.

Q: Yeah, I'd like to see it later.

A: And – yeah, show the picture from my mother. And – and we used to go to synagogue like for service, we used to go at nine o'clock. We walk to the synagogue there, and the womens were sitting upstairs and we were sitting downstairs and we was praying, you know, and – and –

Q: Were you a religious family?



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Not really, not – but in **Poland** was a attitude, you just keep Jewish, you know, even you wasn't Orthodox. You didn't smoke on Saturday, you didn't work on Saturday, you didn't have – you didn't got – open the stores on Saturday. We didn't do anything on Saturday, just go to the synagogue, and we came home, and then when was a nice weather, like summer, I used to go with my brother, we used to go and play soccer to a special place where we used to meet with our friends, and we used to play and then we came home, and we eat.

Q: Did – was – were there two distinct really communities? The Polish and the Jewish, they were very different from each other?

A: Different, yeah, yeah, they was different. You know, I be honest with you; the Jewish, they occupy all mostly business there. The Jewish. Mostly the business they occupy, you know.

Q: What kind of business would it be?

A: Oh, anything, you know, merchants selling clothes, groceries. Be – you know, they got used to have like **[indecipherable]** of beer and vodka. They – mostly they occupy – in our town, they was mostly the –

Q: Did the Poles not like that?

A: They didn't – they wasn't crazy about, you know.

Q: But did they go to these places? Did they buy from the Jewish merchants?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Oh yeah, they had – they didn't got any choice, you know, they – they used to come and buy, you know. They w – they were friendly til – til they started the anti-Semitic start in **Poland** in 1937, you know, they –

Q: Tell me about that. How did – why did it start then?

A: They didn't – they was like when – when **Hitler** came, you know, they adopted some hatreds about the Jews, I think. And they was – in a lot of town where my lover – wife lives – lived, in **Sosnowice**, they making pogroms. You know what the pogrom is?

Q: Tell me.

A: This is that they – they went and they put fires on the stoves, and if they saw di – a lot of Hasidim with their beards and their [indecipherable] and the payos, they beat them up, you know, they – that's what they did, you know, right there in 1937 they started th-these things go on there.

Q: Did it happen in your town too?

A: No, our town it was quiet, you know, I live with – with Polish, you know, we go to school, and we was playing together, you know.

Q: Did you – did you ever – did – did anybody ever behave towards you or your family in a way –

A: No, no, not at all, not at all.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Okay. Did she – did your mom have any Polish friends, or were her – most of her friends Jewish?

A: No, they – they – we got the Polish neighbors, lot of Polish neighbors. They didn't call her on her name, th – over there they called the name on her husband always, you know. They never call her name, they call her – my father was name **Chaimic(ph) – Chaim**, so they call **Chankover(ph)**. You know, they never call her name.

Q: So they would say Mrs. **Chankover(ph)**?

A: Yeah, **Chankover [indecipherable]**, how – how are you, and things. They used to – they used to do that in my town.

Q: I see. Beautiful, beautiful. It's a – your – your son just showed me the portrait of – of your –

A: This is my mother.

Q: Your mother.

A: This was mother in – I would say in 19 maybe '36 or '37.

Q: Can you just hold it up a little bit, like this, so that we could film it? Can you get that? Yeah, thank you. In 1936 or '37.

A: Yeah, I think '37. And this dress was made by a sister's daughter.

Q: How many – did she have sisters and brothers?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: No, no. She – she got the family what the – what – she got two sisters and they got – they got – one was l-living in **Chabinya(ph)**, you heard the town

**Chabinya(ph)**, no. They lived – they got like **Rivcha(ph)**, **Esther**, **Hanka(ph)**.

They got maybe five daughters, and two survive, and they live in **Israel**, they evacuate to **Israel**. And one die on cancer many years ago, only one is – the other one is – must be pretty old now, very old.

Q: And one of them made this dress?

A: Yeah.

Q: It's pretty. It's very pretty.

A: I remember this dress, it was velour, you know, with the white collar.

Q: Yeah.

A: I remember that.

Q: So, how would you describe your childhood, you've told me a little bit about it, but when you think of your childhood and your early years, and – how do you say the name of your town? Sha –

A: **Chzanów(ph)**, yeah.

Q: **Chzanów(ph)**. Ho – what kind of feeling do you have about it?

A: Oh, I was a – I was a happy – happy boy, my brother too. We got a good – we got a good home. We didn't fight for food because we got – we got good finances,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

you know. We didn't pay any rent, we got a nice place where to live. And we got a store, and we was always mi – in the store we used to have candies and cookies, and we used to eat up mostly everything. You know, and my mom, she didn't object it, she loves us –

Q: Yeah.

A: – she likes us. And – and then he came – well, a – what do you like to know?

How the war –

Q: I will, but before I get there, did anybody talk politics at home, or in the community?

A: Well, we didn't talk like here politic, you know. People was fighting for the – how to – we – we used to – we used – not politic, but if – when was a holiday, like Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah, they come to all the – always mention the – the president I-live, because we used to have our president who was very good for Jews.

Q: And that was?

A: **Mościcki. Ignacy Mościcki**, he was –

Q: **Mościcki**, uh-huh.

A: – he was very good to Jews, you know. And they always mention him in – in the – in the –

Q: Did you feel patri – okay, so –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: – in the s – in the synagogue, long live for the president. Like here, you know, the –

Q: Did you feel – did you feel a patriotism for **Poland**?

A: Well, I was born in **Poland**, you know, I learned Polish history, I learned everything in Polish, you know.

Q: But did you – I mean, did you feel different from the Poles?

A: No, I didn't, because I lived in a town where I lived with Poles, so it doesn't – don't – don't make me any difference. And then I came with the – to the organizations, I was with the Jew – with the Yiddish boys, you know, we were singing and playing, and have fun together, you know.

Q: Did you speak any other languages at home –

A: No.

Q: – besides Jewish and Polish?

A: No, not.

Q: Did you understand German?

A: I – yeah, I do understand German a little bit, because mine mother speak very good German. She wrote – she was writing letters in Germans, yeah, because they live in – in – in that town they live – there was – they live – there was the King Kaiser **von Joseph**, Austrian king. And this part where we live used to belong to –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: **Austria**.

A: – **Austria**, you know, th-the – they speak German.

Q: So with the partition of **Poland** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – which took place in 1795, the part of the country that got taken over was Austrian.

A: Austrian, yeah, used to be Austrian.

Q: Austrian, not Russian.

A: Not – not Russian and not Polish.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: They divided after the second – the second war, you know, they became **Poland**.

Q: So what did – how did people react when they heard of **Hitler** coming to power in **Germany**?

A: Oh, you see – you know, we – he was very bad situation, because in 1938 **Hitler** – **Hitler** get o – g-got orders, all the people where they were born in **Poland**, they have to leave **Germany**.

Q: And did they?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah, they did. And there was a place not far, by the border, they calls

**Bolshed**(ph). He send them over there to the border, they have to go, they – they couldn't take anything, just some –

Q: Were these mostly Jews?

A: Jews, yeah.

Q: So Poles – let's say Christian Poles who had –

A: This I don't know, but the Pole didn't went to **Germany** to live, the Pole live in **Poland**.

Q: Right.

A: But the Jews, lot of the Jews went to **Germany**, because **Germany** that time got a good –

Q: Yeah.

A: E-Economy was good, and th – all of them was in manufacturing things: clothes, dresses. When **Hitler** came to power, not to power but later on, he order all the – they was born in **Poland**, they have to go back to **Poland**.

Q: Did any of them come to **Chzanów**(ph)?

A: Oh yeah, a lot of them. We got lot of them, they came to **Chzanów**(ph), you know to **Katowice** –

Q: Did they tell stories?



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Huh?

Q: Did they tell stories of what was going on in **Germany**?

A: Well, that time, yeah, they tell stories that they was – they got swastikas on the store, so they have to close the stores, you know. There were a lot of things, you know. They have to be in – in – they was lot of them. Because **Germany** was a good economy, they went over there, they made lot of money that time.

Q: Did anybody ev – in – in **Chzanów**(ph), did your family feel any fear because this was happ –

A: For the Germans?

Q: Yeah. At that time, before the war.

A: No, no, we just got fear in 1939.

Q: When did you get fear in 1939?

A: When the war stop – got. We was living – we was – we – we was – from the German border we was maybe – **Katowice**, you know, this is –

Q: I've heard of it, yes.

A: **Katowice**, this is the next – is – we was from **Katowice** like 50 kilometers, or the Germans they – the war broke out the first, and they was – three days later they was in our town already, they walked in.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Well tell me, do you remember where you were when you heard that there was a war?

A: Yeah, I used to – when I was 13 years old, my wife, she give me to a tailor, you know, [indecipherable] make clothes.

Q: Your mother gave you to the ta –

A: Yeah, she – she even paid to take me in to learn, you know, over there not like here.

Q: So you were an apprentice?

A: I was an apprentice by tailor, his name was **Lemmler**(ph). What – I met him after the war, you know, I [indecipherable]. So, I learn how to sew, you know, how to – how to learn, you know, and – and then I have to take the clothes was ready to get to the customers, and then I get a tip sometimes, you know. So I was there when I started when I was 13 years old. And mine brother went, he learn ladies' things. Over there it wasn't like here, you know, you can buy designer things, particularly for ladies or men. A better suit, you have to –

Q: You have to make it.

A: – make it from – from the beginning, you know, so I work for this **Lemmler**(ph) til the war broke out, and then I –

Q: Did you still go to school?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: No.

Q: So from age 13 you weren't going to school?

A: Maybe we didn't – went to school – we went to school like for – there was like, I think, six or seven classes, that's it.

Q: I see.

A: And then when you go – was on apprentice, there was a night school for two hours, three hours, we went in the evening after work, and was apprentice school, you know.

Q: Mm-hm. So, were you at **Lemmler's**(ph) when you heard that there was a war?

A: Oh yeah, I was working there by **Lemmler**(ph).

Q: Well, yeah, and can you remember the moment you heard that there was a war?

A: Well, yeah, I remember we used to have the planes coming. The planes coming and then they send in partisans they call, the Germans. They send in people who they speak Polish and Germans, and they – and they terrorize people, they put some candies with poisons, you know, things like that.

Q: Did you see these things?

A: Yeah, we see the – you know, and we got orders not to pick up from the floor anything. And they used to go sabotage the bridges, or started already do things, you know, to –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: To conquer.

A: Conquer, you know, and they got easy, they – they – they came in just in our town was – they came in – we wasn't home when they came in. There's another story.

Q: Where were – tell me. Tell me the story.

A: Okay, when the war broke out, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, my uncle was living next to us in the same building. And he used to sell horses, so there was papers coming, that they gonna come and they gonna take the young Jewish people and shoot them, or take them away. And my mother was worry about. And my uncle got a son and two daughters, and he was worry about too. So he said vo – you know something? Let's – let's get out, evacuate. So we took a good horse, you know, we took a bridge, and we put little things on that, we was like –

Q: On a cart?

A: On a cart, you know, open cart. And we start to go. This was – the war broke out the first, and we, the third or the fourth September, we start to go towards **Kraków**.

Q: And **Kraków** was to the east or to the west?

A: To the west, because this was not – the border was – the border was close to us, but not to **Kraków**.

Q: Got it.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: And we walk over there: me, my brother, my mother and stepfather, you know. We walked there, we just kepted the – our baggages on this little carriage, you know.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: If you walk for – for four days, and then suddenly we came – we came before **Kraków**, and th-the – and the city called **Plaszów**. **Plaszów** used to be – they used to make a **conseration**(ph) camp over there for Jews, the other side.

Q: Is that **p-l-a-s** –

A: **Plaszów** is **p-y-a-s-a-w**, **Pyasaw**(ph). So we went th – this was before **Kraków** and – and then one day we was standing and the Germans came in. They was there already –

Q: In **Kraków**.

A: – they was going so fast. They was motorized, so –

Q: Was that the first time you saw German soldiers?

A: No, I didn't saw them, but we – we gonna hear they gonna be here in a day, two. Then on the way, we met a group from our town, older people. They was in the 25 may – five guys. I know him from **Chzanów**(ph), his father was a famous **[indecipherable]** store. And these people, they moved to au – after the war I met them, they moved to **Australia**. So my mother says to the one of his neighbors

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

**Pinnik**(ph), he says, please, take my son. So h-he – he says okay, let him come with us. And they was running away still. So we ran, I was the youngster there, the youngest and they was like in the – over 20 already. And my mother got stuck over there with mine uncle and everything in –

Q: What about your brother?

A: Oh yeah, my brother's another story was there. My mother was there, and mine brother was – he was kind of smart kid. So he – before the German came in, one day he disappeared from our group there, and my mother says, where's **Ulrich**(ph), where he is? We didn't know where he is.

Q: This is after you left your home in **Chzanów**(ph)?

A: **Chzanów**(ph), yeah.

Q: Afterwards, okay.

A: After. And then a – and then was another guy there, **Zagufski**(ph), the two, they went to look something for water or food. And then a lady come, she says, a Polish lady. Oh, she says, I saw two guys. The Polish military took them and they shot them. They was taking for partisans, for German corroborators, you know. So then, I didn't know what happened, I didn't see him. But then here came the group and mom says, take – take **Jakob**(ph) with us, and I went with them, and we – we was traveling like for five days, you know, walking. If you went to the – to the Russian

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

border, you know, they call that city **Lublin**. It belongs to the Russians now. We came over there and we couldn't walk any more, we got swollen legs, and we – we went into a city called **Beyhavar**(ph), it's not far from the Russian border there. And we went into a Jewish family, they took us in, and we stay there for three, four days. And then suddenly the German came in and we didn't know that the Germans there – there. Where they coming there? So we sat there, and we finally decided to go back home. And how we went home? We – we was telling the German that we was Polish, we were not Jewish. So the German **Wehrmacht** took us on the truck and they traveled back to **Kraków**. And in **Kraków**, we was in **Kraków** already back and my parents, I don't know where they was. So, in **Kraków** we went down, and we – there was going up train, but – o-or can't remember a train, or we went with the bus, if we went back to **Chzanów**. When I came home, my mother was home, and she says to me, guess where – where your brother was. I says, I don't know. When I came home he was sleeping in the bed already. He went back by himself.

Q: So he was not one of the two people who was –

A: No, he wasn't, and then we got the Germans there, and he wasn't crazy about. One day, when we was – the German occupy our town, and we lived still in our house, you know. And one day he went out, it was a order from the Germans, when

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

you see a German soldier, he used to take his hat and bend it in. Because we used to have hats over there, you know, like – we didn't go like – like here, you know. And he got beaten up for that.

Q: He didn't take his hat off?

A: No, he f – he misplace, or I don't know. He didn't see the German **Wehrmacht** going for him. They was promenade the streets where they occupy, you know, they were happy there, they got – they took all the food, the wine, and the – so he got – he got beat up, and he came home, he says – he says to – to my mother, Mom, I'm leaving. Where you going? I'm going to the Russian border. That time – this was 1940, I think, when the Russian made a – **Hitler** make a pact with **Stalin**, they not gonna go to war any more, they go – not gonna fight. You know, they say you take this part of **Poland** and I take that part of **Poland**. So the Russian, they took one part of **Poland**, like [indecipherable] **Wilno**. They make a border and my brother says, this wasn't – I think it was in '39 what is that.

Q: '39 - '39.

A: Yeah, he says, you know, I'm going. He put some pants and socks and shoes and he left. He didn't know where he went. So he went through the border, and he came – and h-he came to a city they call **Lvov**. You hear of the city **Lvov**? This was



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

occupied by the – by the Russians. And he was there, he – my mother was worry about, she didn't hear about him, where he is.

Q: She must have been very worried.

A: Yeah, we was very worry and – and then one day, maybe five months later, we get a – we get a package from **Russia**, oil, soap, little things. And he wrote in Polish that he was in **Lvov**, he – he voluntary resisted to – to – to go to the – to **Russia**, because lot of – lot of Jews that was there, they didn't want to go voluntary you know? So **Stalin** that time ordered – they order – told them they are spies. And they took lot of Jews. They went – they send them to **Siberia**, to **Donbas**. You know **Donbas** what is?

Q: Part of **Ukraine**.

A: Yeah, this is a – a place where they dig coals.

Q: Yeah.

