1 00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,260

2 00:00:06,260 --> 00:00:10,880 The following is an interview of Erwin Forley.

3 00:00:10,880 --> 00:00:15,080 Today is September 19, 1995.

4 00:00:15,080 --> 00:00:18,920 The interview is taking place in Chevy Chase, Maryland

5 00:00:18,920 --> 00:00:22,280 and is being conducted on behalf of the United States Holocaust

6 00:00:22,280 --> 00:00:23,245 Memorial Museum.

7 00:00:23,245 --> 00:00:26,490

8 00:00:26,490 --> 00:00:29,470 Please give us your full name.

9 00:00:29,470 --> 00:00:32,280 My full name is Erwin Forley.

10 00:00:32,280 --> 00:00:33,660 And where were you born?

11 00:00:33,660 --> 00:00:38,100 I was born in Czechoslovakia, Kosice, Czechoslovakia.

12 00:00:38,100 --> 00:00:40,650 And when were you born? 00:00:40,650 --> 00:00:46,860 December 6, 1927.

14 00:00:46,860 --> 00:00:49,410 Let's begin by talking about your childhood.

15 00:00:49,410 --> 00:00:53,040 Who made up your immediate family?

16 00:00:53,040 --> 00:00:56,670 My father, mother, brother, and sister.

17 00:00:56,670 --> 00:00:58,590 What was your father's name?

18 00:00:58,590 --> 00:01:00,660 His name was Henry.

19 00:01:00,660 --> 00:01:02,370 And what kind of work did he do?

20 00:01:02,370 --> 00:01:10,490 We had a farm and also alcohol factory, refinery, rather.

21 00:01:10,490 --> 00:01:12,120 How large was the farm?

22 00:01:12,120 --> 00:01:13,070 It was large.

23 00:01:13,070 --> 00:01:15,630 It was several generations.

24 00:01:15,630 --> 00:01:17,595 And your mother, her name?

25 00:01:17,595 --> 00:01:20,520 My mother, her name was Elizabeth,

26 00:01:20,520 --> 00:01:23,940 and she was born where I was born.

27 00:01:23,940 --> 00:01:28,620 Actually, the farm was about one hour away

28 00:01:28,620 --> 00:01:31,230 from where I was born.

29 00:01:31,230 --> 00:01:33,990 And her name was Charmin.

30 00:01:33,990 --> 00:01:36,110 Her maiden name was Charmin.

31 00:01:36,110 --> 00:01:38,850 Elizabeth Charmin.

32 00:01:38,850 --> 00:01:40,930 And did you have any brothers or sisters?

33 00:01:40,930 --> 00:01:43,350 I had one brother and one /

34 00:01:43,350 --> 00:01:46,013 And how old were they in relation to you,

35 00:01:46,013 --> 00:01:46,680 and their names?

36 00:01:46,680 --> 00:01:48,270 My brother was four years younger,

37 00:01:48,270 --> 00:01:51,880 my sister was four years older. 38 00:01:51,880 --> 00:01:53,310 And their names?

39 00:01:53,310 --> 00:01:58,020 My sister was Barbara, my brother was George.

40 00:01:58,020 --> 00:02:01,250 Did you have a large extended family living nearby, aunts,

41 00:02:01,250 --> 00:02:02,060 uncles, cousins?

42 00:02:02,060 --> 00:02:03,810 Very large.

43 00:02:03,810 --> 00:02:07,680 My father had four brothers and four sisters

44 00:02:07,680 --> 00:02:10,190 who were each was married.

45 00:02:10,190 --> 00:02:16,530 That made up of 16 people because eight children.

46 00:02:16,530 --> 00:02:20,010 They all perished except my mother,

47 00:02:20,010 --> 00:02:21,190 and they all had children.

48 00:02:21,190 --> 00:02:23,220 Some of their children survived.

49 00:02:23,220 --> 00:02:24,415 So were you close to them? 50 00:02:24,415 --> 00:02:25,790 Did you get together on holidays?

51 00:02:25,790 --> 00:02:27,990 Very close.

52 00:02:27,990 --> 00:02:30,890 Well, in temple, but we lived in the same town.

53 00:02:30,890 --> 00:02:33,990 Most of us lived in the same town, close by,

54 00:02:33,990 --> 00:02:37,770 and we met often.

55 00:02:37,770 --> 00:02:42,990 Did you live in the confines of the town or out in the country,

56 00:02:42,990 --> 00:02:44,130 being a farm?

57 00:02:44,130 --> 00:02:46,840 Well, in the beginning, we lived on a farm,

58 00:02:46,840 --> 00:02:50,850 and then we moved into town, which is the town that I

59 00:02:50,850 --> 00:02:52,162 mentioned, Munkacs.

60 00:02:52,162 --> 00:02:53,370 When did you move, what year?

61 00:02:53,370 --> 00:02:55,830 That was when I was six years old, 62 00:02:55,830 --> 00:03:00,300 so it must have been 1933, '34.

63 00:03:00,300 --> 00:03:03,810 How would you describe the economic status in your family?

64 00:03:03,810 --> 00:03:05,790 Was it middle class, upper class?

65 00:03:05,790 --> 00:03:07,030 I would say upper class.

66 00:03:07,030 --> 00:03:08,308 Upper class, OK.

67 00:03:08,308 --> 00:03:12,000

68 00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:13,253 Was it in a neighborhood?

69 00:03:13,253 --> 00:03:13,920 Do you remember?

70 00:03:13,920 --> 00:03:15,030 I know you were very young because you said

71 00:03:15,030 --> 00:03:16,197 you moved when you were six.

72 00:03:16,197 --> 00:03:17,820 Yes, it was a very good neighborhood.

73 00:03:17,820 --> 00:03:19,770 Before you moved, was it a neighborhood 74 00:03:19,770 --> 00:03:22,500 of non-Jews and Jews, or just strictly Jews?

75 00:03:22,500 --> 00:03:25,590

76 00:03:25,590 --> 00:03:26,133 It was mixed.

77 00:03:26,133 --> 00:03:27,300 It was a mixed neighborhood.

78 00:03:27,300 --> 00:03:28,092 Mixed neighborhood.

79 00:03:28,092 --> 00:03:29,860 And again, because you were young,

80 00:03:29,860 --> 00:03:31,810 do you have any recollections of any problems?

81 00:03:31,810 --> 00:03:33,030 Or was that a good time?

82 00:03:33,030 --> 00:03:34,480 No, I don't remember any problems.

83 00:03:34,480 --> 00:03:34,980 OK.

84 00:03:34,980 --> 00:03:37,420 And then you moved at the age of six.

85 00:03:37,420 --> 00:03:38,680 At the age of six, yes. 00:03:38,680 --> 00:03:39,180 Yeah.

87 00:03:39,180 --> 00:03:41,145 And what kind of area did you move

88 00:03:41,145 --> 00:03:42,520 to and what kind of neighborhood?

89 00:03:42,520 --> 00:03:45,990 We moved to so-called big city, which was Munkacs.

90 00:03:45,990 --> 00:03:48,630 By the way, the farm was Rakosh, which

91 00:03:48,630 --> 00:03:52,580 is 10 kilometers out of the city that we finally settled.

92 00:03:52,580 --> 00:03:57,920

93 00:03:57,920 --> 00:03:59,270 And we visited, of course.

94 00:03:59,270 --> 00:04:04,300 We always visited the farm, but my father, everyday he

95 00:04:04,300 --> 00:04:05,680 went to the farm.

96 00:04:05,680 --> 00:04:06,280 From the city.

97 00:04:06,280 --> 00:04:07,570 From this city. 00:04:07,570 --> 00:04:09,490 What was the reason that your family moved?

99 00:04:09,490 --> 00:04:10,280 Did you know that?

100 00:04:10,280 --> 00:04:12,450 Do you know?

101 00:04:12,450 --> 00:04:15,040 I think my mother probably and my father both

102 00:04:15,040 --> 00:04:17,529 wanted a big city, so-called big city.

103 00:04:17,529 --> 00:04:19,117 Tell us about the big city.

104 00:04:19,117 --> 00:04:20,200 How would you describe it?

105 00:04:20,200 --> 00:04:21,519 Well, it was very--

106 00:04:21,519 --> 00:04:25,870 Munkacs was a very Jewish city, actually.

107 00:04:25,870 --> 00:04:28,360 We had-- I can't remember how many,

108 00:04:28,360 --> 00:04:34,360 but 7,000 or 8,000 Jews, and the population was about 25,000.

109 00:04:34,360 --> 00:04:36,430 But most people were very orthodox,

00:04:36,430 --> 00:04:42,200 and the rabbi in Munkacs was very quite well known,

111

00:04:42,200 --> 00:04:44,860 whose son-in-law still lives in Israel.

112

00:04:44,860 --> 00:04:52,900 And we were religious orthodox, but not to the point where--

113

00:04:52,900 --> 00:04:54,220 we didn't have curls.

114

00:04:54,220 --> 00:04:57,970 And the we observed Shabbat and we observed kosher,

115

00:04:57,970 --> 00:05:01,210 and we were considered orthodox.

116

00:05:01,210 --> 00:05:06,690 And life in Munkacs for us was wonderful.

117

00:05:06,690 --> 00:05:10,460 What kind of religious training did you specifically have?

118

00:05:10,460 --> 00:05:15,490 Well, in the beginning, I had a Hebrew teacher, a Hebrew rabbi

119

00:05:15,490 --> 00:05:17,597 who came home every day.

120

00:05:17,597 --> 00:05:18,180 To your house?

121

00:05:18,180 --> 00:05:20,920

And he gave us

lessons for an hour,

122 00:05:20,920 --> 00:05:22,870 and at which point we always moved

123

00:05:22,870 --> 00:05:28,100 the clock ahead so the hour became 45 minutes [INAUDIBLE]..

124 00:05:28,100 --> 00:05:32,600 And after that, I went to public school, elementary school.

125 00:05:32,600 --> 00:05:35,320 And after that, there was a quota

126 00:05:35,320 --> 00:05:41,930 in high school, which was 6% at the time, of Jews allowed.

127 00:05:41,930 --> 00:05:43,450 Well, before we get to high school,

128 00:05:43,450 --> 00:05:46,390 let's talk still a little bit about your younger childhood.

129 00:05:46,390 --> 00:05:47,520 We'll get to high school.

130 00:05:47,520 --> 00:05:49,145 You said you went to elementary school.

131 00:05:49,145 --> 00:05:50,742 This was a public school--

132 00:05:50,742 --> 00:05:51,700 It was a public school.

00:05:51,700 --> 00:05:52,750 --with Jews and non-Jews?

134

00:05:52,750 --> 00:05:53,710 Jews and non-Jews.

135

00:05:53,710 --> 00:05:56,210 Teachers, Jewish and non-Jewish?

136

00:05:56,210 --> 00:05:58,870 Well, the schooling was very--

137

00:05:58,870 --> 00:06:00,550 in the beginning, I went to Czech school

138

00:06:00,550 --> 00:06:05,020 because it was from 1927 to '38 it was Czechoslovakia.

139

00:06:05,020 --> 00:06:07,330 Then in '38 and the Hungarians came,

140

00:06:07,330 --> 00:06:10,750 then we changed schools and went to Hungarian schools,

141

00:06:10,750 --> 00:06:14,140 and at which point then, right after we

142

00:06:14,140 --> 00:06:18,670 went to Hebrew gymnasium, which I went to the Hebrew gymnasium

143

00:06:18,670 --> 00:06:20,560 until the end.

144

00:06:20,560 --> 00:06:24,670 But the friends that we had were mostly Jews. 145 00:06:24,670 --> 00:06:27,910 We usually did not socialize with non-Jews,

146 00:06:27,910 --> 00:06:30,090 except for just saying hello.

147 00:06:30,090 --> 00:06:31,897 But the close friends were always Jews.

148 00:06:31,897 --> 00:06:33,230 What about in your neighborhood?

149 00:06:33,230 --> 00:06:36,280 Did you have neighbors who were non-Jews?

150 00:06:36,280 --> 00:06:37,860 Were you in a Jewish enclave?

151 00:06:37,860 --> 00:06:42,230 No, we had some neighbors that the non-Jews, not too many.

152 00:06:42,230 --> 00:06:44,350 And the relationship then?

153 00:06:44,350 --> 00:06:46,600 It was cordial, cordial.

154 00:06:46,600 --> 00:06:48,550 But it wasn't--

155 00:06:48,550 --> 00:06:49,840 I never had really--

156 00:06:49,840 --> 00:06:54,370 my mother had a very good friend who was not Jewish. 157 00:06:54,370 --> 00:06:59,650 And later on, I'll tell you just what happened to her.

158

00:06:59,650 --> 00:07:03,820 But I did not and my sister didn't, and we usually

159

00:07:03,820 --> 00:07:05,500 socialized with Jews.

160

00:07:05,500 --> 00:07:07,480 Were you interested in sports?

161

00:07:07,480 --> 00:07:13,740 Yes, I played soccer, I played tennis, but mostly soccer

162

00:07:13,740 --> 00:07:14,995 and ice skating.

163

00:07:14,995 --> 00:07:17,080 Did skiing, swimming.

164

00:07:17,080 --> 00:07:20,880 We had a river which was called the [INAUDIBLE],, which,

165

00:07:20,880 --> 00:07:21,760 as I understand--

166

00:07:21,760 --> 00:07:25,335 I haven't been back, but I understand it's dry now.

167

00:07:25,335 --> 00:07:26,710 And we used to go swimming there.

168

00:07:26,710 --> 00:07:29,710

169 00:07:29,710 --> 00:07:33,730 Did you belong to any youth groups?

170 00:07:33,730 --> 00:07:39,730 I belonged to-- actually, in the beginning, I belonged to--

171 00:07:39,730 --> 00:07:42,250 we had the Zionist groups.

172 00:07:42,250 --> 00:07:44,465 I belonged to the Betar.

173 00:07:44,465 --> 00:07:46,600 And what kind of things did you do in this group?

