

Henry Shery

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Abstract

This interview focuses on the prewar life of Henry Shery who was born as Hirsch Gundsher (?) on December 3, 1929 in Lodz, Poland. He had a brother, Jonah (?) four years older, a sister, Devorah (Dora), two years older and a sister, Ella, one year older. Henry's father manufactured children's clothing to sell in stores. In the summer they took a room with a nearby farmer for two weeks. His mother would attend the Jewish Theatre and sing the songs upon arriving home. They lived in an apartment house in a Jewish neighborhood. They were somewhat observant as lit candles Friday night and placed cholent in the nearby bakery's oven to enjoy on the Sabbath. They used horse and buggy and the streetcar for transportation. The family spoke Yiddish and Polish and Henry attended school until the war started when it was closed. He did not enjoy attending Cheder (Hebrew School) after school so often played hooky. His family did not follow the uncle in '34 when he migrated to Palestine as they felt it had nothing to offer. After 3 days of bombing, the Germans surrounded Poland. Their synagogue and its books were burned. Their street became part of the Ghetto and other families moved in with them. Their factory was closed, they all had to wear the Jewish Star and people were hung who spoke against the Capos. Henry was ten years old and, along with the rest of his family, worked in a tailor shop where the uncle was foreman so they got food rations. His parents died and the four children were sent on one of the last trains to Auschwitz where the sisters went to the crematorium and the brothers and uncle were saved for slave labor camps. First they spent two months at the Continental Lumber Company where they were then deemed too weak so sent to a nearby quarry where they were liberated by the Americans and a soldier from Iowa took their photos. The Jewish Brigade from Palestine and with Britain's help got him to Palestine in 1946 where he worked on a kibbutz and then for the Merchant Navy before coming to the US in 1952. He met and married Hannah and they had three children. Henry first worked for a painter, then for a carpenter for ten years. Then he studied orthotic braces and had a store for about thirty years. He did not speak about the Holocaust as felt guilty that he survived but his grandson, Adam, encouraged him to give this interview. Henry attended a Shoah program in Iowa with the soldier who took the photos. A documentary about Henry's final camp is being made by the University of Gainesville with the photos and a journal made by a German School.

Summary

00:00 The following interview will concentrate on prewar Poland. Henry Shery was born as Hirsch Gundsher (?) on December 3, 1929 in Lodz, Poland. His brother, Jonah (?) was four years older and he had a sister, Dvora (Dora), born in 1927 and a sister, Ella, born in 1930. His parents were: Jacob Gunsher and Golda Kahansky Gunsher who was born in

Lodz. They were closer to the mother's family who had a sister in the US who sent photos standing in front of a car. A car was a novelty as there were few cars in Lodz. They used droshkies (horse and buggy) and trolleys for transportation. The photos and letters were destroyed in the Ghetto so he does not know his mother's married name so did not try to find her. His father was in the Russian Army during World War I. He was stationed in Poland and fought against the Austrian Army. He was in the unit which purchased material for uniforms. His mother had two brothers and two sisters. The younger sister, Esther, got married in Poland and had a restaurant, a bar and a salami factory. During the war, she escaped to Russia and joined the Partisans.

05:00 When she returned home, the Russian underground killed her. The oldest uncle, Avram, left in '34 for Palestine. He had three sons and two daughters. The aunt had a grocery store in Lodz and was deported to Auschwitz where she disappeared. They were all red heads. Uncle Leon had a ladies coat store called Kahansky in central Lodz. The Germans confiscated everything in the shop. He lived uptown and when it closed, he was sent to the Ghetto. He hid bolts of cloth at Henry's house but the Germans came to their four-room apartment and found the material hidden behind a chifferrobe. Henry's father manufactured children's clothing to sell in stores. There were six sewing machines and workers. The family was not orthodox like most of the people in Lodz but were religious. They closed their store Friday afternoon and his father went to the barber for a haircut and get his beard shaved.