A: Y-You know? But h-he – he was smart that he went voluntary, he got a job over there. And that time, when there was the German, the Russian got the pact, there was letters coming, you know, they let you – so he send us a package we know where he is. He was in a city they called **Denyaposkya(ph)**, **Ukraine**.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: And he was there, so we know he is alive, he is fine, my mother didn't worry about. And then – and then came a order that we have to leave our house.

Q: How soon after the Germans occupied, did you have to leave your house?

A: Oh, this was in – in end – end of '39.

Q: Okay, so three or four months later.

A: Beginning of '40, they told us we have to leave the house, you just take – take what you need. Anything else you have to leave. We used to have nice furnitures, clocks, you know, w-we wasn't poor, you know, it was okay, middle class. So –

Q: Was your stepfather with you?

A: The stepfather, yeah, he was with him, you know. And so we u – we went – we went to another place where they made like a ghetto, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: It wasn't a ghetto closed, but they called this, street was **Kadlubek**.

Q: **Kadlubek**?

A: **Kadlubek**, the street in **Chzanów**(ph), you know?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we lived with another family. We have to go and we couldn't live by hisself, he lived with another family. And we know these people, we know these people, and we lived there. And my stepfather lived, my mother was there.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: So she couldn't have her store any more?

A: No, no, no, they – we have to leave everything, you know. We have to leave the furnitures, everything. And we live in this house, and then there used to be a – the German organize always Jewish people to – to a Jewish committee. And the lead of the Jewish committee was named **Vedder**(ph). He s – he was from **Germany**. He speak very good German, and th – and they made him for the leader for the **Chzanów**(ph) committee. It's like in **Sosnowice**, you ever hear the leader from the Jewish?

Q: No, who's –

A: **Merin**(ph).

Q: No, didn't know of him –

A: No, you never hear of it?

Q: No.

A: Oh, you should know about this.

Q: Okay.

A: He was the leader from the – all the Jewish in – in **Poland**.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah, and then they send him to **Auschwitz**, you know. You know, when they finished. So, we have to all register. So, the German make a – mine age I was red.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Red **sonder**. There was blue **sonder**, you know, they make colors of each age. So I was there, and I was still working by this tailor a little bit, you know, I went to work there, he got open the store, but he did for the Germans, they came in –

Q: Was he Jewish?

A: Huh?

Q: Was he Jewish?

A: Yeah, **Lemmler**(ph) was Jewish, yeah, he was a very – his father was very rich.

A matter of fact, he has a few building, they're standing today in **Chzanów** there.

Q: Wow.

A: Still there. So, there came a order that all the red **sonders**(ph) kids what they are 16 – they – they already start to get people in – in – in work camps, all the people, you know, in the 20s. I used to have a cousin who went first. He was in – maybe 25. And then they call on the red **sonder**, and I was on the red **sonder**. And they – so the Jewish **comitate**(ph) knew all the Jewish people, you know, they – anything what they do, they went to the Jewish **comitate**(ph). And there used to be Jewish police, you know about that?

Q: Tell me about that.

A: You don't know? They –

Q: I – I know some things, but tell me what you experienced.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah, they – they – Germans, they always have – they selected Jewish guys, they put the –

Q: Armband?

A: – armband with a – this Jewish star, and they say police, they was wearing white bands. And these police was helping the Germans, you know, to get –

Q: Were they – they were – were they not trustworthy then? They would betray their Jewish –

A: No, what they – they were saving their skin, you know. They got better food, th – they was thinking about that the Germans, they gonna save them, so they cooperate with the Germans. This was the whole thing. So – so there came a order, we got a letter, what they deliver to the house, because it wasn't lada – you know, was one community, and that I have to go in that time to register to the school where I used to go. So my mother says – she was worry about me, she says, you know something, you don't – you go hide in the attic. We used to have a attic in the building. So when I didn't came, the German locked up the whole – the whole ghetto – you – like a ghetto, and they look for me – not for me, no, for other ones, where they hiding.

Q: For all of you.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: All of you, who didn't register to them, you know, to go. So they came, the German and the **Wehrmacht**, they says, where's **Jakob**? Mother says, I don't know. I don't know where he is. So they took my mother. They took my mother in the – and she was set – be in the school on **Mizkavitra**(ph), where I used to go to school there. So then mine – mine stepfather came up to me. He says, you know, you took your mother. He says, I think you have to go back and give it up. So it was like two days, I went to the school, and when I came up, there was the Jewish police, and there was the **SS** that time. When I came, oh, he says, we – we **[indecipherable]** he says, where you been? Your mother's here.

Q: The Jewish police said this?

A: Well, yeah. So the German came up and he beat me up like hell, you know. They used to carry the rubber, like a baseball bat like here, but it was rubber. And he beat me for 10 minutes, you know, he – over the head and that, he beat me, kicked me. Says – and he says, go over there, sit. And they let my mother go. So the next day my mother came up and she looked for me, you know, and I saw her just from the far. And then, after that they – they took me to a – not me just, all the young people they took to a hall, a **dulag**. Hall **dulag**, you know. This is a – a place where they concentrate all the people, and from there they separate them, they descended to

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

each camp, you know. And one – one group was that, and the **dulag** was in **Sosnowice**. It was in the town where my wife is born.

Q: Did you know your wife before the war?

A: I met her once, but she was very young, you know, just by neighbor, something like that. And so I went to the **dulag**, and we was there for three days, and then they separate us. And I li – I line up with the group, and they send us to a city called **Goggolene(ph)**. A cit –

Q: In **Poland**?

A: No, **Germany**. The city was maybe a 20 kilometer from **Breslau**.

Q: Okay.

A: **Breslau** was a – used to be a big, big city in **Germany** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – a very commercial 20 or 25 kilometer. We line up over there. When I came, they – we was – we got our clothes there, they didn't took away the clothes, you know. And so they – when we came over there, there was already a Jewish – Jewish office where they took care on you. The German was just outside from the camp, you know, they took care that you don't run away. But the Jewish was, they call a you – **Judenalteste**. You know what this is, a **Juden alster**, h-he was –

Q: The head, the [indecipherable]

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: – the head of the – he was a Jewish guy, he was – he was a nice guy I remember, he was from a city of **Oszna**(ph).

Q: What was his name, do you remember his name?

A: I can't remember, he was a – he was a nice Jewish guy, was very nice, but – so I decamp, and we got – this was not a ca – a concentration camp, was a work camp.

Q: A war camp?

A: Yeah, to work.

Q: Oh, work. A work camp.

A: Work yeah, work camp.

Q: **Arbeitslager**.

A: **Arbe-Arbeitslager**, yeah. And we was there, and so we was there and a few days they took groups to go e – one was going to work in cement, one was working in digging holes, and the other one was working in the auto barn.

Q: How old were you?

A: Oh, I was maybe 15 or 16, something like that. And I line up – we used to – we used to have a little train coming, you know, a little train, not the big one, little train. And used to have like a – this kind of – to get in sand in, some. There was the –

Q: Oh, to get sand into it, yeah.



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Sand, yeah. Yo-You have to make so many – so many days to put something by yourself. And I never shoveled, you know, I never worked with a shovel, you know. So I start to sand – put sand in, and there was guys, oh they was fast, you know, they was shipping fast and then they could take a rest til they got away, the [indecipherable] was full, take away, and I couldn't do so fast. Suddenly I got swollen hands, you know, I wasn't used to shovel. And then one day I was working and I got the **hexenschuss**, you know what the **hexenschuss** is?

Q: **Hexenschuss**, something in your back.

A: In your back, you get curve like that, and you can't move your back, because the body wasn't used to –

Q: All of that, yes.

A: I was right handed, you know, lot of people was left handed. So, there was a Jewish doctor in the camp there, who was a nice guy, you know, he says, you know something? There's no medicine for that, you just go to work and it's gonna go away by himself, you gonna work. And it happened, that's it.

Q: What do you mean it's gonna go away, the **hexenschuss** is gonna go away?

A: Yeah, but then you work, you know, you make exercise back.

Q: Yeah.

A: He couldn't do anything, you know. It's not like here, you gonna go –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah.

A: – for a massage or something. So I was there, I was working and there – there was a lot of guys from my town there, from **Chzanów**(ph) there. So I was there for, I cannot remember exactly, maybe eight months. And – and I use – an-and I find out that I have a cousin, a cook in **Edmund**(ph), was another city, **Edmund**(ph), a German city. So I tried to go to this cousin, but they couldn't transfer me. And this cousin survive, and he live in **Canada**, he die in **Canada**, you know. The same name like – I was a maybe third line cousin. But the cook in town, in mine, in my – **Goggolene**(ph) was a guy – when I was young, my mom used to have a girlfriend, his mother, and we used to go to the house. And his name is **Rumik**(ph), **Abram**(ph). So I figure, oh boy, he's the cook –

Q: It's a good thing, yeah, right.

A: And he gets the food. You know, they used to go – used to go with the plate, and they – they give you – it depends how, was a lot of potatoes, or more water, you know. And I says to him, **Rumik**(ph), you remember me? Oh, he says, he was speaking German [**speaks German**] I don't make any differences, he says, you just go. So he – and you know something? I met this guy after the war in **Paris**, you know.

Q: Really?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: On the **Pletzl**. So –

Q: So he didn't make – so, in other words, he didn't give you any extra potatoes?

A: No, no, no, no, he didn't. He didn't. He – he didn't. And then in – he give di – di  
– he didn't, he – so, I just forget it, and –

Q: What was the food taste like?

A: Oh, that wasn't – it wasn't so bad like in – in the **conciation**(ph) camp there.

Mostly was spinach, and potatoes, and they – we used to have a place like a  
barrack, you know? Used to be like 40 or 30 people, and each evening they used to  
supply for the people bread, margarine, and jelly sometimes.

Q: Were you hungry?

A: Oh yeah. And – and the leader was again the **stubemelster**(ph). You know the  
**stubemelster**(ph)? Is the guy was the leader of the barrack. He is the one who –

Q: Divides it.

A: Divides things, you know. Sometime he g – he cut it up big piece of bread,  
sometimes a small piece, you know. Or sometimes they give you a bread for six  
days, you know? Six days of bread each. Each morning you say oh – oh, I'm gonna  
cut, this is for today. So I cut, ah, then I says, oh, I take another piece, it's go – it's  
gonna be okay. But you know, you didn't cut more that – then you finish your  
bread, was for four days. So I was there maybe five months. And then was a order,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

they gonna liquidate this **Goggolene(ph)**, and they gonna get in the west **Juden**, you know what the west **Juden**?

Q: So who are the west **Juden**?

A: The west **Juden** was Jews from the west. From **Midland(ph)**, **Belgium**, **France**. This was the west Jews.

Q: Are they – were they in a different category?

A: They keep them something, a different category from the poor – poor – from the – we was east, east Jews, they was west. So we have to leave the camp, and they got – we went from there – we went to a city they call **Marchstad(ph)**.

Q: **Marchstad(ph)**?

A: **Marchstad(ph)**. This is a city in – that [**indecipherable**] in **Breslau** too, you know. So, over there we went, they was like – the beginning was six barracks. Six, you know.

Q: For how many people?

A: Six barrack was like – maybe was like 3,000 people something, or less. Less.

Six. And then we came there. There was a Jewish **Juden alster**. Oh shit, I forgot his name. **Burameister(ph)**. You hear about him? Was a famous –

Q: Tell me – tell me who he was.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: – famous – he was from **Poland**. He was on city from [indecipherable] not far from **Auschwitz**. When you came to this camp, he was with his wife there. His wife, and he got two brothers. He was the **Juden alster** on the camp.

Q: In this **Marchstad**(ph)?

A: In **Marchstad**(ph).

Q: Yeah.

A: He was a famous **Juden alster**. He was dressed with beautiful boots of like – officer boots, made – and the beautiful pants, and he was dressed leather jacket. He was –

Q: There was somebody that I remember hearing about, and now his name escape me, who was the head of a camp in **Poland** – I mean, a Jewish **alteste** who was very – everybody was frightened of him, and I just don't remember his name now.

A: You don't know his name?

Q: It will come to me. It will come to me. So tell me about this one.

A: Oh, he was a strict, strict **Juden alster**, you know.

Q: **Rumkowski**(ph), that's who it was.

A: Oh, **Rumkowski**(ph)

Q: **Rumkowski**(ph), he was a very controversial figure.

A: That was lot – lot of them, bad – bad – bad guys –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah.

A: – we used to have in that camp, I tell you. So he was very strict. We – we used –  
I – I was in – in block six, my number was 42, was the number from the – from my  
sh – mine – where I lived there –

Q: Okay.

A: – where they assigned me. When I came in, there was a few people there from  
my town, was – I got one called **Pavian**(ph) and I – they got **Eadik**(ph) and  
**Shudik**(ph). There was a few guys from my town what I have on the picture here  
my **[indecipherable]** there. So we – he was there, and they assign me to a company  
they call **Schalhor**, a German company. This was a company that was building  
there for them factories, you know. He was –

Q: A construction company?

A: Construction company, you know. This was a big company,

Q: Was it a private German company?

A: Private German company. They used the – only private. Used to be **Schalhor**, it  
then used to be **Beton manir**(ph), you know, for **Beton**(ph), they used to make –

Q: That's right, for cement.

A: **[indecipherable]** And I used to there and they – they assign me – and we used  
to – we used to wake up. I – I was with a partner there. I was sleeping downstairs,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

he was upstairs, and we used to wake up like four o'clock in the morning. We used to go – there was a kitchen there, and we used to – we have to go to the kitchen, get coffee, you know, line up, four o'clock. And we used to – breakfast, we used to get this bread what I told you, cut it and – and that. And – and we used to get at **appell** like five o'clock, ready. We used to clean up every day. Another two guys got assigned to clean the – the barrack, the sh – where you live. So everybody has to get out, and they was trying to clean up. You know, we used to have beds, the straw used to fall on the floor, you know –

Q: Right.

A: – and that has to be clean up. And you left – when you left to work, there come a commission from the – from the – from this place, and they check under the bed though it's clean, like the military they do here – I don't know what they do here, you know. So, they assign me to company **Schalhor**. So we went – we st – we start to go like five o'clock, used – we used to work like – oh, it took us a hour half til we came to the place. Our company was like 400 guys, and each group got a different assignment where to go.

Q: So it would take two and a half hours to three hours –

A: Or two hours, I don't know exactly.

Q: – something like that, in the morning before you even start to work.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: To work, yeah, you have to go, they – they – there wasn't any transportation.

You have to take your food for the day, you know, you di – you make your sandwich and that. And when we came – when we came on – they called the **baustelle**, the place where you –

Q: Are constructing.

A: Constructing. So we line up, and they used to have a – a **kapo**, a Jewish **kapo**, you know?

Q: Tell us what is a **kapo**.

A: He was assigned to check on you that you don't run away, that you work, you know, and report that you steal somebody's bread or things like that. I used to have a guy, he was **Forgill**(ph), a nice guy from **Auschwitz**, he was a nice guy, and we got very friendly with him. He was nice, and I was speaking – that time I speak good German already. So – so we came to the **baustelle** there, and – and there was there where the fix the trains, you know, there was – the trains was going on – on call, you know, little trains there and a lot of people got good jobs, they was assigned to the mechanic who conducted the train. They got a good job that –

Q: What – what makes that a good job? Why would that –

A: Huh?

Q: Why was that considered a good job?



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Because he di – he wasn't outside in this cold, he was inside in the – in this little train, inside, in the door –

Q: Was warm.

A: Was warm, you know. And the guy, mostly the guys were the conductors – the train was German Polish. They was **Volksdeutschen**.

Q: **Volksdeutsche**, yeah.

A: And they wasn't bad, you know, they was tha – good to the guys, you know, they – they brought them bread and that, they feel sorry for them, you know. And we came in the **appell**, then comes out there – there was a kitchen over there, a barrack. What the kitchen – the kitchen was supply – cooking food for the German **[indecipherable]**. For the **Baufuehrers**, for these –

Q: Construction directors, yes.

A: The directors what they conducted construction. Came out a guy, he was limping one foot, on the right foot, and he says – his name was **Kubarge**(ph), he was from **Breslau**. Oh, he says to mine **kapo**, I need somebody who speak German, and I need him to help me in the kitchen, he says. Oh, so I was with – friendly with my **kapo**. He says **[indecipherable]** he says, **Jakob**(ph), go up and talk to the chef. So I went up and he asked me f – why – why you come here? I says, I'm from **Oberschlesien**. You know **Oberschlesien**? The German always says

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

**Oberschlesien** belongs to **Germany** and they always want to have to back – back the part of **Poland**. So he says, you know – he says to the **kapo**, okay, I take him in, **Jakob**(ph). So I went in and I –

Q: Not a bad job.