174 00:07:46,600 --> 00:07:49,232 We just met, and it was mostly social.

175 00:07:49,232 --> 00:07:50,560 It was mostly social.

176 00:07:50,560 --> 00:07:51,610 Boys and girls?

177 00:07:51,610 --> 00:07:53,123 Boys and girls.

178 00:07:53,123 --> 00:07:54,790 Did you live in a house or an apartment?

179 00:07:54,790 --> 00:07:56,350 We lived in a house.

180 00:07:56,350 --> 00:07:59,930 In the beginning, we lived in an apartment when we moved,

00:07:59,930 --> 00:08:03,850 and then we moved to the house.

182 00:08:03,850 --> 00:08:05,670 Did you have a very strict upbringing?

183 00:08:05,670 --> 00:08:09,760 Where your parents disciplinarians?

184 00:08:09,760 --> 00:08:12,840 Relatively so, but not really, not really.

185 00:08:12,840 --> 00:08:13,980 They were strict.

186 00:08:13,980 --> 00:08:16,750 I mean, in those days, everybody was strict, but not--

187 00:08:16,750 --> 00:08:22,030 I didn't find that they couldn't make me do things

188 00:08:22,030 --> 00:08:25,600 that I didn't want to do, except for maybe Hebrew

189 00:08:25,600 --> 00:08:29,230 lessons and things like that.

190 00:08:29,230 --> 00:08:30,700 Did your mother work?

191 00:08:30,700 --> 00:08:32,230 No, but she worked at home.

192 00:08:32,230 --> 00:08:34,789 Yeah, sure. 193 00:08:34,789 --> 00:08:43,172 And were there any special holidays

194 00:08:43,172 --> 00:08:44,630 that you remember, anything special

195 00:08:44,630 --> 00:08:46,630 you would want to talk about of getting together

196 00:08:46,630 --> 00:08:49,860 with family or anything that stands out

197 00:08:49,860 --> 00:08:53,990 in your memory of that time?

198 00:08:53,990 --> 00:08:56,750 Well, just immediately what stands out,

199 00:08:56,750 --> 00:09:00,260 I was very close to my cousin, one of my cousins,

200 00:09:00,260 --> 00:09:04,160 and we used to travel on bicycles to the farm, which

201 00:09:04,160 --> 00:09:05,240 was about 10 miles--

202 00:09:05,240 --> 00:09:08,420 10 kilometers-- where my grandfather lived,

203 00:09:08,420 --> 00:09:15,080 who was, at the time, maybe 75 or 77.

204

00:09:15,080 --> 00:09:17,600 And so we visited him, and he couldn't

205

00:09:17,600 --> 00:09:22,770 understand how a young man can drive with a girl together.

206

00:09:22,770 --> 00:09:24,110 This was a female cousin?

207

00:09:24,110 --> 00:09:28,160 Female cousin, by the way, who is here, who is in the States,

208

00:09:28,160 --> 00:09:28,660 survived.

209

00:09:28,660 --> 00:09:29,410 And her name?

210

00:09:29,410 --> 00:09:31,650 Her name is Irene.

211

00:09:31,650 --> 00:09:33,410 OK.

212

00:09:33,410 --> 00:09:37,820 When did you first notice a change in your life?

213

00:09:37,820 --> 00:09:40,160 You were 11 years old in 1938.

214

00:09:40,160 --> 00:09:43,770 Do you have any recollections of things,

215

00:09:43,770 --> 00:09:45,020 conditions starting to change?

216

00:09:45,020 --> 00:09:48,040

You mean after the Hungarians came in?

217

00:09:48,040 --> 00:09:48,860 Yeah.

218

00:09:48,860 --> 00:09:53,600 Not really, because we somehow we were--

219

00:09:53,600 --> 00:09:55,780 somehow we never realized just-

220

00:09:55,780 --> 00:09:57,110 it's just like here.

221

00:09:57,110 --> 00:10:01,130 People don't realize that the things are happening.

222

00:10:01,130 --> 00:10:04,940 In Serbia, if you ask a 12-year-old or a 15-year-old

223

00:10:04,940 --> 00:10:08,560 about Serbia, most of them, even though with television today,

224

00:10:08,560 --> 00:10:09,950 we have more news.

225

00:10:09,950 --> 00:10:12,980 But I remember my brother was four years younger,

226

00:10:12,980 --> 00:10:15,380 and he always asked, when Hitler spoke, he said,

227

00:10:15,380 --> 00:10:18,080 is this good for the Jews or bad?

00:10:18,080 --> 00:10:20,390 So today, possibly, a 10-year-old

229

00:10:20,390 --> 00:10:22,168 would know whether it's good or bad.

230

00:10:22,168 --> 00:10:22,710 I don't know.

231

00:10:22,710 --> 00:10:26,570 But those days, we were not involved with news as much

232

00:10:26,570 --> 00:10:28,730 as today.

233

00:10:28,730 --> 00:10:33,630 But we cared and we knew what was happening,

234

00:10:33,630 --> 00:10:35,583 but we didn't believe it.

235

00:10:35,583 --> 00:10:36,250 Nobody believed.

236

00:10:36,250 --> 00:10:39,790 We didn't believe it until 1944 when they took us.

237

00:10:39,790 --> 00:10:41,500 OK.

238

00:10:41,500 --> 00:10:44,060 I mean, granted, you were still very young in 1938.

239

00:10:44,060 --> 00:10:48,590

Is there any

incident in 1938 that

240 00:10:48,590 --> 00:10:56,260 stands out in regard to this, the coming war, the future war? 241 00:10:56,260 --> 00:10:56,760 Not really. 242 00:10:56,760 --> 00:10:58,880 You felt comfortable on the streets? 243 $00:10:58,880 \longrightarrow 00:10:59,580$ 244 00:10:59,580 --> 00:11:01,616 There were no changes as far as that. 245 00:11:01,616 --> 00:11:05,160 And 1939? 246 00:11:05,160 --> 00:11:06,310 Well, we--247

248 $00:11:08,440 \longrightarrow 00:11:10,560$ We sensed a little bit, but not too much.

249 00:11:10,560 --> 00:11:11,070 In what way?

250 00:11:11,070 --> 00:11:12,153 What was the first change?

251 00:11:12,153 --> 00:11:15,290 Well, because in Hungary, the changes were there,

00:11:15,290 --> 00:11:18,690 but we really didn't feel it in the cities.

253

00:11:18,690 --> 00:11:22,500 The first change was really in 1942 when they--

254

00:11:22,500 --> 00:11:25,170 '41, end of '41, '42--

255

00:11:25,170 --> 00:11:27,750 when they took all the Polish Jews and all

256

00:11:27,750 --> 00:11:30,270 the non-Hungarians, so-called, and they

257

00:11:30,270 --> 00:11:34,350 deported them to Russia.

258

00:11:34,350 --> 00:11:37,710 And they just took all the non-citizens.

259

00:11:37,710 --> 00:11:38,835 From where you were living?

260

00:11:38,835 --> 00:11:40,270 From where I was living.

261

00:11:40,270 --> 00:11:41,388 From where I was living.

262

00:11:41,388 --> 00:11:41,930 So up to'19--

263

00:11:41,930 --> 00:11:43,750 And they deported them to Russia or Poland.

00:11:43,750 --> 00:11:46,530 But up to 1942, life went on for you as a little boy.

265

00:11:46,530 --> 00:11:49,690 I was very young at the time, yes.

266

00:11:49,690 --> 00:11:51,230 Everything was more or less normal.

267

00:11:51,230 --> 00:11:52,270 Normal.

268

00:11:52,270 --> 00:11:53,535 What about your bar mitzvah?

269

00:11:53,535 --> 00:11:54,660 Did you have a bar mitzvah?

270

00:11:54,660 --> 00:11:55,260 I had a bar mitzvah.

271

00:11:55,260 --> 00:11:55,760 It was 1940.

272

00:11:55,760 --> 00:11:59,680 I had four friends, and we had peanuts.

273

00:11:59,680 --> 00:12:01,890 That was the bar mitzvah, and then we--

274

00:12:01,890 --> 00:12:05,440 of course, the temples were very orthodox, all temples.

275

00:12:05,440 --> 00:12:08,190 There were no reformed temples.

00:12:08,190 --> 00:12:11,820 So every Saturday we went to temple,

277

00:12:11,820 --> 00:12:19,050 and we usually stayed outside and the children played.

278

00:12:19,050 --> 00:12:24,010 And fathers stayed inside and mothers stayed home.

279

00:12:24,010 --> 00:12:27,652 So the women, as I remember, they didn't go to--

280

00:12:27,652 --> 00:12:29,610 I don't remember my mother going to the temple,

281

00:12:29,610 --> 00:12:31,130 except on holidays.

282

00:12:31,130 --> 00:12:32,460 But your bar mitzvah--

283

00:12:32,460 --> 00:12:33,487 My bar mitzvah was--

284

00:12:33,487 --> 00:12:34,320 --went off smoothly?

285

00:12:34,320 --> 00:12:36,450 Yes.

286

00:12:36,450 --> 00:12:37,620 OK.

287

00:12:37,620 --> 00:12:41,250 And now let's move up a year or so or two.

00:12:41,250 --> 00:12:45,210 So 1942, when you

were almost 15.

289

00:12:45,210 --> 00:12:47,990 In 19-- well, then we started--

290

00:12:47,990 --> 00:12:51,700 no, I was about almost 15.

291

00:12:51,700 --> 00:12:55,260

Almost 15, yeah.

292

00:12:55,260 --> 00:12:59,640

Well, then I-- we usually did not

293

00:12:59,640 --> 00:13:04,560 think of other things in social school and social parties,

294

00:13:04,560 --> 00:13:08,290

and we used to have a big group of children.

295

00:13:08,290 --> 00:13:10,740

And I would think

that we were not

296

00:13:10,740 --> 00:13:14,940

too concerned what was happening the world at the time, which

297

00:13:14,940 --> 00:13:18,930

is, I think-- it happened not only with me, but with all

298

00:13:18,930 --> 00:13:20,210

the children.

299

00:13:20,210 --> 00:13:22,450

We used to have parties and

we used to get together.

300

00:13:22,450 --> 00:13:27,085 We used to take trips, day trips to the mountains and swimming.

301

00:13:27,085 --> 00:13:28,210 And so you don't remember--

302

00:13:28,210 --> 00:13:29,640 Well, certainly the social aspect,

303

00:13:29,640 --> 00:13:31,470 but I don't remember anything of the--

304

00:13:31,470 --> 00:13:32,340 Restrictions.

305

00:13:32,340 --> 00:13:35,820 --any restrictions, except for school where we couldn't-- we

306

00:13:35,820 --> 00:13:39,630 were limited as far as how many children can get into a high

307

00:13:39,630 --> 00:13:40,398 school.

308

00:13:40,398 --> 00:13:41,440 Because of your religion.

309

00:13:41,440 --> 00:13:42,440 Because of the religion.

310

00:13:42,440 --> 00:13:43,590 How did that make you feel?

311

00:13:43,590 --> 00:13:47,010

312 00:13:47,010 --> 00:13:49,140 I think we were living with it, and it was just

313

00:13:49,140 --> 00:13:52,260 like a natural occurrence at the time.

314

00:13:52,260 --> 00:13:55,410 I wasn't-- today, we would be bothered.

315

00:13:55,410 --> 00:13:58,220 We were bothered, but not to the degree that--

316

00:13:58,220 --> 00:14:01,200 today, I look at it differently, of course.

317

00:14:01,200 --> 00:14:04,030 But no, it didn't--we just changed.

318

00:14:04,030 --> 00:14:08,890 We went to Hebrew school, but we really never associated

319

00:14:08,890 --> 00:14:10,870 with non-Jews at the time.

320

00:14:10,870 --> 00:14:14,785 And what kind of courses did you take in the gymnasium?

321

00:14:14,785 --> 00:14:18,210 I think it was math, Latin, Hebrew.

322

00:14:18,210 --> 00:14:19,950 In the Hebrew gymnasium, it was Hebrew,

00:14:19,950 --> 00:14:24,200 Hebrew history, Hungarian.

324

00:14:24,200 --> 00:14:27,122 But most classes were in Hebrew.

325

00:14:27,122 --> 00:14:28,770 And how much information did you get

326

00:14:28,770 --> 00:14:33,420 from the daily paper about what was happening, about Hitler?

327

00:14:33,420 --> 00:14:35,940 We got very little because it was--

328

00:14:35,940 --> 00:14:39,780 they never did a pro-Hitler anything, the Hungarians,

329

00:14:39,780 --> 00:14:40,530 and the Jewish--

330

00:14:40,530 --> 00:14:42,780 I didn't read the Jewish papers.

331

00:14:42,780 --> 00:14:44,827 I didn't read Jewish.

332

00:14:44,827 --> 00:14:47,160 They had Jewish papers, but I didn't read Jewish papers.

333

00:14:47,160 --> 00:14:49,577 By the way, what languages or what language did you speak?

334

00:14:49,577 --> 00:14:53,415 We spoke-- well, even when we were young

335

00:14:53,415 --> 00:14:54,540 and it was Czechoslovakian.

336

00:14:54,540 --> 00:14:56,440 When I was born, it was Czechoslovakia.

337

00:14:56,440 --> 00:14:59,250 We still spoke Hungarian, and my mother

338

00:14:59,250 --> 00:15:02,680 was always very Hungarian very nationalistic.

339

00:15:02,680 --> 00:15:05,490

340

00:15:05,490 --> 00:15:10,200 But we spoke Hungarian and German, some German.

341

00:15:10,200 --> 00:15:13,290 My grandmother lived with us after 1938,

342

00:15:13,290 --> 00:15:15,202 so she spoke German mostly.

343

00:15:15,202 --> 00:15:16,410 So we spoke to her in German.

344

00:15:16,410 --> 00:15:17,535 So you were fluent in both.