10:00 The factory was open on Sunday. They had a pressing room. There were less than a dozen workers, both Jews and non-Jews. In the summer, they went to their summer home which was a room they rented from a farmer about an hour away. They took public transportation to get there and his father would visit them on Friday afternoon. The farmer picked him up with his wagon and they spent a couple of weeks with him. They always had fresh sour cream, eggs and milk from the farm. It was a non-Jewish farmer who gave up part of his farm for extra income. Other nearby farmers did the same so they had other children to play with. Lodz was a very big city with the biggest textile industry in Europe. They had a Jewish Day School, a Jewish Gymnasium (high school), a Jewish Hospital and a Jewish Theatre. His mother was an avid theatre goer. She sang the songs upon her return. That is how Henry learned Jewish songs. It was a lively city, pretty with parks and clean with no smokestacks.

15:00 Life was complacent. Henry had everything he needed and he did not want much. They did not have a radio but there was one in the apartment complex which everyone listened to until the Germans confiscated it. They lived in the Jewish section, not in the center of town. He lived on Judustie (Jewish) Street with synagogues on both sides. It was a city street with apartment houses. Each had a courtyard in the center with a caretaker on the premises who closed the gate at night. It was a 3-story apartment house. Carriages stood in front like taxis. Henry never met his mother's father who died before he was born. He

was a horse trader and bought a special type of horses for carriages. They were medium in size. His grandfather had body guards with him as he carried cash when he went to farms for two or three days and returned with horses. His stable was across from their apartment house. There was a deli across the street who sold salami and pastrami. Another store sold dairy products such as cheese and milk and a third store sold groceries in barrels. His mother shopped daily as there was no refrigeration and he went with her to carry the bundles. They lived on the third floor.

- 20:00 The apartment had four rooms: kitchen, parlor and two bedrooms. He slept with his brother, his parents slept in another room and his sisters in another. There was no central heat but there was a tiled heater in the middle of the apartment where wood produced the heat. Each apartment had its own heater. Cooking was separate on a coal stove. They had electricity but no phone. No one in his neighborhood had a car. To see a car was a novelty. Uptown people had a few cars. Everything was delivered by horse and buggy. It was a 20 or 30-minute walk to public school for both Jews and non-Jews. His father's factory was on the ground floor of their apartment house.
- 25:00 His parents rented the apartment. He thinks the next-door neighbor was the owner of the building. He imported smoked fish in wooden crates. He got it fresh and would give some to his mother. He went to Gdansk, the port, to get the fish. The family went to the center of the city by streetcar which was just two houses away. They took it to the cinema where he saw cowboy movies but not on Saturday. His brother and sister went more often than him. His brother was much older so was like an adult. Harry visited his grandmother across the street. She was the widow of the horse trader and remained when the stable closed. Later the uncle bought a modern apartment house uptown, the grandmother's house was sold and she got an apartment uptown. They took a trolley to visit her. She had central heating but no elevator or balcony. His family would keep their food outside to keep it cold as they had no refrigerator. They did not know anything different so thought that was the way life should be. Life was simple. He had friends to play soccer with and there was a park so he missed nothing. His mother lit candles on Friday night and he and his brother went to the bakery, #20 next door. They lived in apartment # 18.
- 30:00 They brought cholent (stew of meat, potatoes, carrots, beans) wrapped up in newspaper with their name on it to place in the oven until they picked it up Saturday after services. The whole neighborhood's pots were there. Therefore, they had a hot meal on Saturday when they could not cook. It was pretty much the same meal every Saturday. After the Sabbath they could go to the deli as all the store reopened. There were no Christian stores on his street. The caretaker was the only Christian. Most of the people were Jewish. There was a convent in the backyard so you could see the nuns from his window. Harry spoke Yiddish at home and learned Polish in school. He heard Polish before he attended school as his parents spoke it. When war started, the Jewish children were not

permitted to attend school. Ghetto was formed and the school was inside the ghetto area. The Polish people were forced out of the area and Jews from many places were brought in to live.