A: Not a bad job. I went in and he introduce me to his wife, he got his wife, a nice lady. And he told me, I am from **Breslau** and we gonna get along, you gonna have food here. You not gonna be – you not gonna eat a ger – the food in – in – in you – in you place, you gonna eat the food here, German food. I says fine, you gonna do it, you peel the ca – potatoes over there and take care the kitchen that is clean, and – and clean the **kessels**. You know the **kessels**? Was where they cook the food, you know?

Q: You mean the – the – the pots?

A: The pots, those big pots, because it wasn't the food for one guy, there was – there was the – all the German the – all the supervisors, they used to go lunchtime and in the evening come to eat. They used the stamp foods, you know, food stamps, and they give it to them, and –

Q: Ration cards, in some –

A: Yeah, ration cards, there was ration cards, you know. And – and he was living in **Breslau**, and he was coming af –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: And he was a **Volksdeutsche**?

A: Huh?

Q: He was a **Volksdeutsche**?

A: No, he was a German, no he was a German.

Q: Okay.

A: He didn't speak Polish, but h-he – every day he went to **Breslau**, in the morning he came back with his wife, and he says – and he always told me you couldn't hear the news over there. So h-he, every day he says **Jakob**(ph), you know the Germans, they have a lot of problems in **Ossen**(ph). In **Ossen**(ph), that's mean on the Russian front.

Q: So what year was this? By – by – by what time –

A: This was – this was already in, I think like in '42, something like that when I was there.

Q: **Stalingrad**, the battle of **Stalingrad** may not have happened?

A: They va – no, the German was, they got lot of casualties there, you know, there's winter –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and they couldn't advance.

Q: Of course, of course.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: **Stalingrad**, yeah, he says – and he give me the news every day. You couldn't hear the news in, we didn't got any radios.

Q: So I have a question. From what you're telling me of your experience, it sounds to me that you were either what one would say is a forced laborer, or a slave laborer.

A: No, this was forced labor.

Q: Forced labor.

A: Forced labor.

Q: What makes it different from being a slave laborer?

A: Slave labor is when the – you go to the concentration camp.

Q: And then you work.

A: Yeah, I ca – I'm coming to that.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: So I was there, and I la – they used to have – everybody used to have a – a card when you go to the kitchen. In the camp, they used to stand, and they used to give you the food.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So I used to have mine friend ups there **Pavian**(ph), he was from **Chzanów**, he got a good appetite. So I says to **Pavian**(ph), you know, you take my card and use it

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

for your food. He says, okay, I'm gonna – I'm gonna take care of you bed in the morning, I'm gonna clean you shoes. I says, okay. They call a **fyfuss(ph)**.

Q: **Fyfuss(ph)**?

A: A **fyfuss(ph)**, one who **helpeth**, you know. I says okay, so he took care of mine bed, and that, and I give him my card, and I was eating there when I came home. I didn't need any food.

Q: So you weren't hungry.

A: No, I was hungry there. I was feeding there. And I was there like maybe six months, something and suddenly I get a package. They used to – they used to – this time they used to – could send to the camp, packages, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I used to have two friends, they used to live in the same barrack. Her uncle – her uncle was a **meister**, you know they call a **meister**, he was –

Q: A master.

A: – negotiated with the German police, with the – with – with the gau – **gaulführer(ph)** from the city, the chief the police like here, you know, that he was the top, he was give – given gold pieces.

Q: Easily bribable.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Bribable, you know, and he was with him – he was a – I remember like as – he was – each night he was going out with a big stomach, which – medals, and he got in nich – here he got stars, you know, and he got a **sable** here, in the side. And he was going to the city, and everybody in **Chzanów** has to –

Q: Right.

A: – take off the hat, **gut** – **guten haben, guten haben**, know? So these two guys, they used to get lot of food, because the uncle was good with the police there, but they didn't share anything, the two guys, nobody. The used to get honey cake, butter, lot of things. And one day I says, oh-oh – okay, I'm gonna go out and see what's going on. There was another guy there who used to get packages too, his name was **Mondschein**. But he wasn't writing the same way like I. He – he got – he was **Mondschein** but he was writing like **m-a-n-g-i-e-n, Mangien**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So a – each time I went out, oh, maybe it's for me something. No, he got the package. One day I go out and I get a suitcase. And I look in and there's a letter inside from my stepfather. He says – he says, they got – they got – they got my mother. They took – they used to do is, they – the military took around the ghetto, and they pick up he – my mother – my mother, he told me, he wrote me my mother used to – she went and buy a – bought a chicken from a Polish lady. And a

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

policeman caught her, and they put on the truck and they send her to **Auschwitz**.

So, he send me – he send me her clothes, he says maybe you can sell it on the **Baustelle** and make something, you know. So in this – he says, the city is gonna be clear, they clear up the whole city. Nobody's gonna be in the city any more. So he told me that he's gonna go to **Auschwitz** too, you know, he –

Q: So when your mother said – when your mother said goodbye to you in that one place –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that you mentioned. Was that the last time you saw –

A: The last time I saw her. In the school.

Q: In the school that you were going to.

A: Yeah, last time. So I got this suitcase and was her clothes and he put mine clothes there. He said – he told me in Polish, he says, well, maybe you can help you with that. You know, lot – lot of people in the camp, they used to sell in this – in this **bau** camp, there used to be not just je – Jews was there, but we was under guard, but used to be Polish people, Czechs, Russians – not Russians, but Ukraine. They went voluntary to work for the Germans. And we used to deal with them under – we used to work together sometimes and we used to de – sell it, the pants, or you sell a ring or something, that they bring you bread, or something, you know,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

the – so I got this suitcase, and they clear out the city. And then one day I'm out help – they clear out the city **Chabinya**(ph) and **Chzanów**. And then a – the new people was always in the front of this leader from the camp, you know, he was the –

Q: So you're talking – excuse me, now you're talking about your hometown, about **Chzanów**(ph)? About –

A: Yeah, they evacuate. Af – they took off all the Jews, they have to leave there, and they – they made a new name. They make **Krenow**(ph) –

Q: **Krenow**(ph).

A: – a German city. They took it – the city, to the Third Reich.

Q: I see, they incorporate, they annexed it.

A: They annex – annex it the city to the Third Reich, and they call them **Krenow**(ph) and they have to take all the Jews, young people they send to camp, and older people went to **Auschwitz**. And I used to have a – a cousin over there. My father's brother – she was **Esther**, and her sister was **Haika**(ph), and they got two kids. And that time – that time, they used to take the young kids, they have to go to a pre-school, you know. I don't know why they did, the German. She was a teacher in the pre-school this – and the two kids you – one was – one was maybe, I remember, he was five years and the girl almost two years. And when they evacuate the city they took all the kids from the pre-school, and all the teachers and



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

everybody and they went, all of them, to – to **Auschwitz**. They clean up the whole city. So, when I got the suitcase, when they evacuate the – all the city, so I – they made a – they – new people came to the camp, and then I looked and my – my two cousins –

Q: So that's how you knew about what was going on.

A: Yeah.

Q: They told you.

A: So, they told me the story about they – one of the cousins got – there was five girls, but one went to ca – she took care of her – of one of the sister's kid. And she went to **Auschwitz** and – and the mother survive. The mother I met in **Marchstad**(ph) with the sister. Her name was **Haika**(ph) and **Ruja**(ph) and I says look, I got some clothes. They – they used to give them clothes, you know. They got lot of clothes what they took from people, and we used to give them private clothes. So I told them I got some clothes and I can give you from your aunt, some dresses. So I met them there. They used to come to me each Sunday. One work in the kitchen and one work in the – where they – where they washed the clothes and she was a **seamster**. So I met them there, and suddenly I met my uncle there.

Q: Your father's brother?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: He – he was – he was 50 years old, and he looked very skinny, you know. He used to be a heavy guy. Good food and he smoked cigarettes, you know. And we used to get – we used to **Marchstad**(ph) we used to get a packet cigarette a day – a week, from the Germans. And suddenly I see my uncle. And mine – and then the – the leader from the camp, **Burameister**(ph), he know him, because my uncle used to go over there to his town and sell horses.

Q: What was his name?

A: Huh?

Q: What was the name of your –

A: **Ithzak**(ph). **Ithzak**(ph).

Q: **Ithzak**(ph).

A: Yi-Yi – **Ithzak**(ph) was his name. **Ithzak**(ph) **Mondschein**, that's my father's brother. So he said, the – the leader from the camp, **Burameister**(ph) says

**[indecipherable] [phone ringing]**

Q: We can stop, just for a second.

A: No don't – don't worry about this – no, it's okay, it's okay, he's gonna talk to him.

Q: Okay, okay, okay.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: He says, it's okay, I get you a good job here, don't worry about. He was – he lost weight, you know, he was looking very bad, and then he says to me, **Jakob**(ph), you have some cigarettes for me, he says? I got **mahorka**(ph) for you. They called it – cigarette **mahorka**(ph), I give him. He was very fond cigarettes, and the – the **Judenest**(ph), they give him a job on the – in the camp we used to have sheeps, you know there? I don't know where they come. And he was taking care on the sheeps, so he didn't went to camp. So, he was there for one year, and then he came a order. This was already in '43, something.

Q: I have a question here. You're still – as far as I – I can tell, you're still working for this private construction company, German construction company.

A: Oh yeah, yeah. Oh yeah, I got – yeah, I work for this company, you know, the **Schalhor**. I work – I was still working before – before the **[indecipherable]** camp.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, one day – or I tell you another story.

Q: Yeah, but I have a question. Hold onto that story, don't forget it. I want to ask, during this time, was there any interference from the German military, or SS in the workings of how the company handled their own affairs?

A: No, no, no. They was just outside watching you that you don't escape, and do your work. Or there's some report that some part – somebody doesn't work, they

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

have to report to them. And he went to the camp, to the **Judenest**(ph) and he report to him that this guy doesn't do good work, you know?

Q: Did you know at that time what **Ausch** – what **Auschwitz** meant?

A: Oh yeah, because when they built **Auschwitz**, right, in '39, we used to see [indecipherable] trucks with people in stripes. They used to go buy supplies, something. We used to see, but we didn't know what – what the hell that **Auschwitz** is, we didn't know that, that time.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: That is **Auschwitz**, and **Birkenau** building, they build the barracks for them.

Q: This – this sh – this company?

A: No, not this company.

Q: No, no, a different wa – the people in stripes.

A: Stripes. They used to take fugitives like – they used to have German po-political too, you know, who was against **Hitler**, lot of them Germans.

Q: Yeah.

A: So they took them there and they built this kind of – you know, when they went into **Ukraina**, they took Ukrainians, you know prisoners, or Russians, and they put them in stripes and their the one that build the barracks in **Auschwitz** and – and **Birkenau**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah. And you, by the time you were in **Marchstad**(ph), you knew that it was a death camp.

A: Not exactly I didn't know that. This **Auschwitz** there, we didn't know that.

Q: So when you got the letter from your stepfather –

A: Yeah, then I know that is – they – she went to **Auschwitz**.

Q: And that she probably wouldn't survive it.

A: And we knew – we – we knew from the new people what they – they – they annexed the city and they evacuate all of them, that we knew there is camps, but we didn't know there is a **Dachau** there or is a lot of camps in – in **Germany**, we didn't know about that, or **[indecipherable]** or something.

Q: I see.

A: And one – one day, I was working the kitchen, I forgot to mention to you, so there was a – a German, his name was **Buerger**(ph). I couldn't – I – he stands before me. He was – I work in the kitchen and – and there was in the **appell**, I supposed to go to the kitchen to work. And he come up to me, he says **Jakob**(ph), today you're not gonna go to the kitchen. Hell, he says, I'm working outside, you gonna work with me. He was – he was jealous on me that I work in the kitchen, I got warm. So he took me to work and I working in a **gleis kalona**(ph), you know what this? We was –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: The **kalona**(ph) I know, but **gleis**?

A: **Gleis**, this is – we was making railroads, after –

Q: Right, right, right.

A: You have to take the railroads, it was a few guys, and pour them and that. So I – my – my com – my **sheba**(ph), the **kapo**, he couldn't do anything. They took me and – and the **kapo** says, I'm gonna report to the chef from the kitchen. So he went to this guy, to **[indecipherable]** and he says, **Jakob**(ph) is not here, he took him to the **gleis kalona**(ph). So the chef de kitchen, he went to the bullfighter, you know, he was the main guy from the – and he was wearing on the lapel a – a **hakenkreuz**, you know –

Q: Oh yeah, a swastika.

A: – he belongs to the party, a party man. He didn't want to go to war, you know, the – he – he was wearing a swastika and he belongs to the **Hitler** party. Oh, he says, **Jakob**(ph)? He says, if **Jakob**(ph) is not there, I'm not gonna make any food today. I can't peel the potatoes and that. He says, wait a minute, I be – I be back. And he took a – a little train, you know, and he went with the train down maybe a – a 50 k – 15 kilometer to a city they call **Yelch**(ph), German city. And he went over there, he says to the – to this **Buerger**, to this boss, you don't touch **Jakob**(ph), he says. **Jakob**(ph) belongs to the kitchen, and don't ever touch him. So he took me on

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

the train, he took me to work there, and I was – I-I was happy that – that – and he says **Jakob**(ph) – he was a nice guy, he was a German, he – he – he was the head from the company **Schalhor**. What I r – I was written to the Germans after the war, the company exists in **Germany**.

Q: How do you spell the name?

A: Ger – in – in German it's gonna be jo – [**indecipherable**]

Q: Okay. **Schalhor**

A: **Schalhor**. S-c-h-a-l-h-o-r, **Schalhor**.

Q: Ah, **Schalhor**. Okay.

A: I think that the company ex – and was existing in **Germany**, and now when I wrote to the German where I work, you know. And that – that I – I was – and then, after maybe a two months, he came, the guy **Kubon**(ph) in the morning, he says, you know something? The Germans, they losing so many people, they – they send me a – a letter I have to go to the army. He was Olympic, you know, he was Olympic guy, I don't know. He says, I gonna be in the luft – **Luftwaffe**. You know what the **Luftwaffe** is?

Q: In the air force, yeah.

A: The **Luftwaffe** is the one what gonna take care on planes or something there.

And –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: So he said goodbye?

A: He said goodbye, I'm leaving, and his wife left, and then they assign another lady. But I was with the lady not long, because then came a order, we gonna close the camp, and we gonna go to the **conciation** camp.

Q: And that is when things changed.

A: Changed, yeah. So –

Q: So, hang on a second. It's now close to one o'clock and I'm thinking maybe we have a break for a little bit, because we've been going strong for almost two hours.

A: Maybe – maybe we gonna finish that. Are y – are you hungry, or what?

Q: Yes. I wa – a sandwich will be fine.

A: I – I can make coffee you – for you here.

Q: Okay. That will be good. What do you guys –

A: What – what kind of coffee you like? Dec –

Q: – what do you guys like?

**End of File One**

**Beginning File Two**

Q: Okay, well, we're meeting again to continue our interview with Mr. **Jack Mondschein**. And where we left of was at the point where I believe the cook, the



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

German cook who was the head of this – the – I guess your culinary place, is – is being drafted into the army, the – even though he's got a wound –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know. And you learn that your whole **Marchstad**(ph) is going to be –

A: Moved.

Q: – closed – moved, and you're –

A: Moved, yeah.

Q: – and you're going to a concentration camp.

A: Yeah, we going here.

Q: So tell me what happens – what happens at that point, when he leaves, you have a lady come by for awhile –

A: Yeah, I was with her just maybe a four weeks. She was very nice, you know. She was the cook. And – and then he came, you know, our order, that we gonna evacuate this whole place, **Marchstad**(ph).

Q: Yeah.

A: There was lot of – lot – lot of peoples since then I went in, you know? They build more barracks and they got more people in there, and –

Q: It had grown.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Grown, yeah, and then came a order, because they want to put everybody in the **conciation** camp, not **a-arbeits** camp, from that camp.

Q: Yeah.

A: But lot of – lot of camps, they didn't went through to the **[indecipherable]**

Q: Oh, so they – they just closed? Or the people –

A: Yeah, they were gonna be closed. And they took us – they was – that time when they closed, there was maybe 6,000 people already.

Q: That's a lot.

