

It's going to be aired. Well, what do you mean, our tape?

Yes, no, no, no, no. I'm talking about Milton Berle.

Oh, now? He's on--

I'm Donald Freedheim. Today we are interviewing Mr. Marvin Newman, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section.

Good morning, Mr. Newman.

Good morning.

How are you today?

Pretty good. It's nice to be here.

Good. We appreciate very much your coming here and speaking with us this morning.

Nice to be here.

Tell me, where do you live now?

I live in Beachwood, Ohio. My address is 25333 Hilltop Drive. I'm a mason contractor.

I see.

My profession is a bricklayer. I'm also a homebuilder.

A homebuilder? Who do you work for?

As a home builder, I build top quality houses.

Is that the name of the company, Top Quality?

No, no, no. The name of the company is Newman Builders Incorporated.

I see. I see. Do you have a family?

Yes, I do. I have a family. I have two sons and a daughter. My daughter is married. I have a two-year-old grandson. Fortunately, my older son got married yesterday.

Oh, that's very nice. That's very nice.

What does he do?

He is also a bricklayer and a home builder. He works with me and also works on his own.

Where does your daughter live now?

My daughter lives also in Beachwood, Ohio.

She lives here?

Yes.

Well, I'd like to go back now to your childhood in Europe.

Yes.

I'd like you to tell us where and when you were born.

Yeah. I was born October 10, 1929.

Where was that?

That was in Jasina, Czechoslovakia.

How do you spell Jasina?

Y-A-S-I-N-A.

In Czechoslovakia, where is that?

That is or was in the central Carpathians. It borders Czechoslovakia and Galicia. Otherwise, we were right on the border of Poland.

Did you live there the early years of your childhood?

Yes. I was born there. I lived my early horrible years till I was taken. In the end of 1943, I was taken away from my home.

The Germans came in about a 1942. We were, like, a house arrest.

Well, let's go back. We'll come to that. Let's go back a little bit. What did your father do? What did your family do?

We had a farm. We had a farm, and my father also was a tinner by trade.

A tailor?

A tinner.

Tinner.

Tinner, I see.

He used to make pots and pans, and roofs and gutters, and all that.

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Yes, We were a family of six brothers and two sisters and my mom and dad.

Where were you in the brothers and sisters?

Between me and my brothers and sisters, I was the second oldest from my brother.

I see. How old was he? How much older was he?

My brother, fortunately, he did survive. He's four years older than I am.

Four years older?

Yes.

All the ones were younger.

Yes.

Now tell me something about the town. Was it a large town, a small town?

The town was a good-sized town. There was about 15,000 inhabitants and about 2,000 Jews. So it was a town of 17,000 people. Lumber was the big business. In Yasina was all lumber.

I see.

Yeah.

Did they have forests around?

Oh, huge forests, otherwise, we could cut lumber for 100 years and we would never cut it out, forestry.

Was the town very divided between the Jews and the non-Jews? Do you remember in those early years?

No. Otherwise, the Jews lived mostly in the surrounding areas in the main town. The people, the inhabitants, where they lived over there, it was mostly hilly.

But it was integrated? There was no Jewish ghetto?

No, no, no, no. Before the war, or before Hitler, or even the puppet regime of Hungary came in over there, they were a puppet of the Nazis, and there was no integrated or whatsoever. Everything was equal because Czechoslovakia was a democratic state.

Was it an Orthodox community or a conservative? What was the religious nature?

I would say it was mostly Orthodox. But I would say just like over here, if you wanted to believe in something. But I would say 80% of the people were Orthodox.

Was your family Orthodox?

They were Orthodox. But what it brought us, I mean, my mom and dad till they went to the gas chamber, they were real Orthodox. But unfortunately, me and my brother, what we start experiencing, we just didn't have a chance to follow the Orthodox things up. We just had to abandon that.

Do you remember something of the early school years, what kind of schooling you had?

Yes, unfortunately, my early school years, you see, we used to have, in our place over there, fortunate, we had a shortwave radio. Being us by the border, so we also listened daily from London, and all that, and current events, what's going on in the world. Would you ask me that word again?

Well, I wondered how those early years were--

Yeah, OK.

--in terms of schooling. Did you go to regular school, or did you go to a special school?