- 35:00 Henry completed three years of schooling before the war. In Elementary School, he mostly learned the A, B, Cs, grammar and how to count and little history. His parents read many different Yiddish newspapers but Henry did not know how to read Yiddish. His father was not close to the children, was reserved and you had to look up to him. He did not speak but you had to show him respect because he is your father. His mother was different as she was close to the children and her nieces and nephews, more a social butterfly. You never spoke against your father. His mother might give him permission to do things as she was more flexible. He would visit his father's workshop to observe as he was too small to use the machines. His brother might have worked there a little.
- 40:00 He was close to his mother. His father was more aloof, not your friend like today. He did not argue with his father. Whatever his father said, was what happened. Henry does not know how his parents met. Later Henry found out his brother was a half-brother as his mother died when he was born so his father remarried and his brother considered her his mother. Henry learned this from a cousin in Israel. It made no difference to him. There was an age difference between the parents. Henry was close to all his siblings. It was a normal family. His father provided the living and his mother ran the home. She attended Jewish plays at the theatre but his father did not usually go. Things rub off on you without knowing as Harry does not know if he learned something from the parents but he would not be here if he did not learn something from them.
- 45:00 He learned from them to have respect for others. Children were treated with respect. His father attended synagogue Friday evening and Saturday morning. He had no problem in school. He played football with others and had no problem until war broke out. He did not feel animosity against him from anybody. Henry had no non-Jewish friends. Henry would play ball with his Hebrew School friends instead of going to school. His grandmother paid the Rabbi to teach him and angry when he did not attend Cheder. Cheder was where you learned Hebrew prayers. There were about four or five boys and the Rabbi was not very nice to them. If the children did not repeat the words after him, they were spanked. Harry attended Cheder after regular school. He preferred playing ball outside. The Rabbi was supposed to be a teacher but he was not compassionate to them.
- 50:00 They did not have political discussions at home. When President Sutsky (?) died in '35, they knew he had passed away and there was mourning. Perhaps his parents discussed politics with the neighbors or between themselves. Hitler came to power in '33 when Henry was four. His uncle, his mother's older brother in '34 decided to go to Palestine but due to the British White Paper, there was no immigration. The uncle sold his

business to his brother and bought an apartment house in Tel Aviv. He got the British government to permit him to migrate with his five children to Palestine. He asked Henry's father to go but he felt there was nothing to do there. Two of the uncle's sons were Zionists and got into Palestine by smuggling themselves in. They asked their parents to come and the aunt decided to join her two sons so sold everything and settled in Palestine. The younger cousin did not want to go and went to the Naval Academy in Italy and became a naval officer in Civitavecchio. He had a British passport. He had three sons and two daughters. They had an inkling what Germany was like. Germany had a red flag that indicated something was brewing. They talked to Henry's father who thought nothing was happening and they had all they needed.

55:00 His father thought there were only sand dunes in Palestine. They would not be able to get in as the British placed an embargo. Henry does not remember discussing Hitler. Politics in the late 30s was in everyone's mind. They thought Germany was going to expand. They had the Polish Army. They thought if Germany invades them, the Polish Army would protect them. In summer '39 the war started when the German airplanes bombed Lodz and the Polish Army disappeared, some going to England. After three days, the Germans surrounded Poland. Suddenly they saw German tanks and trucks in Lodz which is in Central Poland about 100 kilometers from Warsaw. Henry never traveled outside Lodz and the farmhouse before the war.

60:00 He did not think that life would be so destructive. After the planes arrived, the synagogue on their street was burned down. There were bullets all over it and they were ordered to bring all religious books to the courtyard to set them on fire. The books and synagogue burned simultaneously. Next, the Nazis set to create a Ghetto. Henry's family lived on a street inside the Ghetto so they did not have to move. Three or four other families moved into their apartment. It was a revolving door. They enclosed the Ghetto with barbed wire and uniformed German soldiers every certain amount of meters so they could not go out. People from Austria, France and small Polish towns arrived to share their apartment. Some people in the Ghetto were taken to labor camps. They lived in the middle of the Ghetto. The Ghetto was large. A streetcar did not go through the Ghetto. Food was brought in by horse and buggy which were also used to take the dead bodies to the cemetery. His grandmother passed away before the Ghetto was closed, before the war. His uncle, wife and two children moved into the Ghetto with other families.