A: Lot of people, and they came two doctors. And we used to have a pharmacy there, you know, like for – for six people there, where somebody was very sick they – they treat him. So there came two German doctors. They lane – line up all the – naked. We ki – we – we face them naked. And one doctor was making right, and one to the left. It was alphabetical order. So in the front was mine uncle, **Ithzak(ph) Mondschein**. I was next to him. And he looked very – he lost weight, you know, you could see how – so they told him go to the left. And then I came, they told me to the right. So lot of people there was – and then was a group, they was assigned to different camps, but not **conciation** camp. This guy, the name was deleted from the camp, **Baumeister(ph)**, he didn't want to **conciation** camp. He went to another camp they called **Klettendorf**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: So it's the guy with the boots.

A: Yeah, the guy there, the leader from the camp.

Q: Right.

A: They call the **Judenalteste**.

Q: Yeah.

A: He went, and his wife, and the – and the two brothers, they went to a war – not a working camp, they called **Klettendorf**. I don't know, he got – he got – he collected lot of money from people what they came, you know. When the people come to the – came to the camp, to **Marchstad**(ph), they didn't change the clothes, they left them in the clothes. And lot of people they came, they got gold rings, there was lot of rich people there, and they – and – and they give the money to – to him, and they buy – they bought out the German, he was a German there, a leader, a older guy, maybe his – was 60 years old, **Schultz**, the name. And he was the leader from the camp, you know –

Q: Right.

A: – he got all the orders. And he made up his group to go to a work camp.

Q: To a work camp, yeah.

A: Work camp.

Q: Another **Arbeits** – **ar-arbeitslager**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Another **arbeits** camp. And I went with lot of thing. We went to **Marchstad**(ph). They – they – we put the – back our clothes, and in the night, we was walking to **Marchstad**(ph).

Q: This is after the selection?

A: After selection, you know, there's a group, I don't know how many. We was there and we went. I would say maybe a – maybe a 3,000 people, something like that. I have no idea now. And we walked over there, there was like from **Fünfteichen** to **Marchstad**(ph) was – from **Marchstad**(ph) to **Fünfteichen** was maybe oh, six miles, something.

Q: The place was called **Fumpftiden**(ph)?

A: **Fünfteichen**.

Q: **Fünfteichen**.

A: **Fünf** is – is five.

Q: Yeah.

A: And **teichen** is – is a water, you know?

Q: Ah yes, a pond. **Teich**.

A: **Teich**.

Q: Yeah.

A: **Teichen**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

**Q: Teichen, Fünfteichen.**

**A: Fünfteichen.**

**Q: Five ponds, five lakes.**

**A: Five lakes. And we walked over there, and we came in the night, and there was – over there on this camp there was no Jews. There was Poles, Germans, Ukrainians, Czechs and all the slav – slav, you know, and they was there, political. The German was political, the pa – Germans, and the Poles – I don't know what the Poles. And they – when we came in, we have to march, **eins, zwei, drei, eins, zwei, drei**. You know like military. And they were standing with – with this rubber – they each – each one – there was **kapos** there, you know, all the **kapos**. There was Germans or Poles, Ukrainian. And they were standing with the rubber-like baseball thing, for rubber, you know, made. And whoever didn't go with the right foot, he got hit, you know. They making lot of noise, you know, they make yelling, that. Lot of them got like hoarse – hoarse as –**

**Q: From yelling that much.**

**A: From yelling you know, they s – they scare us, you know. So we standing on an **appell**. **Appell**, that's mean we line up on **appell**. And they came and they divide each one to a barrack. I was line up the 21 barrack, and mine block fuehrer was a German, **Miller**. Was a **SB**.**

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Really?

A: Oh God, he was terrible. So they assign us in this barrack was like 40 people, in one barrack, you know?

Q: Can I stop you just for a second? When **Ithzak**(ph) got sent to the left, and you to the right.

A: Well they – they went to the crematorium, you know.

Q: So that's what I wanted to –

A: Sick – sick people, they went to the crematorium. People got lot of – there was lot of people there what they came from – from the – oh, you don't know this story. You know, can I mix in this story?

Q: Of course, mix it in.

A: You know, there was a – when the German invited the Russians, you know, in '41, the Russians, the trains, what they have is right there from the Europeans.

Q: That's right, it is.

A: So, they came – they came, SS man – SS to the lager, I forgot his name, he was the main – he was the main of all the – all the camps. And he selected the big boys, good strong boys. They took the boys, like 500 of them, not from one camp, from a few, and they put German uniforms – you don't know about that. And they put the –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

and they put the yellow – yellow band on them like the – the German used to have a  
– a – a – a division they called the **arbeit** – **arbeit** division, the **SR**.

Q: Mm-hm, yeah.

A: **SR**, they used to wear a red band, or la – like the prince – the prince from  
**England**, they got a picture a few months ago.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He went on a dance and he put a German uniform.

Q: That's right, that's right. So that sort of armband, yeah.

A: That kind of uni – armbands. And they took the – all the boys, the Jewish boys  
and they sent them to **Ossen(ph)**, to the front.

Q: To do what?

A: Do what? They went – and they have to take off their – for the train. They lift  
one side and they made it smaller.

Q: Narrower. Narrower tracks.

A: The tracks that the German can advance the trains, the supplies for the military,  
and – and then I – and we got lot of them in our **Marchstad(ph)** camp they came  
later, later they came. And all of them, they got frost on the legs and the hands, you  
know, and –

Q: It was hard work.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Hard work, because they – they – they live outside. They didn't live in – in – in a house. They sleep on the train. You know, they got a covered train, they sleep there and they feed them. And then they got – suddenly they got sick, all of them. They got typhus, because they didn't took any showers and they got lot of –

Q: Lice.

A: – lice, big lice on them. And the German was worry about that they gonna –

Q: Infect everybody.

A: – infected the army, so they took the, all the 500 – lot of them they died, didn't came back, they buried them. And they came back to a camp they called – to a special camp where they make a quarantine of them.

Q: That's right, okay.

A: They keep them inside, and then when they recover, they send them to the work camps, so lot of them, they was in the line with me, they got [indecipherable] you know, stiff legs and the hands.

Q: So when they were selected, they were selected –

A: They make it to the light – to the left, you know, they send them –

Q: That's right.

A: – they send them to a crematorium in **Germany** there, I think called

**Brander**(ph). There was – there wa – there was lot –



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: So it's a death camp.

A: There was a lot – lot of – lot of crematoriums in **Germany**, you know.

Q: Did you realize that you wouldn't see **Ithzak**(ph) again?

A: Oh yeah, I knew, when – when – when they put him over here, I knew that that's it. And so if you went to this – he went there, and then we line up in **Fünfteichen**, and they select us a-all to the barracks, and the next morning they select us to go to work. I couldn't go any more to the kitchen any more. So I work around railroads there. I work on the – on the **autobahn**, you know the **autobahn** in **Germany**?

Q: Mm-hm, highway.

A: Highway.

Q: Yeah.

A: I work on that, you know, and lot of them, and –

Q: So the concentration camp was called **Fünfteichen**?

A: **Fünfteichen** –

Q: I see.

A: – where I was.

Q: I see.

A: There was lot of them, different one. There was **Dachau**, there was **Mauthausen**, **Ebensee**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah, **Ebensee** I remember, my [indecipherable]

A: I was in **Ebensee**, I am gonna come – come to that.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: So I got selected to work on the highway there, you know, and then we got – we got already that time we got **SS**. There wasn't the **Wehrmacht** any more.

Q: How did that change? How did life change?

A: Oh, when the **Wehrmacht** was was very bad. And particularly when you was on this – on this – on this [indecipherable] or this German, yeah he was – the **Judenalteste** on this block, his name was **Miller**, he was – he was a political, you know, he got the –

Q: He was a – he – was he Jewish?

A: No, no, he was German.

Q: He was German. A German political prisoner.

A: Political prisoner, there was a lot of them, but they was – they was so bad, you know, they – they just didn't like anybody. So we was on this block and we used to go to work in the morning, we used to wake up like four o'clock, you know, and they give us some soup, they beat us. He was standing in the doorway, we-we – we walked out, and everybody hul – has to get something over the head with this bundle. He was a **sadic**, you know, **sadic** guy, very terrible

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah. A sadist.

A: Terrible guy, a blonde guy with blue eyes. He got a chin out, I – he's [indecipherable] in my eyes. Was awful, this guy. So we was there. This was already in '43, you know, and then –

Q: Do you remember was it – excuse me – was it summer, was it spring, was it winter, '43?

A: Yeah, it was – it was winter, yeah, it was '43.

Q: '43? Okay

A: And one day, Christmas, it was like Christmas, we knew – I don't know how we knew the Christmas, there came a Swiss – Swiss delegation. And a night before – in the morning we used to get bread with butter, good food. And the Swiss delegation came and they checked it out, oh they said, they not so bad. The people, they get good food, they present – they went to certain barracks, they show what they get, and – and then, when they left, the torture come in. And I – I used to have SS men, I couldn't believe it, I told my son about, he was going to work with us, and he was from **Romania**. And he speak Jewish like a Jew. And I couldn't believe it. And he was such a bad guy. But they told me that lot of the Jews in – in **Romania** they speak Jewish, they're Gypsies or something like that, I don't know. Speak Jewish. I was – when we went to work, he talks Jewish to us, you know. And I couldn't

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

believe it, and I didn't know it was a Jew or no, but they say he – he was a sworn SS man, you know. Because lot of ro – you know, lot of join the – the German army, like the Hungarian –

Q: That's right.

A: And the Romanian, you know. They join, they – they got in – in I – in – in – in the **Hungary** they joined the – they was even fighting on the **Oss**(ph) front, you know, the Hungarian there. So we was there, and then the Russian start to come again on German territory, you know, from the **Ossen**(ph). There was lot of trouble for them.

Q: So they're starting to retreat.

A: Retreat there from – from – from **Russia, Ukraine**, you know.

Q: In the camp, did you know these things? You sa –

A: No, i-in this camp, we could hear already the – the noise from the – from the cannons, you know.

Q: Really –

A: Yeah.

Q: – so it was that close?

A: That clo – they wasn't far away. They was like I don't know how far. So they decided to liquidate the camp.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Okay.

A: **Ebensee**, and they divided again people in different –

Q: No, we were still in – still in **Fünfteichen**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so that's – you hear the cannons –

A: We ki –

Q: – and then they send you to **Ebensee**?

A: No, not yet.

Q: Oh, okay, nevermind, I won't push.

A: Then – so they decided to take th – all the people and send them to different camps.

Q: Okay

A: And we used to have – and we used to go to work, there used to be lot of German companies, you know?

Q: Yes.

A: They didn't went to war. And they – they was one – one way we work, he was a – for sure was a communist. And he – every day he came, he says all done, all done? So, they start to divide us, and I line up in a camp. We walked, we didn't transported, we walked to a city they call **Fornbruck**(ph). It's – it's – it's in – in the

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

neighborhood from **Breslau** there. We went there, i-it wasn't a **conciation** camp, again a work camp.

Q: So was it run by a private company?

A: No, no, no, it was run by the Germans, but was a Jewish camp again.

Q: It was a work camp, yeah.

A: Work camp, we worked there. And I was there maybe a – a month, and I met a – the – the **Juden alster** was Jewish, you always – they always got the Jewish, an-and his name was **Oskar(ph) Bromberger(ph)**, and he was a German Jew. And he was from my town. When the **Hitler** kick him out –

Q: Oh, he came to shi – **Chrishna(ph)**?

A: He came to **Chzanów** –

Q: **Chzanów**.

A: – with his brother and parents and – and I met him in **Chzanów**, where he was playing soccer, I met the ones there. And he was the – the **Juden alster** and he see – I talk to him, he says, you listen **Jakob(ph)**, I am a German, I'm not gonna make difference between people. He was nice, you know. So he was there maybe two months. And then came a order again, close up the camp. And we again – they didn't divided people, no, we start to march. They – we put us in – in five – five people in a line, and we start to march toward the – towards the **Sudeten**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah.

A: Czecho – **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: **Czechoslovakia**.

A: And we line up not far from **Pilzen**. You know **Pilzen**?

Q: Oh, so – yeah, I s – I've been there, mm-hm.

A: **Pilzen**. We line up there –

Q: South of **Prague**.

A: We line up there, and they didn't got where, so they – they took lot of farms, where the farmers used to have – for the winter they used to have hay and things. So they keep us over there. We didn't work, no, they keep us over there. And food was – very little food, you know. People was dying there. From that place there was, every day they took out like five, 10 people dead. They couldn't survive from the – from the march, you know, they couldn't survive because there was a lot of walking to do.

Q: Yeah.

A: We was walking in this wooden shoes, and this – the uniform was from **conciation** camp, you know. We didn't got any other clothes because when we went to **Fünfteichen** they took away all the – all the pr-private clothes.

Q: Was that the first time that you had to put on that uniform?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah, in **Fünfteichen** was the first time we put it on. The first uniforms and wooden shoes, and – and that's what we got you know, and they – and then when we went to the other camp, we didn't got any clothes, so was wearing that clothes, and they closed this **[indecipherable]**, we start to walk toward **Czechoslovakia**.

We was there a why – lot of people die on the way, they couldn't –

Q: They couldn't do it.

A: They couldn't do it, you know, so they left them. They left them just on the – on the – on the field there. And then they line us up in a station not far from **Czechoslovakia**. I don't remember if it was **Pilzen** or before, and they put us on a train, open train.

Q: Open.

A: And we didn't know where we going. They put all in a train, like 35 people in one train. And the train used to go in the night only, because in daytime, they used to come, the English, you know, with the planes, and they used to destroy the railroads that – and they didn't want it that they see they got here some people in transport, you know. And we was driving that maybe for, I think two weeks. No food, we ju – we just got the supplies from the other camp ov – keep it with us. And then we line up in the – in the mountains in **Austria**. We didn't know it's **Austria**,



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

but we line up. Then I found out the – the **Austria**, in the mountains there was the **Baskeed**(ph), I think.

Q: Mm-hm. **Baskeed**(ph)?

A: **Baskeed**(ph) is – is like here the – have mountains in –

Q: And the name – and the name was **Baskeed**(ph)?

A: **Baskeed**(ph), and I can't remember. La – la – like in **Poland** they have the – **Carpatha**(ph) is in **Poland**, you know?

Q: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

A: And here is the **Baskeed**(ph) and there was lot of snow. And – and we didn't got big blankets, we just –

Q: Was this already in 1944?

A: It was in '44 already, beginning '44.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Beginning '44 or – or later maybe, maybe later because it was snowing. It maybe was in March. And we was going like for two weeks and lot of people we couldn't – we – we tried to wake them up and they – they got frozen there. And after two weeks traveling, we line up in **Mauthausen**. This was our – our **conceration** camp, **Mauthausen**. And we line up, so they took us out from the train. From the 35 people was in the – in this – in the – in this – this transportation there, the – maybe

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

10 or 15 got out, the rest was just frozen there. So they took us to the camp, we have to walk to the camp. So they – it was winter, snow, cold like hell. They took out the clothes from us, we have to leave the clothes. And we went for a shower, they give us a shower, you know. They used to have the showers, but – and they cut us, the hair out, they shave everything. And they put a – a line on the head here, you know, there was a razor, special, got through the middle of the head, when you escape, that they see who you are, you know. And – and they line us up and they shave us up and they put some chemicals on us. They was worried that we had lice or something, they was worry about. And we was there a couple days and then – then we line up, we line up and they took us to **Ebensee**.

**Q: Is Ebensee in Austria or Germany?**

**A: Austria.**

**Q: Austria.**

**A: This everything Austria.**

**Q: Okay.**

**A: Everything is Austria. And we got in Ebensee, so there – we was there til – til May fifth. Then the American came in. And that Ebensee was another torture.**

**Q: So, excuse me, if – were you there for a couple of months, or were you there for a year and a couple of months at the –**

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Where?

Q: **Ebensee.**

A: **Ebensee** I was – I was more – almost a year there. Four – from '44 middle to '45.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: So we – we line up there.

Q: Yeah.

A: And this was another torture. There was again this bunch of guys, this Ukraines and the Czechs. They was in the lead over there, the **kapos**.

Q: Yeah.