No, no, we went to a regular school.

A public school?

Public school, absolutely.

Did you have many friends who were not Jewish?

Yeah, we had many friends where they were not Jewish. It didn't make any difference. I mean, before the war started, it didn't make any difference whether you were a Jew or a Gentile or what they called it. We also had in our hometown-- what they call those?

Catholics?

We had Catholics. We also had--

Gypsies?

No, no, no, these people what they believe in, they use Sabbath. What they call that?

They weren't Islam?

No, no, no, no, no, no. They have temples. But they go Sabbath. They believe in Sabbath, Seventh Day Adventist.

Seventh Day Adventist?

Adventists, yes, yes.

Now when did you start to feel that there was something wrong? Can you recall a time when there was beginning to be some anxiety in the family?

Well, by us living at a border town on Poland, I remember when in, like, June, when Hitler invaded Poland. It was a beautiful daylight.

I seen dozens and dozens of white aeroplanes when they attacked Danzig and all that. This is when the war started.

Now that was 1939.

That was in 1939.

Now was there any indication that might happen?

Yes.

Do you remember any discussion of that?

Because first of all, we had the indications. We prepared ourselves in our hometown because we were at the border of Poland. Poland, already then, was very anti-Semitic towards the Jews. So in other things, people still crossed Poland coming into Czechoslovakia over there. We did get the messages how things originated and how things progressed from then on.

So you were hearing it through the radio and other ways?

The radio and, also, people came through. They crossed the borders, and so forth.

Were you aware of any anti-Semitism in your town before 1939?

Yes, yes. I was aware of anti-Semitism because what I would say is we did have fanatic Catholics. They did not like the Jews. Since I was a small boy, they did not like the Jews because they were fanatics.

They had that picture, Jesus Christ on the wall. They hated the Jews because otherwise, they had in their heart, and their parents, from parents to parent, they told that Jews killed Jesus Christ. That's why they had hate for us.

Now was that connected in any way with what was happening in Germany?

No, no. That was not connected in any way. Yeah, that's just going back, way back.

Now before 1939, before the attack of Poland, the invasion of Poland, Yes was there any military activity in your town?

Yes, yes, there was military activities around the clock. After 1939 and 1940, there was military. We also lived by a train. We also had activity that they start evacuating all the Jews.

Before that, though?

Oh, yes, there was.

Before 1939.

There was.

In your town, there was military?

I mean, around the clock, hungry, and we even had armies coming from Italians and crossing into, going-- all of those armies and everything else around the clock, fighting against Russia.

Now did you begin to notice any further anti-Semitism around this time, let's say in school or among your friends? Did your friendships change?

Yeah, it did. See, after 1939 and the hate for the Jews became effective. So even a lot of our friends, going back, a lot of our friends and neighbors, but we were friends, some of them just turned against us.

How did your family react?

They couldn't react much. There's not much they could do.

Was there any talk of leaving the country among your family?

No. See, we were a big family, and we were a close, tight family. See, in 1939 also, some family of mine, we had a chance. Otherwise, in 1939, there was Russia. Otherwise, Russia came and occupied part of that Poland. We had a chance, a lot of our friends or relatives, they were fed up with the regime and the Nazis and everything else.

So they crossed into Russia. Some of them came back. Some of them just stayed there forever or never came back.

But you do remember the planes going over?

Yes, every day. Tanks and armored vehicles and horses and mules and so forth, but that was a border town. There was never a dull moment.

Then what happened in the town around that time, in terms of your family's situation? Was your father able to work? Was he still able to carry on his job?

Yes, my father was able to work. I mean, partially, not in full speed like he-- we used to work for a-- see, most of our people inhabitants were Ukrainians. Otherwise, we were born in Czechoslovakia. But central Carpathians, most inhabitants are Ukrainians. There was a province, otherwise. It was a province of Czechoslovakia.

Now when was the first time that there was that you felt, can you remember, a threat to your family?

Well, I tell you what. The first time I felt a threat to our family and to our whole community was actually in 1939. I mean, ever since Hitler invaded, even ever since it occurred in Germany, the Crystal Night, or whatever it was. Ever since then, there was no place for the Jews nowhere.

Well, now how did your family react to that?

Well, it disturbed us. So otherwise, it disturbed us. We could no longer live a stable life.

