

--down there. And later on I realized why we were sent down there at the latter part of 1940, because the weather, especially around in Poznan, is much colder than it is in the city that I came from.

The weather down there could probably reach, in the wintertime, between 10 to 20 or 25 below zero. In the summertime, we couldn't work down there because the turf was shaky. You would actually sink in. So you had to walk it when the turf was actually frozen or real cold, that you can actually cut in with a shovel.

And our work was to straighten up this Dojca river, which is around down there, so the water could run smoothly instead of crooked. The river was going a little crooked. So we straightened up for quite a few miles this area.

And if you can imagine working in this kind of condition without any gloves, without any winter clothes whatsoever, just the things that we had on our back. So people started dying. And I think the main cause of death was there was from hygiene.

And let me give you what I mean by hygiene. There were no facilities of taking a shower. There was no facilities of even washing yourself, less a shower. We slept in this barn for almost six months.

The first week, we were confronted with lice, which we never got rid of in the six months. Our pastime was really-- I hate to say it, but I must-- is scratching. And the lice were actually penetrating our skin. It was unbearable and unbelievable.

The only water facility that we had is, in the morning, two of the boys used to go to the river and take a tin container with two little ears on it, and get the water, and bring it to the front of the gate. And everybody was privileged to take a little water with their two hands and wash your face. This was the extent of hygiene for almost six months.

Toilet facilities was in the back of the barn, against the barbed wire, right in an open space. No facilities whatsoever.

And there was a little kitchen in the front as you come into the gate. And as you came in from work, you got your bowl of soup. Of course, around 12 o'clock, when we worked, we got a bowl of soup. And in the morning, we got some what I call ersatz coffee, some coffee made up, I don't know from what, except it was dark, and a piece of bread. This was the extent.

But the food was not the killer. The first thing was the hygiene and the second thing was the frostbite. If you could see some of the boys coming home, or falling actually in from the top, when we straighten this little river, falling into the water, and totally dead. And then we used to fish them out with the hook and take them to the back of the camp in the woods, which was like a common grave, and put them in with their clothes, with everything, and just bury them.

This was, I believe, the worst that I have ever been in one, and this was the first one. And this is why it was so vivid in my memory.

And as I said, I didn't believe it myself until I went back in 1983, and I saw the same barn, and I saw the cattle inside, and I saw the barn where we used to take the shovels out, and I saw this little house still standing down there just the way it was in 1940, except the farmer is different. The one who was our guard died. In fact, I even found out his name, which I didn't know then but I know now. And another Pole of German descent owns the farm now. So this was the first one.

Let me tell you what happened at the end of this first camp, called Ruchocki Młyn. Around March of 1941, we felt the one who really survived, and the one who survived this first one, I don't know if there would have been a movie to take the way we looked in March of 1941.

When I said "we survived," we looked like all of us like zombies walking, dead bodies walking around. Really, we couldn't walk. We couldn't talk. We didn't know what happened to us. We were so mesmerized that it

was all-- all was a dream.

So all of us, or most of us, decided that enough is enough, and we're going to strike. All of a sudden, we became heroes. And we're going to strike, and we won't go to work anymore.

And we had some kind of an idea. If we could possibly persuade this Volksdeutsche, who were guards of ours, and this farmer, who requisitioned us to do his work-- also a Pole, to see if he can get a doctor.

And actually, in our mind, we felt that if he get a doctor who has more intelligence than a farmer, he would see the circumstances that we look. And you know, we're still human beings. Maybe there will be something, some mercy, something that in our dream was-- maybe they will send us back home to the ghetto, because we did not even know that such thing existed as labor camps, as slave labor camp, because we thought this is the only one. We are the only ones out of the 200,000 Jewish people who were really forsaken, sent in here to Ruchocki Młyn. We did not know of any other camp.

So we decided to strike. So what did we do? And I will tell you of a courage that it took on one of the guys who did it, that we thought we're all going to get shot. But we didn't.

In the morning we decided, all, that we're not going to go to work. So of course the time came, 6 o'clock. That bell rings, and you got to go out, and get ready, and get your bread and coffee, and go to work. And nothing doing. The gates-- we don't open our gate. We had a gate too for our barn, and then there was a gate to the barbed wire. We don't go.

