

-TITLE-MAX GLAUBEN

-I_DATE-

-SOURCE-DALLAS MEMORIAL CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

-RESTRICTIONS-

-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT

-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT

-DURATION-

-LANGUAGES-

-KEY_SEGMENT-

-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-

-PERSONAL_NAME-

-CORPORATE_NAME-

-KEY_WORDS-

-NOTES-

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00:00:00 I'm Max Glauben. I live in I live in Dallas, Texas. I'm married with three children, one grandchild.

00:00:30 Q: What's the first thing you can think of, when yo were four or five years old?

A: Being rushed to the hospital to have my tonsils out.

00:01:00 That was in Warsaw Poland, in 34 or 35. The next thing I can remember is living in Warsaw, Poland.

00:01:30 Probably the worst thing was on Sept. 1, 1939, when I came home to our apartment and looked through the taped window.

00:02:00 A precaution AGAINST BOMBS TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM the shattered glass or bullets.

00:02:30 And looking through the window I saw a dog fight between two planes. We thought it was a practice or something.

00:03:00 But then we heard on the radio that the German planes had attacked and WWII had started.

00:03:00 Q: Do you remember what you thought?

A: My first thoughts were for personal and family safety. I didn't know what war was about.

00:03:30 The regular musical program went off and what even I as a nine year old heard as German propaganda, came on.

00:04:00 Everybody knew it was German propaganda, telling Polish soldiers to lay down their arms, that they were defeated before they started. To the best of my recollection it was a Friday.

00:04:30 Q: Do you remember going to school on Monday?

A: I didn't go to school because of the bombing.

00:05:00 Warsaw was bombed for two weeks. After about a week and a half, planes were circling over Warsaw, dropping leaflets saying that if Poland didn't quit, Warsaw would be flattened.

00:05:30 So school was disrupted by the bombing.

Q: What was your understanding of what was happening?

A: In those days, parents didn't consider children on their level, so there was no explanation. I can tell you what I thought. When Kristallnacht happened and some of the Germans were deported.

00:06:00 Germans fled to Poland, German Jews that is, and we had a family that was living with us.

00:06:30 So we heard from them what happened. Also. we had programs in Poland, and trouble with children going to school.

00:07:00 So we had some experience in coping with anti-Semitic events. But as for the war, it seemed a way of completely demolishing

00:07:30 cities, that is what we heard about.

00:08:00 We heard not to run, but to go into shelters. All we heard about was destruction.

00:08:30 The bombs did not discriminate, didn't care whether you were Polish, Jewish or what. We were concerned about what the Germans would do.

00:09:00 The fear came from the Germans who had escaped. Also we heard about the Corridor, and Czechoslovakia.

00:09:30 And there were newspapers. There was radio, but it was mostly stories of happenings.

00:10:00 My father was part owner of a Jewish newspaper. My grandfather was the founder of the Jewish Express, and my father the founder of the Yiddisher Tagblat, which was a daily.

00:10:30 When I was in Israel, in a museum, I saw a cope of the paper that apparently was preserved from before the war. The press was destroyed during the war.

00:11:00 The linotype machines could be used continuously because it was possible to change the type.

00:11:30 It was destroyed out of pure hatred for the Jews. The equipment was quite new and could have been used for years.

00:12:00 When the Germans first came in, they tried to give the impression that they were peace loving.

00:12:30 They would provide soup for people who needed it. I remember them announcing that the pickle factory had been bombed and that there were loose pickles available.

00:13:00 But after a few days, they began picking up people from the street, the Gestapo became active, and when you went to the bank, you couldn't get money, so people became poor.

00:13:30 Electrical generators burned out, so appliances wouldn't work, and food in refrigerators, if you had one, would go bad.

00:14:00 We don't realize what would happen in case of a bomb attack here, with everyone trying to get into a car at the same time.

00:14:30 Think of everyone trying to go south out of Dallas, of not having money, or food, and your plastic money not being worth anything.

00:15:00 I think my parents were frightened. But if you look back you realize that bad things and sad things always bring people together.

00:15:30 The human being, body and mind, is a great creation because you can live in many conditions.

00:16:00 Our minds work differently in a free society than in the case of an emergency. You don't have to push any buttons.