Then was there a time in which there was an actual threat to the family, where police came in?

Yes. Yes. See, actually, most of the Jews in 1940, otherwise, most of the Jews, you see, we were dominated by a fascist Hungarian government. They cooperated with the Nazis. See, Czechoslovakia left in 1939. Hungary moved in. They were a part, otherwise, they were a puppet government of the Nazi regime.

Yes.

They started in 1939. They started taking Jews. I mean, around the clock, trains from all over Czechoslovakia, there was Czech and Slovakia and Hungary. And they started taking Jews to Poland of no return. Otherwise, we used to have that trains.

At one time, a policeman came in and he was supposed to take a report. So they were supposed to also take us to Poland, either shot us, or execute us. There was a river there in Russia, or in someplace in White Russia named [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. So that's where they executed most of the Jews.

But it just so happens my mother didn't speak any Hungarian. That might have saved us for the time being evacuated.

People from your town, then, in 1940, began to be taken.

Right, some of them. But some of them were taken, and some of them were left at the present.

What was the atmosphere then in your family and friends?

I mean, there is not much. I mean, we had no power. After that, we were only limited places to go. Me and my brother, we worked, otherwise.

We were very young. But we were capable to work. Many times the Germans, they crossed day and night also with trains. And many times, the German army, there wasn't a Wehrmacht.

And otherwise, they needed help to unload slabs, the ham slabs, and they were full of salt. Otherwise, all that shipment was going to the front. Otherwise, we were right on the border and it was going through the front many miles. They needed workforce.

So they took us. We got beaten up. Some of the Germans used to take the hams and juice it in that salt. The salt was over the slabs, so keeping it from surviving, that bacon.

We used to get beat up and kicked after we worked. So they let us go back home.

This is when you were 10 and your brother was 14?

Yeah, I was 10 years old. Otherwise, our education was stopped. We were no longer accepted at the public schools because we were discriminated because we were Jews. So that's why we no longer were the same people as those other people.

This was in 1939, 1940?

This was in late '39 and starting in 1940.

Then what happened as the war went on?

Well, then what happened is we did survive, sort of and had a very hard time. We stayed at that home town. They kept taking Jews, mostly Jews, and they around the clock, and taking them.

Mostly, at that time, I don't think there was no concentration camp. There were, but they mostly were shot.

Did you know that at the time? Do you remember?

Yes.

So you knew where they were going?

Yeah, in fact, they took me one time, too. They took me across the border. And fortunately, I don't know. Somebody must have--

Well, how was that? Explain that. What happened? Do you remember the experience?

Yes.

Talk about it.

Otherwise, they rounded up some of the Jews in our home town. I was downtown over there. So these SS, or whatever, they used green uniforms at that time. I didn't have any experience, till later on I get to know the names and everything else. But we were surrounded.

Who was surrounded?

I was surrounded.

You and who else?

No, no, just me. Just me with some other Jews were surrounded. I was taken. We were taken.

Otherwise, we walked. We crossed the border over there. It just so happens that I took a chance.

What did you do?

I just ran away. It was mostly forest. Otherwise, most of the people, where they were executed, were executed off limits to civilians in some areas that civilians didn't go through or anything else. Or if you get executed, most of the times you had to dig your own grave in order to be executed.

Did you see that or did you hear--

No, no, no, no, no, I seen that. I seen that.

So you knew when you were taken across the border--

I knew for what reason, absolutely.

So you went, your first opportunity?

Yeah. See, that was my first opportunity. But unfortunately, it's just like when police come over here and they surround a lot of cars, and a couple of them get away.

It just so happens I got away. I was small and slick. I was prepared because I know that the only way to survive is maybe keep running. That's the only way you can survive.

You ran back home?

I ran back. I mean, it took me a couple of days to go through. It's all forest, you know? I had to visualize where I'm at and stay away from the public. I came back home. Nothing happened.

Then as time went, then what happened?

Then, as time went on, I mean, otherwise, they keep executing Jews, and killing, and so forth. Otherwise, we stayed there at Yasina till end of 1943.

So you were there till the end of '43?

Yes.

How many Jews were left at the town?

Yeah, I'll tell you what. I would say maybe 70% of the Jews were still there.

Were still there?

Yes.