Then the German came, this owner, this farmer, and knocked on the gate, on our gate. And he opened it up. And one of the guys threw a bunch of lice on him. And we thought we are all going to get shot.

The guy run away. He didn't know what happened. He run out of the gate. And one of the guys started telling him that we are not going to work, that we are sick and we need a doctor. And we felt that if we get a doctor, maybe they will send us back home.

Well, the doctor didn't come until a few days, and we didn't go to work. And they cut our food. They gave us only one bowl of soup a day. And we almost died then inside the-- inside this barrack with all the lice.

And finally a doctor came. And the doctor was a civilian, but he was German. He spoke fluent German, and you could tell he wasn't Polish. Of course, prior to the doctor coming, which took several days, some guy decided-- he said, listen. If the doctor comes, and if he not going to show him any kind of physical effect on what's hurting us-- what are you going to show him? That you are skinny? That you're dried up? It doesn't make any different to him. If he didn't know to the extent what the doctor is going to do with us.

So some guys got ideas of self-inflicting wounds, if I can describe it to you. In this time and age it's hard to really even think about it, and what it is. You think of suicide.

But we were not suicidal. We wanted really to live. We wanted to fight the whole thing on to the last bitter end.

So some guys came. There were an idea of if you take some rusty nails, and punch your body, and you pour it in with salt-- rub it in, actually-- within a day or so you'll get some wounds.

And believe me, you're talking about pain. Some of the guys must have really-- I don't know how strong you are if you want to live. I think a person is stronger really than he thinks when it comes to wanting to be alive.

And then some guys took some strips of the clothes, and we wrapped our arms around real tight, on your legs and even your abdomen, and you swell up after a few days. And you should see some people, the way we looked. It was horrible.

Finally, the doctor came, and we stayed. And the doctor didn't even go close to the barbed wire. We were,

like, inside the camp between the barbed wire and the shed. And he was on the other side, about 100 to 150 feet away, looking at us like monkeys, and ask each one, what's wrong with you, what's wrong with you? And we showed him we got swollen legs, and with sores and so on.

It didn't take him two minutes. He told this German who owned it, this farmer, not to let anybody out. It's quarantined, because we are undesirables, and we will-- what do you call it-- infest the whole-- everybody around us, not to let us out completely. Fine.

So we didn't know what to do. We went back to the barn, and we stayed down there. A few days later, there came some trucks again, and they transferred us out from there, from this barn. And we came to the city of Poznan.

We came to the city of Poznan, they took us to a place for delousing. I'll never forget. This was the first shower that we have ever gotten in six months. And you're talking about some guys say they went in with 10 lice, they got out up to thousands, because it was unbelievable what was going on down there. It was good in the long run, because they shaved every blade of hair from us. And we-- I don't know how to describe it, the feeling of like a new-born baby after we got out.

And of course they didn't let us out of sight. When we came to this de-lousing, to our surprise, we found out that there are other camps. We met other people from different areas who were confronted with almost the same tortures as us. They told us our stories, we told us their stories, and we found out there is camps all over the place, and they had the same almost fate. They were also broken up, almost dying. And they brought them over here, and also they got, like, a community bed, and there must have been over 1,000 of youngsters, all from my city.

From there they took us to a place in Poznan, like a-- what do you call it? Quarantine camp. You didn't go to work. But it was more orderly. It was, the way we understood, an old camp for Polish soldiers, also with bunks and so on, but buildings, and a big place. That was a tremendous place. And all of us wound up down there.

And we thought from there, maybe they will make some kind of selections to send you to labor camps, and really start living a normal life, or they will send you home. This was our hope.

I remember in this camp, they had a Jewish man from Germany who was the head of the camp. I'll never forget his name. His name was Sali, Sali Galecka. And I even run across him because I searched him. He went back after the war to Düsseldorf, and he died there, just about six months after the liberation. He was also in different camp. He was in Auschwitz, but I never knew him. Only in this camp.

When we came to this camp, as I told you, we thought they're going to send us home. It didn't happen. We stayed down there not too long, probably a month or so.

But let me give you a illustration of a camp where people die from hunger. This was a second thing. And I still went through this one.

It wasn't a camp. It was actually a-- what do you call it? Like a quarantine. You go through, you know.