00:16:30 Some people will panic; others will just go and do the right thing. The mind will adjust to the environment.

00:17:00 In the midst of all the troubles, people draw together. You don't ask how you are going to survive, you just know that you are going to survive.

00:17:30 Fear can either panic you or alert you.

00:18:00 To me, there was no challenge too great, to let any enemy overcome, all through the camps and the liberation.

00:18:30 They could spit in my face and I could say that it's raining. But it was done for my safety, not theirs.

00:19:00 Q: You went out on the streets while this was going on?

A: In about four weeks, the Warsaw ghetto was created.

00:19:30 When the ghetto was established, there were a lot of new rules set down.

00:20:00 If you lived outside the ghetto area, just for meanness, the Germans would make you move. You could only take what you could carry because the Germans were interested in the furs, the jewels. the gold.

00:20:30 If you got caught with a radio, you were automatically shot. Any literature that was Jewish was turned in.

00:21:00 If you were found with any of these items, you were shot. Before this, we had freedom at certain hours.

00:21:30 You could purchase if you had coupons. But only if the Germans brought the goods into the ghetto.

00:22:00 Some people robbed the stores before they opened. There were a lot of people pressed into the ghetto from all over.

00:22:30 When a family with two children had two pieces of bread, the children might eat and the parents would see no.

00:23:00 Friends living together might see let the children die. And we had to cope with typhoid and diphtheria.

00:23:30 I don't think there was a disease known to mankind that was not brought into the ghetto.

00:24:00 I remember as a eleven or twelve year old youngster how do you get electricity - you throw a wire with a rock attached so that it would around an electric wire from the trolleys on the aryan side, and you held it with gloves or insulation.

00:24:30 Attach it to a water line and you get enough electricity to light a bulb. Or you used carbide to make lamps.

00:25:00 You put a container of water above something holding the carbide so that the water dripped on the carbide forming a gas that could be lit and that would provide light.

00:25:30 Q: Did you have to move when the ghetto was formed?

A: We lived on Mila 38, apartment no. 43.

00:26:00 Behind the apartment was a place that sold coal for heating, and they gave my father a job.

00:26:30 The coal for the yard came from the aryan side, and people who could not buy it would try to steal it.

00:27:00 The wagons that were used, were also used to smuggle food into the ghetto by using false bottoms that opened from underneath and so could not be detected .

00:27:30 My father was involved. You needed small people, and I went on a lot of missions like that.

00:28:00 I would fit into the double bottom. Things brought back in had to be packaged so that they would fit into small spaces.

00:28:30 Things didn't naturally come in those shapes so people had to be told, by phone or by me going over there.

00:29:30 Then I would carry an envelope with instructions, but I never saw them so that I could not reveal them.

00:30:00 My father was instrumental since he had the connections on the other side from before the war.

00:30:30 To do this work, you had to be blue-eyed and blond and speak good Polish.

00:31:00 So if anything went wrong, you wouldn't stand out as being Jewish. Another kind of smuggling - I used to have an overcoat with 15 to 20 pockets.

00:31:30 There were many gates into the ghetto, and after a while one would get to know who could be bribed. Then we could bring in a wagon-load on a day when we were not supposed to cross the border.

00:32:00 Sometimes I would ride in open view - we had two wagons with rubber tires so they would ride easier.

00:33:00 We had cobble streets. Metal wheels would grind the load.

00:33:30 You might have mashed potatoes from the coal, by the time you got back. So with the rubber wheels, the ride was soft.

00:34:00 On the special trips, I would open the book at the gate, as though we had a ticket, and there was an envelope with a bribe.

00:34:30 We had to make sure of the timing, to return to the gate at which the guard would be on duty.

00:35:00 Q: Much has been written about the feelings of helplessness. But you seem to have been quite active. How do you explain that?

00:35:30 A: First, I should say that it's a matter of luck that I am here. God wanted that, and I am a strong believer in that.

00:36:00 Also, you have to realize it has to do with the fact that my father was thrown out of the newspaper business and had the connections. It also might have something to do with my personality.

00:36:30 I always was a go-getter. It has to do also with people's attitudes.

00:37:00 Not everyone was able to do what I did. Then there were people sick in the streets.

00:37:30 Or for example, people were pulled out of line from waiting, or might be picked up going to or from work and children might be left.