Working or just--

Well, I mean, most of the businesses were confiscated.

But you were not in school?

No, no, no, no. I was not in school.

Just working around?

Just working around, or see where we can get some food for the families. Because all our sisters and brothers were smaller. Otherwise, we had to see if we can get some food in order for our family to survive.



Now at this point, you're 14. Your brother, your older brother was 18. The whole family was still intact.

Right. OK. At this time over there, finally, the day came--

Well, let me ask you something. Did you still have that radio, that shortwave radio?

Yeah. We had that shortwave radio till the end of the ride. We heard when all the forces-- we heard everything daily broadcast from London. Yes.

Was that allowed?

No, no, no, that wasn't allowed. If they would have caught us, we would have got shot instantly. We just confiscated that. Otherwise, we just buried it. That's all.

What happened at the end of 1943?

At the end of 1943, they finally caught up with us.

How did that happen?

Well, they rounded us up.

Your family as well as others?

The whole town, otherwise, they rounded us up. They rounded up--

House to house?

No, you round from house to house. They rounded us up. They took us to a train.

Do you remember that day?

Absolutely.

Can you tell me what happened that day?

Well, I mean, they surrounded us. They took us to a train and loaded us up.

Was your whole family together?

Yeah, yeah, the whole family was together.

How were they reacting to this?

Well, I mean, everybody was crying and all that.

You were?

Me, my older brother, otherwise, see, you know, the thing is, crying actually didn't help. Because the only thing I know is it was not pleasant on our heart. That didn't help.

Yeah. But your father and mother and the whole family were together going to the train?

Right, the whole family, my mother and my father, and we were six brothers and two sisters. In fact, my youngest brother was born, was just two months. He was born around October or November of 1943, my youngest brother.

So your mother was carrying?

Yeah, right. She was carrying while we went through all that ordeal. She was pregnant. Fortunately, I had a brother.

It just so happens, unfortunately, that I remember all my brothers, the names, sisters. I just cannot remind myself of what my mother and father named that child.

But now you're going to the train. Do you remember, can you recall your thinking at that time?

Yes, absolutely. I mean, hollering was to the sky. I mean, you know how people holler. Naturally, you're being taken and loading in them animal wagons. You got barbed wire around those small windows.

Did you have any possessions from your house? Do you take any possessions?

There wasn't much. They wouldn't let us take anything. Just I mean, not food or anything, or maybe a few blankets. Yeah, everything, we had to leave everything there.

Did you have a feeling as to where you were going?

Yeah, oh, absolutely. I had a feeling, because another thing is we knew what the Germans are doing with the Jews.

Did they say where they were taking you?

They didn't say.

They just were rounding up?

They never said it. They never said it.

What time of day was it?

Daylight, like in a morning day.

You were herded onto a train?

Well, otherwise, they rounded us up. They round us up like cattle. If you didn't go fast enough, or there was sick people, or couldn't go over there, they hit you with a gun, with other side of the gun.

If you couldn't go, then they just left you there and gone. You got killed, that's all. You got shot.

Now did you have any gang of friends at that time? Were you able to make other friends?

Like an uprising or something? No.

No, not an uprising, just that usually around that age, you have--

Yeah, I had many friends. Yeah, like boyfriends, yeah, I had many friends, even many friends. Fortunately, some of the few survived.

Were they all Jews? Were all your buddies--

Well, I mean, before Hitler came in, I had all kinds of friends, non-Jewish.

But I mean right around this time in the '40s.

Jews.

They were all Jews.

This was all--

How about girlfriends? Did you have any social life with girls at that time?

No, there was no social life. First of all, your mind-- another thing is when you see they expedite all these people, and they execute all these people of no return, you know. So otherwise, your social life was-- first of all, I was young. My mind was always how we getting into this mess and how to get out of this mess.

How to survive.

That was how to survive, and that was my only thing in life, day by day.

So now going to the train that morning?

Yes.

But then what happened?

Going to the train, then they finally evacuated all the Jews from my hometown. They took us to a place. It took about two, three days. They took us to Hungary.

Now, was your family all together on the train?

All together.

Were there others in the car? How many people were?

Oh, God knows. Maybe in one car, a carload? God knows, maybe 200 people in one place.

Were you able to sit?