And down there, when we came in, the camp was such a luscious green, like you go to a farm. You wouldn't believe it, that in less than a month you couldn't find a blade of grass in the entire perimeter of this camp.

We had a pastime, when we got a bowl of soup, to go down and pull the grass, and pull it, to little bitty piece it, and put it in the soup so the soup would get thick.

And the sicknesses that arise from down there, first of all, the major cause of sickness was-- what did they call it? Diarrhea or dysentery. And it was unbelievable.

But people didn't really care anymore. It was just to fill your stomach up with something. They didn't know what. And this was the closest thing. You couldn't eat dirt. So grass was the only thing we put it in, the

soup. And there was-- this camp was clean. And from there, we started-- they started making selections to different camps.

It's going to be a long story if I have to tell you each camp and what we went through. So let me pass a few camps. We went through five more camps in the vicinity of Poznan. And we worked at the railroad. We built the railroad between Poznan and Warsaw.

We also were transferred to another camp that we worked on a highway from Warsaw to Poznan. We worked in a aeroplane factory doing very manual work, and some other types of work, all kind of labor, in the forest and so on, smaller Kommandos and so on.

The camps, the rest of the camps, were more, I would say, humane as the first one was. The first one I will never forget. The second one, of course, it was starvation. There was no work. You stayed inside. You didn't do anything.

Of course, the other ones was if you had any ability, that you could-- any stamina, that you can still put the shovel in the ground and work, they needed you. They want you to work. We worked on-- we did very heavy labor. And thank god, some of us survived. A lot of them didn't. They couldn't.

Of course incidents happened in some of the camps, whereby it's probably hasn't been written, and I can assure you that are camps all over Poland. The Jewish people have slaved, and worked, and transferred, that now, in 1985, nobody knows that a camp existed down there. Nobody survived. It's like a forgotten thing that nobody probably knew where it was. It is impossible to know.

And I am a firm believer. We talk about Auschwitz. We talk about Buchenwald. We talk about Sachsenhausen. We talk about so many camps. Because this was the highlight of the liberation.

But until the liberation, there are camps that have been eliminated. There isn't any slightest idea that there was any camp at all. Only the people, the Polish people who lived in the city, only the ones who were guards down there, they're the one who are the silent one who do not want to talk about it.

And the example that I'm giving you, and I know for a fact that it's true, is this camp that I mentioned to you, Ruchocki Młyn. Ruchocki Młyn is not even mentioned in Yad Vashem. Nobody knew about it. Nobody knew that the first transport from Łódz Ghetto went to Düsseldorf until when I went back in 1983. And this is when I opened my eyes to see that I'm the only one.

And I have searched and searched now, and probably will, and I haven't found it. I haven't found anybody.

The other camps had-- [SIGHS] let me give you another camp, even though that the camps that I described are as more humane, on what transpired. And also, I want you to remember-- this is very important-- that we did not have any German guards. This was all Poles of German descent, Polish citizens of German descent.

In one of the camp that we worked for the highway from Poznan to Warsaw, we had two young fellas who were familiar with the area, escaped. Several days later, they caught him, and they brought him back.

And you probably have heard or been told that the Polish citizen-- not the Christian population-- were informed of, even though some of them were very good, but a lot of them were not, were informed that if they catch a prisoner from a concentration camp, that they will be rewarded. There was always a reward for prisoners who escaped. And this is why they were searching so carefully, and whenever they caught somebody, because we were identifiable with our hairdo and with our uniforms. And it was very hard to escape. So I'm sure somebody got rewarded.

These two boys ran away, and they caught them several days later. They brought him back. Let me give you a torture that very little has been said about, and I don't think it's ever been written about, but I was there, and I saw it with my own eyes.

They called the whole camp out. You have to go on what they call Appell. You got to go outside and line up in five at 4:00 in the morning before you go to work. They took these two boys.

Each camp at that time did have a delousing truck. It was a truck where you used to put your clothes and delouse it for hygiene, which was good for us, and I guess it was good for them too, because they were scared that they're going to get poisoned from us. So we used to put our clothes, and then we got another set to keep.

They turned this oven on. It's a truck. Actually, it looks like a cement truck, like a round thing, where you open up the door in the back, and you put your clothes in. And I guess they turned on high speed of-- what do you call? Steam or whatever it is.