A: They got the u – the upper hand. They beat the hell of us, you know. When we went to the **appell**, we didn't walk too fast, you know, they hit you over the head, they kick you, you know. You was wear your wooden shoes and the snow was on wood, you know. Was like so hard you have to – each time you have to cut it off the snow, you know. And they beat the hell of us. There wasn't any food, they stole the food. Th-They got supply to give us the bread, they keep the bread. They give it to their friends [**indecipherable**] the lot of – there lot of – there was lot of – lot of Ukrainians there, you know, and Poles and Czechs –

Q: A lot of corruption, yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: You know, they got – they got in the camp, I don't know for – they wasn't political maybe. Maybe for other things, you know, who knows? And there we spend it, and then in – in '45, maybe – yeah, and we was working in the hi – in the mountains there, you know? In the morning we – we have to walk to – we went out like five o'clock to work. Have to go like four kilometers to the – to the mountains. And they got mountains already inside – when we came, the mountains was already like homes or something. They dig out the stones, you know, the stones. And we have to shovel the stones on the little trains. And they took him out and there was plenty to build armory over there, factories for ammunition in the stones. And we – we – we went in and this mountains inside like maybe one kilometer or two kilometers deep already, because people was working before us there.

Q: So it was like a quarry.

A: Yeah, they – they was planning to build a ammunition, li-li-like they build in **Marchstad**(ph). You know in **Marchstad**(ph) they build a factory where they produce cannons there?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In **Marchstad**(ph), when I was there?

Q: Yeah, yeah, mm-hm.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: So we was doing that, he was terrible, you know, was – they b – they got these **kapos** there, and the **SS** mens, you know, they was – they was chasing us, do fast, **Schnell, schnell, schnell**, you know, they – and we didn't got any food, a lot of – lot of people die over there. There was **musselmen**, you know **musselmen** is?

Q: Muscle men, right?

A: Muscle men, you know, like you lose weight, you weigh like 40 – 50 pounds, you didn't look like that already. So they was getting a hard time there. And then one – one day before the liberation, before the American came, they made **appell** and they says that we all have to go into these mountains there, because it's going to be a big fight now, between the German military and the American. So finally the **kapos** there, the germ – the – the – the Ukraines and the – and the Poles, they said to the people not to go. Don't go over there. So, this was the night before the American come in. In the morning, we didn't went to this mountains. In the morning we wake up for **appell**, there's no Germans. No Germans, no **kapos**. The – all the **kapos** what they made a ha – give the hard time to people, they run away with the Germans. And like lunchtime, the American came into the camp, and they start to – people was hungry, you know, they wou – they – we went to the – to the military, says, give us food. So they went and they brought the big **kessels**, you know? And they start to cook pork **[indecipherable]** you know. And we start to run

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

to them to eat, you know? And I went, a lot of other people went. And once I took the food, they gave us food, maybe two hours later I got sick. I got diarrhea, and I was laying on the bed. So the Red – the Red Cross came, the military and they checked out who was – who's available, who is sick you think. So they – they took me, and I was very sick, I got diarrhea and they took me to a hospital they call **Bad Ischl**. That's the whole city was hospitals.

Q: Was it like a sanitorium?

A: Yeah, sanitorium, the whole city. And they put me in between Germans, **SS** guys, next to German military. There wasn't other places, you know? And they heal me, the nurses did, German – was German nurses. They was laying, a lot of the Germans that they came from **Ossen(ph)**. **Ossen(ph)** they call for **Russia**, you know. They were sick, without hands, frozen up, you know, they got frozen there and that – I was laying there for three weeks.

Q: Can I stop for a second? You say the am – you know, I want to go back to when the Americans came in the camp. That's – did you know that was freedom?

A: Oh yeah. I ma-matter of fact, before, when I get the food, I have to register by the Americans, you know, my name and my number. I used to have a number you know, but not printed out, 81, or – or 82, something like that. And they give me a card, you know, I got a card. But I can't find the card since we move over here. I

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

used to have a card from the – from the American military, my name and a stamp, and they kept them, you know, who took care on me, that – the major or something and I cannot find the card, I used to have it. My –

Q: What kind of impression, how di – what kind of – how did they behave when they came –

A: The Americans, oh, were nice.

Q: Yeah?

A: The American was nice, but the Austrian, they was terrible. The Austrian, they say, we didn't know there was a camp here. They lived there, not far away. You know, when you talk with the nurses, they say, we didn't know this was a **conciation** camp. They lie, you know. And o-okay, I was there like three or four weeks and then they relieve me. I was weigh – I was weigh maybe, I don't know, maybe 70 pounds. I was very – lost weight, you know, I got – my waist was maybe a 26 or 25. So I – I went with a train to **Vienna**. And on the way we – we fi – we found already the **UNRRA**, you know the **UNRRA**?

Q: Tell us what is the **UNRRA**.

A: The **UNRRA** is – was an organization what they supply food and clothes for you. They used to be in the second war, you know? That's a – I think a private organization, or it's from the –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: It's international.

A: International, the **UNRRA**. And then we found the Joint. You know, the Joint is a Jewish organization there. And they help me with clothes, to get clothes, you know, and they give us food in **Vienna**, and then I ask them, I says, I want to go back to **Poland**. And I could – couldn't walk, I was hardly walking. And they took me to a – to **Vienna**, to the station and they told me that this train is going to go to **Poland**. This train. Because everything was destroy, you know, they couldn't get like – it wasn't a passenger plane, it was again a train, he was covered already, you know. So I wasn't by myself, there was a lot of people going back. And – and took us maybe a week to come to **Poland**. And I line up in **Katowice**. **Katowice** is a big city in **Poland**, you know. But the Germans al-al-always want to have the city, you know, **Katowice** is a nice city. It wasn't destroyed you know. I line up, I remembered the street. And I remember before the war, we used to have a cousin in **Katowice** what they used to have a deli, you know. And they always supply us with Hebrew salami they send us. And I have – I na – when I go down from the train, I says, oh God. So, I go down and – and I look for the street I remember. It was **Mariacka** three, famous street in **Katowice**. And I go in, I says, it's my cousin there. She was not a cousin from first line, maybe third line. And I went in and I told her who I am, and sh – they was related from us from – from my gran – from



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

the grandma. And she was – she wasn't in camp, she was hiding in **Katowice**. You know, the Gentile, they – she was hi-hiding by a Gentile, by a Ca-Catholic family, and she survive. So she got the restaurant and she give me food and she says, I get you some money, and I – and this time the Russian was there al-already, you know, in **Poland**. They occupied **Poland**, you know, the – the Russian army. So she took me to – there was a – a Russian truck, military truck. And she went into the Russians, she give them like 500 **zlotys**, she says. Let them g – where you going? Oh, he says, I'm going towards – towards **Chzanów** or [indecipherable] so I says, I live over there, so I hop on the truck and – and they took me to **Chzanów**. And in **Chzanów** I line up in the middle of the ring, you know. We used to have a ring, you know, they call like downtown. When the German came into this town, they take four people and they hang them in the middle on the street. Jews. And today there's a monument there – over there. So I come down, I says, where I'm gonna go? I says oh, I'm gonna go the ghetto, where used to be the ghetto. So I walk over, and I found there a old lady, what they used to have a bakery in **Chzanów** there. The lady was maybe 65 years old. She got a Polish baker who work for her, **Tomek**, and he – he took this – this lady, and he buried her in a field. She survived two years underground. She survive, and she got apartment, when I came up she was – she was baking cake. I came, she gave me cake and coffee. And anybody who came,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

came up to her, you know? It was like a – a little ghetto, that they – they got a few apartments and downstairs was a f – was a guy living, **Schnitzer**(ph) his name, what I was with his brother in – in **Ebensee** together. And he took me in, you know, he says okay, stay here, you gonna have where to sleep. And I got swollen legs, you know, I couldn't walk, I was – I wasn't in good shape, you know. And he says he was doing some work, you know, tailoring. I didn't know too much because I was yo-young when I learned, but I help him out, you know, he feed me and I was there. I was there til I got – I tried to get some weight, you know.

Q: Did you go back to where your house was?

A: No, not yet. I – I couldn't walk o-over there so far, you know, it wasn't so far, but I couldn't walk to my house there. So, in one day I was there, here comes a Polish military like my brother, you see the – the picture there?

Q: Mm-hm. Maybe we can show this now on camera.

A: Yeah.

Q: Hold it up, and you – is the picture of yourself and your brother, is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so –

A: So here comes a – a military with a letter. He says, I-I'm looking for **Jakob**(ph) **Mondschein**. They call me **Janek**, you know, in Polish, the – the Polacks, they

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

didn't call me **Jakob**(ph), they call me **Janek**. I was friends with them. I look for **Janek Mondschein**. I says – so he went up to the lady, says he's downstairs, just go down. So I come, and there's a letter from my brother.

Q: First you hear that he's alive.

A: Yeah. It's certain – I am – I am here in the hospital in **Biddegosh**(ph), and I am wa – and I am hurt, come to see me. So I couldn't go right away, I wait til I – you know, I gain weight and thing, so maybe two weeks later I took – I went to the – to the train station. And he give me some money, the guy, you know. And I took a ticket and I went to **Biddegosh**(ph).

Q: Was that far?

A: **Biddegosh**(ph) was like maybe a – took – took us like – th-the railroad wasn't going fast, you know. Well, everything was disrupted. It took me like three days to go to him. Maybe 400 kilometer, something. **Biddegosh**(ph). And I lined up over there and I found – I ask – I found where the hospital is and I came in, my brother was there. So I went to the hospital, I says, what's a matter. He says, he got – when he was in the army, you know, the Russians they took the Polish citizen, they made a army from them, you know. But if they didn't want the Polish to go first to – to **Warsaw**, you know that, they want to be the –

Q: Liberators [indecipherable]

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: The liberators. So he was – he was working, he was – his assignment was that he – he was in a – there is a river in **Poland** they call **Wisla**. To go to **Warsaw**, he – he have to cross with a boat [**indecipherable**] and he was leading for the – for the – for the communication wires, you know. So his boat has to go on the other side, and get the wires on the other side from the **Wisla**, that the military kept communication with the – with the – with the soldiers. So he got shot with a – they call a dum dum. You know, this is the bullet dum dum, this was – this is against the – the – against the law to use it, that, because the dum dum is a bullet and it goes in.

Q: It's an exploding bullet.

A: Exploded bullet, they're called dum dum.

Q: Okay.

A: And he got hit in the leg here, and ripped his whole leg and – and – and he couldn't have any – any feeling on the bottom, and – and they operated maybe three, four times and they couldn't – they couldn't get the – the [**indecipherable**] back the live –

Q: The nerves, yeah, mm-hm. Did he lose his leg?

A: No, he didn't lose leg, but he didn't got the – as winter was, he got – he didn't feel when it's frozen, you know? So he – I was there for three days, he was – he

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

was very not normal. He was smoking, you know, the Russians – he learned smoke, the Russians when they smoked cigarettes, they took paper, you know?

Q: Yes.

A: Paper they throw away and they smoke –

Q: That's right.

A: – **mahorka**(ph), you know. He got very – not the same guy, and he was drinking vodka there, you know, he couldn't believe it what happened to him. So, I was three days, I says to him, you know, I'm going back to **Chzanów**. And they told him that after awhile he's gonna be **demolized**, you know –

Q: Demobilized.

A: – they gonna – demobil – yeah, they told him you – you gonna be free, he says. The Polish arm – the Polish government told him, we gonna get you a farm for free, and we get you cows, things they took away from the Germans, you know, from the – and they would give it to the military back everything, you know. So he came, in that uniform he came what the picture is. And he came to **Chzanów**, he says, well, le-let's go and see what's going on with the property. Like, he was a military, and if he – we – if he got a friend who was from **Chzanów** too, but he was in the Russian army, he was a decorate Russian army, he used to have a medal from **Lenin**. You know **Lenin**, who was **Lenin**? So we said, let's go to the property with him, we will

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

see what's gonna happen, or we can see our thing. And we went over there, and the Poles, they didn't let us in.

Q: Did you know who –

A: They say no, you don't own that, you are not the – they was like a [indecipherable] over there [indecipherable]. And my cousins live, I got two cousins give us – they li – they live with their parents next. And we used to have a – oh, you want read the paper?

Q: No, you actually knocked your mike out. Sorry. Hang on a second.

A: So –

Q: Just be a little careful when you like, hit your chest.

A: Okay.

Q: Thank you. Sorry about that.

A: And –

Q: So your cousin –

A: He couldn't g – we could – they let – they – they – they'd us go and see. So –

Q: Well, did you know these people? The Poles?

A: No, that time was the Russian occupied area, it wasn't any law like here, you know, you go give him notice. It doesn't exist. Whoever got the power, you know.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: And we didn't want to fight with the people there, so –

Q: But they weren't people you knew from before the war.

A: No, no, we didn't know who this is even.

Q: Okay.

A: But they didn't let us in, you know. Used to be a gate over there, you know, like a little farm. We used to have like eight, nine horses there, always, and we used to have a place for hay. We used to have chickens there, you know, all kind of things. Like, it was a little away from the main streets there. They didn't let us in, so he said, well – I says to my brother, you know, maybe we can sell these things. So he came up a guy, they call that **Saban(ph)**, you know what **Saban(ph)**? Is like, he was born in **Chzanów**, they call **Sabali(ph)**.

Q: Ah, yeah.

A: A name, you know, like here they call the Texan –

Q: A Texan.

A: Texan. **Saban(ph)**. And he – he – he used to sell, before the war he used to sell import fruit, oranges, bananas. He says to us – he came up, he says, you know something? I'm gonna buy this whole thing from you guys. I know you not gonna stay here. If he didn't got any money, you know, lot of money. So we went to the city hall, and we dig out the papers, they wasn't destroy the papers. And there was a

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

big book, you know, a book big like this here. And we looked up and there was my grandmother, her name, **Lya(ph) Mondschein**. She was the owner of the property.

So we went in and we sign off to him and he gave us like 2,000 dollars for the property. And I says to my brother, look, what we gonna do here?

Q: So was it in **zlotys** or was it in dollars actually?

A: In dollars was like 2,000, you know.

Q: No, but it was Polish money.

A: He gave me some dollars, old dollars, you know.

Q: Old dollars.

A: He got old dollars, and then we was worry about to keep the dollars in the top.

We – we went to a shoemaker and he opened the heel, and he stick in the dollars in the heel. Was funny. And we keep dollars and – and – and **zlotys** by then, and I says to **Ulrich(ph)**, you know, let's – let – let – let – yeah, and we was hanging around the town there, and I met a girl, you know there. She was older from me, like two years older, and she – she start to cook for me you know, and take care of me. She was – her name was **Bashkar(ph)**. And her name was **Ruja(ph)** [indecipherable] same like my wife. And she – she care about me, but she was older than me, I don't think – three – three or four years older. Then my brother come, he says look, she's older than you, why – why do you hang around it? It's – it's not – not for you, you



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

can always get a girl there. So, we decided he – he – he got ou – out of the army, you know, they took him – they give him some money too, you know, the Polish military. And they told him that he can have a farm in – in – in – in **Germany**. You know, the Pole, after the war – after the war, th-the Russian took par-part of **Lvov**, and th-they give the Poles the West **Germany**, they're called **Farbruck(ph)** there. They give – give them, and they was – the German lived for years over there. So – so – so where we gonna go here? So if you went over there, and we – you could travel, he was a military, we travel. And that time you could go into a German and say, get out here, give me the **[indecipherable]** and they – you – they was – they got scared for the – for the Poles, you know, that time. And the city called **Vulja(ph)** was a beautiful city. It wasn't demolished, the train was going, you know. And then – then I used to have a – a friend of mine, is – what I used to go to the school with him in **Chayder**. His name was **Schwartz(ph)**, **Shimmy(ph)** **Schwartz(ph)**. And I go with my brother and he was working there, and then he go – comes this guy. He's a major in the Polish army. And he – his – his friend is – is the police chief from – from **Vulja(ph)**, was a Jewish guy. He was the commander from the city, you know they used to – there wasn't any organization that time, you know, he was the commander. I got the picture here in the album with him. So he went with – with us, he says, come on, I'll get you apartment **[indecipherable]** to a

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

German family, there was a lady with a daughter. They – the husband wasn't there, he was in the war. So he says, get out. I says, oh, just let her live. Give us just a – a room for us and we gonna be in peace. I don't want to chase her out. She was nice, with her daughter, she was crying. So she give us our apartment, and we was there, and we was trying to, you know, he – my brother was – he likes to drink and smoke, and – and things like that. And we spend it – and we spend it with my friend, he was a military man, you know, we spend it lot of times. And this military man [indecipherable] he line up in **Stockholm**, in **Sweden**. And his son, maybe eight years ago, his son went to **China**, and from **China** he came to **Los Angeles**, and he came to my place and I let him stay for two weeks for free. Can you imagine it?