65:00 The schools were transformed into tailor shops and other workshops. His father's machines were removed as there was no more private enterprise. People in the Ghetto could only work for the German Army. In the evening the gates were closed. Harry went out with friends and opened the gate a little and saw the SS with a boy about 12 or 13 in a SS uniform walking in the middle of the street. They had handguns which they were shooting up into the air. Henry and his friends closed the gate and ran home. The

Germans appointed Capos, Jewish police, which formed brigades for shops to make leather boots, furniture and German uniforms in factories setup in the schools. The Capos formed a hanging gallery in the center of the Ghetto and randomly chose about ten people to hang so everyone would look and see who was boss. The Jews had to do the hanging.

- 70:00 They hung the people who spoke against the Capos or against Germany or if they did not like your attitude. The Capos put the noose around the people's neck or they would get shot. The Capos had a band on their arm like a civil servant, perhaps it was white. Before the Ghetto closed, all the Jews had to wear the yellow Star of David both in front and in back to indicate they were Jewish. Even if they were uptown, they had to show they were Jewish. That was the first rule that the Germans gave. When you walked down the street, the people looked differently at you. They lived in the same country but they were different from the Christians. Right away the Poles knew that you were Jewish. The Jews were deprived of some things as you could not walk into a store to buy candy. Jewish stores were wiped out as once the Ghetto was closed, all the Jewish stores were closed. You needed a ration card to buy things from dispensaries.
- 75:00 There were no private stores. His father worked in a tailor shop with his mother, sister and brother so they could get a bowl of soup in the morning. His uncle was the foreman of the shop so they all worked for him making uniforms for the German Army. It was an assembly line with each worker doing one thing. His task was to sew the right sleeve into the garment. Someone else sewed in the left sleeve. If you hold back the assembly line, you lost your job. He used a sewing machine. He knew how from seeing his father's machines so he could handle it. He was ten years old and worked along with everyone else. He used the foot pedal on his father's old machines. They were placed with hundreds others in a tremendous area. The Lodz Ghetto was not destroyed as it needed the free labor for the German war machine. Chaim Konkovsky was the leader in the Ghetto. He was aloof. Henry did not know him. The Germans appointed him so everyone would look up to him. He was both a stooge of the Germans and represented the Jews. He went to Auschwitz in the train after Henry's. Henry saws him get out of the train and go into the oven. Henry was in the next to last train when they evacuated the Lodz Ghetto so Konkovsky was in the last train.
- 80:00 Konkovsky was a politician as he tried to calm everyone down while playing to the Germans. People did not talk favorably about him. He had little contact with Germans. Henry thought that Konkovsky should have done more for the people. They made up songs about him. Konkovsky promised he would talk to the Germans and get food but it did not happen. People were angry with him. The main thing they needed was food. People slept wherever they could. They had to work to eat. Konkovsky had food as he took what he wanted. Henry was privileged in being in the company. Konkovsky led a privileged life and probably had headaches. Life in the Ghetto was not easy. It was

every man for himself. After the Ghetto was created, food was rationed and Henry felt hungry. His father got sick and passed away in '42. There were no doctors. He died of sickness or hunger. His mother said to the children, "You don't have a father anymore." He died at home. The Burial Brigade did not have a horse and buggy so people carried his body on wheels to the cemetery. His mother said they were orphans. A year later, in '43, his mother died so the siblings were left to themselves.

85:00 His mother did not work in the tailor shop. She got rations so got food. Henry does not know if she died from hunger. She died at home while he was at work. The four were left alone. The Ghetto thinned out. Children under ten were taken to a better place. Those over 60 were also taken to a better place so trains were sent out daily. Most people believed that children were a burden. They were sent to summer camp and older people to other camps. The Ghetto was solely for people capable of working and producing. Henry believed this. He never believed that they would take people to a crematorium. Henry went on the train with his brother, sisters, uncle, his wife and their two children. When they saw the chimney, they thought it was a large bakery, not a crematorium as all bakeries had large chimneys. He survived along with his brother, uncle and a cousin. Perhaps his sisters were told to go left to the crematorium. His aunt was told to go right and her son was told to go left and she would not let him go so Mengele told her to go with him. Henry worked in the tailor shop until September '44. The Ghetto got thinned out.