00:38:00 They would have trucks on the street and people would just disappear.

00:38:30 They might be sent on a work detail or to a camp. If there were children left behind, what would happen to the children?

00:39:00 If there were relatives, they might be taken in. Some would become beggars, and maybe someone would give them a piece of bread.

00:39:30 They could freeze to death. The bodies would decompose on the street.

00:40:00 There was not enough water. We could get water in to feed animals, that is, if we said it was for animals.

00:40:30 But we needed pills to put into the water, and some people didn't have the pills. Same thing with sugar we used to smuggle in saccharin. To this day I will not eat saccharin.

00:41:00 It came in all forms, and we didn't know how much to use.

Q: Were there arguments in the home between your mother AND FATHER? About the missions?

00:41:30: A: You begin to think defensively.

00:42:00 You could be killed for no reason, or for doing something for yourself or your family.

00:42:30 You were born into the world at this time, in this situation. Like soldiers, may not want to go to war, but you do it for patriotic reasons.

00:43:00 It was for humanitarian reasons, the way I was brought up - you cannot let a barbarian do these things.

00:45:30 It wasn't done for money. I felt I was doing something better than killing Germans, because people benefitted from my activities.

00:46:00 Until, 1945, the question was where am I going to get the next meal. I never knew the value of money because we had none.

00:46:30 My father fed the family by means of the smuggling. When I was in the camps, I got a loaf of bread for a group of people.

00:47:00 And the coffee - that's why I didn't drink coffee until recently.

Q: Did you and your family have to move around in the ghetto?

00:47:30 And when you did, what did you carry with you?

A: We moved three times. All we were able to take were personal belongings.

00:48:00 We had valuables, jewelry, and protective weapons. During this time, there were gangs of kids going around looking for wealth.

00:48:30 Wealth that had been left behind by families that had been picked up. This was used to help pay for the food that was smuggled in.

00:49:00 I told about the fur coats that were found and sold or traded with the gentiles for food. I was in an apartment where the hooks used to hold the curtains were made of gold.

00:49:30 Lamp bases were made of gold, and other things.

00:50:00 So when we moved, we took the most precious possessions. The Germans didn't care about the belongings.

00:50:30 So when you moved, the apartment would be furnished or the clothing better than what you had.

00:51:00 The furnishings might not be fancy. But there were other apartments that you could get things from. I took with me a pot where I had chicken schmaltz.

00:51:30 My mother said that, whatever else, I had to take the pot of chicken fat. But we never used it for eating. When we discovered after the uprising, we were taken to a square where people were lined up undressed.

00:52:00 And the women had to squat and be searched in the secret places for anything precious. And we were told that if anyone was caught with gold or silver or money

00:52:30 They would be shot like the ten people had been shot at the ghetto wall, as an example. My mother said to dig a hole with my heel.

00:53:00 So my brother and I dug a hole, and in the bottom of the pot I found a box from Kiwi shoe polish.

00:53:30 My mother told me to bury the box in the ground. When the Germans came to check me, they told me to put my hand in the pot and take out anything that was there. But there was nothing there and so I wasn't shot.

00:54:00 I wish I had gone back. after the war and looked for it. I also carried a money belt and my father told me to divide up the money.

00:54:30 I gave half the money to my brother and I haven't seen my brother since. When the fighting started the firing started from our apartment.

00:55:00 The ghetto was a mile square and we just happened to live in the center.

Q: From what you have said about the youngsters going from one apartment to another, it seems like a new moral code was being written.

00:55:30 When you live under those conditions, you become a judge of what you feel is

00:56:00 right and what you feel is wrong. You have to justify to yourself that what you are doing is right.

00:56:30 I would not consider it a crime to go to the aryan side and stuff myself with food. But I would consider it a crime to hold up someone for money.

00:57:00 I no longer think its wrong to steal food in order to survive.

00:57:30 There were innocent people who were brought into the ghetto and then taken to the gas chambers. We felt that rather than the Germans having this money, we should.

00:58:00 Take the stuff, sell it, and use it in order to survive. That's how people survived from 1939 to 1943.

00:58:30 With everything, there was a culture in the ghetto. There were songs written and sung, and various activities.