345

00:15:17,535 --> 00:15:20,070 But at home we were fluent in German, Hungarian, and then

346

00:15:20,070 --> 00:15:25,980

in Czech because I went to Czech schools, so I spoke Czech.

347

00:15:25,980 --> 00:15:30,390 And our friends, we only spoke Hungarian.

348

00:15:30,390 --> 00:15:34,050 Even in Hebrew school, we spoke Hungarian.

349

00:15:34,050 --> 00:15:37,245 We always hoped to go to Israel eventually, secretly.

350

00:15:37,245 --> 00:15:40,410

351

00:15:40,410 --> 00:15:42,250 We being your family.

352

00:15:42,250 --> 00:15:44,640 No, no, the children, the youth.

353

00:15:44,640 --> 00:15:46,510 The youth always spoke about it.

354

00:15:46,510 --> 00:15:49,930 And that's why today I probably wouldn't belong to that group.

355

00:15:49,930 --> 00:15:54,900 But the Betar was always a radical group.

356

00:15:54,900 --> 00:15:57,110 Were you a member of that when you were--

357

00:15:57,110 --> 00:15:58,462 what age were you when you-

358

00:15:58,462 --> 00:16:00,420 But I think I wasn't a member because of belief

359

00:16:00,420 --> 00:16:02,835 as much as because it was a social kind of--

360

00:16:02,835 --> 00:16:05,980

361

00:16:05,980 --> 00:16:06,480 OK.

362

00:16:06,480 --> 00:16:12,300 It's 1942, and you're in gymnasium and life is going on.

363

00:16:12,300 --> 00:16:14,690 Actually, in 1942, I was not in gymnasium.

364

00:16:14,690 --> 00:16:18,630 In '42, I was in Hungarian high school,

365

00:16:18,630 --> 00:16:23,280 and then I went into the gymnasium later on, in 1943.

366

00:16:23,280 --> 00:16:23,810 OK.

367

00:16:23,810 --> 00:16:24,810 So things were going on.

368

00:16:24,810 --> 00:16:30,470 So things were going on, and the change really came in 1943--

369

00:16:30,470 --> 00:16:33,510

in '44 when the

Hungarians came in.

370 00:16:33,510 --> 00:16:36,000 Anything in 1943 that you wanted to put--

371

00:16:36,000 --> 00:16:38,850 Well, there was nothing that drastic that

372

00:16:38,850 --> 00:16:43,890 happened, except we were always listening to news.

373

00:16:43,890 --> 00:16:46,710 I remember my parents were always listening.

374

00:16:46,710 --> 00:16:48,210 Did you sense that they were getting

375

00:16:48,210 --> 00:16:49,740 more tense, more concerned?

376

00:16:49,740 --> 00:16:50,730 Well, they were.

377

00:16:50,730 --> 00:16:54,180 I mean, we spoke about it, and there were some of the Jews

378

00:16:54,180 --> 00:16:57,810 have gotten papers, Christian papers,

379

00:16:57,810 --> 00:16:59,960 and they moved to Budapest.

380

00:16:59,960 --> 00:17:05,130 And they were trying to live as non-Jews at the time so that 00:17:05,130 --> 00:17:07,829 they can escape should something happen because we were

382

00:17:07,829 --> 00:17:09,180

the last--

383

00:17:09,180 --> 00:17:11,682 I mean, everywhere else the Germans moved in.

384

00:17:11,682 --> 00:17:13,890 And we didn't have the

Germans because the Hungarians

385

00:17:13,890 --> 00:17:16,740 were allies with the

Germans at the time.

386

00:17:16,740 --> 00:17:18,869 But in March, they moved in.

387

00:17:18,869 --> 00:17:22,680 They came in, and that's when all hell broke loose.

388

00:17:22,680 --> 00:17:23,400

OK.

389

00:17:23,400 --> 00:17:25,900 Now let's talk about the first--

390

00:17:25,900 --> 00:17:29,400 Well, everything happened very fast because as soon

391

00:17:29,400 --> 00:17:30,720 as the Germans came in--

392

00:17:30,720 --> 00:17:36,900

now, prior to that, of course, we had a farm,

00:17:36,900 --> 00:17:39,870 and we were never liquid because if you have a farm,

394

00:17:39,870 --> 00:17:42,600 then money is always invested.

395

00:17:42,600 --> 00:17:45,660 So even if you wanted to make a major move,

396

00:17:45,660 --> 00:17:47,520 we couldn't have at the time.

397

00:17:47,520 --> 00:17:50,387 And you couldn't sell land, you couldn't sell real estate.

398

00:17:50,387 --> 00:17:52,470 So Jews couldn't sell because there were no buyers

399

00:17:52,470 --> 00:17:54,420 and you couldn't sell it.

400

00:17:54,420 --> 00:18:00,240 So in 1944, everything was taken away, the houses.

401

00:18:00,240 --> 00:18:03,021 We moved-- they moved us into a ghetto.

402

00:18:03,021 --> 00:18:04,570 Is this around March?

403

00:18:04,570 --> 00:18:07,050 This was around-- no, the Germans came in March,

404

00:18:07,050 --> 00:18:09,540 and this was in

April, end of April.

405

00:18:09,540 --> 00:18:12,280

Germans were in for about six weeks.

406

00:18:12,280 --> 00:18:14,280 Do you remember seeing

them come into your town?

407

00:18:14,280 --> 00:18:16,790

408

00:18:16,790 --> 00:18:18,930

I don't remember-- I

remember seeing them,

409

00:18:18,930 --> 00:18:20,740

but I don't remember seeing them march in.

410

00:18:20,740 --> 00:18:21,240

Yeah.

411

00:18:21,240 --> 00:18:22,657

But I meant, you saw them come in?

412

00:18:22,657 --> 00:18:23,760

I saw them, but very few.

413

00:18:23,760 --> 00:18:25,370

There were very

few that came in.

414

00:18:25,370 --> 00:18:28,500

It wasn't, like, an army that came in, just a few Germans.

415

00:18:28,500 --> 00:18:31,140

As a 16-year-old,

what were your--

00:18:31,140 --> 00:18:32,640 We were concerned,

of course, and we

417

00:18:32,640 --> 00:18:33,932 moved from a comfortable house.

418

00:18:33,932 --> 00:18:36,200 We were taken to a ghetto.

419

00:18:36,200 --> 00:18:38,680

But first, we had to put on stars.

420

00:18:38,680 --> 00:18:40,680 Little by little, they

started taking businesses

421

00:18:40,680 --> 00:18:44,315 away one week, and the next week you had to put Jewish stars on.

422

00:18:44,315 --> 00:18:46,190 How did you feel about wearing a Jewish star?

423

00:18:46,190 --> 00:18:48,120 It didn't feel good.

424

00:18:48,120 --> 00:18:50,580 We didn't feel good because--

425

00:18:50,580 --> 00:18:52,170 of course we didn't feel good.

426

00:18:52,170 --> 00:18:56,400 It was a very bad feeling, but everything happened so fast

427

00:18:56,400 --> 00:18:59,500

that you had no time to really feel.

428

00:18:59,500 --> 00:19:01,430 It wasn't that got used to it.

429

00:19:01,430 --> 00:19:04,380 There was no question of getting used to it because you didn't.

430

00:19:04,380 --> 00:19:06,360 What were the first restrictions,

431

00:19:06,360 --> 00:19:07,850 that you had to wear the star?

432

00:19:07,850 --> 00:19:08,940 We had to wear the star.

433

00:19:08,940 --> 00:19:09,940 Were there any other restrictions on--

434

00:19:09,940 --> 00:19:11,070 Jews couldn't have businesses.

435

00:19:11,070 --> 00:19:12,330 They took the businesses away.

436

00:19:12,330 --> 00:19:17,250

437

00:19:17,250 --> 00:19:18,900 Of course, we didn't go to school.

438

00:19:18,900 --> 00:19:21,260 The schools were closed.

439

00:19:21,260 --> 00:19:25,770 The Jewish gymnasium was a very well-known school.

440

00:19:25,770 --> 00:19:30,450 It was one of the schools that started in 1924,

441

00:19:30,450 --> 00:19:34,540 and it developed into a very fine school,

442

00:19:34,540 --> 00:19:38,450 and people from all over the country came to Munkacs.

443

00:19:38,450 --> 00:19:41,600 Anyway, they closed that.

444

00:19:41,600 --> 00:19:43,800 How did you feel about having your school closed?

445

00:19:43,800 --> 00:19:44,400 Bad.

446

00:19:44,400 --> 00:19:46,095 I mean, not only the school, you didn't

447

00:19:46,095 --> 00:19:48,720 care about the school as much as the houses, all the neighbors.

448

00:19:48,720 --> 00:19:52,260 Everybody was herded into a small area, a ghetto.

449

00:19:52,260 --> 00:19:53,880 This was a ghetto in your town.

450

00:19:53,880 --> 00:19:58,780 In my town, where we stayed for about two months--

451

00:19:58,780 --> 00:20:00,990

no, less, about six weeks.

452

00:20:00,990 --> 00:20:03,925 It was until-- we were there about four weeks.

453

00:20:03,925 --> 00:20:04,750 In the ghetto.

454

00:20:04,750 --> 00:20:05,792 Were you in an apartment?

455

00:20:05,792 --> 00:20:07,650 We stayed in one house, in a small apartment

456

00:20:07,650 --> 00:20:14,580 with other families, who also some of them survived.

457

00:20:14,580 --> 00:20:17,090 Did you have enough food?

458

00:20:17,090 --> 00:20:17,960 We had food.

459

00:20:17,960 --> 00:20:20,280 Well, usually, I was in one of the groups that

460

00:20:20,280 --> 00:20:23,700 was able to get into town to look around

461

00:20:23,700 --> 00:20:24,740 and to bring in food.

462

00:20:24,740 --> 00:20:25,980 How was that possible?

463

00:20:25,980 --> 00:20:27,990 We were never hungry there.

464 00:20:27,990 --> 00:20:29,170 We always had enough food.

465 00:20:29,170 --> 00:20:31,420 But how was it you were able to get out of the ghetto?

466 00:20:31,420 --> 00:20:34,640 Because that they had what they called a Judenrat, which is--

467 00:20:34,640 --> 00:20:36,310 you know what that is--

468 00:20:36,310 --> 00:20:40,620 a Jewish committee representing all the Jews,

469 00:20:40,620 --> 00:20:42,750 which, at the time, we were getting

470 00:20:42,750 --> 00:20:47,550 favors from the Germans, and so they would tell us whatever

471 00:20:47,550 --> 00:20:50,220 the Germans wanted us to know.

472 00:20:50,220 --> 00:20:53,790 And they constantly told us that this is temporary

473 00:20:53,790 --> 00:20:56,820 and that we are going to go to Hungary to a work

474 00:20:56,820 --> 00:21:01,800 camp, and just a relocation and we are not going to-- nothing 00:21:01,800 --> 00:21:03,940 would happen to us.

476

00:21:03,940 --> 00:21:06,700 But of course, we knew-well, we didn't know.

477

00:21:06,700 --> 00:21:08,840 We hoped because the Jews always hope.

478

00:21:08,840 --> 00:21:12,820 So we hoped that it's true.

479

00:21:12,820 --> 00:21:16,560 And that's what happened.

480

00:21:16,560 --> 00:21:18,845 Was there a wall around the ghetto?

481

00:21:18,845 --> 00:21:20,130 No, there were gates.

482

00:21:20,130 --> 00:21:21,940 No, not a wall, just gates.

483

00:21:21,940 --> 00:21:24,070 We couldn't get out, the guards.

484

00:21:24,070 --> 00:21:26,200 We couldn't get out.

485

00:21:26,200 --> 00:21:32,670 And so the food was enough, and then everybody

486

00:21:32,670 --> 00:21:33,550 was hiding jewelry.

487

00:21:33,550 --> 00:21:36,640 And people that had jewelry,

they dug holes in the ground

488

00:21:36,640 --> 00:21:40,270 and were hiding all their jewels and valuables.

489

00:21:40,270 --> 00:21:45,190 What did you as a 16-year-old, 16-, 17-year-old,

490

00:21:45,190 --> 00:21:47,620 take with you into the ghetto from your house?

491

00:21:47,620 --> 00:21:50,990 Well, we took clothes, mostly.

492

00:21:50,990 --> 00:21:56,110 The valuables we dug into the ground,

493

00:21:56,110 --> 00:21:58,810 whatever silver and things like that, which we never

494

00:21:58,810 --> 00:22:00,610 found after.

495

00:22:00,610 --> 00:22:03,610 And we took clothes, mostly, and food.

496

00:22:03,610 --> 00:22:07,610 Did you yourself take anything special that belonged to you?

497

00:22:07,610 --> 00:22:08,220 No.

498

00:22:08,220 --> 00:22:09,090

No.

499

00:22:09,090 --> 00:22:10,700 You mean to the ghetto?

500

00:22:10,700 --> 00:22:11,560 Yeah, to the ghetto.

501

00:22:11,560 --> 00:22:14,910 Nothing that I remember that meant much.

502

00:22:14,910 --> 00:22:18,570 But ultimately, from the ghetto, we couldn't take anything.

503

00:22:18,570 --> 00:22:21,340

504

00:22:21,340 --> 00:22:23,500 Were you able to sleep well in the ghetto?

505

00:22:23,500 --> 00:22:24,950 In the ghetto?

506

00:22:24,950 --> 00:22:29,420 Well, you had so much excitement that we slept.

507

00:22:29,420 --> 00:22:34,080 But life in the ghetto wasn't good, wasn't good.

508

00:22:34,080 --> 00:22:35,710 People very frightened?

509

00:22:35,710 --> 00:22:39,640 People were frightened of what will happen, and we all knew.

510

00:22:39,640 --> 00:22:42,090

But we heard stories.

00:22:42,090 --> 00:22:44,620 I'll come back to '42 for a minute.