90:00 Konkovsky had to produce so many people to be shipped out every other day. He chose and sent notices to pack up a suitcase and come to the train outside the Ghetto. There were few children left. His younger sister was in hiding as she was too young to work but they got food for her. He went to the kitchen at night and got potato peelings to cook soup. He fought over it with the rats. Each person got a loaf of bread each week and they had to make it last the week. He shared his bread with his sister. Some people used the Black Market to buy a slice of bread for a gold ring. He had nothing to sell. They had burned their belongings in the winter for heat. The apartment was empty. They broke up the furniture for fuel as had no coal and no wood. He looked for food each night as the most important thing was to survive the next day. They had youth groups in the evening.

95:00 They were Zionist groups where they talked about what would happen after the war. There were cultural groups such as the Theatre. Konkovsky had the front seat. They tried to be cultured. They were slaves but they needed something to look forward to. The most important thing was to survive that day. Then you looked forward to surviving the next day. He could not celebrate his birthday. He could not buy or bake a cake as there was no flour. They hoped the war would end. Everyone's personality changed as they were worried about what was going to happen—how could they live through such tragedies. No one could imagine such things could happen. The Germans were

sophisticated and a scientific country. Everybody was sad. Life was turned upside down. Only one neighbor had a hidden radio and they would listen to BBC so they knew of some of what was going on. They never heard of Auschwitz on the radio. They believed Konkovsky that people were relocated.

100:00. They heard about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in '43 on the Polish part of BBC. They knew that Russia was involved in the war and that Germany marched on Russia. They wanted to know what was happening in Poland. Konkovsky was nice looking with black rimmed glasses and a Fedora hat. He dressed nicely with an overcoat and looked like a gentleman. Henry did not know him before the Ghetto. The Germans established a committee with Konkovsky as head. The Ghetto was liquidated in September '44 so it was pretty empty when Henry left. The Russian Army was coming closer so they were liquidated. The Russian front was at Warsaw heading their way. They got a notice in the shop to meet in the morning with a suitcase to go to a labor camp as they were closing the Ghetto. They received a loaf of bread as they entered the train. They marched into the train with the SS and German Shepherds on both sides. The people were packed in. There was a bucket in the corner of the train. They had to stand up for three days. The train would stop, the whistle blew and they filled up the motor with water as the train ran on steam.

105:00 There was no water for the people so some died. If you sat down, you would never get up again. If you ate your bread the first day, there was nothing left for the other days. When they reached Auschwitz, they saw the gates and were told, "Mach richt" (go right). Capos helped get their suitcases down and Mengele looked them over. Henry later found out who he was. Mengele was stocky and balding with a big round face. He, his brother and his uncle were asked what kind of work they did and were told to go to one side. They were not tattooed as there was no time for it at the end. It was a mass production as so many people arrived at once. Some of the people who worked at the crematorium told him that it is not a bakery. They said that people go there and you do not see them anymore. It did not make sense to him. The older people understood and he found out later. His uncle had no knowledge of a crematorium. He could not believe such a thing but later found out. They were there for two months. They cleaned the barracks inside and out. In the morning at 5 AM they had a headcount. They stood for two hours in the freezing cold. They wore white and blue pajamas and torn shoes. If you spoke, SS would shoot you in front of everyone.

110:00 Life did not mean anything. They were in a holding pattern. They did not have a specific job. The SS did not know where to send them. They took a head count in the evening and got a bowl of soup in the daytime. It was mostly a vegetable soup – potato or Kohlrabi. There were many prisoners from Poland, Romania and Hungary and POWs from Russia. Each had a different insignia including the homosexuals. All the prisoners were mixed together. In Lodz, they wore the yellow Star of David on their regular

clothes. He would get a bowl of soup in his shop in Lodz upon arrival and another bowl before he left. Henry was hungry both in Lodz and in Auschwitz. He did not think of food in Auschwitz as being hungry made no difference as he knew that he would die.