00:59:00 There was a song about the ration books. Other songs. I am sure there was love going on. No matter under what conditions you live.

00:59:30 I think having lived under these conditions has made me a better person.

01:00:00 A lot of things were done. Maybe the need was alright but the act was not.

01:00:30 We felt that survival was the bottom line. That was the justification.

01:01:00 It's like fasting on Yom Kippur. If it's a hazard to your health or a pregnant woman, then you don't have to fast. So there

are two sides to it.

01:01:30 I could have been killed. So it was a matter of protecting my life.

01:02:00 I was supposed to have surgery on a Saturday. I am not religious, but I thought about it. I was told that it was a good deed.

01:02:30 To make the effort to save your life.

01:03:00 Before the ghetto, we had a lot of Christian neighbors who were not the nicest.

01:03:30 As the people being persecuted, you try to be nice to them.

00:00:00 Repeat of above, beginning at 01:01:00

00:00:30 Repeat of above

00:01:00 Repeat of above

00:01:30 Repeat of above

00:02:00 Repeat of above

00:02:30 Repeat of above

00:03:00 Repeat of above

00:03:30 Repeat of above

00:04:00 We had to ride in the back of the few trolleys that were available to the Jews. Like the blacks here.

00:04:30 Q: Were there any good times on the ghetto?

A: Yes, there was pride in anything of value. There was theater.

00:05:00 But not later on. Still, all the teachers were in the ghetto, and each of the apartments had their own schools.

00:05:30 I learned some of my English, Latin, geometry, arithmetic, Polish.

00:06:00 Everything was taught in Hebrew, and Polish and English were on the side.

00:06:30 After the first year, the Germans tightened up on what we could do of an illegal nature.

00:07:00 The enjoyable thing was that you could sit there for 10 or 12 hours and read and study.

00:07:30 We learned by memory because there were no text books. I can still quote Latin proverbs we learned. (and do so).

00:08:00 Everything was memorized - sometimes written on a piece of paper to take home and learn for the next day.

00:08:30 Everything you have can be taken from you, but what you have in your head is yours.

00:09:00 Everything I learned, I felt, would stay with me.

00:09:30 That was our joy and our happiness, that we were outsmarting the Germans. We had such a strong will to live.

00:10:00 (Int) Let's get to Mila 38 No, 43, and what happened.

00:10:30 There were various factories in the basement.

00:11:00 It was a nice, wholesome environment. Everyone was Jewish except the gatekeeper. There were apartments, squares.

00:11:30 There was a playground, a community trash collection. At Passover, someone would bring a big pot and make everyone's pots kosher.

00:12:00 There was the big open space of the coal yard and place for the fire wood. We did not live there during the uprising.

00:12:30 In 1942, my parents had to move closer to where they were working.

00:13:00 They had soldiers who rode the streets on bicycles and killed anyone who was out. And some people who wanted to die would do that.

00:13:30 Several months before the uprising we moved again.

00:14:00 Where we lived before, Mila was wide. Now we could see out on the narrow Mila.

00:14:30 It was very close to where the fighting started. Also to the train yards where Jews were taken.

00:15:00 Q: How were you involved in the uprising?

A: It was a Passover night and we were just getting ready. Some people came to the door.

00:15:30 We thought it was a gang, but they said they were fighters and they were going to use the apartment to fight from.

00:16:00 My father stayed and helped, but then the Germans started

using armor, and the building was burned.

00:16:30 After the one day, we went into camouflage shelters that were fire proof.

00:17:00 They proved to be fire proof later on when the ghetto was burned. Hiding is like being confined to a hospital in a chair or a bed.

00:17:30 You get very restless, you change day into night. We would go out at night to get fresh air.

00:18:00 We were discovered by an informer. He said he couldn't reach his shelter and we let him in. The next day he disappeared, and the next day the Germans came.

00:18:30 But we would go outside to look and make meals and get fresh air.

00:19:00 Describes the way the air shaft was disguised.

00:19:30 It was well done so that they could not find it.

00:20:00 The windows were disguised with sand, but the informer told the Germans and they used grenades. We were rounded up and put in the square, and then put on boxcars.

00:20:30 The camp was Majdenek. It had not been changed yet from a work camp to a death camp.