512 00:22:44,620 --> 00:22:46,780 There was a family, a Polish family,

513 00:22:46,780 --> 00:22:53,830 that was deported to Poland, four children, four

514 00:22:53,830 --> 00:22:56,110 girls, and parents.

515 00:22:56,110 --> 00:22:58,810 And they came back, they escaped.

516 00:22:58,810 --> 00:23:00,520 And they came back and told us stories

517 00:23:00,520 --> 00:23:04,912 about how the Earth is moving and the people were underneath.

518 00:23:04,912 --> 00:23:06,070 Who would believe--

519 00:23:06,070 --> 00:23:06,940 I was 15.

520 00:23:06,940 --> 00:23:09,100 Would I believe that people would do that?

521 00:23:09,100 --> 00:23:11,950 So we never believed them, so we thought they were stories.

522 00:23:11,950 --> 00:23:14,560 But of course, we found out later it was true.

523

00:23:14,560 --> 00:23:18,070 And these people have gotten non-Jewish papers

524

00:23:18,070 --> 00:23:22,030 and all kinds of gimmicks, and they all survive.

525

00:23:22,030 --> 00:23:24,980 They all went to Budapest and they all survived.

526

00:23:24,980 --> 00:23:28,420 Eventually, they went to Israel, and the man just died.

527

00:23:28,420 --> 00:23:29,270 He was 96.

528

00:23:29,270 --> 00:23:30,290 And what was their name?

529

00:23:30,290 --> 00:23:31,550 Eneman.

530

00:23:31,550 --> 00:23:39,050 E-N-A-- E-N-E-M-A-N.

531

00:23:39,050 --> 00:23:41,320 So here you are in the ghetto.

532

00:23:41,320 --> 00:23:42,490 And what did you do?

533

00:23:42,490 --> 00:23:45,860 What was a day like in the ghetto, typical day?

534

00:23:45,860 --> 00:23:50,310

A typical day was just

trying to get food

535

00:23:50,310 --> 00:23:53,780 and trying to find out news as to where we were going

536

00:23:53,780 --> 00:23:55,900 or what will happen.

537

00:23:55,900 --> 00:24:01,056 And if I remember, even had a holiday there.

538

00:24:01,056 --> 00:24:04,290 We even had-- but it's not very clear.

539

00:24:04,290 --> 00:24:05,030 Passover?

540

00:24:05,030 --> 00:24:07,170 Yes, but it's not clear just what we did.

541

00:24:07,170 --> 00:24:08,910 How was your health then?

542

00:24:08,910 --> 00:24:09,428 It was good.

543

00:24:09,428 --> 00:24:10,470 And your family's health?

544

00:24:10,470 --> 00:24:11,670 My family's health was good.

545

00:24:11,670 --> 00:24:14,880 My grandmother was with us constantly.

546

00:24:14,880 --> 00:24:16,800 She was 72, she was very ill-- 547 00:24:16,800 --> 00:24:17,670 I mean, always ill.

548 00:24:17,670 --> 00:24:23,100 She had gallbladder problems, but she came along

549 00:24:23,100 --> 00:24:24,870 and she was with us in the ghetto.

550 00:24:24,870 --> 00:24:27,810 How many people were in your ghetto apartment?

551 00:24:27,810 --> 00:24:32,090 In our ghetto, we were six of us,

552 00:24:32,090 --> 00:24:34,570 and they had about six or eight people.

553 00:24:34,570 --> 00:24:36,900 So probably, in a two bedroom apartment,

554 00:24:36,900 --> 00:24:41,530 we had about 12 people, two or three bedrooms.

555 00:24:41,530 --> 00:24:43,210 So that went on for six weeks.

556 00:24:43,210 --> 00:24:46,740 That around from four to six weeks.

557 00:24:46,740 --> 00:24:49,500 In May, of course, we were taken to the-- 558

00:24:49,500 --> 00:24:57,540 after the ghetto, we were taken to the brick factory, which was

559

00:24:57,540 --> 00:24:59,460 about two miles out of town.

560

00:24:59,460 --> 00:25:01,260 When you say "we," the whole family?

561

00:25:01,260 --> 00:25:03,720 The family, everybody, the whole--

562

00:25:03,720 --> 00:25:06,870 all of us, all the Jews, the whole ghetto.

563

00:25:06,870 --> 00:25:07,980 How did you know--

564

00:25:07,980 --> 00:25:09,930 how did you hear that you had to go to the--

565

00:25:09,930 --> 00:25:11,355

How did we hear?

566

00:25:11,355 --> 00:25:13,440 Well, you couldn't help but hearing.

567

00:25:13,440 --> 00:25:18,450 4:00 in the morning, the police came in, the Hungarian--

568

00:25:18,450 --> 00:25:19,428 what do you call them?

569

00:25:19,428 --> 00:25:20,220

They had a feather.

570 00:25:20,220 --> 00:25:21,878 Arrow Cross?

571 00:25:21,878 --> 00:25:22,920 They weren't Arrow Cross.

572 00:25:22,920 --> 00:25:25,950 It was the gendarmes.

573 00:25:25,950 --> 00:25:29,130 And they came in, and they started beating everybody,

574 00:25:29,130 --> 00:25:33,100 and out, and you're going to be moving.

575 00:25:33,100 --> 00:25:36,300 So then we walked the 2 kilometers.

576 00:25:36,300 --> 00:25:37,830 Do you remember any thoughts you had

577 00:25:37,830 --> 00:25:39,540 on that night, that part of the morning?

578 00:25:39,540 --> 00:25:43,130 No, it was you just--

579 00:25:43,130 --> 00:25:44,550 well, you just wanted to survive.

580 00:25:44,550 --> 00:25:47,788 You just didn't want to be hit because they were very bad.

581 00:25:47,788 --> 00:25:49,580 They were worse than the Germans, actually.

582

00:25:49,580 --> 00:25:51,720 These were Hungarians.

583

00:25:51,720 --> 00:25:53,820 I think, all

through this time, I

584

00:25:53,820 --> 00:25:56,680 have seen maybe four or five Germans because most of them

585

00:25:56,680 --> 00:25:58,560 were Hungarians.

586

00:25:58,560 --> 00:26:00,310 And they were part of the Arrow Cross,

587

00:26:00,310 --> 00:26:01,560 but it wasn't the Arrow Cross.

588

00:26:01,560 --> 00:26:04,902 It was the police, actually, group of the police.

589

00:26:04,902 --> 00:26:06,610 And how did you get to the brick factory?

590

00:26:06,610 --> 00:26:07,440 We walked.

591

00:26:07,440 --> 00:26:10,230 Well, we were all consolidated on marketplace,

592

00:26:10,230 --> 00:26:12,030 and then we just marched to the brick

593

00:26:12,030 --> 00:26:13,358 factory, whoever could make it.

594

00:26:13,358 --> 00:26:14,900 There's one man who couldn't make it.

595

00:26:14,900 --> 00:26:16,920 They just shot him.

596

00:26:16,920 --> 00:26:18,570 Did you see that?

597

00:26:18,570 --> 00:26:21,750 No, I didn't see it, but I heard it.

598

00:26:21,750 --> 00:26:23,380 And they were very ruthless.

599

00:26:23,380 --> 00:26:27,510 They were really-- beginning, starting from then,

600

00:26:27,510 --> 00:26:29,710 it became bad.

601

00:26:29,710 --> 00:26:33,120 So then in the brick factory, once we arrived there--

602

00:26:33,120 --> 00:26:36,710 How long did it take you to get to the brick factory?

603

00:26:36,710 --> 00:26:39,745 A couple of hours, two, three hours.

604

00:26:39,745 --> 00:26:42,180 It was the whole day because until they accumulated us

605 00:26:42,180 --> 00:26:43,300 and until we started.

606 00:26:43,300 --> 00:26:45,540 And what did your family take with them?

607 00:26:45,540 --> 00:26:48,150 Well, we mostly took food, mostly,

608 00:26:48,150 --> 00:26:50,860 and then we took clothes, some clothing.

609 00:26:50,860 --> 00:26:54,120 It was summertime, so we just took some clothing, whatever we

610 00:26:54,120 --> 00:26:57,280 could carry, but mostly food.

611 00:26:57,280 --> 00:27:00,960 And I remember my brother always asked when Hitler spoke--

612 00:27:00,960 --> 00:27:02,490 I didn't mention it before--

613 00:27:02,490 --> 00:27:04,500 it this good for the Jews or bad for the Jews?

614 00:27:04,500 --> 00:27:08,610

615 00:27:08,610 --> 00:27:09,110 All right.

616 00:27:09,110 --> 00:27:11,280 So the brick factory,

we had the groups

617 00:27:11,280 --> 00:27:14,130 of people that were in charge.

618 00:27:14,130 --> 00:27:18,210 So I was in charge of my section.

619 00:27:18,210 --> 00:27:22,160 And I remember the girl that I used to like at the time,

620 00:27:22,160 --> 00:27:26,320 her father came to me, says, take good care of my daughter.

621 00:27:26,320 --> 00:27:29,100 But they all-- none of them survived.

622 00:27:29,100 --> 00:27:33,630 So there were families that were totally, totally

623 00:27:33,630 --> 00:27:35,610 died, complete families.

624 00:27:35,610 --> 00:27:38,500 They had no-- there's no memory, there's no nothing.

625 00:27:38,500 --> 00:27:40,790 There's a family in the farm there were a father--

626 00:27:40,790 --> 00:27:43,260 there was parents and a son.

627 00:27:43,260 --> 00:27:45,180 They died, and just no-- 00:27:45,180 --> 00:27:46,500 nothing.

629 00:27:46,500 --> 00:27:48,000 And they had brothers and sisters,

630 00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:49,750 they all died, and there was nothing left.

631 00:27:49,750 --> 00:27:52,530

632 00:27:52,530 --> 00:27:56,267 So anyway, we stayed there for a few days.

633 00:27:56,267 --> 00:27:56,850 How many days?

634 00:27:56,850 --> 00:27:59,960 I don't remember how many days, but a few days.

635 00:27:59,960 --> 00:28:01,650 What was the tenor?

636 00:28:01,650 --> 00:28:02,180 We had food.

637 00:28:02,180 --> 00:28:04,500 But the first thing that the Germans did--

638 00:28:04,500 --> 00:28:07,350 the Germans, the Hungarians, actually.

639 00:28:07,350 --> 00:28:10,140 They took all our identifications 640

00:28:10,140 --> 00:28:12,912 and they made a bonfire.

641

00:28:12,912 --> 00:28:14,370 So then we said, well, how would we

642

00:28:14,370 --> 00:28:18,810 go to Hungary for resettlement if we had no papers?

643

00:28:18,810 --> 00:28:22,140 You couldn't walk on the streets without identification.

644

00:28:22,140 --> 00:28:28,020 So then they started suspecting that something is happening

645

00:28:28,020 --> 00:28:30,840 and that really are not going to live.

646

00:28:30,840 --> 00:28:34,200 But the Jews are always hopeful, so we hoped.

647

00:28:34,200 --> 00:28:37,260 But that's the time that we really

648

00:28:37,260 --> 00:28:38,790 started feeling very bad.

649

00:28:38,790 --> 00:28:42,690 And they said, well, you don't need it

650

00:28:42,690 --> 00:28:47,330 We will go to [INAUDIBLE],, which is a Hungarian farm area,

00:28:47,330 --> 00:28:51,120 and we're going to be resettled and we're going to live there.

652 00:28:51,120 --> 00:28:53,730 And of course, that never materialized

653 00:28:53,730 --> 00:28:57,830 because then there were three transports

654 00:28:57,830 --> 00:29:03,390 and then we were resettled to Auschwitz.

655 00:29:03,390 --> 00:29:04,980 Could you just describe a little bit

656 00:29:04,980 --> 00:29:08,130 about the conditions in the brick factory?

657 00:29:08,130 --> 00:29:10,860 Well, of course, the bathrooms--

658 00:29:10,860 --> 00:29:13,320 I mean, we had thousands of people,

659 00:29:13,320 --> 00:29:17,880 and certainly there was no--

660 00:29:17,880 --> 00:29:21,890 the only interest we had was how to get food and how to escape.

661 00:29:21,890 --> 00:29:24,360 But at that point, there was no escape

662 00:29:24,360 --> 00:29:27,030 because there was just no place to escape.

663 00:29:27,030 --> 00:29:28,220 And the neighbors--

664 00:29:28,220 --> 00:29:31,110 Did you yourself, as a young teenager, think about escaping?

665 00:29:31,110 --> 00:29:33,630 We thought about it, but we always wanted the family

666 00:29:33,630 --> 00:29:34,530 to be together.

667 00:29:34,530 --> 00:29:37,080 In fact, my sister was in Budapest

668 00:29:37,080 --> 00:29:39,480 and she was studying in Budapest.

669 00:29:39,480 --> 00:29:42,120 And when the Germans came in March,

670 00:29:42,120 --> 00:29:45,120 she decided to come back to be together with the family

671 00:29:45,120 --> 00:29:46,977 so that the families would be together,

672 00:29:46,977 --> 00:29:49,560 which was a mistake because it should have been that everybody

673 00:29:49,560 --> 00:29:50,640 should be on their own. 674 00:29:50,640 --> 00:29:52,890 And it took her-- in fact, it took her about two weeks

675 00:29:52,890 --> 00:29:58,270 to come home to be with us.

676 00:29:58,270 --> 00:30:00,600 And would she have stayed in Budapest,

677 00:30:00,600 --> 00:30:05,100 she would have probably survived there because many of the Jews

678 00:30:05,100 --> 00:30:09,293 have gotten papers there and they just survived.

679 00:30:09,293 --> 00:30:10,710 So she came back, and then she was

680 00:30:10,710 --> 00:30:14,310 with us in the brick factory, of course, and she was-- but would

681 00:30:14,310 --> 00:30:17,880 she have not come home, my mother wouldn't have survived.

682 00:30:17,880 --> 00:30:20,610 What did you do in the brick factory?

683 00:30:20,610 --> 00:30:22,660 In the brick factory, we just-- nothing.