And one by one, some of our boys had to take, one by one, and put them in into this truck. And they turned on the steam. And to describe you when they took out one of the boys, and the other one, who was just about to be going, in the second one, to describe him how he looked. And they showed it in front of all of us so there would be a deterrent not to run away.

I remember the first one, when they got him out, it was the most horrible sight that I've ever seen in my whole life. Is one arm shrunk like almost to nothing. The other one was long. The head was blown up. It was a caricature of a human being that I've never-- I've never seen it. And I didn't even know if it could happen by getting into steam then.

And then they put the other one on. And this was the deterrent. So from then on, I don't think anybody ever run away.

And then we had another camp. You see, the torture by some of the Volksdeutsche was probably-- I'm talking about-- I'm not talking about mass murder, like gas chambers, and so on, which was a horrible thing, but I am talking about on a one to one basis what they did. It was tragic.

We were in another camp. We had one boy who was sick. And you know, the barracks did not have their own toilet facilities. You had to go to the last barrack at the end of the camp. And this was one barrack which you have all these little toilet facilities. It was a hole with the cut-out little holes, and this is your toilet facility.

And he couldn't make it all the way to the end of the barrack. He probably had diarrhea. And he did it behind a barrack. And one of the guards caught him. You wouldn't believe, for this little incident, not for being vicious and not trying to run away, the next morning some of the boys had to dig a grave and put this young man in alive. And they buried him all the way to the head. The head was out.

I don't know how long it takes for a person to succumb to this, but I remember we went to work afterwards. When we came home, he barely lived. [CRYING] Anyway, we took him out, and we buried him. And this was another episode of the torture.

Now this is not the famous camps. This is not Buchenwald, and this is not Auschwitz, and this is not Sachsenhausen. This is not even Ohrdruf. But this is a plain labor camp where I describe it more humane.

Of course, we went to other camps. And then, in October of 1943, all the camps around in Poznan were liquidated. And I guess I was fortunate still to go along with it. And we came to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Let me just ask you for a minute, what did you think was happening on the outside in these couple of years that you were in Polish labor camps?

Well, to be very honest with you, we knew very little. There was no such thing as communications between the outside, or radio, or any information from anybody. The only time that we knew that-- how the war was going on is if we came to a camp, and we were fortunate enough to have newcomers coming from a city who would give us some information. Otherwise, we did not know, to be very honest and true. We did not know who was involved in the war.

We knew that Germany has taken Poland. We did not know that the Soviet Union was involved in a war. We didn't know anything. We were like cattle, really. We didn't know too much, honestly.

In Auschwitz, when we came to Auschwitz, we knew a little more from coming in with so many thousands of people. They came from different parts of the country. Then you could discuss it, like from Hungary or Romania. But until 1943, we were absolutely dumbfounded. We did not know who was fighting the war.

I myself compiled some statistics. I don't know if you can imagine. When we came to Auschwitz, we did not know what Auschwitz is all about it. We did not know. Unless you lived around the area, and you knew that there was a town called Oswiecim, which was actually Auschwitz. We did not know anything about it.

But I remember, when we came to Auschwitz, and we saw the discipline of the German guards, the erect type of nice-looking young soldiers with whips, and I mean, really, I said to myself, and I still do, which might not be very proper, I said it was like going from hell to heaven when we came to Birkenau, to Auschwitz.

And I think I can verify it, that it really was because being in Auschwitz over a year, from September or October of 19-- in fact, I compiled it now in 1983 by checking with the office in Auschwitz to know exactly how many came in from our transport, and what actually transpired then.

I found that there were so many documents, that I could compile that they even had the record of me being down there. When I gave him my number, that I got tattooed on my arm, and I said my number is 143248, they told me, are you Leo Laufer, and I said, yes.

And they told me when I came into-- the date, when I got out, how much money I made, even, that I wasn't aware of, for 40-some-odd years, that I made money in Auschwitz. They told me that I was making 4 Deutschmark a day while being in Auschwitz and working. And I said, what happened to my money? They told me that the money went for the guard, for the food, and for the lodging. And they showed me in the document, signed by an SS Oberscharfuhrer, that I was making 4 Deutschmark a day.