115:00 In Lodz he had a different life from before as the hunger was new. At Auschwitz, hunger was an old thing. He got a bowl of soup with bread to keep his body alive. He felt bitter in Auschwitz that all of a sudden his family disappeared and he had no life. He was bitter against all Germans—SS, policemen—as they made your life bitter. He hoped it would come to an end. You did not know if you would live out the war or not. Then he was shipped by train to a labor camp, Settlestin (?), in Hanover. He worked for the Continental Lumber Company in Hanover. It was partly owned by British, Americans and Germans. They made tires and vulcanized lumber on tracks so that tanks could move on asphalt without ruining it. Tanks usually ran on steel or rubber tracks. Henry worked there for two months. There was a head count in the morning when they stood outside for an hour or two in their blue and white pajamas. Then they marched into the factory. They mixed big items.

120:00 They had a German foreman who wore a mask with goggles and rubber boots. The prisoners were bare-handed and did dirty work. Everything smelled of rubber. They mixed lots of chemicals together and cleaned up. Then they cleaned the floor. German civilians worked there at the desks. Young women about 20 or 25 worked at the desks. He cleaned around the desks and workers threw pieces of bread at him. The SS lady wearing boots with heels saw this and kicked his head open and he had to throw the bread away. Henry held something on the wound until it stopped bleeding after a day or two. His scar is still there. He also hurt his mouth – all for a tiny piece of bread so he does not love the Germans. After two months working, they were too weak to do the work. There was no sabotage. They were glad they had the day and finished and marched, got another bowl of soup and waited for the next morning. Russian POWs were brought in who were stronger. Henry's group were marched to another camp, Camp Ahlen (?) with about 1,000 prisoners outside of Hanover. He was assigned to work underground in a quarry which was cold, wet and dark. They dynamited to build factory ammunition. They had to load rocks on trains. It was the hardest work they had to do. People died and their bodies lay on top. The Germans took the rock and pushed the train out.

125:00 Each rock was on a trolley on tracks. His brother and uncle were with him. One morning his brother could not get out of his bunk as he did not feel good. The Jewish foreman said not to worry. He will take him to his family. He was injected with gasoline so Henry lost his brother. He and his uncle were left and worked day in and out. After morning roll call, they went to the quarry where they dynamited and people who died from hunger, the cold and disease were pushed out. They continued until liberated, from mid-February to May. The 84th Division of the American Army in Hanover liberated him. All of a sudden he heard rumors from the German soldiers that the allies were

coming close. About 600 people who could walk were taken in a death march to Bergen-Belsen. About 60 including him were left behind. Some were shot or died marching to Bergen-Belsen. He found out later that the Germans gave orders to kill them all and burn the camp. At night they heard shelling close by.

130:00 All of a sudden the German soldiers disappeared. No one was there early in the morning and jeeps from the 84th Division pulled up. Polish prisoners were there. The camp had electrified fences around the camp and the Poles broke the fence and all were free. The American soldiers gave the prisoners chocolate and gum and some of the prisoners died from dysentery as their stomach could not take food. Henry does not remember if he ate any chocolate. They gave the prisoners rations. At first the Americans did not know what they were seeing as they appeared as skeletons on the street and could not stand up. The soldiers were astonished they were seeing human beings. A documentary was made about Camp Ahlen (?). An American soldier from Iowa had bought a camera for \$1 in a pawnshop in L.A. before being shipped overseas. He took pictures as could not believe what he saw. The documentary came from his photos. Henry Kissinger was in the 84th Division's Intelligence section and liberated Henry's camp. After the documentary was published, Henry got a call from a 92-year-old man in Florida asking if he was remembered.