684 00:30:22,660 --> 00:30:23,270 Sat? 685 00:30:23,270 --> 00:30:25,845 We just sat around and we just waited to be--

686 00:30:25,845 --> 00:30:27,670 for the next step.

687 00:30:27,670 --> 00:30:28,620 Which was?

688 00:30:28,620 --> 00:30:33,100 Which was the transportation to Auschwitz.

689 00:30:33,100 --> 00:30:35,250 And well, I've just neglected to say something.

690 00:30:35,250 --> 00:30:38,760 My grandfather, who was 83 years old,

691 00:30:38,760 --> 00:30:43,560 also was brought in from the outside of town.

692 00:30:43,560 --> 00:30:47,640 Many of the Jews were brought in from the little villages

693 00:30:47,640 --> 00:30:49,470 into Munkacs, which was the big city,

694 00:30:49,470 --> 00:30:51,900 and the transports took place there.

695 00:30:51,900 --> 00:30:55,710 And so he was brought in, and actually, he was beaten up.

696

00:30:55,710 --> 00:30:57,780 And his beard-- he had the beard.

697 00:30:57,780 --> 00:30:59,940 They pulled his beard out, and he was bleeding.

698 00:30:59,940 --> 00:31:01,680 I mean, he ended up in Auschwitz,

699 00:31:01,680 --> 00:31:03,720 but he died, of course, the first day.

700 00:31:03,720 --> 00:31:06,600 But he was brought into town from the farm

701 00:31:06,600 --> 00:31:08,550 because he was on a farm.

702 00:31:08,550 --> 00:31:11,080 The farm goes back a few generations, actually.

703 00:31:11,080 --> 00:31:12,690 Goes back to his father.

704 00:31:12,690 --> 00:31:21,740

705 00:31:21,740 --> 00:31:24,710 Talking about your experiences while your family

706 00:31:24,710 --> 00:31:26,540 was in the brick factory.

707 00:31:26,540 --> 00:31:29,060 And for how long were you there? 708 00:31:29,060 --> 00:31:30,650 We were there just for a few days.

709

00:31:30,650 --> 00:31:34,520 And it seemed like a eternity, but it was a few days.

710 00:31:34,520 --> 00:31:41,220 And we all hoped that we would be sent into Hungary,

711 00:31:41,220 --> 00:31:42,860 but really didn't believe it.

712 00:31:42,860 --> 00:31:44,888 But secretly, one always hoped.

713 00:31:44,888 --> 00:31:46,430 And if he wouldn't have had the hope,

714 00:31:46,430 --> 00:31:48,430 then we wouldn't have survived.

715 00:31:48,430 --> 00:31:51,290 But it never materialized because no one

716 00:31:51,290 --> 00:31:52,520 was sent to Hungary.

717 00:31:52,520 --> 00:31:55,770 Everyone was sent to Auschwitz from the brick factory.

718 00:31:55,770 --> 00:31:58,340 And it was just a temporary stop for a few days.

719 00:31:58,340 --> 00:32:00,380 And the food was adequate. 720 00:32:00,380 --> 00:32:03,080 There wasn't enough, but it was adequate.

721

00:32:03,080 --> 00:32:06,410 Were people in general helping other people?

722

00:32:06,410 --> 00:32:10,460 What was the tenor of the feeling there?

723

00:32:10,460 --> 00:32:13,490 Yes, the older people, parents, our parents,

724

00:32:13,490 --> 00:32:16,040 and friends, their friends, they seemed

725

00:32:16,040 --> 00:32:18,080 to be more pessimistic than the youth.

726

00:32:18,080 --> 00:32:20,100 The youth was always more optimistic.

727

00:32:20,100 --> 00:32:24,710 So we always felt, that, well, something will happen

728

00:32:24,710 --> 00:32:26,930 and this won't take place.

729

00:32:26,930 --> 00:32:29,820 And we didn't believe any of the stories that we heard.

730

00:32:29,820 --> 00:32:34,360 And in fact, I think my parents didn't believe it, either.

731 00:32:34,360 --> 00:32:36,472 Were people sharing food with each other?

732 00:32:36,472 --> 00:32:37,430 They were sharing, yes.

733 00:32:37,430 --> 00:32:38,888 And was one family helping another?

734 00:32:38,888 --> 00:32:39,900 They were sharing, yes.

735 00:32:39,900 --> 00:32:43,260

736 00:32:43,260 --> 00:32:43,800 All right.

737 00:32:43,800 --> 00:32:45,780 And then your next recollection.

738 00:32:45,780 --> 00:32:50,940 My next recollection is when they divided the groups

739 00:32:50,940 --> 00:32:54,150 and we all took trains to Auschwitz,

740 00:32:54,150 --> 00:32:55,560 so that was the first group.

741 00:32:55,560 --> 00:32:57,510 We happened to take the second.

742 00:32:57,510 --> 00:32:59,760 How did they divide them? 00:32:59,760 --> 00:33:02,490 Well, they took about 80 into a car,

744 00:33:02,490 --> 00:33:04,740 into transport, so it was about--

745

00:33:04,740 --> 00:33:08,670 I can't remember how many, but to be had between 80 and 100

746 00:33:08,670 --> 00:33:11,697 in one of those cattle cars.

747 00:33:11,697 --> 00:33:12,780 Were you with your family?

748 00:33:12,780 --> 00:33:14,155 We were together with our family,

749 00:33:14,155 --> 00:33:15,300 and we were all together.

750 00:33:15,300 --> 00:33:17,700 I mean, the immediate family, immediate family

751 00:33:17,700 --> 00:33:20,080 with my mother, six of us.

752 00:33:20,080 --> 00:33:24,660 And so the life in the cattle car was really miserable.

753 00:33:24,660 --> 00:33:27,360 But anyway, the first part, the first group left.

754 00:33:27,360 --> 00:33:29,380 And then three days later, the second group, 755 00:33:29,380 --> 00:33:32,760 which is us, which was May 25 sometimes.

756 00:33:32,760 --> 00:33:36,870 And the trip took two days.

757 00:33:36,870 --> 00:33:40,890 And on the way we have gotten water once or twice,

758 00:33:40,890 --> 00:33:44,790 but the bathroom facilities were we had a big pot.

759 00:33:44,790 --> 00:33:48,220 And then people stood around it.

760 00:33:48,220 --> 00:33:52,560 And if somebody had to go, then they just stood around.

761 00:33:52,560 --> 00:33:57,420 And then once or twice, they emptied these big pots.

762 00:33:57,420 --> 00:33:59,510 Was it very dark in the car?

763 00:33:59,510 --> 00:34:01,680 We had two windows.

764 00:34:01,680 --> 00:34:03,750 There were two windows.

765 00:34:03,750 --> 00:34:05,265 But no.

766 00:34:05,265 --> 00:34:06,840 Well, at night, yes. 767

00:34:06,840 --> 00:34:08,860 But during the day, it was dark.

768

00:34:08,860 --> 00:34:10,540 It was dark.

769

00:34:10,540 --> 00:34:13,170 And how were your parents?

770

00:34:13,170 --> 00:34:18,960 Well, then at that point, we thought that, well, this is it,

771

00:34:18,960 --> 00:34:22,593 that it really didn't-- we were not too optimistic.

772

00:34:22,593 --> 00:34:24,010 Did you know where you were going?

773

00:34:24,010 --> 00:34:24,510 No.

774

00:34:24,510 --> 00:34:25,320 You did not know.

775

00:34:25,320 --> 00:34:28,179 Once we arrived, we still didn't know where we were.

776

00:34:28,179 --> 00:34:32,580 And we really didn't know about Auschwitz.

777

00:34:32,580 --> 00:34:35,650 I didn't know that it existed at the time.

778

00:34:35,650 --> 00:34:38,550 So in the car, people were trying to--

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word generated with 3Play Media. It is not the primary source, and it may contain errors in spelling or accuracy.

779 00:34:38,550 --> 00:34:42,489 I remember there was one man whom I shaved because he had

780 00:34:42,489 --> 00:34:45,310 a beard, and he wanted to arrive nice and neat,

781 00:34:45,310 --> 00:34:46,830 so I shaved them.

782 00:34:46,830 --> 00:34:51,179 But the people were getting sick and some people

783 00:34:51,179 --> 00:34:53,570 died, not in our car, but in some other cars.

784 00:34:53,570 --> 00:34:55,510 Some people died that were sick.

785 00:34:55,510 --> 00:34:58,770 Were there many children in your car?

786 00:34:58,770 --> 00:34:59,820 Babies?

787 00:34:59,820 --> 00:35:01,640 Not little babies that I remember,

788 00:35:01,640 --> 00:35:07,200 just my brother's age, who was, at the time, 13.

789 00:35:07,200 --> 00:35:08,700 How crowded were you?

790 00:35:08,700 --> 00:35:11,120 We had about 80 or 90 people in the cattle car.

791

00:35:11,120 --> 00:35:14,280 So you couldn't really lie down.

792

00:35:14,280 --> 00:35:16,170 You could sit or stand on the floor,

793

00:35:16,170 --> 00:35:18,440 but we had no facilities to sit.

794

00:35:18,440 --> 00:35:20,970 So how did you sleep?

795

00:35:20,970 --> 00:35:23,190 I don't remember sleeping.

796

00:35:23,190 --> 00:35:24,910 I don't think we slept.

797

00:35:24,910 --> 00:35:26,530 So it was two nights.

798

00:35:26,530 --> 00:35:29,610 Then when we arrived, on our arrival, which was about 3,

799

00:35:29,610 --> 00:35:33,600 4 o'clock in the morning, they, of course, opened the doors,

800

00:35:33,600 --> 00:35:37,980 and it was like a thunder.

801

00:35:37,980 --> 00:35:38,730

"Raus, raus!"

802

00:35:38,730 --> 00:35:40,170 And that was the German.

803

00:35:40,170 --> 00:35:42,780 Of course, Mengele was standing there, which is--

804

00:35:42,780 --> 00:35:44,470

How did you know it was Mengele?

805

00:35:44,470 --> 00:35:48,210 We didn't know then, but we found out after who he was.

806

00:35:48,210 --> 00:35:50,760 I mean, we didn't know until many, many days

807

00:35:50,760 --> 00:35:52,185 after who he was.

808

00:35:52,185 --> 00:35:53,310 We just saw a man.

809

00:35:53,310 --> 00:35:56,340 We just saw a man, and he said, you go here and you go here.

810

00:35:56,340 --> 00:35:59,100 And everything happened very fast.

811

00:35:59,100 --> 00:36:03,750 So my grandmother went with my brother.

812

00:36:03,750 --> 00:36:06,090 And of course, they went because she was very old,

813

00:36:06,090 --> 00:36:08,730 and she was old-looking also because she was sickly.

814

00:36:08,730 --> 00:36:14,310

And my brother was sort of not tall, so we--

815

00:36:14,310 --> 00:36:15,810 but not by choice.

816

00:36:15,810 --> 00:36:18,230 It just so happened that this Polish--

817

00:36:18,230 --> 00:36:22,050 there were some Polish guides who

818

00:36:22,050 --> 00:36:27,870 were trying to direct all the young people to work, like us,

819

00:36:27,870 --> 00:36:31,140 and all the little children with the grandparents rather than

820

00:36:31,140 --> 00:36:34,290 the parents so that the grandparents should perish,

821

00:36:34,290 --> 00:36:36,137 but the parents would survive.

822

00:36:36,137 --> 00:36:37,470 But at the time, we didn't know.

823

00:36:37,470 --> 00:36:39,030 We thought that they were very bad

824

00:36:39,030 --> 00:36:40,248 and that they were very mean.

825

00:36:40,248 --> 00:36:41,290 We knew they were Jewish.

826

00:36:41,290 --> 00:36:43,470 They were Jews, these Polish--

827

00:36:43,470 --> 00:36:44,070 Polish Jews.

828

00:36:44,070 --> 00:36:47,490 This is a commander, that was their job.

829

00:36:47,490 --> 00:36:51,870 And so they said, you go there because otherwise you'll die.

830

00:36:51,870 --> 00:36:58,090 So they said, whoever can't walk should go to the left.

831

00:36:58,090 --> 00:37:00,780 And they'll have trucks and buses,

832

00:37:00,780 --> 00:37:01,920 and then they'll take them.

833

00:37:01,920 --> 00:37:06,270 But so many, many people--

834

 $00:37:06,270 \longrightarrow 00:37:11,400$ so many people volunteered.

835

00:37:11,400 --> 00:37:14,470 I mean, they did go to the right.

836

 $00:37:14,470 \longrightarrow 00:37:16,350$ But some of the mothers didn't want

837

00:37:16,350 --> 00:37:18,113 to leave their children, of course,

838 00:37:18,113 --> 00:37:19,530 and they went with their children.

839 00:37:19,530 --> 00:37:23,240 So of course, they died.

840 00:37:23,240 --> 00:37:26,160 And in many cases where a mother wasn't home,

841 00:37:26,160 --> 00:37:27,960 sometimes-- it happened in my family

842 00:37:27,960 --> 00:37:31,123 with my cousin, whose sister was home

843 00:37:31,123 --> 00:37:33,540 and she took out of the child, and she went with the child

844 00:37:33,540 --> 00:37:36,930 and then the mother survived and the sister died, of course,

845 00:37:36,930 --> 00:37:39,640 with the child, not her child.

846 00:37:39,640 --> 00:37:43,390 So all children perished at this stage and old people.

847 00:37:43,390 --> 00:37:45,750 And then the others, like myself, my father,

848 00:37:45,750 --> 00:37:49,250 we were together, and my sister and mother was together. 00:37:49,250 --> 00:37:52,247 So we ended up-we walked into--

850 00:37:52,247 --> 00:37:54,330 Were the four of you still together at this point?

851 00:37:54,330 --> 00:37:54,580 No.

852 00:37:54,580 --> 00:37:55,580 They separated the men--

853 00:37:55,580 --> 00:37:57,165 They separated the men and the women.