Stand up. there? Was no toilet facilities or anything.

Was there any food? Did they give you any food?

The only food was we were able to take. Then, we didn't have any food. Some of those other people, they had a little more food, we shared.

How about your mother and the baby?

I tell you one thing is the mother and the baby, see my mother used to breastfeed the baby. So if she ate, I MEAN that's how the baby survived. Yes.

So you were on that train for, you say, two or three days?

Two or three days, And the destination was someplace Hungary. They brought us to a cemetery.

Now let me ask. Did the women and men divide on the train?

No, no, no, no, no, no.

So how did you do the toilet? How was the toilet--

It wasn't a very pleasant thing. No. It wasn't. Otherwise, children and women and wives and kids was all on the same train.

Did they ever let you out to just walk around and get some air?

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. There wasn't such thing over there. There was only about four or five guys on the whole train.

Listen. There was only about four or five guys with submachine guns. They never let us out. The only way we can peek out is through that small window. That small window was surrounded by barbed wire.

Now were there people at that time crying on the train?

Yeah, they did. But it didn't help nothing. You can cry to God, but it didn't help nothing.

What happened when the train stopped, then, when you got off?

Well, I mean, the train went for two, three days. I mean, it stopped, it went, and it stayed.

Till it got to Hungary.

--till we got to Hungary. Then we stayed there for about three weeks. So they put us up, maybe 10,000 Jews over there. They put us up right on a cemetery. We stayed right on that cemetery. We stayed there for about two or three weeks.

This was what time of year?

This was between February and March of 1944.

And were there tents or huts?

No, no, no, no, no. There was no tents or anything. We just stayed right on an open sky.

Was it cold? Wasn't it cold?

Cold-- I was young. I mean, there was no tents or anything. Maybe we shared, or we had some jackets or something, or maybe we still had some blankets left from our home place.

Your family was together in that cemetery?

Right.

Did you know what was happening then? Did you know?

Yes, absolutely. We definitely knew what was happening. Maybe my mother and father didn't know. But another thing is, the destination was Auschwitz from there.

But you didn't know that at the time?

They told us.

Oh, they did?

Yes. They told us. So destination was Auschwitz.

What did that mean to you?

That means that that was the place where you go and you get gassed and you get executed.

Was there any attempt to escape by anyone?

No ways.

Did your older brother-- how did he feel? He was 18.

I mean, we were together. We didn't talk much about it. But it was a very unpleasant thing.

Because we were watched. We were watched around the clock with submachine guns and everything else. So no way was there an escape.

Anyone who objected was hit or was--

I mean, that was a common thing.

So how long would you say you were in that cemetery?

For three weeks.

Three weeks.

Yes. At that time, after three weeks, we were about 10,000 Jews over there. At that time, they brought trains over there. We went to the trains like cattle. They loaded up by load, day by day, and destination was Auschwitz.

Now when you went on that train, were you with your family?

Yes.

Still with the family?

Still with the family, right. When we left Hungary, we crossed a big city in Slovakia name was Kaschau. That was destination Auschwitz. So it took us about two or three days. At least, every transport was no less than 2,000 people. So we came. Then we finally did arrive in Auschwitz.

What happened? Do you remember the time of day?

Absolutely. I came in in Auschwitz, I would say, between 10:00 and 11 o'clock.

Morning or night?

Morning.

Morning, OK.

Yes, we crossed we crossed Krakow, a big city of Krakow. That's about 20 kilometers from Auschwitz. They shipped us in to actually Auschwitz. They call it Auschwitz, but we were in Birkenau. This is where most of the executing took place.

So I came into Auschwitz. And as I went off the wagon, so I seen brand new-- I seen a vision over there. A Polish Jew came over to me and he said, I mean, from nowhere he said to me in Jewish, Kannst du arbeiten? I told him yes. Ich kann arbeiten.

You work?

So to work. So, Du kannst arbeiten, he says. He said to me like this, you go on that side where the strong people go. You go on that side.

So I followed him.

Just to you or to your family?

No, no, no, just to me. Because my family, at that point, I left my family. Because my family went to the right. Right, that means all the kids and all the ladies and all the older people and all the sick people went to the right. That means you went--

At that time?

At that time, I didn't know. But I was told after they took care of me over there that those are all the people went to the gas chamber.