00:21:00 There were no signs. There were no unloading ramps.

00:21:30 A trip that should have taken 6 hours took days. There were many dead.

00:22:00 I saw people rush to drink water and they died soon after, not having eaten in five days. Then the line just proceeded to the gas chambers. I didn't even know where it was. But in an interview like this I happened to mention that it was close to Lublin.

00:22:30 I thought maybe it was Treblinka but that was on the other side.

00:23:00 My family, my mother and father and brother were together, and we didn't know what we were in for.

00:23:30 A man went over to where airplane workers were located and he said that he had 100 experienced aircraft workers. So the line was stopped except for women and children. I was going to go with my mother, but my father said I should stay with him.

00:24:00 They pulled one hundred men out of the line and then it continued to the gas chamber. So that included my mother and brother.

00:24:30 There were other relatives there who went in with my mother. A few years ago I went to the Holocaust

00:25:00 reunion in Washington, DC and there were ways to put names in a machine and see if anyone survived.

00:25:30 After 37 years I did not expect that any one I knew would be found.

00:26:00 We were in a long line and I didn't want to wait. But my wife urged me to put in my name. Nothing happened until this year. I was liberated in April, 1945

00:26:30 and I wasn't contacted until April 1985 I got a phone call someone wanted to know my background.

00:27:00 Two of my aunts, who I had seen going into the gas chamber, were alive and one of them had found me.

00:27:30 They had lived with us in Mila 38 in Warsaw and we had left our belonging with them when we had moved.

00:28:00 I found out that my mother had gone on sick call and never returned. My brother must have been separated from her.

00:28:30 The two aunts spent the war working in a munitions factory.

00:29:00 Don't recall talking to anyone on the train. It was just a matter of survival.

00:29:30 When people breathed, the vapors would condense on the metal parts of the roof and people would try to reach it to drink it.

00:30:00 People would climb on bodies trying to get height enough. I saw people urinate and drink.

00:30:30 I remember looking out - sometime the cars would be on a siding and I could see the flowers and greenery and I wondered why I had to be inside here.

00:31:00 There was the hope that I could get out of the box car but it was a transition period from one place to another.

00:31:30 All we could do is anticipate -, what is going to happen. Once your in the boxcar you can't get out until someone opens it.

00:32:00 Was there anyone there that became your family?

A: No, the only one there was my father.

00:32:30 We went to a factory concentration camp. We made parts from blue prints. I never saw a whole aeroplane.

00:33:00 We worked with very hard wood. The camp was in the woods with barbed wire and guards. We would march to the factory.

00:33:30 We had to sing or get a riffle in the side. We worked and we walked back for a ration - a loaf of bread for 12 people and a bowl of soup. In the first camp there was no coffee.

00:34:00 We would occasionally get special duty - like digging a mass grave. That first camp was the most brutal I was ever in.

00:34:30 When Mr. Wiesenthal was here to talk to us, we asked him about the head of the camp, Fikes (ph) and we learned that he had been executed by the allies.

00:35:00 He would hang people, shoot them for any reason. He would put a belt around the neck of a prisoner and have him dragged in front of the prisoners, and you had to hit him or get hit.

00:35:30 They would burn the person's nose to see if he was still alive. They would hang people by their legs - they had five gallows.

00:36:00 It was by the gate so that we could see when we marched back. Hanging down, sometimes with their insides cut out. Or people hanging with their hands tied behind their backs.

00:36:00 (Int) It seems the Germans were doing this to establish power. Also by being arbitrary

00:36:30 they made it clear that it didn't really matter whether you behaved properly.

00:37:00 Right. You just lived daily.

00:37:30 They talk about escape. But if you didn't speak German you would be recognized immediately. Also, our heads were shaved with a 1" down the middle, and "0"s on the side.

00:38:00 And in some camps they put numbers, with "KL" which in German meant "concentration camp".

00:38:30 So if you ever escaped and hid it and they opened it up and saw it - and some of the people were not in condition to escape - they were walking skeletons. That was the first camp.

00:39:00 In the first camp, we were involved with fighter planes. In the second, it was the Heinkel, a bomber.

00:39:30 The planes were there, maybe, for repairs. But I was still working on parts. Only this time there were civilians, Germans and Poles, so there was some sympathy.