854 00:37:57,165 --> 00:37:58,665 Did you say anything to your mother?

855 00:37:58,665 --> 00:38:00,260 At that point, I saw them once.

856 00:38:00,260 --> 00:38:03,300 It happened so fast that we couldn't talk.

857 00:38:03,300 --> 00:38:04,820 I mean, they just pushed us aside.

858 00:38:04,820 --> 00:38:06,528 And we didn't know whether it's temporary

859 00:38:06,528 --> 00:38:09,320 or whether it's permanent.

860 00:38:09,320 --> 00:38:12,020 They said, you go here and go here, and that was it. 861 00:38:12,020 --> 00:38:13,310 And that was the end.

862 00:38:13,310 --> 00:38:16,920 And then we couldn't-we didn't see each other.

863 00:38:16,920 --> 00:38:18,920 And of course, they said the packages

864 00:38:18,920 --> 00:38:20,803 were all in the middle.

865 00:38:20,803 --> 00:38:22,970 So all the luggage that we had, food and everything,

866 00:38:22,970 --> 00:38:23,840 was left there.

867 00:38:23,840 --> 00:38:25,170 So nobody took anything.

868 00:38:25,170 --> 00:38:26,878 So you just had the clothes on your back.

869 00:38:26,878 --> 00:38:28,500 Just what we had on.

870 00:38:28,500 --> 00:38:32,320 And then we went to barracks, to a barrack

871 00:38:32,320 --> 00:38:34,680 that we had, maybe, I don't know,

872 00:38:34,680 --> 00:38:36,057 1,000 people in the barrack. 873 00:38:36,057 --> 00:38:36,890 What barrack was it?

874 00:38:36,890 --> 00:38:37,940 Do you know the number?

875 00:38:37,940 --> 00:38:39,190 I don't remember.

876 00:38:39,190 --> 00:38:40,790 But I remember it was a wooden barrack

877 00:38:40,790 --> 00:38:43,950 and it had wooden three-level beds.

878 00:38:43,950 --> 00:38:47,750 And on each level, there were about between 8 and 10 people.

879 00:38:47,750 --> 00:38:52,190 And that was the temporary quarters, until we were--

880 00:38:52,190 --> 00:38:56,630 until we moved into different areas, everybody

881 00:38:56,630 --> 00:38:57,510 to a different area.

882 00:38:57,510 --> 00:39:02,750 So at this point, we were there for a few days,

883 00:39:02,750 --> 00:39:04,970 and then we knew what happened.

884 00:39:04,970 --> 00:39:07,010 The first day we arrived to these barracks,

885

00:39:07,010 --> 00:39:09,080 we knew what happened to our families who

886

00:39:09,080 --> 00:39:10,250 didn't come with us.

887

00:39:10,250 --> 00:39:11,480 How did you know?

888

00:39:11,480 --> 00:39:14,300 Well, in the first place, we saw the fires.

889

00:39:14,300 --> 00:39:20,120 We had this-- we smelled the human flesh that you could feel

890

00:39:20,120 --> 00:39:22,010 because they also had they also had

891

00:39:22,010 --> 00:39:26,220 three holes that the little children were burned.

892

00:39:26,220 --> 00:39:28,400 And they used to just pour gasoline on them

893

00:39:28,400 --> 00:39:31,250 and they burned them.

894

00:39:31,250 --> 00:39:32,630 Did you see these ditches?

895

00:39:32,630 --> 00:39:33,860 No, you could just smell it.

896

00:39:33,860 --> 00:39:38,210

I mean, these were the Polish people that

897

00:39:38,210 --> 00:39:41,210 worked there, they told us.

898

00:39:41,210 --> 00:39:42,210 But I didn't know.

899

00:39:42,210 --> 00:39:42,900 It was never--

900

00:39:42,900 --> 00:39:43,820 The Polish Jews?

901

00:39:43,820 --> 00:39:45,740 Polish Jews, yeah.

902

00:39:45,740 --> 00:39:49,490 So in these barracks, in the bathrooms, so-called bathrooms,

903

00:39:49,490 --> 00:39:52,120 where it was a row of toilet seats,

904

00:39:52,120 --> 00:39:55,460 and they always had some dead bodies in the corners

905

00:39:55,460 --> 00:39:58,220 that they had to remove eventually.

906

00:39:58,220 --> 00:39:59,270

[INAUDIBLE]

907

 $00:39:59,270 \longrightarrow 00:40:01,910$

908

00:40:01,910 --> 00:40:03,470

So we stayed here

for a few days,

909

00:40:03,470 --> 00:40:08,060 and this is where the people that were assigned to work,

910

00:40:08,060 --> 00:40:09,620 they had numbers.

911

00:40:09,620 --> 00:40:12,890 They received numbers, which I had received.

912

00:40:12,890 --> 00:40:15,380 My number was 89957.

913

00:40:15,380 --> 00:40:18,500 My father's was 89956.

914

00:40:18,500 --> 00:40:19,240 So we were--

915

00:40:19,240 --> 00:40:20,260 This is a tattoo.

916

00:40:20,260 --> 00:40:21,480 A tattoo.

917

00:40:21,480 --> 00:40:22,948

How did-- what were your thoughts

918

00:40:22,948 --> 00:40:24,240 when you were getting a tattoo?

919

00:40:24,240 --> 00:40:26,500 Well, we were-- the tattoo meant very little.

920

00:40:26,500 --> 00:40:29,570 The tattoo really didn't bother us as much as everything else

921 $00:40:29,570 \longrightarrow 00:40:30,155$ around us.

922

00:40:30,155 --> 00:40:31,030 The tattoo was just--

923

 $00:40:31,030 \longrightarrow 00:40:34,520$ But when you were getting it.

924

00:40:34,520 --> 00:40:36,987 It really didn't bother us that much at the time

925

00:40:36,987 --> 00:40:38,570 because there was so many other things

926

00:40:38,570 --> 00:40:40,280 happening, so many people around us

927 $00:40:40,280 \longrightarrow 00:40:42,860$ that we saw so much death and people

928

 $00:40:42,860 \longrightarrow 00:40:45,470$ and dead bodies in the bathrooms,

929 00:40:45,470 --> 00:40:48,560 and then stories that we heard from other people

930 $00:40:48,560 \longrightarrow 00:40:50,480$ that the tattoo was nothing.

931 $00:40:50,480 \longrightarrow 00:40:51,530$ It wasn't painful.

932 $00:40:51,530 \longrightarrow 00:40:55,053$ It's not a painful procedure.

933 00:40:55,053 --> 00:40:55,970 What were you wearing?

934 00:40:55,970 --> 00:40:57,440 Did you get a prison uniform?

935 00:40:57,440 --> 00:40:59,720 We got a-- yeah, striped--

936 00:40:59,720 --> 00:41:02,540 did they get it there?

937 00:41:02,540 --> 00:41:04,970 I think we-- I can't remember whether we had it already

938 00:41:04,970 --> 00:41:05,810 or we got it later.

939 00:41:05,810 --> 00:41:06,560 No, we did get it.

940 00:41:06,560 --> 00:41:09,770 Yes, we had prison-striped uniforms.

941 00:41:09,770 --> 00:41:12,380 And so we were assigned.

942 00:41:12,380 --> 00:41:14,450 They asked us what type of work we do,

943 00:41:14,450 --> 00:41:23,450 and we were assigned to a camp called Budy, which is B-U-D-Y,

944 00:41:23,450 --> 00:41:25,520 which was a farm. 00:41:25,520 --> 00:41:27,555 And the reason they--

946 00:41:27,555 --> 00:41:29,180 I don't know whether that's the reason,

947 00:41:29,180 --> 00:41:32,720 but they asked what kind of work we did at home.

948 00:41:32,720 --> 00:41:35,760 And my father said he was a farmer.

949 00:41:35,760 --> 00:41:39,720 So whether that helped him, I don't know.

950 00:41:39,720 --> 00:41:41,690 But anyway, so that meant that we

951 00:41:41,690 --> 00:41:44,740 are going to live because if you were assigned to work

952 00:41:44,740 --> 00:41:48,680 and you left Auschwitz, then for the time being, you're living.

953 00:41:48,680 --> 00:41:51,260

954 00:41:51,260 --> 00:41:55,490 So after maybe a few days, maybe a week in Birkenau,

955 00:41:55,490 --> 00:41:57,080 actually, not Auschwitz, Birkenau,

956 00:41:57,080 --> 00:41:59,700 which was the distribution point,

957

00:41:59,700 --> 00:42:05,860 we left Birkenau and we went to this place called Budy.

958

00:42:05,860 --> 00:42:07,230 And you lived there.

959

00:42:07,230 --> 00:42:08,170 We lived in Budy.

960

00:42:08,170 --> 00:42:09,130 You lived in Budy.

961

00:42:09,130 --> 00:42:13,370 And it was a permanent-- it was a small camp, a small camp,

962

00:42:13,370 --> 00:42:18,290 maybe 400 people, 400, 500.

963

00:42:18,290 --> 00:42:21,170 And of course, every morning, we had

964

00:42:21,170 --> 00:42:25,660 our bells, which was we lined up and they counted us.

965

00:42:25,660 --> 00:42:27,500 For how long did you line up?

966

00:42:27,500 --> 00:42:31,760 Early morning for half hour, 20 minutes, half hour, rain

967

00:42:31,760 --> 00:42:33,065

or shine.

968

00:42:33,065 --> 00:42:34,190

And there were selections--

969 00:42:34,190 --> 00:42:34,690 [INAUDIBLE]

970

00:42:34,690 --> 00:42:35,630 There were selections.

971

00:42:35,630 --> 00:42:37,463 Yes, because there was selections, sometimes

972

00:42:37,463 --> 00:42:39,830 they said, oh, we need 20 volunteers.

973

00:42:39,830 --> 00:42:43,485 They would take out volunteers, and they never come back.

974

00:42:43,485 --> 00:42:45,360 Now, whether they were reassigned or not that

975

00:42:45,360 --> 00:42:47,040 we never knew.

976

00:42:47,040 --> 00:42:48,870 But they never came back.

977

00:42:48,870 --> 00:42:52,320 I mean, often they didn't come back.

978

00:42:52,320 --> 00:42:54,570 Sometimes they did because I volunteered sometimes,

979

00:42:54,570 --> 00:42:58,770 some days, and I was lucky enough to come back.

980

00:42:58,770 --> 00:43:00,640 But very often, they didn't.

981 00:43:00,640 --> 00:43:07,380 And the work was farm

work, and my father and I.

982 00:43:07,380 --> 00:43:12,870 And the guards once, I remember, we went out to the farm,

983 00:43:12,870 --> 00:43:16,150 they asked, are you a farmer?

984 00:43:16,150 --> 00:43:18,040 He said, yes, I'm a farmer.

985 00:43:18,040 --> 00:43:22,110 So they asked him, how many pounds of seed

986 00:43:22,110 --> 00:43:25,290 do you need for an acre of land?

987 00:43:25,290 --> 00:43:28,130 So of course, he knew that because he was really a farmer.

988 00:43:28,130 --> 00:43:29,820 And said, yeah, you really are a farmer.

989 00:43:29,820 --> 00:43:31,680 And then he had some other questions.

990 00:43:31,680 --> 00:43:35,250 And would he have lied, which some people did,

991 00:43:35,250 --> 00:43:36,720 they beat them terribly. 992

00:43:36,720 --> 00:43:39,728 Some were beaten so that they couldn't even work anymore.

993

00:43:39,728 --> 00:43:41,520 And then, of course, eventually, they died.

994

00:43:41,520 --> 00:43:44,490 But they always tried to find--

995

00:43:44,490 --> 00:43:47,272 they didn't need any reason, but this was just one reason

996

00:43:47,272 --> 00:43:48,480 why they would beat somebody.

997

00:43:48,480 --> 00:43:53,100 Oh, you're a liar, and then they would beat them.

998

00:43:53,100 --> 00:43:57,120 So we left here, and it was--

999

00:43:57,120 --> 00:44:00,090 life in camp, of course, was better than in Birkenau

1000

00:44:00,090 --> 00:44:05,127 because we had food and some of the guards were decent,

1001

00:44:05,127 --> 00:44:06,210 but most of them were not.

1002

00:44:06,210 --> 00:44:08,333

1003

00:44:08,333 --> 00:44:10,500 What do you mean, someone of the guards were decent?

1004

00:44:10,500 --> 00:44:12,540 Well, they were not physical.

1005

00:44:12,540 --> 00:44:13,890 They didn't abuse us.

1006

00:44:13,890 --> 00:44:17,830 As long as you did the work, you didn't abuse us.

1007

00:44:17,830 --> 00:44:21,000 Now, at the farm, to supplement the food,

1008

00:44:21,000 --> 00:44:27,420 I remember I was eating this grass because it wasn't just

1009

00:44:27,420 --> 00:44:28,020 regular grass.

1010

00:44:28,020 --> 00:44:29,100 It was a sour grass.

1011

00:44:29,100 --> 00:44:30,480 I don't know what you call it.

1012

00:44:30,480 --> 00:44:34,410 It was like-- it's a sour grass, a wild grass.

1013

00:44:34,410 --> 00:44:37,277 So I ate it and I got diarrhea, which lasted for 30 days.

1014

00:44:37,277 --> 00:44:38,860 You were given this or did you get it?

1015

00:44:38,860 --> 00:44:42,180 No, I was just-- no, on the

farm I was just pulling it up.

1016 00:44:42,180 --> 00:44:46,590 And I lost about 40 to 50 pounds at the time.

1017

00:44:46,590 --> 00:44:53,070 And we had a dispensary and I was getting cold tablets.

1018

00:44:53,070 --> 00:44:57,150 So I used up all the cold tablets they had to this time.

1019

00:44:57,150 --> 00:44:59,268 And then they didn't have enough cold tablets

1020

00:44:59,268 --> 00:45:00,060 and I had the cold.