Let me give you an example, exactly. They got the date. We arrived in Auschwitz August 29, 1943. The numbers that they gave from the group that we came in was 142, from 142570 to 143861. A total of 1,291 from all the surrounding camps came in because this was all small camp.

And now I got the idea, when I got into Auschwitz, why is it that out of about maybe 1,400 that almost 1,200 got into Auschwitz. Because we came from labor camps-- see, we were strictly men. It wasn't families. And since we survived, we were the capable workforce. So this is why we all got in.

And I compiled so many documents that I wasn't aware of myself what date. It's very hard to-- because we didn't have any pencils, or notes, or knew that we're going to survive even to make notes.

And when I said-- and I made this remark, that we came in, we said it was like going from hell to heaven. And I really mean it. I mean it now, and I meant it then. Because when we came in, they took us to a delousing thing. We were in the quarantine for about a month. It's also a quarantine in Birkenau. You have to go through the quarantine.

And we had showers. The showers were cold, but they were beautiful. They gave us new clothes which was clean. You couldn't find any lice like we had in all the other camps, or like the first one especially I described. And then we didn't get a lot of food. But it was sufficient to sustain yourself.

If you get sick, so you go to the gas chambers. It's the easiest, believe me, way to die. The tortures that they did to us from 1940 to '43, it is hard for me to describe. I don't believe that many, many-- that many, many could have survived from this kind of-- even though there wasn't any gas chamber, I wished that they probably would have had a gas chamber in some of the camp, instead of the way some of our boys dies with frozen arms and legs, and walking around until they actually fell on their face, and then we dragged them and we buried them. It was probably a much easier way-- not that it is a good way. I'm totally against it. But

to us at that time, this is the way we felt.

And then the few who were fortunate to get out of Birkenau from the quarantine, to go into Arbeitslager, which we went to Camp D in Birkenau. I was never really in Auschwitz. I was in Birkenau all the time. And from our barracks, I was in in Block 28.

And you could see, when you get out in the morning, you could see the chimneys burning, and you could smell it. And we knew exactly what it was after you were a while in camp. But we never got close to the crematorium to really feel it, on what really could happen to you if you really get sick.

So I guess-- I don't know why I survived. I think I had a strong will. I wanted to live so bad, because first I was so inquisitive. I was anxious to find out what happened to my rest of the family.

Mind you, I was taken away all by myself, never to know anything about it, and what happened, from 1940. And this is already when I was in Auschwitz, in 1943, nothing, absolutely nothing what happened, or a letter, or a note, or a friend who has seen my parents, or how did they live, or how did they die, or what happened to them. Nothing. And this, I guess kept me alive, I wanted.

And I think secondly, I believe it was-- food had a lot to do with it too. I was very small I didn't need a lot of food. I probably weighed, I guess, when I was in Auschwitz, maybe 75 or 80 pounds. You didn't need a lot.

I remember I used to get my bread, and put it in my pocket, and I used to nibble on it for half a day until I finished it, just to keep my mouth working or whatever. And this is what kept me alive. And--

Did you believe it would end?

Oh, sure. If I wouldn't believe it's going to end, I don't think I would have-- I would have lived. I had a strong desire that I'm going to get out somehow. I don't know-- unless somebody's going to kill me. Then I would have no alternative. But I had a feeling-- I was so anxious to live, I really wanted to live.

Of course, Auschwitz, we have seen so many things in Auschwitz, that-- I remember in 1944. We were in Birkenau. And when we came the day before-- no, two days before I arrived. Two days before, in October of 1944, we were next-- I don't know if you can visualize 30 barracks on each side. Then, between the barracks, you had to go from Camp D, you go to Camp E, which had barbed wire on both sides, electric barbed wire.

And you say-- you can get immune sometime to certain things when you get used to it. We got used to it, all of us who were in Birkenau, to seeing, when we got up in the morning, when we went to work. Each one had his own Kommando to go to work. And you see at the barbed wire which were on both sides. Camp D, you have barbed wire here and here, and you go out to the front gate.

And you see people hanging on the electric wires. It was no novelty. It was an everyday occurrence for a year and three months. When I was in Birkenau we saw it every day. There wasn't a day that you couldn't see bodies hanging, the arms stretched out, holding on to the electric wire. And that was it. And then they pulled them off.

And it was-- you really get immune to it. But I guess I'm alive. I didn't feel this way, that I want to finish my life this way.