135:00 He was the Commander who liberated the camp and in charge of the civilian area. He took civilian Germans to bury the dead from the barracks. He was a Jewish officer. When they were liberated, they tore the gate down. They did not care. They heard bombing and saw planes. They thought the camp should be bombed and let everyone die as they felt dead already. After liberation, he and his uncle went to Bergen-Belsen as were told it was the camp for women. The British Army was there. The British and Americans interchanged. They got a ride on a British truck to look for his sisters. Someone said that Kahansky found his daughter but not his wife. His wife went to the shower with her son and Henry's sisters. They saw soldiers wearing the Star of David. They were from the Jewish Brigade of Palestine who wanted to get young people together to organize them to bring them to Palestine. Henry traveled with the British trucks led by the Jewish Brigade against the British and took about 600 to Zalstein (?), Germany. They were from Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Slovakia and France – from all over Europe. They were all between 14 and 18 and formed a little kibbutz, a cooperative village. They stayed in the DP Camp and learned a little Hebrew.

140:00 They tried to get passage to Palestine. They were demonstrating in Zalstein (?) so the UN would allow Jews to enter Palestine. The British had a White Paper not to allow anyone in. In May '46 the British government allowed 600 children to immigrate legally to Palestine and Henry was one of them. There was a lot of pressure from the UN to save the children. They settled in a Kibbutz, a coop farm, where they worked a half day and went to school a half day. They worked from 5 AM to noon on a tractor and went to

school from 1 to 6. He remained until '48 when war broke out. He was no longer worried about the next meal and no longer hungry. Henry constantly thought of his war experience and, even today, a trigger makes him remember. Sometimes he thinks about it with bitterness. He thinks about the time he got off the train and saw the sign, "Arbeit Mach Frei" and how deceiving it was.

145:00 Maybe some people knew the truth as were not as naïve as he was. There was the underground who informed people. His uncle and brother did not know the truth either. His uncle had been a cyclist in Lodz, not a backward person. His uncle remained with his daughter in Bergen-Belsen and met an old friend who lost her husband in DP camp. After two years they got married but the daughter had TB and went to a sanitarium in Switzerland where she passed away. Henry was alone in Palestine. He missed his childhood as the Germans had wiped out his childhood years. He went from being a child to being an adult to fight another war in '48. Henry was in the Haganah Underground and in a kibbutz where he learned to use a rifle to defend himself and to get ready for war. He had little ammunition and armaments. The Jewish Merchant Navy brought people from DP camps in '51. People were living in DP camps in France, Italy, England and Cyprus. When Israel was established, they first emptied out Cyprus as it was under British rule.

150:00 Henry came to the US in '52 as he thought he needed a change in his life. He had been here twice before with the Merchant ship and had an uncle here. The uncle who survived settled in Washington, D. C. where he met his wife, joined youth groups and got married. Henry moved to Toms River in Lakewood as a friend lived there. He attended young Jewish groups which had dances and met his wife, Hannah. Her parents lived there and had a poultry farm. Hannah attended Middle School there when they came from New York. He married Hannah and worked for Mr. Strauss, a painter, for 75 cents an hour in Lakewood. He did not drive as did not have a car so Mr. Strauss picked him up at 7 AM. Henry shared an apartment with a friend. He was supposed to work until 5 PM but the job ended at 7PM when he did not have a ride home. He was only paid for 40 hours so after three or four weeks, he asked for more money. Someone told him there was an opening in a Carpentry Shop, a Union shop, where they asked if he could hold a hammer. He became a carpenter and made \$1.50 an hour and felt rich. He worked there for ten years and got raises. He had three children. He received a nice silver tray for service. He would get one or two weeks vacation.

155:00 He went to school in New York to learn orthotic braces and decided to open a store. His boss said that if he needed money, he should come to him. He had the store for 20 or 30 years and sold it in 1980 and opened another store and sold it and worked part-time for the new owner for ten years and retired. His wife worked with him all the time and he misses her. He never returned to Lodz. He was asked to testify against Capos in Hanover but refused to go to Germany. Instead, he went to the German Consulate and

gave his statement. Last year he went to Switzerland and Italy on vacation. He feels there is nothing to return to in Poland. He would not find his parents' graves as they are mass graves. He did not have a birth certificate. He needed it for Social Security and Poland said that everything is destroyed. Some people returned to Lodz but he did not. He did not discuss this for years with his wife or his children. His wife knew he was in a concentration camp. She did not ask questions and he did not bring it up. He put it in the back of his mind. When he was asked to speak before high school kids, he spoke an hour about the atrocity of the war but not about his personal things.