Q: Wow. Wow. Wow. How long the tie lasted.

A: They're still – they're still living in **Sweden**, you know, but he – he – poor guy died, this guy **Shimmy**(ph). So, we line up in **Vulja**(ph), I says, what are we gonna do here? There's nothing to do, that city, crazy. My brother start to drink and smoke and ran around with girls, you know. Military. And he was limping, he couldn't walk really good. So we stayed there for two months and we said, you know, we gonna go to **Germany**.

Q: I want to interrupt here, before we go to **Germany**, because I have a number of questions, based on what you've told me.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah, go ahead.

Q: When you came back to **Poland**, at – at some point, did you find out what had happened with your stepfather?

A: I know, he got – he – he got – he went to **Auschwitz**, you know, he wasn't there.

Q: He wasn't there.

A: No.

Q: And his children?

A: His children, we di – I always look for the children, you know why? Because we got mix up with the west **Juden**. He was a west **Jude**.

Q: Yeah.

A: After the war – a middle – **Hitler**, when he chase out all the Jews from **Germany**, he went to **Belgium**. And then any – any camp I came, I look for his name, you know?

Q: What was his name?

A: His name was – his name was **Herman(ph) Mehler(ph)**.

Q: **Miller**?

A: **Meh-Mehler**.

Q: **Mehler**?

A: **Mehler**, yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: **Mehler.**

A: **M-e-h-l-e-r, Mehler.**

Q: **Mehler**, mm-hm.

A: You know, and I always look for him, and I never could find. I look for my wife's, you know, family too there, sometimes. So –

Q: So okay, so that was one question, you – your stepfather ended up in –

A: I looked for him, but I couldn't find –

Q: You couldn't find.

A: I think they are not alive because they – you know, the German Jews, they wasn't like the Polish. The Polish Jews was – they was used to hardship. And the German Jews they live a good life, they was good for years, you know, they have everything what they need. And they couldn't survive, lot of them they didn't survive. Very few survive ves – **vestu**(ph) they called it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Yeah. They couldn't – I was with them – I was at **Fünfteichen** with Hungarian Jews, and they didn't survive, they die like flies every day. They couldn't do the work and they die, lot of them.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: And I wanted to ask you, during all those years, it must have been seven – you were 17 years old when you first had to register at your former school, and you were taken away.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you were liberated when you're 21 or 22 or something like that?

A: Something like that, yeah.

Q: Did you ever want to give up?

A: What is that?

Q: Did you ever want to give up?

A: No, no, no, we – in **Ebensee** – **Ebensee** was the last camp that we didn't figure we're gonna survive. It was so bad. First of all, we have to walk every day lot of kilometers to go to work, and after work, you have to walk back. And then when you came to the barracks, you got beaten up, and you didn't get any food. So this – this was –

Q: This where you figured this is it.

A: This – this is it, yes, but we didn't figure **[indecipherable]** we're gonna survive that. It was – the **worstest** place was **Ebensee**.

Q: So when those Americans came in, how did you feel?

A: Oh, we was – we feel good –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Did you feel it was real?

A: – you know, sure. Lot – lot – not all – everybody got sick. Lot of them they was still in good shape, you know? The only people got sick when they took this food, you know? If they didn't give us this food, they give us just regular bread, you know, to get used to the food would be okay, but they want to do good for us and they didn't know. They didn't got any instruction, you know, how to do it.

Q: Yeah, yeah. I mean, in between – you say your brother changed. When you saw him, he changed.

A: Oh yeah, he changed, the military, you know, changed him.

Q: Military changed him.

A: He was a big smoker, and he was drinking lot of vodka, you know, he got used – the Russians they just –

Q: Drank.

A: – drank lot of things, you know.

Q: Do you think you changed?

A: Sure, I changed, yeah, I don't know. I was always try to be kind to people, you know, didn't – didn't want anybody to hurt, or – like I went to [indecipherable] I didn't – I didn't want to chase out the German lady with her daughter on the street,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

and take away the apartment. I says well, we gonna have enough one place where to live, because we figure we're not going to stay there.

Q: But it was beed – was it – did it become harder to still keep that part of yourself during those years?

A: Yeah.

Q: It did?

A: I was tough, you know. I didn't want to give up anything, you know. I know my mom wasn't there, mine relatives – the – mine – my uncle's kids didn't survive, you know, they – he got three kids, all of them they gone, and he got two grandchildren, they're all – all gone.

Q: Yeah ... Did your brother ever become more familiar to you?

A: Oh yeah, no he – when we – when we went from **Vulja**(ph) we – we went to our – to the Czech border, you know. And the city – I can't remember the city, the border with the **Czechoslovakia** was ... klet – not **Klettenborg**(ph). I don't remember the city there. We went, and we got some money left and we order a smuggler, you know? Was a smuggler there, he says, oh, give me so much money, I take you overnight, I take you to **Czechoslovakia**. Because we got the closest border, it was **Czechoslovakia**. So we pay money, we went in the night. Not me, my brother, but he took another few families through a forest, and we line up in the

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Czech border, after the border with the Czech police. And the Czech police says, just don't worry about, there is here a Jewish organization they call Joint. And they took us to the organization, to the Joint, and they told us that we can go to **Israel**, or we can go to **Germany**, you know, and they help us, they give us food, they give us some money, you know, and they – they put us on a pla – in a plane, in

**Czechoslovakia**. We went to **Prague**, and from **Prague** we went in a train, in a regular train. Then we changed the train from the Czechs to German trains. We was traveling with the German train, it wasn't a – a – it was a train like for commercial train, because it was lot of people. And we line up in **Germany**, in a city they call **Ulm**.

Q: Oh yeah, mm-hm.

A: Was a big city, was completely flattened down, the city was completely down. So over there we went in in a military **caserna** (ph). The Joint took us already, the Americans. We – we line up there and they give us clothes, you know, and they give us food, you know, chocolate and all the kind of goodies you know, we used to get for free, you didn't pay. And they told us that there are chance here. You can go to **Australia**, you can go to **New Zealand**, but you can't go to **America**. Becau – because the – to **America**, you have to go when you have relatives. So, I – so we said well, we gonna sit around here for a while. We gonna see what we gonna do. I



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

didn't want to go to **Israel**, because I want to – I want to be in – in – you know, I want to be in **Europe**, maybe I could find some relatives. Matter of fact, I found some cousins, you know. A-After the war I found them. So we was there in **Ulm**. So we was have a good time, we was – music was there, was dancing. Food was plenty.

Q: Was your brother different?

A: No, he changed, you know, li – I was afraid just for his – his drinking, he lada – he liked to drink, you know.

Q: I – I know, but by that point, had he stopped drinking as much?

A: No, he, when he got the occasion, he was – he was li – smoking lot of cigarettes, that – I never smoke in my life. So – so he says, you know, be – be over here. I'm gonna take the train. He finds out that in a – in a city past **Munich** is lot of people from our town over there, from **Chzanów**(ph). So he took the train from **Ulm**, and he went to **Munich**, and from **Munich** he took a train, he went to **Passow**. You know, **Passow** is another city where is the – the border is the Czech border, **Passow**. And there used to be a big camp from – from Jews they call **Pocking**(ph). Used to be Orthodox Jews there on the camp. Lot of liberated people. So he says, I'm gonna go – he's gonna go to **Passow**, and he went to **Passow** and he met lot of people from our town and he was happy there. And he used to go out in the night to

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

dancing places, and drinking, and he rent a place, the name was **Waggoner**(ph). I remember the owner, you know, they give us in a hotel, they give us a place, and then he says – he came back to **Ulm**, he says if I want to go with them to **Passow**. I says, sure, I'm gonna go. So we – we took what we got, you know, and we went to **Passow**. And – and I got this apartment, and then we used to have a Jewish committee there, **Passow**, where we used to get supplies from the **UNRRA**, from Joint. We used to get chocolate and ham and all the kind of goodies for free, you know, and they – and they told us they gonna bring some machines, sewing machines and you register, you were – that you were gonna go make clothes, coats or something. I didn't know too much about, you know, cause I wasn't a –

Q: You didn't have much chance.

A: Chance. I didn't got to learn a lot of things, but I knew a little bit. So I – we hang around, we was working in this place, the Jewish committee'd give us a – a room, and I – I – and I become a contro – a controller there, because there was a Jewish committee, and the Americans supplied food. And there was a guy there that – the head of the department, and he was – he was taking the food home, you know, he was cheating. So I become the controller of the food. I wa – when the food came –

Q: Very powerful position.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: No, me and another guy too was there, we – we control the food. And his name is **Ruble(ph)**.

Q: **Ruble(ph)**.

A: You know who **Ruble(ph)** is? There's a bird in **Poland** called **Ruble**. And his name is **Ruble(ph)**.

Q: Yeah.

A: He survived the camp. He was from **Kielce**. He got to **[indecipherable]** there, you know, and he was stealing the food that he could become control, and I control everything. We had a good time that – in **Passow**. They call our city what – three rivers come together, you know, in one shot. **Drei-Flüsse-Stadt** they call.

Q: Yeah, **Drei-Flüsse-Stadt**, okay.

A: And we used to go, each night they used to put boats, and we used to get some money from the Jewish federation, and my brother was s-smuggling – not smuggling, selling cigarettes there. He – he went out to a girlfriend, a Romanian girl, beautiful, beautiful girl. Her name was **Nora**. Beautiful, like a actress. And she – and she got in – in – involved with the **PX**, with the American military, you know, we used to have a **PX**? She used to go to the **PX**, and she used to bring whiskey, cigarettes. **Chesterfields**, the only kind of cigarettes. And he used to sell, he used to

–

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Trade.

A: – trade. Sell to the Germans, you know, the Germans used to buy there, and she was bringing him – I don't know what she was doing with the military, but she was his supplier, and – and he fall in love with her, he – she was such a beautiful girl. Short girl, good looking Romanian, you know, like – she looked like a Gypsy, you know, beautiful. And he fall in love with her. And I saw, it was a white life. We used to go o-on the boat each night, and there was music on the boats, Irish music, you know, and that. Was crazy, you know, meet girls. And then I says, well, thi-this is not a life. Wha-What – what I'm gonna do here? I don't want to be German, you know? I could marry a German girl, but my mother always told me, you just marry Jewish. So I – I keep her word. So, finally, I – I – I got one Polish German girl there, got involved, **Maria Novak**. And she want to marry me, but I told her, I – I promise my mother, that's – that's it. And I decided, I says, I find out that I have a – a cousin in **Paris**, something. I find out he is not – he is maybe the third or fourth line. So I says to my brother, you know something **Rick**, I'm gonna go – go to **France**. So I went – I forgot the city what I went, and I hire a smuggler, not myself, but it was a couple guys there. And – and he says overnight we gonna go, I pay him some money. I got some money left, I give him like hundred dollars, you know, and I says – and he took me to the city, I me – took to a forest, he took me to **Strasburg**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

German city, German friend city **Strasbourg**. He says to me, you know, I not can go far with you because if I get arrested, they gonna put me in jail for years, because I'm a smuggler. So, he says, when you go to s – when you come to **Strasbourg** – he led us by the – not far from the – from the – from the station, you know? He says, the station is over there. You walk out, and he give us – he – he give us French money, you know? **France** – **France** money. He says, you walk out to the – when you buy the ticket, you just say **Paris**. Not – nothing more. Don't talk too much, he says. So, I went over there and was another guy and I went there, I says, **Paris**. The guy give me a ticket and the train came and I saw, go to **Paris**, and I went on the train. I went – I went on the train and I line up in **Paris**, and I line up in a station they call **Gardelis**(ph), where I lived with my wife, not far away you know, from this station. And – and I go down for the train, I says, wa – can't speak French, what the hell I'm gonna do here? And finally there was, over there I remember now, there was some people coming, Jewish people what they look for refugees, you know? He came up to me, he says – I says yeah – he just – don't talk too much, he says. He speak to me in Yiddish, he says, I take you to a – to a place in **Paris**, I can't remember the name, he was a French millionaire, after the war. He was before the war, is like here **Rockefeller**.

**Q: Rothschild?**

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Huh?

Q: **Rothschild**? Was it the **Rothschilds**?

A: Oh, yeah, **Rothschild**!

Q: **Rothschild**, mm-hm, yeah.

A: **Rothschild**, not **Rothschild**, now you got it.

Q: Yeah.

A: He took me to his house. He gi – he – he – not to his house, he got the hotel, a place where the people, not Jewish now, anybody can be there as long as he wants.

**Rothschild**, you were right, you were right. And he took me there and I got food and I got sleep there. And I says, how I'm gonna get again to this – mine cousin there? And mine – mine second father, he used to belong to a socialist organization they call the **Bund**. You know what this is, the **Bund**?

Q: But explain. Tell me what it is.

A: This is like a socialist organization, you know. It's like the left here.

Q: Mm-hm, okay.

A: We have the democrats, more, more, more to the left. They was more to communism than socialist. So they came over there to this hotel and they was looking for – for **Bunds**, for the –

Q: For members, people –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Members. So I says yeah, I used to have a stepfather, he belonged to the **Bund partai(ph)**. And there was in **New York** a big **Bund partai(ph)** organization. I don't know if they exist today. Was a big organization. They was taking these people from **Germany**, they – they could send visa and bring him over, they got the power that time. So he says, you know something? I know the – a guy, I bought a coat from him, his name is **Zagorski(ph)**, oh yeah, **Zagorski(ph)** he says, I think he is a cousin to my father, his father was something. They came from the **Mondscheins**. So, we took the – we took a cab, and he took me up to this – to mine cousin in **Paris**. And I came up, and he got a – a factory already going. He was manufacturing coats. **Gabardine** coats was the style in **Paris**.

Q: So he also was a tailor?

A: He was a tailor, he was a – he was – he was coming from **Germany**, so he was already – he knew, and he – and you – he used to have a German wife, he was married to a German wife. And they escape – they went away from – from **Germany** to **Paris** before **Hitler** took him to the – you know where –

Q: Right.

A: **Hitler** prosecute the wives, even, you know.

Q: That's right.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: So she and when the French got into **Paris**, he – he got this place before the war. So what she do, she took him, and she save him in **Vichy**. You know what **Vichy** was?

Q: Tell me.

A: **Vichy** was when the German went into **France**, they split – they got – they got the – they took a French minister, prime minister, **Lavelle**, and he was a fascist. And they told him, you gonna be **Vichy**, this is **Kotazire**(ph). This gonna be French territory, and we gonna take **Paris** all the time, you know, that – that's – they made the deal. So she – she got the power. She took him to **Vichy**, they call, and she was hiding po – the war, th-they – because they – when the German came in to **France** they took all the – all the Jews to the – to the camp. So after the liberation, she told him here, you got a place to work, you got all the machine and fabric, and he start to work. And he need people to work, so when I came he says okay, I'll be – I get you a job. And you gonna eat – you gonna have food. So I got a job already, and I got food to eat, and he give me a place to live in – on the fourth floor, a little place, I slept there. And then I met my cousins there. Cousins from the third line, what they – there's – there's one alive, and two alive in **Paris**, still live. The others die a few year ago. So I was there, and so I – I couldn't speak French, so you know, then I



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

have to go – then they took me to the police station, you know. Over there, when you live in a place –

Q: You have to be registered.

A: – you have to register.

Q: That's right.

A: Then you move from that place, you have to dimit – register.

Q: I – yeah, that's right.

A: Then I have to go to the **prefecture de police**, get a paper. So they went with me, and I declare I'm political asylum. I'm a refugee from **Poland**, **Poland** used to be communist, so they accept me as a refugee, they give me a paper and I have to be – each year I have to go and –

Q: Right.