00:40:00 They weren't supposed to talk to us. But sometimes they would put half a sandwich in a drawer and motion for us to come and get it while they walked away. If we were caught with it, sometimes it meant dying.

00:40:30 But there were mean people too. One German took the handle off a file and threw it at me and hit me in the hip.

00:41:00 I got blood poisoning, and I would have died but someone helped me. If I had gone on sick call, to the hospital, I would have been taken out and machine gunned, because sick people can't work.

00:41:30 in the first camp, as I said, we were working in the factory, but if other work had to be done, we were taken.

00:42:00 We were taken to work in a far. Three people escaped. Usually escapees were not discovered until morning, when the 15 prisoners would be taken out and shot.

00:42:30 But they were noticed and 30 people were laid out on the ground to be executed in the morning. But before daybreak they captured the three who had escaped.

00:43:00 So 10 or 12 were shot, including my father. So when I got up in the morning, his boots were standing in the circle, with the other sets of shoes.

00:43:30 To this day I don't know how he died because there were different stories. But a couple of days earlier, we were on a detail.

00:44:00 Where there were mass graves. They poured gasoline on them and burned them and then recovered the gold.

00:44:30 Or the silver that had melted. They would move away the ashes and roll it up for whatever their purpose.

Q: What was your feeling when you saw those boots on that Saturday morning?

00:45:00 A: It was like somebody drives you out in the desert and leaves you there. I had nothing. I was just about 13 at that time.

00:45:30 I knew the others were gone, but I had not actually seen the death. There is hope for a long time.

00:46:00 That is why, I understand, when someone dies, they open the casket, so there is some finale. In this case, I never saw the body, though I saw his boots.

00:46:30 You could have hope, or you could assume he was dead. In

order to survive, you have to assume you are on your own. You become very hardened.

00:47:00 You come to accept things. Like if a person faints at the sight of blood, when he revives, and you show him more blood, he may be able to accept it.

00:47:30 Like some of the details we were sent on. During the winter, people died of illness and cold.

00:48:00 You might bury them, or you might put them in the flames. If you got a minute to rest, or found something to eat, you would do it right there with the bodies.

00:48:30 You just get hardened. You don't think anything about it.

00:49:00 It becomes a part of you. You become an animal and you look like it.

00:49:30 When I was liberated, I had to learn how to use a fork.

LOSS OF SOUND

00:50:00 The third camp was salt mines, and that was all Jews. Finally I was sent to Flossenburg (ph) which was on the Austrian border. There we were mingled in with all kinds of people.

00:50:30 We were still political, with a red colored triangle, mixed with murderers and others.

00:51:00 Q: From '43 to '45, though you were a child was there anything you considered fun?

A: No.

00:51:30: It was not like in the ghetto where we were also learning while these things were going on.

00:52:00 Learning was a distraction while other things were going on.

00:52:30 We were fortunate that the kids had a few hours of escape.

Q: There are a few things I would like you to touch on.

00:53:00 I understand that you do tremendous amount of lecturing. What is the message that you want to convey?

00:53:30 I could focus on the bad things. I mention them so that they understand what people can do to one another.

00:54:00 I feel that God has chosen me to speak up for the ones who didn't make it. I am not doing this for my gratification, because anything I do is gratis.

00:54:30 And then I try to put everything in perspective. These were the same as people who live anywhere else.

00:55:00 Mostly they were good people who were murdered just because they were Jewish. And they were a cultural people - there was 800 years of culture behind them.

00:55:30 They were just like the people to whom I was speaking there. It is inconceivable to me that people who were as intelligent and industrious as the Germans

00:56:00 how they could do this. But more, the society that we live in right now

00:56:00 there's an element that could do the same thing now, not to us necessarily, but to my children and to them in the audience.

00:56:30 I am saying that unless we speak out and become concerned, and participate, that we keep this a democracy.

00:57:00 Don't let someone do something to a neighbor that you don't like. Tell him about it. Let them know that we live in a democratic society and everyone has equal rights. These are the points that I am trying to make.

00:57:30. I was liberated in 1945, and I worked for the US Army. I got papers, came to the US in 1947 and was drafted for the Korean war.

00:58:00 Served two years, got out, got married, and have three lovely children.
.END.→