This is just immediately getting off the train?

Immediately getting off the train. So the last words, what my mother said, the last word what my mother said was-- see my name is Marvin. I changed my name. My Jewish name is Moshe Leib.

She said Moshe, [GERMAN]. I just turned around and left.

What does that mean?

That means where are you going in the world? That I'm a young child, you know, still a teenage child, and where are you going? That meant where are you going in a world all by yourself.

Yes.

Yes. Because she wanted me around her, and I didn't listen to her. OK. Then, as we went off, proceeded, and SS surrounded us, then 10 minutes later, a doctor comes over. He was about your size, a little shorter than you.

He came over and asked who are twins or triplets and all that. I experienced him like he would have been five, six feet away from me. It just so happens we did have some twins and a couple of triplets in our hometown. Yes.

So they were taken away immediately. Then I stayed in Auschwitz for--

Before that, did your older brother go to the left with you?

No, no. My older brother went also to the same side where I went and my dad also left my mother with four brothers and two sisters. He also came on the same side there where we did.

Because of what that person said?

That man told us--

If you can work, go to the left.

Yes, yeah, go to the left. Otherwise, this group they were expediting. Otherwise, this is a group where they was expediting, the people where they went to the gas chamber, and also some of the people what will be selected to the workforce in various concentration camps.

Now do you remember the parting of your mother and father?

Beg pardon?

Do you remember the parting of your mother and father?

Yes, I mean, the parting was that they went one side and I was the other side. That was it.

But do you remember what your mother and father said or how they--

No, my mother, the last word my mother said, where are you going in a world all by yourself.

Do you remember seeing her, then, going to the--

Yeah, I remember seeing her going. They were rounding them up. They were taking them to the gas chamber.

Did you know at the time?

Yes, absolutely. I certainly know.

You knew that was the end?

Absolutely. I had it in my heart, and I knew all about it.

So then what happened to you?

Then what happened to me? Then what happened to me, they took me away with some other younger people and strong people. They kind of had me isolated in a block. It was maybe a couple blocks, that means a couple of buildings away from the gas chamber.

They had us isolated over there. I stayed in Auschwitz for eight days.

Were you alone? You say isolated alone or were you with some others?

No, we were with some other people.

With some others?

Yes.

Your mother or your father?

No, no, no, no, no, no. I never see my father after that. Yeah. So it just so happens I have never seen my father and I have never seen my brother because they said do you have any relatives? We said, yes, I have a brother and a father.

When we said that, they split us up. They split us up. That means that we will never return again.

Did your father survive or no? Is that the last time?

No, no, my father did survive 10 days after he was liberated in Dachau. He died 10 days after the liberation, and he was buried in a mass grave.

But you did not see him?

No, no, no.

You didn't know where he was?

No, because they split us up.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes. So you were there for eight days?

Eight days.

What were you thinking this time? Do you remember what was going through your mind?

The only thing in my mind was ever going through that how in the world, even I know I was many times, like they say, on a death row and there was no escape. But the only thing in my mind was hope and how to survive.

You kept hoping.

Kept hope. I never gave up hope.

What happened during those eight days?

Those eight days, we were isolated. Unfortunately, I almost died there. We didn't get much food. It just so happens a man was half dead and he couldn't eat. He gave me the food. So I think that survived me.

After the eight days, they set us up. Barbed wire was all over there and the trains coming and going over there. Finally, they round us up, 2,000 people, and destination Mauthausen.

Mauthausen was a camp in Austria. It was a headquarters of a camp. It was surrounded about 25 different branches of concentration camps. But Mauthausen was a headquarters.

This was what time of year? This was March, about of '44?

This was right in March. Right. All that took place right in March.

All right. Then what happened when you got to Mauthausen?

Well, I mean, it took about three days. It took about three or four days to get-- they loaded us up in the same wagons, cattle, no sanitary, right, like cattle, no sanitary, or no food, or anything. They took us up about three days.

With a freight train, we went through Poland into Czechoslovakia and then into Austria, through Vienna. Because I could see through the little window.



Your brother was not with you at this point?

At that point, my brother was with me.

He was?

To Mauthausen. Yes. So finally, we did arrive to Mauthausen. I don't know what it was Saturday or Sunday. We did arrive to Mauthausen on a morning.