A: – pay – prolong the paper. So then he – he got very busy, you know, and he move to another place, a bigger place. And I told him, you know, he give me something there what I didn't like the work, you know, that cutting. He says, okay, I – little by little I'm going to advance you in – so, he was a very experienced man, you know, he got a system what he could – he manufactures clothes. And he didn't want anybody to see what he's doing, you know, he – he picked up – so I – I was standing next – I was helping him. If somebody needs something, I was giving to

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

them. I took the clothes from here, I put it here. I put for the presser the clothes, and that, you know, he got me in little by little. I was there for five months, five or six months. I says, what the hell, this is not the life for me, you know, he – I was making money, I could live just three days, because I have to pay for the food, that we used to have a German cook, **Esther**, that she used to cook for everybody, she used to come every day, cook up and go home, you know. So I have to pay for the food. And he was nice to me, he took me out. Sunday we used to go to **Fountabloom**(ph) in **Paris**. We used to go to [indecipherable] places, you know, with the train. We didn't got a car there, and – but I see, and I start to learn his tricks. And I couldn't speak good French, but the French ladies, they always – they say always, do you speak French? Whatever you do, you gonna learn if you speak. Don't speak Yiddish, they say. So I learn a little bit, you know, from the ge – from the ladies there, was nice French ladies. And I learn his trick, and one day – and one day is a place where all that manufacture come together Sunday, you know, they talk about how much – how much money they make and – where's my? Oh yeah. And what they manufacture you know, and things. They – they talk about how much money they make and how many pieces they make a week. And I was jealous to listen to this [indecipherable] thing. And then – then was a guy there, a man I met. And he – he used to work for – for this **Albert**, his name is. My cousin.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: What was your cousin's last name?

A: La – **Zagorski**(ph).

Q: **Zagorski**(ph), okay, mm-hm. **Albert Zagorski**.

A: **Albert Zagorski**(ph). He – he die, he was 101 years old.

Q: Oh my God.

A: He die last year. And I says – he so – and – and his name was **Chamelan**(ph) he find out that I work for **Albert**. Dis – he says to me, do you know this, to do what he's doing? How to design the collars and the lapels? I says, I know how. So I went, I – I stole the forms, you know, he didn't know that. I stole a couple forms, you know, from single breasted, double breasted. And – and – and I went to this guy, and he got a big factory, like I got a picture here someplace with the people what I work there. You know, the album is there, on **Chamelan**(ph). And there was a lot of – like 30 people working, and he made me for the foreman. He says, you are in charge of these people. And when comes Friday, I bring you the money and you pay out – over there is not like here, you – that time. Checks, you know, we got cash. We collect checks from the –

Q: Right.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: – from the manufact – where we work for them, and – and each time came that the amount of money, and I pay off for them, he says take care – he says, you know, I'm gonna give you right away 30,000 dollars. And by **Albert** I make like 10,000.

Q: Wow.

A: So he says – so I see I got a guy, you know, he would – and he likes me. I work for him three weeks, he went and bought me a diamond ring. I work another few month, another diamond ring. And I brought the rings here, I give it one to my son and one to the other one, you know. He was treating me well, he says he likes me. He took me out for dinners, you know. His wife was German, not Jewish but German, but she was a nice lady. And I work for this guy, and I was doing very well for him, you know. He likes to play horses. He wake up in the morning, he went to a café, he play horses, he loves money. Monday he come, **Jack – Janek** he called me, **Janek**, give me some money. Borrow me some money. So I always give him – and I – and I didn't keep French money, you know, French money wasn't too good, so I went Sunday, I went on the **Pletzl**. **Pletzl** is in **France** like **Fairfax**.

Q: Okay.

A: There was Jewish smugglers. I took the French money and I bought dollars for that. I give 400 francs, I got like a hundred dollars for that. So I always – he says, you – he says Monday bring me a hundred dollars. So he – he played the –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Saturday, Sunday he played horses, he went special place where he got the name even **France**, a famous place. And he lost the money over there, I always give him hundred dollars and Friday he give me back. And I – he was nice to me and I work, I make money, and he order me suits. You know, over there you went to a tailor, th – wasn't like here you go to –

Q: Right.

A: – to **Bullock's** or someplace, buy a suit. Custom made. Tailor came to measure mo – each fitting, you know, he came to my – to his shop to make measurement me, you know, he – he was nice to me, very fine guy, you know.

Q: But was your cousin **Albert** not happy when you left?

A: Yeah, oh, he wasn't happy, he was very upset. He – matter of fact, he didn't want to – want to come for my wedding. I was begging him to come for my wedding, you know. Finally he came. And I was there, and then finally – finally I says, I got – I got my cousin, another one what the – in **Paris** now. His name is **Mendek**(ph), he work for **Albert**. And he got married. And he didn't make money by **Albert** because he gave him so much to do, you know? When he finish, has to go home, you know, he was – the work was, each one got separate things to do. So he says to me, **Janek**, he says, you know, I-I'm getting married, I need some money. I says, yeah, you come up to my place, and I get you work as much you

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

want, he says. I give you lot of work, not one thing, lot of things. So he came up, he left **Albert**, he came up and I give him work. He was making good money. And then he learn again, he says – one day he comes, he says, you know **Janek**, I'm going for myself, he says. There was – that time was a tailor was better than a doctor. That time in **France** the doctors didn't make any money. And the one was manufacturing **schmattas**, they call – you know, the **schmattas**, they was making money, you know, we – we live, you know. When I went out with my wife eating in a restaurant, I give a tip more than the mo – the food was worth it. She was complaining always, you know. And – and then I – he went on his own, and then I got jealous of him, and I went on my own too.

Q: No kidding.

A: I went on my own, and I took his brother, what he give me the first food in **Chzanów. Schnitzer(ph), Shimily(ph) Schnitzer(ph)**.

Q: That's right.

A: I took him for my partner. He couldn't speak French, you know, he was very bad in speaking. And I went and I rented a boat at a place in **Paris**. No, first I rented a place by a lady – you – you ever was in **Paris**?

Q: Yeah, once or twice.

A: You was in the **Follies Bergere**?

Q: Oh.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah?

Q: I mean, not – I know of it, I've not been there, no.

A: Oh, you wasn't?

Q: No.

A: In this street I rented a place on the third floor where the **Follies Bergere** is.

Q: Wow.

A: Really shady call. And I rented the place by a lady and – and she told me oh, she can work for me. I says, yeah, you can do. So I pay rent there for her and I start to work, and I got so much work that all the employees, they work, they give it the – this – my boss, the work, they give it to me, because he couldn't produce the same thing what I did over there. They didn't like the work. So they send me the work, and I – so I says, this place is too small. So I went, I rented another place, **Richard Adain**(ph), **39**, and I rented there and I put my machine, I start to work and I got like 16 employees, you know.

Q: What year was this?

A: In **Paris**.

Q: Yeah, what year was this?

A: In **Paris** this was '57. This is maybe in – in – in the 50s or something like that.

Q: Were you married by then?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: No, I was married '57. I was single that time.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: And I rent a place, and I knew what to do, and I got the – all the – I was – I was getting work from people what they got stores. They give me the fabric and I manufacture for them, you know. They pay me for each thing and I got people from **Spain**, Spanish people and I got Moroccan people, they're **[indecipherable]** in French there, then I work, manufacture there. And I was doing pretty good you know, with nothing.

Q: That's right.

A: When I went out with my wife to the restaurant, when was a bill to pay 200 **franc**, I give the waiter 200. You know, because the money wasn't – you know, was keeping the money in the pocket. My wife was complaining, hey, you're losing your money always. You know, I keep the money, I didn't put in the bank like here, you know, it wasn't organized. So, I was working myself, and then I was going on with somebody from another city. I was eating in a restaurant they call **Rose**, like my wife. **Rosie**. In **Paris** you go to the restaurant twice a day.

Q: Yeah. What a life.

A: I'm going for lunch, and I go in the evening for dinner. So she knows always when I'm coming and I got my place there and I walked – eat there, and she knows,



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

oh Janek is coming, she make me special food, not like here. Here you go, you got always the same menu, you know? Over there she cooked something for that. And then I met my wife before the war by our neighbors, when she was very young. Accidentally. You know, she is my neighbor and I met her there, and – and so, I know her. And then, after the war, I didn't got – you know, after the war I didn't – I didn't got in there. When I was liberated, and I know she was living in **Sosnowice**. So one day, when I f – was feeling good, I took the train co – **Sosnowice**, where she lives there. And I know that she got a rich family what she – they used to have a store on mar – **Monjaewska**(ph) Street. This I didn't ga – I should get in this before – before I met my wife. So I went there, and I was going with my – I got hair like – like now the hippies go wa – hair like that, you know. I was pray to lose her because my hairs was standing up like that, you know. And so I says, I'm gonna go to this street and see what's going on over there. And I go. She wasn't a big lady, she was a little lady, she was like five – how ol – tall was Mom? She was a short lady, you know. And – and I walk around there and I see her in this picture there you know in back. I say this – there's **Ruja**(ph) there, you know? There she is in the store, and he-her cousins, she got two cousins what they was – they wa – they wasn't in camp, they was hiding out, you know? The Gentile people hide them out the whole war, though they got always stores there, the merchandise,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

when they got out from the hiding, they went to the store, they were selling things, you know. And when she came to **Sosnowice**, she came to them. And – and I – I walk around the street and I see she is selling things. So I go in, I says, what – what are you doing here? And I talked to her, she says, you know something? I have a boyfriend, she tells me. I says, oh, okay. So I spent two days over there in they apartment, they got their own apartment, they're cousins. And what – what – they – they came later to **Paris**, these cousins, you know. And I spend there and – and I says okay, I'm going home, back to **Chzanów**. And I wait for my brother, he's gonna come. And this hap – and that – in **Paris** when I got my factory there, the new one, I was eating in the restaurant, there was a guy coming from another city, **Rouen**. And he – and I was – nice dress, you know, over there. I wasn't dress jeans or something. Every day I was wearing a tie, nice shirt, a beautiful suit, tailored to me. And I was going to work like that, at work was like that. And the guy says, you know, something, I – I like you [**indecipherable**]. You not good looking, but you l – you okay, he says. So he says, you know something, I got a niece for – for me, what I want you to meet. Ah, I says, I'm not interested. She lives in **Rouen**. It's – it's – it's from **Paris** to go **Rouen** is like two hours to go. And he was coming buy clothes in the city and go back to his store, you know, they buy merchandise, and so he – he was nudging me every day, every Monday he used to come to **Paris** and

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

buy. He says, ah, one day. I says, I'm gonna take the train there next Sunday. And I – and I took the train to **Rouen**, they was waiting for me there, and there was two girls there. And one was a little one and one was a tall one. Oh, I says, this one I like it. No, he says, this one is taking, he says. This the one what you – so, introduce me to her and I spend a day, and – and they say if I marry you I buy you – in – in **Europe** they buy you apartment, furnitures, you know, old-fashioned things, and – and I didn't know, I – I want to get marry you know, I was already 29 years old, what I'm gonna fool around here. And when I was in the shop, it was like six o'clock, I was ready to go and eat. Then I get a phone call, who is it? My – my wife, she called.

Q: This is her picture?

A: Yeah.

Q: Let's hold it up.

A: She calls me and she says, oh I'm here by my cousins. You want to come to see me? I says, sure, I come. I – I left everything, I took a cab, and – and I drove to the street where she is, and there she is.

Q: Hold it up like this. And that's what she looked like then?

A: She looks nicer, the other picture's nicer. But she looks like that, you know. And she was – she was 19 years old.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Wow.

A: And I says – and she live in **Sweden**. After the liberation she went to **Sweden**, and I didn't know that. Yeah, that's the way she looked later.

Q: Beautiful, beautiful.

A: And I was serious about, I says okay, I says, I'm gonna – I'm gonna come to visit you. She stayed by a cousin what she used to work in **Poland**, you know. Her name is **Pavil(ph) Mongill(ph)**. And she was – she came for a visit to him, and so I was coming each night to her, you know, take her out. One night I went, I took her to **Follies Bergere**, I want to – I want to impress. Then I – then I took her to **Casino de Paris**, I took her to – to **Mon Cadeau**, to **Operette(ph)**. I took her to the opera. And then I took her – one night I took her to – to **Lido de Paris**, and I made a picture over there with her. And she liked this kind, you know. She liked it, but she wasn't sure. She says that, I don't know. She do – she was with the sister there, and she told me, I don't want to be a maid by my sister. Her sister got a son, and her sister was a sewing lady, she was making dressing for customers. And she – she didn't want to stay with the sister and be her maid. So I says, look, situations like that, apartments here is – that time it was very hard to get a place where to live, you know, it was terrible. I says, if you want to marry me, I'm – I'm ready, you know. And she call her brother, he says, oh don't marry this **Jack** – this **Janek**, he's – he

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

is from **Chzanów**, he is – he is no good, you know, he – the – the name from the city wasn't good, you know. And come back to stu – to **Malma**(ph). And she said no, I says, I like **Paris**. She likes it, she right away – she was there for four – four months, she start to speak French. She didn't went to school, but she right away adopt the language and she speak English. She went to [indecipherable] they speak English over there, and she liked it. I went and I bought shoes, right away, nice shoes and I bought her a purse. And I didn't know – I didn't tell her that I'm gonna marry her, you know? Just be nice to her, cause money wasn't – wasn't important money, because we was making money. There's no question about. And – and then, after – after a few months, she was [indecipherable] the cousin, she says well, you know, let's get marry. I says okay, we gonna get marry. So I says, where we gonna get marry? I says, you know, we gonna get married by **Rosie's** [indecipherable] where I used to eat for years there. She's gonna make good – good food for us, we gonna make a little [indecipherable] there. And she went to the city hall and she arrange all the papers. She did, you know, all the papers and – and I got a rabbi, what we used to hang out together. He was from **Chzanów**, his name was **Bacon**. We used to have a place in **Paris** in a restaurant, each night we used to meet somewhere in the place. We used to drink beer, talk about politic and things. There was a few friends there. Each night we didn't got what to do after work, we came,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

we got one restaurant on **Bonne Nouvelle** Boulevard, and we meet there, and we got our table, and – and the **hazan** says, you know, I get – I'm gonna marry you. I says, fine. So we – we got the wedding and we got the **[indecipherable]**. And her brother came from **Malma(ph)**, **Jacoby(ph)**, still told her, don't marry him, come back to **Sweden**. And she got a boyfriend in **Sweden**, you know. She got a boyfriend in **Sweden**. So, finally she likes this time what I got, I was nice dress, and she liked it, you know. I was going each week to the barber, you know, to make me my hair, and make me the manicure, and the pedicure. You know, it wasn't – it wasn't expensive that time, you know, it was cheap. And I was always nice dress, and always smell nice, you know, perfume. I – I – I try to – to feel a – you know, that I – I'm something, you know, that – and she liked that. And we decided we got married, but the only problem was that I didn't got a good place where to live, you know. She was always complaining about my place, you know. Always, yeah, and I marry and a year later he came, **Henry**.

Q: Mm-hm. I think let's hold these off until the end.

A: He came up, you know, and we – I used to live in a place, he was maybe 300 years old, from **Napoleon's** time. And I used to have the shop over there and I used to have mine – and she bought furnitures and everything, you know. And – and I was on my shop. I was making money with my partner. And finally we decided –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

there was some – something go on that she didn't like it, you know, to live where a place where the work is, you know? So we says, look, you want to go, I don't care for the – for the place. Or we gonna go to **Sweden**, or we gonna go to **America**.

Wherever you want to go. So she said, you know, I got a friend in – in **Malma**, his name is **Ranier**, and she's a cousin to **Max Factor**.

Q: The cosmetic person?

A: Cosmetic, yeah. You know, the **Factors**, they are Polish. The brothers, they came from **Poland**. They came from **Lodz**. And she's a cousin from the **Factors**, and I gonna make you a affidavit and you come to **Los Angeles**. So he made the affidavit, he send the affidavit and she start to work to get to the **United States**. She got the affidavit in her name, but I was entitled to be with her, because I was married to her, and she – and she organize the papers, everything. Went through the doctors. And I told my partner, you know, I'm leaving. I don't want to be any more here. My wife, she du – she didn't like the place and that, and that time, you couldn't get a nice place, you have to have a lot of money to buy the place.

Q: That's right.

A: You have to have a few million dollars and I didn't got this money. So she made the papers, and in '57, in December, she got pregnant with the second – with my youngest son. And he was three years old, **Henry**. And everybody from the family

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

says, just don't go that time, she's pregnant, it's not gonna be good. And we gonna take a ship, we didn't want to fly. So we took the **United States** ship, **Cherbourg**. And he was crying all the time he want to go home, you know. And we took the ship, and – and we came to the **States**, and the ship was in trouble on the way. Was so – was such a storm that the ship has to stop in the middle on the **Atlantic** and – and rest til we continue to **New York** and – and – and finally we came to **New York**, we land up in – oh yeah, my brother lu – left it from the **Germany** to – to **United States** there, you know, he left and so we line up in **New York**, when he told me, no, maybe stay – stay here. I belong to a union and – and maybe you get a job, but I says, I don't know, I – I – I'm not – my assistant **[indecipherable]** friends, it's not going to be good in the **States**, you know. I was worry about that I not going to be able to – to do this kind of work here, you know, they – here they are crazy, they go to the factory, you have to really know what you're doing, you know? So I stay eight days and I says, you know, I'm gonna fly to **Los Angeles** to the **[indecipherable]** the one who give me **David David**. So we came to **Los Angeles** and he was waiting for us, and – and took us to a house and we stayed there – we stayed there for eight days and then we rented a place in **Los Angeles**, two bedroom and – and I didn't got a job and I couldn't speak English and I couldn't say a word. So finally I got a neighbor. We moved in, he was a French



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

guy. He used to work in **Los Angeles** in a French restaurant. He says to me, you know something? I know a guy from – from **Paris** who is a manufacturer here. He is a – he is a chap who works for – for **Robinson** or **May Company**, he makes things. Maybe he's gonna hire you. So he went, oh yeah, bring him in. I come in, I know this guy from **Paris**.