1021

00:45:00,060 --> 00:45:05,140 We had an oven, and the doctor said to take out the coal,

1022

00:45:05,140 --> 00:45:07,350 to supplement the coal tablets--

1023

00:45:07,350 --> 00:45:08,100 Oh, coal, C-O-A-L.

1024

00:45:08,100 --> 00:45:08,855 Coal, coal.

1025

00:45:08,855 --> 00:45:14,880 C-O-A-L, to supplement the tablets.

1026

00:45:14,880 --> 00:45:17,100 And after 30 days, I was all right.

1027

00:45:17,100 --> 00:45:19,470 But I never regained the weight because there

1028 00:45:19,470 --> 00:45:20,940 was no food to regain.

1029 00:45:20,940 --> 00:45:25,920 But I survived with the food that they gave us.

1030 00:45:25,920 --> 00:45:29,180 You had started to say what a day was like.

1031 00:45:29,180 --> 00:45:31,890 But the day started very early.

1032 00:45:31,890 --> 00:45:36,470 And then, of course, we all went to our assigned work areas.

1033 00:45:36,470 --> 00:45:39,030 Did they give you anything to eat in the morning?

1034 00:45:39,030 --> 00:45:40,830 Just coffee.

1035 00:45:40,830 --> 00:45:44,880 Coffee and sometimes a slice of bread.

1036 00:45:44,880 --> 00:45:47,790 And lunch, they gave us a soup, which had sometimes

1037 00:45:47,790 --> 00:45:52,300 a little piece of meat in it, salami or something like that.

1038 00:45:52,300 --> 00:45:55,380 And sometimes they

gave us black bread

1039

 $00:45:55,380 \longrightarrow 00:45:57,787$ with it, though not always.

1040

00:45:57,787 --> 00:45:58,620 But it was adequate.

1041

00:45:58,620 --> 00:46:02,320 The food, whatever it was, we could survive on it.

1042

00:46:02,320 --> 00:46:04,530 And you were-- the barracks?

1043

00:46:04,530 --> 00:46:06,330 The barracks, we had our own beds.

1044

00:46:06,330 --> 00:46:07,680 The barracks were good.

1045

00:46:07,680 --> 00:46:08,700 We had blankets.

1046

00:46:08,700 --> 00:46:09,780 So it was not the levels.

1047

 $00:46:09,780 \longrightarrow 00:46:11,977$ No, it was individual beds, individual.

1048

00:46:11,977 --> 00:46:13,560 I think there were a couple of levels,

1049

00:46:13,560 --> 00:46:16,350 but individual beds, individual beds.

1050

 $00:46:16,350 \longrightarrow 00:46:21,350$ And we had an oven that we

could heat up and we could eat.

1051 00:46:21,350 --> 00:46:22,380 Did you have blankets?

1052

00:46:22,380 --> 00:46:23,293 We had blankets.

1053

00:46:23,293 --> 00:46:23,960 And we had rats.

1054

00:46:23,960 --> 00:46:25,627 And you were still wearing your prison--

1055

00:46:25,627 --> 00:46:28,530 We had rats, plenty of rats.

1056

00:46:28,530 --> 00:46:32,382 We still wore our prison uniforms.

1057

00:46:32,382 --> 00:46:33,340 Were you ever deloused?

1058

00:46:33,340 --> 00:46:36,090

1059

00:46:36,090 --> 00:46:37,620 In the beginning, when we came in.

1060

00:46:37,620 --> 00:46:39,870 Not there, not that I know.

1061

00:46:39,870 --> 00:46:41,862 I don't remember, no.

1062

00:46:41,862 --> 00:46:43,320 But in Auschwitz-Birkenau you were. 1063 00:46:43,320 --> 00:46:45,140 In Birkenau we were, yes.

1064 00:46:45,140 --> 00:46:51,578

1065 00:46:51,578 --> 00:46:53,120 You were talking about a typical day.

1066 00:46:53,120 --> 00:46:53,920 So you got up.

1067 00:46:53,920 --> 00:46:57,010 So we got up, and then we went to the farm and we would--

1068 00:46:57,010 --> 00:47:00,310 well, in August, of course, we had the wheat,

1069 00:47:00,310 --> 00:47:01,720 so we had to cut the wheat.

1070 00:47:01,720 --> 00:47:03,490 So none of us--

1071 00:47:03,490 --> 00:47:05,110 I mean, I didn't know how to--

1072 00:47:05,110 --> 00:47:06,433 what do you call that?

1073 00:47:06,433 --> 00:47:07,420 A scythe?

1074 00:47:07,420 --> 00:47:09,200 You know, when you cut the wheat?

1075 00:47:09,200 --> 00:47:09,800 With a scythe?

1076 00:47:09,800 --> 00:47:10,300 Scythe?

1077

00:47:10,300 --> 00:47:11,200 Is that what--

1078

00:47:11,200 --> 00:47:12,117 That's the instrument.

1079

00:47:12,117 --> 00:47:13,700 Oh, that's the name of it, the scythe?

1080

00:47:13,700 --> 00:47:14,440 Curved?

1081

00:47:14,440 --> 00:47:15,130 Yes.

1082

00:47:15,130 --> 00:47:16,630 So one behind the other.

1083

00:47:16,630 --> 00:47:19,720 Now, if one didn't go, then I don't

1084

00:47:19,720 --> 00:47:21,620 have to tell you what happens.

1085

00:47:21,620 --> 00:47:27,010 But we somehow managed to learn and we did it.

1086

00:47:27,010 --> 00:47:30,030 And during that season, we used to work

1087

00:47:30,030 --> 00:47:32,620 between 16 and 17 hours a day.

1088

00:47:32,620 --> 00:47:34,870 And I remember I used to work together with my father,

1089

00:47:34,870 --> 00:47:35,750 and he was--

1090

00:47:35,750 --> 00:47:38,830 I always begged him not to work so hard

1091

00:47:38,830 --> 00:47:41,410 because he needs his strength.

1092

00:47:41,410 --> 00:47:44,193 But so he did.

1093

00:47:44,193 --> 00:47:45,860 So were you always next to him, working?

1094

00:47:45,860 --> 00:47:47,320 Always together.

1095

00:47:47,320 --> 00:47:48,670 Physically next to him working?

1096

00:47:48,670 --> 00:47:52,810 Well, no, not physically, but we lived in the same place.

1097

00:47:52,810 --> 00:47:58,990 And we never told the SS that we were father and son,

1098

00:47:58,990 --> 00:48:01,750 and they never knew it because they always separated people.

1099

00:48:01,750 --> 00:48:03,880

If they found out that there was father and son, 1100 00:48:03,880 --> 00:48:06,950 they separated them and put them somewhere else.

1101

00:48:06,950 --> 00:48:09,040 So we never called each other--

1102

00:48:09,040 --> 00:48:11,172 I called them by its first name usually.

1103

00:48:11,172 --> 00:48:12,630 Or even if I call them by his name,

1104

00:48:12,630 --> 00:48:14,980 but the SS didn't know our names.

1105

00:48:14,980 --> 00:48:18,533 We only had numbers, so it didn't matter, really.

1106

00:48:18,533 --> 00:48:20,950 Would they have had names, then they would have had a name

1107

00:48:20,950 --> 00:48:22,390 and they would have put it together.

1108

00:48:22,390 --> 00:48:23,515 But they didn't have names.

1109

00:48:23,515 --> 00:48:25,520 They only had numbers.

1110

00:48:25,520 --> 00:48:31,390 And well, they were--

1111

00:48:31,390 --> 00:48:33,980

guards were pretty bad.

1112

00:48:33,980 --> 00:48:41,560

At one point, I stole

some food that I

1113

00:48:41,560 --> 00:48:43,980

had given to-- there

was a camp for women,

1114

00:48:43,980 --> 00:48:45,420

and I threw it over to them.

1115

 $00:48:45,420 \longrightarrow 00:48:50,290$

It was, like, kohlrabi,

you know, those big--

1116

00:48:50,290 --> 00:48:51,960

Where did you get the food from?

1117

00:48:51,960 --> 00:48:53,680

Well, we had a

farm, so we had it.

1118

00:48:53,680 --> 00:48:55,870

And I just took it, and

I just threw it to them.

1119

00:48:55,870 --> 00:48:58,630

And I was caught,

so I got 25 lashes.

1120

 $00:48:58,630 \longrightarrow 00:49:02,350$

I couldn't lie down on my

back for about four weeks.

1121

 $00:49:02,350 \longrightarrow 00:49:04,000$

That was the only

time that I got hit.

1122

00:49:04,000 --> 00:49:06,910

I was never beaten

any other time

1123 00:49:06,910 --> 00:49:11,260 except for this one time, which was unusual.

1124

00:49:11,260 --> 00:49:15,750 And on Sundays I did extra work.

1125

00:49:15,750 --> 00:49:17,180 Sunday was not a day off?

1126

00:49:17,180 --> 00:49:19,710 It was a day off, but I volunteered

1127

00:49:19,710 --> 00:49:22,870 so that I can get extra food and cigarettes that I cleaned--

1128

00:49:22,870 --> 00:49:25,450 we cleaned up the SS quarters.

1129

00:49:25,450 --> 00:49:29,680 And so I got extra food for that and the cigarette butts.

1130

00:49:29,680 --> 00:49:32,430 My father was a heavy smoker, so I got him

1131

00:49:32,430 --> 00:49:35,770 the cigarettes from the SS for him to have cigarettes

1132

00:49:35,770 --> 00:49:37,000 at the time, I remember.

1133

00:49:37,000 --> 00:49:39,202 What was it like to clean up the SS quarters?

1134

00:49:39,202 --> 00:49:42,395

1135 00:49:42,395 --> 00:49:43,770 They didn't give us any problems.

1136 00:49:43,770 --> 00:49:44,810 They were nice.

1137 00:49:44,810 --> 00:49:46,990 They were around when you were doing this?

1138 00:49:46,990 --> 00:49:49,030 Sometimes, sometimes not.

1139 00:49:49,030 --> 00:49:52,948 But they were-- we had no problem with that.

1140 00:49:52,948 --> 00:49:54,490 What do you mean you cleaned them up?

1141 00:49:54,490 --> 00:49:55,157 What did you do?

1142 00:49:55,157 --> 00:49:57,580 We cleaned up the floors, we cleaned up--

1143 00:49:57,580 --> 00:49:58,450 they had parties.

1144 00:49:58,450 --> 00:50:00,640 They had the glasses, the dirty glasses.

1145 00:50:00,640 --> 00:50:02,260 We made their beds.

1146 00:50:02,260 --> 00:50:02,990 We just--

1147

00:50:02,990 --> 00:50:05,180

Who worked with you, other young--

1148

00:50:05,180 --> 00:50:08,595

Well, I had one room, somebody else had somebody else's.

1149

00:50:08,595 --> 00:50:09,970

We had about two or three people.

1150

00:50:09,970 --> 00:50:10,970

And they asked for volunteers.

1151

00:50:10,970 --> 00:50:12,762

But were those people

who volunteered young

1152

00:50:12,762 --> 00:50:13,830

like you, teenagers?

1153

 $00:50:13,830 \longrightarrow 00:50:16,030$

Yes, mostly young, yes.

1154

00:50:16,030 --> 00:50:17,380

Most of the people were young.

1155

00:50:17,380 --> 00:50:18,838

I mean, even my

father was younger.

1156

00:50:18,838 --> 00:50:24,110

But he was 50, so that was

not so old at the time.

1157

00:50:24,110 --> 00:50:24,610

Yeah.

1158

00:50:24,610 --> 00:50:26,152

But that was what they considered old

1159

00:50:26,152 --> 00:50:28,200 because the older people didn't survive.

1160

00:50:28,200 --> 00:50:30,310 So most of the people were young.

1161

00:50:30,310 --> 00:50:33,430 What did you talk about with the other teenage boys?

1162

00:50:33,430 --> 00:50:35,890 Well, we spoke about whether we'll ever--

1163

00:50:35,890 --> 00:50:39,190 well, the talk was mostly how to get food, really,

1164

00:50:39,190 --> 00:50:41,570 and how to survive because if you--

1165

00:50:41,570 --> 00:50:43,110 so we always tried to get food.

1166

00:50:43,110 --> 00:50:47,650 At one instance, there's one group that worked with pigs.

1167

00:50:47,650 --> 00:50:51,100 And there were a little piglets, and now the question

1168

00:50:51,100 --> 00:50:52,600 was how to bring in the piglets, how

1169

00:50:52,600 --> 00:50:58,810

to take the piglets into the camp, into the dorms.

1170 00:50:58,810 --> 00:51:01,630 And so they put them in the manure.

1171 00:51:01,630 --> 00:51:03,190 When they cleaned up the manure, they

1172 00:51:03,190 --> 00:51:05,877 brought a pile, and they that's how they got them out.

1173 00:51:05,877 --> 00:51:07,960 Then they went into the manure and they picked out

1174 00:51:07,960 --> 00:51:10,300 the piglets, they brought them in, and they cooked them.

1175 00:51:10,300 --> 00:51:12,970 We had an oven that we could cook.

1176 00:51:12,970 --> 00:51:15,800 So that was one instance.

1177 00:51:15,800 --> 00:51:17,770 And there were many instances that--

1178 00:51:17,770 --> 00:51:20,830 there was one instance that two people wanted to escape,

1179 00:51:20,830 --> 00:51:25,990 two couples, actually, two Jews, but they were couples.

1180 00:51:25,990 --> 00:51:28,450 They had Jewish couples also.

1181

00:51:28,450 --> 00:51:33,340 And one of them, they were very friendly with the SS.

1182

00:51:33,340 --> 00:51:36,790 So they got uniforms, and they were

1183

00:51:36,790 --> 00:51:46,750 changing in into the uniforms in one of the horse barns.

1184

00:51:46,750 --> 00:51:51,530 And somebody saw them and one of the couples saw them,

1185

00:51:51,530 --> 00:51:53,280 so he called the SS, and they caught them.