160:00 His grandson, Adam, is interested in the Holocaust and asked him to write about it. Until then, he never spoke about it. His children did not ask and he could not talk of it. His children knew he was in the Israeli Army but he never spoke of his previous life as did not want it to come out. Now, he feels it is OK to speak about it. Until a couple of years ago, he could not and does not know why. Perhaps he was ashamed that he survived. He felt guilty that he survived while others did not. He never had the urge to bring it up. The worse time was when his father passed away as he felt he lost everything. When his mother passed, he felt abandoned. The four children were by themselves as they could not go to relatives who had their own problems. You had to fight to survive. You could not go to a friend as everyone was for themselves. He had to slice his bread so it would suffice for seven days. He needed to be disciplined to cover the week and hope no one would steal it. A piece of bread was like a piece of gold. Working in the quarry was not easy as people died as they were very weak. It was freezing cold, wet and pajamas and shoes was the only clothes. If your shoes wore out, you took a pair off a dead person and perhaps, his jacket, too.

165:00 He tried to survive. It was hard times. There was an incident after the war during Yom Kippur when he left the DP camp with three or four other young guys. They ordered ham in a German restaurant as they did it against G-d. They felt that what G-d did to them, they did it to G-d. He never ate ham before and it did not exist during the war. It was his fight against G-d. He does not know if it tasted good but ate it to spite G-d. How could G-d let something like that happen? He is still angry with G-d. It was his revenge. He fasted for five years as had nothing to eat. At Zalshammer (?) the Jewish Brigade got them together. There were youngsters from many countries speaking different languages. They had to learn Hebrew as the common language. He studied it from '45 to '46.

170:00 When he got to Palestine, they spoke Hebrew to communicate. He has a couple of friends from the DP Camp—one in Canada and two in California. In 1996 he returned to Israel for the 50th Anniversary. Anyone alive returned. From 60 people, they lost ten in the '48 war. They lived in a nice Kibbutz for the weekend and have a tape from it. There is a Camp Ahlen (?) documentary done by a young soldiers' photos of emaciated skeletons. He sent the photos to his parents in Sioux City, Iowa and they were developed and placed in a cigar box in their basement. A survivor wrote a letter to the Army 84th

Division, the Log Splitters, and asked if the man who took the photos still has them. He went to the basement and found them and told the survivor who contacted other survivors. In the survivor newsletter, "Together" he wrote that he wanted to meet as many survivors as he can who were in the photos. Henry was not in the photos.

175:00 They publicized whether there were more survivors from labor camps. A German school had made a journal of the camp. The School of Journalism at the University of Gainesville in Florida saw the article and wanted to make a documentary about it. It was partially funded. Henry saw the article by Ms. Lieberman from Connecticut that they wanted to get in touch with anyone liberated in Camp Ahlen. Henry called her up and she said that she wants to bring the soldier to New York to have a gathering. The survivor was dying of cancer and could not go to New York so she asked Henry to go to Sioux City. He did not want to go in February as it is so cold but the survivor wanted to meet him. Henry's wife broke her arm so their daughter stayed with her. He flew to Iowa and went to the former soldier's home. He looked at the photos and recognized himself. The synagogue at the Jewish Community Center had a Shoah celebration and put six candles for the six million and he was presented with a cup engraved of Camp Ahlen. Henry made a speech and said one picture speaks 1,000 words and if not for him, it would not have taken place. A week later the soldier died and a survivor gave the eulogy at the church. The former soldier had been taken by ambulance to the Jewish Community Center. It was a very moving moment. Henry interviewed for the documentary in February 2005 when it was very cold. Henry is very proud of his family and his children.

180:00 They were understanding as they did not ask questions and he did not have to respond until his grandson became involved in the Holocaust and asked him to do this interview. Henry responded that everyone knows everything but his grandson insisted that he must tell his story. His grandson went on the computer to search for interview information and got a call from the Museum. If it was not for him, Henry would not have done it. He is very grateful for his family and three children and their spouses, his grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, one five or six weeks old. He thanks G-d they are in good health.

182:00