And in October of 1944, I remember one time we-- there was Camp E. And Camp E was called the Zigeunerlager, the gypsy camp. I don't know if you heard about the gypsies. And there were a bunch of people, really, that some of us derived some pleasure after work, when you got out, you go to the back of the barrack. I wasn't in the front. I was in the back of the barrack.

When you opened the doors, and you could see him. It wasn't too far away to the next one. And they were on their side in the back of the barrack, playing sometime harmonicas. And see families totally together, not like us. With us, it was strictly men. There was no woman in our camp, in Birkenau.

And the gypsies had a privilege, I guess, of the whole family was down there-- their grandparents, their grandchildren, their wives, their daughters. The whole family was all in the same type of barracks, but they probably lived, like, together as a family.

And all of a sudden-- And they used to sing and so on. We used to get a little amusement sometime out of it once in a while.

And all of a sudden, one night, when we got up in the morning, believe me, it was such a tragedy that I'll never forget it, we saw the whole barrack-- I mean blocks, thousands and thousands of people, totally gone. Not a soul. The barracks are empty.

And when we went to work, when we stayed-- in the back of the barrack we used to line up for going to work-- the chimneys were just blasting. And the smell was unbelievable, because it wasn't too far away. You could see the chimneys. And everybody says, see, here they go. They're going out the chimney.

And we knew they were gassed, and we knew they were burned, and this is what it is. And we went to work.

We came home from work, there was a new crowd of people down there in the same barracks that the gypsy lives. And believe it or not, you know who the people were? They made room for the last transport from the Łódź Ghetto in October of 1944.

Of course, the ones who were from Łódź, from my city, you can imagine the anxiety to find out everybody was next to the barbed wire, screaming their lungs out. And it wasn't-- I would estimate 200, 250 feet, away screaming, hollering, because you couldn't see it. Did you see my brother, and everybody at the same time.

And believe it or not, then I found my brother, who came at the last transport. This was my half brother, Szmereł, who came from Łódź. And I told him to go a little farther down where there wasn't so many people, that I could hear, because the screaming was unbelievable.

And I ask him what happened to my family? What happened to the father, and mother, and so on. He told me the following, that I still don't know anything, that my father was taken away in 1942 with my only brother, OK? And then he said they took Mother with the sisters, also the latter part of '42.

Where they went or what happened to them, he don't know. But I surmised they probably took them to Chelmno, because this was the time when they gassed 400,000 people or whatever it was in Chelmno on these gas trucks. And there is no sign, there is no memorial. There is a memorial. I went through Chelmno in 1983. But there is no names, nothing. There's nothing that I can find out until today.

And with my brother at that time, and I was so involved on what happened to the family, little did I realize that my first cousin, who was named after my same grandfather, Shmuel Leib Laufer-- his name is the same, identical, because his father and my father were brothers-- was standing next to my brother, and I didn't even realize. I just found out two years ago, when I put an ad in the paper in Israel, that this cousin is alive.

And he was telling me episodes that I did not remember between me and my brother by the-- what I told him and what I asked him. Because I guess I had so much that I wanted to forget, maybe, that he reminded me. He said, do you remember when you threw some bread across for him? Certain episodes. And sure enough he's alive, and I just found him two years ago. So this would happen in Auschwitz.

From Auschwitz, we went again to other camp, because Auschwitz, I believe, was about almost finished at that time. I believe the Russians were approaching. And a lot of them met a terrible fate. They killed a lot of people. They gassed a lot of people. They took everybody who couldn't walk or whatever. They finished them up.

And us, they still kept on for labor. They took us out of camp, and from there we went to Dachau. We stayed in Dachau a few months, not long. All this, mind you, is October 1944 until March 31, 1945. So it's a



very few months.

We went to Dachau. From Dachau we went to Sachsenhausen. From Sachsenhausen we went to Buchenwald.

And Buchenwald was pretty bad too, but we were down there probably not over a month. And from Buchenwald, they selected some people, and they send them to Ohrdruf.

Now Ohrdruf is another camp that I remember vividly, because this was my last one. And I really run away from Ohrdruf. And I believe this--

10 minutes.

OK.

In Ohrdruf, where I run away from. And I was liberated by the United States Army. And this was March 31-- actually April 4 of 1945.