It was about 10 kilometers where we got off from the train. Finally, we came to Mauthausen. It was like a fortress, otherwise. It was up on a hill.

That headquarters was built like a fortress. It had those winding streets going up. I mean, those serpentines going up.

When we came up over there, finally, when we came to Mauthausen, there was about five or six kettles of water, I mean, just water. After not eating three, four days, a lot of people didn't make Mauthausen, or otherwise they died right in those wagons. They just couldn't take that punishment.

So I seen five or six kettle of small water over there. I took a chance and ran to that water and duck my head in there and drank some water. So by the time I started to get a sip of water, they were SS over there. They were dressed always with these boots. Yeah, and I got kicked in the stomach. But it didn't bother me, kick in the stomach, as long as I got a little bit of water. So that kind of revived me a little bit and give me a little hope.

Then what happened?

Then what happened? OK. After that, we went and we took all the clothes we were all on traveling. They gave us different clothes. Yeah, they gave us different clothes.

What sort of clothes?

Otherwise, they gave us the clothes what they wore in the concentration camp, the white and the blue, you know, those striped clothes. Yeah. Automatically, I became a-- what you call it-- they give me a number in Mauthausen, my debt number. They call it a debt number.

Otherwise, we had roll call. Every day in the morning, we had a roll call.

What does that mean?

A roll call, that means an appellplatz, they call that in German. There were 20,000 or 30,000 people stand on roll call, either you dead or alive. That means to report, see how many people are still living, and how many people are dead, and so forth.

What time was that in the morning?

We had it in the morning. We used to get up at 4:30 in the morning. OK. Going back, see I didn't stay in Mauthausen. Going back, I was shipped to another concentration camp about 10 kilometers from Mauthausen. The name of those camp was Gusen 1, Gusen.

How do you spell Gusen?

G-U-Z-E-N. Gusen 1 and Gusen 2, each one housed 20,000 people. They killed 2,000 a day, they brought another transport a day.

These were all men, all boys?

These were all-- boys were, just unfortunately, maybe 150 or 200 boys. They were 40,000 men. In each camp, they housed 20,000 men. If they executed or different style of death, they keep bringing every day fresh, new people.

Tell me about the living arrangements. Tell me about where you slept.

OK. See the living arrangements was not very pleasant. Otherwise, beds were made out of boards. There was three story bed. They housed us-- every night we had to go to sleep. Otherwise, first of all, in a block, there was at least 2,000 people in every block.

As far as the baths is, it was all boards. There was no blankets or anything. They housed us, we slept in a bed between six and eight people in a bed, one on top of each other.

Six to eight people across?

No, no, no, no. Yeah, right, across. Otherwise, it was a first floor, second floor, third floor.

Bunks? First bunk, second--

Right.

There were eight in each bunk?

Six between eight people, like, otherwise, they forced us into there. They forced us.

Did you know the people next to you?

No, not really. I never knew no people.

Were you one of the youngest?

A lot of them, they just went to sleep. A lot of them died, even. I used to sleep in the same bed. I used to go to sleep in the same bed with people that they never made it up the next day.

It happens at least two, three times a week. I went to sleep. Otherwise, they just forced us into, like, a herring or a fish, every night.

Was there any degree of social interchange, such as I'm so-and-so, I'm from so-and-so.

Yeah, there was. But everything was depressed. There was no hope otherwise.

How about the food?

The food was not good at all. First of all, they gave us bread. A loaf of bread, they split us up, for 20 people, one loaf of bread. The bread, it just so happens the bread was mixed with sand.

So you just ate--

Yeah. As far as for breakfast, they used to give you one bowl, we're talking about one bowl, figure, let's say, it's a liter, a liter. We had to split up with one bowl of coffee, or water, or hot water, we had to split up for 20 people. So by the time everyone got a sip, some of them got and some of them just didn't get nothing.

How were you feeling at that time, I mean, physically? Were you feeling weak, or were you feeling sick?

No, no, no, I was feeling fair.

Fair.

But not sick, thank God. Yes. Because I prepared myself for that. That's the way I went on.

All right. Well, let's take a little break.

Sure.

Then we'll come back.

Would be delighted.

We'll talk a little bit more.

I have many more material.

OK.