Q: No.

A: I know we used to go together each Sunday on football games, to see football. And he's married, his name was **Rosenberg**, you know. So I was thinking he was – but he was nice to me, he used me, you know. Oh, he told me, you're in **America**, you know. You have to know how to sew, you have to be fast. And – and I was in a different – different trend. **France** is different, and I hang out a little bit with him, and – and then my – my wife, she met here people what she was in the camp with them. A lady, her name was **Small**. And we met her, you know, when we came we didn't know anybody know, but when they find out we are here, one fa – they all came to our house and that, and so – they work in the motion pictures, this lady. She says, you know something? I'm gonna try to – they worked, husband and wife they work in the motion pictures, and **[indecipherable]** maybe we gonna try to get you in there, you know? Was very hard because was a union, you know. The union have to accept that. But finally they – they talked me in, you know, and the boss give me

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

like oh, two days work and says, well, the union's gonna send you tomorrow to **Universal** for a couple days. You gonna work in **Columbia** a few days, you know. I didn't got a steady job. But I learn.

Q: Were you happy when you came here?

A: Yeah, I was happy, I learn – I learn lot of things, how to work and what to make, and I learning about [indecipherable] I used to – I went in and I worked for **Judy Garland**, she got a **TV** show here. Not myself, but I work for somebody who was in charge – she used to have a show each week, **Judy Garland** in **CBS**.

Q: Yeah.

A: So he helped me out. He was a Romanian guy, he was not a Jewish guy, Romanian. He was speaking Jewish too. He was in the German army, you know. But I ignored that, you know, he give me a job, I didn't care, you know and – and I broke into this system. I – I learn a lot of things what I would learn in my life, you know. How to do things, uniforms and – and – and lot of – I – I work in the 80 days around the world for – for – for – for – what's his name, he got killed in the plane? **Elizabeth Taylor's** husband there.

Q: Oh, **Mike Todd**.

A: **Mike Todd**, I work on his pictures, I – I work for – for what's his name? We met – we met on the wedding [indecipherable] **Charle Heston**. I got – oh yeah,

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

this [indecipherable] **Sammy David – David David**, he has a daughter here, **Mary**, she's like our daughter. And she got married here and she – she work for a company where they take care for the actors. So we went for the wedding and here is **Charle Heston**. And the comedian was there. And I went up to **Charle Heston**, I says, hi, how are you? I work for wes – oh, Western Costume, I says oh – he says all of my pictures are made in Western Costume, because they are union. So, you know, I got – learn these things, this trade and now I can do anything.

Q: You know, for many peop –

Q2: Can I change the card on the camera?

Q: Okay, sure.

**End of File Two**

**Beginning File Three**

Q: So, it sounds to me that a lot of people when they come from **Europe** –

A: Oh, this is –

Q: – and they come to **L.A.**, it's like two different worlds and they can't adjust.

A: Oh yeah, I couldn't speak English, I couldn't drive, you know. I have to learn how to drive, and I didn't know the streets and that. It was a hard time in the beginning for me, you know, it was tough.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: I got two kids, you know, and it was tough, you know? But my wife, she was so good. When we was here not even a year, she bought a house. I just found the other day the – the agreement from the house. We bought the house for 16,000 dollars.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: In **Los Angeles**. **Dancemeer(ph)**, **Pico** and **Dancemeer(ph)**. And we lived there a year and then she says, you know something? We gonna buy a bigger place. And she bought eight units for this money. She traded in. Oh, she was off – she was something. In business she was number one. She – she knew how to do it. She was so good, and – so, we move into our – to our eight units we rented out, and – and she's doing all the time trading and buy that and do that and she was terrific, you know, she's –

Q: How many years were you married?

A: 59 years.

Q: That's a lot.

A: It would be 60 years December 21<sup>st</sup>, and she died December six.

Q: 2012? Yeah? Two –

A: December sixth she died.

Q: Last year?

A: Yeah, last year, last year.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Last year.

A: It's gonna be – it's two months already. It's gonna be three months the sixth – sixth of March.

Q: I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. It's a life partner.

A: She was something.

Q: Yeah. Did you ever go back to **Poland**?

A: No, I never want to go back. He wants me to go back.

Q: But you have nothing to pull you.

A: No, no desire, you know. The – I think the people what I know, they're not alive any more.

Q: Right.

A: One – one of my friend, I find out when I was in **Poland**, the sherm – the Germans shot him. Was a young guy mine age. He was shot when he was a **kazak(ph)**, he was maybe 18 years old, the Germans shot him. And one met – we met him one, his brother lives, but I don't know he's alive. Much older that I am. And his mother's not alive. And the generation what I was, I don't think the – it's a new generation. You know, her brother goes to **Poland** each three mo – each year.

Q: From **Sweden**?

A: Yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Yeah?

A: He has Polish friends, what they come they – they pick him up in **Kraków** on the airport, and they take him to **Chzanów**(ph), and he stays with them for three months. He pays them money and they feed him and that, and – yeah, he goes.

Q: But you don't have that feeling?

A: No, no, not – not really. I – I don't have anybody there. The only I have is my father there, the grave. What – what – when I came to – after the war I came there, and me, my brother, we bought a new –

Q: Gravestone?

A: Gravestone. But over there the gravestone, they is not like here, the –

Q: A monument stone, yeah.

A: A monument, yeah, we bought a new – and I got some pictures here from the gravestone what I made with my brother there. And we le – I got my grandmother. I got my grandfather there.

Q: To me it sounds like you've had such a varied life, with so many different parts to it, and so much – you know, a – a childhood in a smaller Polish city, the war and the Holocaust and –

A: Oh yeah.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: – surviving it. A post-war year where you build up your own business from nothing.

A: Oh no ye – but I – gen – give me – hand me this book over there, I – this is in Hebrew, but I got in – in English a book, and I can find it.

Q: About building up a business in **France** in the post-war years –

A: Yeah, I know that –

Q: – and then re-making a life here.

A: But here in **America**, I learn a lot of things, how to do things, you know, you learn ve – no, no, not here. On the top. Below. Yeah, this – this yellow.

Q: Yeah.

A: You learn a lot of things. I would never learn in **France** this kind of thing. I learn how to do for ladies' things, for men's. I –

Q: So did it make the Holocaust, those terrible war years, did it make that experience kind of go in the back of your life, or has it been something that you live with every day?

A: No, no, I don't – I try to forget, you know. The only thing now is I live wi – for my wife. Every day I think about this.

Q: Of course.

A: I don't think about the Holocaust any more, you know.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Were there years that you did?

A: What was that?

Q: Were there – was there a time when you did think about it all the time?

A: In the beginning I did, but I – I forgot that, you know. I have no grudge against the German new generation. They didn't know what's going on, you know, and – and I met lot of Germans, they was nice to me, you know? I got lot of – like this **[indecipherable]** I work for him.

Q: That's right.

A: His wife, they was nice to me. And I met lot of – lot of Germans what I – we got along when I lived in **Germany**, you know. Used to play soccer with them.

Q: But you know, so many people who went through such things, when peace came, and when life returned to normal, couldn't go back to normal because of everything they had been through.

A: Yeah, I tried to forget, you know, I try – I don't think about any more. I just remind my son a lot of things you know. He likes to hear a lot of things what I – but, you know –

Q: Okay.

A: I'm 90 years old.



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Doesn't seem that way. Tell me, what is this book that you wanted to show me?

This is –

A: This book was written from a – from a – from a – from a guy from **Chzanów**, he was down in **Israel**.

Q: From **Chzanów**, uh-huh. And it's written in – in Yiddish or in –

A: In Yiddish na – but I – I have in English here too.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: I have in English, but I – I look for that, I can't find. I have it someplace.

Q: And so you see people –

A: You see, that's the way – that's the way we look when we're liberated, you see?

I look like that, but not – this is not my picture, you know.

Q: No. But yes – yes. Barely, barely there. Barely there.

A: Yeah. That's the way I – they look.

Q: Well, I –

A: This I – everything is from mine, the people here.

Q: I think – is there anything else you would like to add to our interview?

A: What you like me add?

Q: You've told us so much.

A: No, okay, so –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: You know, but it's – if there's something that you think –

A: The only thing, if my wife would live, would be the – would be the best thing.

Q: Yeah.

Q2: But what – what message do you have for future generations?

A: I think fu – I – I am telling to my granddaughter she should get books and learn about what the past is, you know, and how it is.

Q: Because you know, see, many people – it – it – it's clear that you moved on from the past.

A: Oh yeah, I moved on from the past, yeah.

Q: But you want them to know about it?

A: Yeah, I know, I – I tell my granddaughter a lot of – lot of things, you know, but I don't think the young people they're interested in that.

Q: Some are. Some are, but –

A: Depends.

Q: Yeah. The – but the question I have is, how do you manage both moving on from it, and knowing about it? Why is it important to know about?

A: I think they should know is – is – is not just for Jews, but any gen-generation.

What going on now, you know, people, you know, they should realize what's going on, to not do things like that, you know, and –

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Did you lose something that you never were as able to get back from – from that experience?

A: Well, the family I can get back, you know. Used to have a big – big family from my mother's side, and my father's side. From my father's side, nobody's – I got from my father's brother, there was family of five there. **Ithzak**(ph) he got – he got the – in **Marchstad**(ph) they were in the way, but his two daughters with the two grandchildren and his wife, they just – nobody – and I always look for them, you know, when I – when I went to a camp, you know, I could look around, you know, somebody's there, they got lists of people. But I never could find them, because they went, I think, straight to **Auschwitz**, I think.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: That's the reason you can't find them. And mine – mine – my wife's mother, she told me she saw her the last time when the German took her, you know. They clean up the city, they took her, she saw her in a German military truck. They took her up, and she said – wave her hands to her. That's it, the last time she saw her.

Q: L-Last time she saw your mother?

A: Her mother.

Q: Her mother, her mother.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: And her sister, the older sister, oh you showed the pictures from the older sister? She got married in the war. It was a silly idea, you know? They was – they was saying, the – the Jewish Committee'd say, if you are married, you not going to go to – to the camp. So she got married and she got pregnant. And she went to **Auschwitz** with the pregnancy. See, the Germans, they didn't want to have generation coming.

Q: Yeah.

A: And she lost one, two, three sisters. She survive and her older sister **Manya**(ph) in **Sweden**, and the brother. They survive, and the other three didn't survive. There were six of them. And her father got lucky, he died before the war, in a heart attack.

Q: Well, I'd like to – I'd like to then end the formal part of the interview. Thank you very much Mr. **Mondschein** –

A: Okay, you – you're welcome, you're welcome.

Q: – for talking to us today.

A: You're welcome.

Q: I appreciate it.

A: You're welcome.

Q: I appreciate it very much. And now, maybe we will pan through some of the pictures. Maybe we'll put them on the – the table, however it's easiest for you, and – and we can – and maybe Mr. – **[break]** Tell us, what is this picture about?

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: This is in the war.

Q: Okay, and who is this?

A: This is her – her o – this is her older sister.

Q: This is your wife's older sister?

A: Yeah.

Q: And your wife's name was **Rose**? Is th –

A: My wife was **Rose. Rose.**

Q: **Rose.** And her older sister was?

A: **Esther Haile**(ph).

Q: **Esther Haile**(ph).

A: **Esther Haile**(ph), two names.

Q: Okay.

A: And she was here.

Q: That's **Rose**?

A: **Rose**, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: This in the wartime.

Q: Yeah, yes. Think – is that okay?

Q2: That's fine.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Okay. And that's in **Poland**.

A: That's in **Poland**. It's all – this was in **Sosnowice** where they – where they live.

Q: Yeah.

A: Was done before – before they – they clean up the whole – the whole –

Q: So let's take – all right, then that. **[technical directions]** And so this is – looks like you and – and your wife?

A: Where's that? Oh, this in **Lido de Paris**, when I met her.

Q: Okay, hold it up straight.

A: May – m-may – maybe the first week or two weeks –

Q: Oh, really?

A: – I took her to **Lido de Paris**, we was eating. And over there you eat, and a show and dance.

Q: When you were trying to impress her?

A: Yeah, I tried to impress her, you know.

Q: I think you succeeded.

A: Yeah, I succeed. It's a shame that she don't survive more.

Q: I know.

A: Oh, this is – this is –

Q: Your wedding.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Our wedding pictures.

Q: It's beautiful.

A: Yeah, it was a-across – across from the re-restaurant where we met. Used to be a photographer, [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah. And what – what year – what's the date of your marriage?

A: The 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

Q: 19?

A: 19 – 19 –

Q: '52, was that it?

A: '52, yeah.

Q: 1952, okay.

A: This is – this is her cousin, where she came to **Paris, Parvil(ph)**. Oh you don't have the picture there.

Q: No.

A: Yeah, this is –

Q: This is your wedding picture with a lot of people in it.

A: Yeah, this is her. She has her two cousins here. These two cousins, they call [indecipherable] they came to **Paris**, and she came to them. And this is mine – mine cousin and – and **Eva(ph)**, they're still in **Paris** there. **Mondschein**.

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

Q: Uh-huh, **Mondschein**. The one – uh-huh, and the **Zagorski(ph)**, is he there?

A: No, **Zagorski(ph)** is not on the picture. But I have lot of pictures he send me, **Zagorski(ph)**.

Q: Did he ever forgive you?

A: Oh yeah, he was friend there. And this is the – the – the **Parvil(ph)**, his daughter, and we don't know where she – she lives in **Paris**, she got married, she's divorced. And this is my cousin – this is **Zagorski's** sister.

Q: Uh-huh. Where your finger is there, yeah, I see.

A: She die – she die like four years ago. They operate open heart surgery in **France** and she die on the table. **Helen** is her name.

Q: This is a lovely picture right here of your wedding.

A: Oh, this is – yeah. Same photographer.

Q: Very, very nice. December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1952. And your wife's maiden name was?

A: **Manovic(ph)**.

Q: **Manovic(ph)**. **Rose Manovic(ph)**.

A: **Rose Manovic(ph)**, she – she used to have a – she was talking about she used to have relatives, and when we came in – in **Florida** and they moved to – to **Uruguay**.

Q: Wow.



**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah. This was her father's something family, but we never met. She was writing to them, but we never met.

Q: Thank you Mr. **Mondschein**. Thank you very much.

A: Okay, all right.

Q: It's been a long day.

A: Yeah, what time is it?

Q: Almost five.

A: Oh, okay. All right. Thank you.

Q: So, we've taken over your house, we've taken o –

A: That's okay, that's okay, no problem.

Q: Okay. This concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview –

A: Yeah, so this gonna go to the – to the Holocaust?

Q: That's right, to the Holocaust Museum. It will be in our archives, and you will get a copy.

A: I – I got a – the paper from **New York** there. I get each month the paper and they say they have a – in April is gonna be some celebration [**indecipherable**]

Q: Yes, that's right. Today, this weekend it's here in **L.A.**

**Interview with Jack Mondschein**  
**February 15, 2013**

A: Yeah, I – you know, there's – I don't go over there, you know, there's not too many left, you know. I just – I just two months ago, my – I got a cousin from my mother's side in **Los Angeles**, she was just in the funeral. Last week they call me, she die, like that. She was on the funeral of my wife and last week I – she was – she got her funeral.

Q: She's gone too. Yeah. Happens. This weeke – they weekend it's in **Los Angeles**, and in April we have it in **Washington**.

A: Yeah, I got the paper there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Do you know the paper what – what I get?

Q: I don't know the paper, but I do know that **[indecipherable]**

A: Toge – together, you know, togetherness, the paper? I get it from the –

**End of File Three**

**Conclusion of Interview**