I don't know if you have enough time. Do you want me to tell you--

You have about 10 minutes. If you can summarize some of what happened at Ohrdruf. I know that we have--

OK, let me tell you in Ohrdruf what happened. On march 31, 1945, suddenly the camp was evacuated at a very short notice, because the day before, and maybe two days before, even, we heard some artillery shots.

Right.

This we have on tape from last week, about the liberation. Is this something you want to tell us about Ohrdruf itself prior to the liberation?

Well, I can tell you that we-- actually the liberation was working. We run away, and then I was hiding out in a air raid shelter. From there, we came back to the camp. And we were liberated by the United States Army in Ohrdruf.

And from there, I worked for the United States Army until September of 1945. Then I was fortunate enough to met a captain by the name of Ben Kaplan, who was then the director of supply and transportation for UNRRA under Fiorello La Guardia. I was his boss.

And he took a liking to me. He said, Leo, you come along with me. And I had a really wonderful time from 1945 until 1948, until when there was the Berlin blockade. I remember when we had the Berlin blockade, we sent a transport of food and clothing from Hanau, with tanks.

And he told me-- he said, Leo, you are still a DP, which is a Displaced Person. He said, let's go to Frankfurt, and we'll make your papers, and you'll go to the United States.

And then, of course, we still had to have a sponsor, one of them from work and one of them for lodging. And Al Schwartz, which I mentioned before, was with the 134 Anti-Aircraft that I met a few days after the liberation. He signed his affidavit that he will keep me in his house.

And Ben Kaplan secured a friend of his in Nassau County in New York to give me a job. And even though I didn't need either one of them, but we had to have it. Legal.

I know our filming time is short. Could you just maybe briefly tell us what effect this all has had on your life?

It had, I believe, probably good and bad. Let me tell you the good and then I'll tell you the bad. The good, I believe it makes you a much stronger human being to fight for the right of humanity. You see the inequities

that has been done to humanity, and you want to preserve a better future. You want your children to have more than you had. You want to give them the best education that money can buy, because I didn't achieve it.

The bad that you have, the bad thing about it, is it is to me that anyone who went through this type of atrocities, I would hardly say that he could be 100%, not normal, but not being the way it should be. And I can tell by my own family and my own daughters, my own wife, who is a second-generation Dallasite, it is hard for me to tell her, because I feel that the person born in this country, where it's so free, and so taken for granted about America, that I feel that they cannot understand it, that it's something missing there. Maybe they don't believe it, and what transpired. It's hard.

And this is, I think, the dilemma probably of a lot of our survivors. And I don't think that any of our survivors who has gone through some traumas, that you could be really 100% normal. It's very hard, including me.

I know I've been a good father, and a good husband, and a good provider. But still there is this anxiety of the past.

I'll give an example. Where could I go to find a grave [CRYING] of my parents? This is the dilemma.

When I went back to Poland, at least I saw the grave of my brother, and I can relate that tragedy happened. He got sick. He died. He's buried down there. I don't know the rest of them.

And you know there are so many things. And when you grow up, especially when you left as a youngster, that you would want to ask about my father. I don't know anything about my father's family. I didn't know the names. I was too young to absorb all this, or to make notes. Where do you get it? I probably die and I won't know.

But there are certain things, if you live you can find a lot. I just was in Israel not too long ago. And I found out that my great-grandfather was a rabbi in Poland. I did not know until a few months ago. And he is buried on Mount of Olives.

But the new life, my daughter researched it while she is attending Hebrew University. And she found, actually, through the chevra kadisha, that he was the beit din, the chief rabbi, at that time in the 18-- the latter part of the 1800s-- 1890, I believe. That he died down there. And the grave is still there.

And we went to the cemetery, and I found the stone. Can you imagine that? It's almost 100 years. It's over 100 years.

But where are my parents? Where can I search for them? There's no place. I hope-- I'm searching now to find anybody who has lived in the house when they took me away in 1940 so I can find out at least the fate. How did my mother look? When did they take them away? How was my brother? How was my sister? This is the dilemma.

I think that we have to-- I think we have to stop now for the time being.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

And we thank you.

Thank you.

I'm sorry. It's-- gets emotional.

Nothing to be sorry for. Understandable.