1186

00:51:53,280 --> 00:51:56,400 And of course, they were torn apart by two dogs, two of them,

1187

00:51:56,400 --> 00:51:59,317 because the idea was that one would be in uniform,

1188

00:51:59,317 --> 00:52:01,650 the other one would have a shovel or some kind of tools,

1189

00:52:01,650 --> 00:52:02,880 and just walk out.

1190

00:52:02,880 --> 00:52:05,040 But they never made it.

1191

00:52:05,040 --> 00:52:09,090 What was your relationship with the Jewish kapos?

1192

00:52:09,090 --> 00:52:12,960 I really had nothing to do with them, nothing much, other

1193

00:52:12,960 --> 00:52:14,820 than just follow the instructions.

1194

00:52:14,820 --> 00:52:16,830 I was never friendly with them.

1195

00:52:16,830 --> 00:52:18,690 Did you have any feelings about them?

1196

00:52:18,690 --> 00:52:21,570 I thought they were miserable because they really--

1197

00:52:21,570 --> 00:52:24,270 they did more than what they should have.

1198

00:52:24,270 --> 00:52:25,338 They didn't have to--

1199

00:52:25,338 --> 00:52:26,005 they were then--

1200

00:52:26,005 --> 00:52:27,660 In what sense?

1201

00:52:27,660 --> 00:52:34,330 Well, they were-- for example, when I was beaten,

1202

00:52:34,330 --> 00:52:36,018 they didn't have to do it.

1203

00:52:36,018 --> 00:52:37,310 They were the ones to beat you? 1204

00:52:37,310 --> 00:52:39,750

They were the ones, yes.

1205

00:52:39,750 --> 00:52:41,100 The SS never did the dirty work.

1206

00:52:41,100 --> 00:52:42,750

It was always the German--

1207

00:52:42,750 --> 00:52:47,160 the kapos, the prisoners

did it to themselves.

1208

00:52:47,160 --> 00:52:52,970

And there was one

instance that I had--

1209

00:52:52,970 --> 00:52:55,990

there was somebody who I don't remember what he did,

1210

00:52:55,990 --> 00:53:00,540

but the SS made me pump

water on him in the winter,

1211

00:53:00,540 --> 00:53:03,510

just became an icicle.

1212

00:53:03,510 --> 00:53:06,460

And then he was taken into

infirmary and he died.

1213

00:53:06,460 --> 00:53:09,120

1214

00:53:09,120 --> 00:53:12,420

So they didn't do it, I did it.

1215

 $00:53:12,420 \longrightarrow 00:53:15,340$

But if you don't do it,

then they shoot you.

1216 00:53:15,340 --> 00:53:17,635 So you did things.

1217 00:53:17,635 --> 00:53:20,150 But the kapos didn't have to do what they did.

1218 00:53:20,150 --> 00:53:22,097 They went beyond the call of duty.

1219 00:53:22,097 --> 00:53:23,680 You're talking about the Jewish kapos?

1220 00:53:23,680 --> 00:53:25,260 The Jewish kapos.

1221 00:53:25,260 --> 00:53:27,680 And the other kapos were mostly homosexuals,

1222 00:53:27,680 --> 00:53:31,050 and for whatever political reasons they were in prison.

1223 00:53:31,050 --> 00:53:34,230 Many of the kapos were Germans and other homosexuals.

1224 00:53:34,230 --> 00:53:36,390 They had different insignias.

1225 00:53:36,390 --> 00:53:38,970 Did you have contact with them?

1226 00:53:38,970 --> 00:53:43,410 No, not other than in Birkenau when we arrived.

1227 00:53:43,410 --> 00:53:46,810 There was one who liked me, and he was homosexual

1228

00:53:46,810 --> 00:53:48,960 and he always brought me food.

1229

00:53:48,960 --> 00:53:53,130 But I left and I never saw him after.

1230

00:53:53,130 --> 00:53:56,070 But they always tried to get the young people

1231

00:53:56,070 --> 00:54:01,440 and have affairs with them, but then they gave them food.

1232

00:54:01,440 --> 00:54:03,860 Were you enticed into an affair or [INAUDIBLE]??

1233

00:54:03,860 --> 00:54:04,360 No.

1234

00:54:04,360 --> 00:54:09,870 No, he just-- he started it, but it never came to the point

1235

00:54:09,870 --> 00:54:13,077 where he really said anything I didn't even know he was.

1236

00:54:13,077 --> 00:54:14,410 In the beginning, I didn't know.

1237

00:54:14,410 --> 00:54:16,390 I thought he was very nice to me.

1238

00:54:16,390 --> 00:54:17,880 But later on, then I saw his-- 1239

00:54:17,880 --> 00:54:21,310 I think it was red triangles, if I remember correctly.

1240

00:54:21,310 --> 00:54:21,810 Or pink?

1241

00:54:21,810 --> 00:54:23,477 I can't remember whether they were pink.

1242

00:54:23,477 --> 00:54:26,850 I don't remember which ones they were.

1243

00:54:26,850 --> 00:54:29,790 But later on I found out that that's what he wanted from me.

1244

00:54:29,790 --> 00:54:32,550 I mean, that's what they told me.

1245

00:54:32,550 --> 00:54:37,710 What about your relationship with the women's camp in Budy?

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00:54:37,710 --> 00:54:38,510 Did you see women?

1247

00:54:38,510 --> 00:54:42,420 Well, for example, my job was also we dug ditches.

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00:54:42,420 --> 00:54:48,060 We dug a trench, but it was a 8-foot trench.

1249

00:54:48,060 --> 00:54:52,257 And my job was to place the-- what

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00:54:52,257 --> 00:54:56,130 do you call the grass squares?

1251

00:54:56,130 --> 00:54:56,730 The sod?

1252

00:54:56,730 --> 00:54:57,690 Sod.

1253

00:54:57,690 --> 00:55:02,550 So the women were bringing the sod, and I with somebody else,

1254

00:55:02,550 --> 00:55:04,230 with a hammer, we were placing the sod

1255

00:55:04,230 --> 00:55:07,200 on the side of the trench.

1256

00:55:07,200 --> 00:55:08,850 Now, these women-it so happened

1257

00:55:08,850 --> 00:55:11,920 that our guard was very nice.

1258

00:55:11,920 --> 00:55:14,790 And I tried to place the sod very slowly

1259

00:55:14,790 --> 00:55:17,760 because the women that were bringing us the sod,

1260

00:55:17,760 --> 00:55:20,640 they carried three to four sods at a time.

1261

00:55:20,640 --> 00:55:21,990 And their guard was a terror.

1262

00:55:21,990 --> 00:55:23,280 He was a horror.

1263

00:55:23,280 --> 00:55:25,740 So he had a dog, a German shepherd,

1264

00:55:25,740 --> 00:55:28,050 and they were running.

1265

00:55:28,050 --> 00:55:32,190 He said that they are not supplying us enough sod,

1266

00:55:32,190 --> 00:55:37,330 and so the dogs were chasing them to bring the sod.

1267

00:55:37,330 --> 00:55:39,100 And of course, these poor women, I mean,

1268

00:55:39,100 --> 00:55:41,910 we said we wouldn't want to see our family here

1269

00:55:41,910 --> 00:55:44,190 because it could have been our family also.

1270

00:55:44,190 --> 00:55:46,820 So this was for about three days.

1271

00:55:46,820 --> 00:55:50,160 They just kept on, and we couldn't-- they stood behind

1272

00:55:50,160 --> 00:55:53,310 us, so we couldn't put-- and they always kept on saying that

1273

00:55:53,310 --> 00:55:55,830

they're not bring enough sod and they kept on running,

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00:55:55,830 --> 00:55:57,190 and they ran them further.

1275

00:55:57,190 --> 00:55:59,610 And it was just a terrible sight.

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00:55:59,610 --> 00:56:04,990 So that was one of the very bad experiences that happened.

1277

00:56:04,990 --> 00:56:10,800 And finally, we were happy when this finished.

1278

00:56:10,800 --> 00:56:15,480 So but there were women, but they made them work very hard.

1279

00:56:15,480 --> 00:56:19,080 Did you make any friends with any of the other teenagers

1280

00:56:19,080 --> 00:56:20,430 at that time?

1281

00:56:20,430 --> 00:56:21,840 In the camp?

1282

00:56:21,840 --> 00:56:23,040 No, just associations.

1283

00:56:23,040 --> 00:56:26,220 We were just--actually, we were all

1284

00:56:26,220 --> 00:56:28,690 trying to survive because at this point,

1285 00:56:28,690 --> 00:56:31,580 we knew that the gas chambers exist,

1286 00:56:31,580 --> 00:56:35,850 and they knew everything, when somebody is taken there,

1287 00:56:35,850 --> 00:56:38,220 we even suspected that.

1288 00:56:38,220 --> 00:56:40,400 So we were just trying to survive,

1289 00:56:40,400 --> 00:56:42,480 just trying to get all this food,

1290 00:56:42,480 --> 00:56:45,930 and hoping that one day we'll survive.

1291 00:56:45,930 --> 00:56:50,230 Did you have any feelings when you would see a dead body?

1292 00:56:50,230 --> 00:56:52,150 It was a natural occurrence.

1293 00:56:52,150 --> 00:56:55,020 So it wasn't it wasn't as if--

1294 00:56:55,020 --> 00:56:56,520 it was just a natural occurrence.

1295 00:56:56,520 --> 00:56:59,040 In the beginning, it was frightening.

1296 00:56:59,040 --> 00:57:02,610 But after, it was a natural occurrence.

1297

00:57:02,610 --> 00:57:09,180 And what else do we have?

1298

00:57:09,180 --> 00:57:13,630 Did you ever harbor thoughts about trying to escape?

1299

00:57:13,630 --> 00:57:15,100 There was no escape.

1300

00:57:15,100 --> 00:57:17,060 There was no way to escape there.

1301

00:57:17,060 --> 00:57:19,552 The escape should have been before we left.

1302

00:57:19,552 --> 00:57:20,760 We shouldn't have gone there.

1303

00:57:20,760 --> 00:57:21,720 We should have escaped.

1304

00:57:21,720 --> 00:57:24,960 But once we were there, there was no escape

1305

00:57:24,960 --> 00:57:27,720 because the guards were all around us, electrical wires

1306

00:57:27,720 --> 00:57:29,110 all around.

1307

00:57:29,110 --> 00:57:31,170 And these two people that tried to escape,

1308

00:57:31,170 --> 00:57:33,180 you heard what happened to them.

1309

00:57:33,180 --> 00:57:39,310 And very seldom did anybody ever escape any of these camps.

1310

00:57:39,310 --> 00:57:42,760 Did you have any contact with your mother and your sister?

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00:57:42,760 --> 00:57:48,017 The first week that we got there, I saw them.

1312

00:57:48,017 --> 00:57:49,350 So they were taken to Budy, too?

1313

00:57:49,350 --> 00:57:50,690 That was a terrible shock.

1314

00:57:50,690 --> 00:57:51,568 No, no.

1315

00:57:51,568 --> 00:57:52,860 No, this was still in Birkenau.

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00:57:52,860 --> 00:57:54,130 Oh, in Birkenau.

1317

00:57:54,130 --> 00:57:56,885 What happened was I asked someone,

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00:57:56,885 --> 00:57:58,510 and they said, yes, they saw them here.

1319

00:57:58,510 --> 00:57:59,830

And I just went--

1320

00:57:59,830 --> 00:58:03,220

I remember I had some soap and I took them some soap.

1321

00:58:03,220 --> 00:58:05,230 And they were shaven, their heads were shaven.

1322

00:58:05,230 --> 00:58:07,330 So it was difficult to recognize, even.

1323

00:58:07,330 --> 00:58:10,270 But we met for very briefly, a few minutes,

1324

00:58:10,270 --> 00:58:12,190 and that was the last time I saw them.

1325

00:58:12,190 --> 00:58:14,560 My father didn't see them.

1326

00:58:14,560 --> 00:58:16,990 Did your mother or sister say anything special to you?

1327

00:58:16,990 --> 00:58:19,660 At this time?

1328

00:58:19,660 --> 00:58:21,640 No, we were just happy to see each other,

1329

00:58:21,640 --> 00:58:23,170 and then we had to separate.

1330

00:58:23,170 --> 00:58:29,530 It was just-- no, nothing that I would remember.

1331

00:58:29,530 --> 00:58:31,016 We were crying and then-- 1332 00:58:31,016 --> 00:58:34,970

1333

00:58:34,970 --> 00:58:36,350 so and what else?

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00:58:36,350 --> 00:58:39,810

1335

00:58:39,810 --> 00:58:40,900 So you worked in--

1336

00:58:40,900 --> 00:58:42,060 I worked on the farm.

1337

00:58:42,060 --> 00:58:44,540 How was-- you said, obviously, your health was not good.

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00:58:44,540 --> 00:58:46,030 You had lost 40 or 50 pounds.

1339

00:58:46,030 --> 00:58:46,822 My health was good.

1340

00:58:46,822 --> 00:58:48,530 Even though you lost a tremendous amount?

1341

00:58:48,530 --> 00:58:49,060 I was fine.

1342

00:58:49,060 --> 00:58:49,560 I was fine.

1343

00:58:49,560 --> 00:58:50,960 I worked very hard.

1344

00:58:50,960 --> 00:58:57,110 Then I worked-- oh, after that incident that I gave the food, 1345 00:58:57,110 --> 00:59:00,210 I was put in--

1346 00:59:00,210 --> 00:59:02,450 no, there was another incident.

1347 00:59:02,450 --> 00:59:05,750 I was working in a fishery where we--

1348 00:59:05,750 --> 00:59:07,010 This was in Budy?

1349 00:59:07,010 --> 00:59:08,450 This was in Budy.

1350 00:59:08,450 --> 00:59:12,270 And I was working in the fishery there the fed the fish,

1351 00:59:12,270 --> 00:59:13,950 and it was a fishery, regular fishery,

1352 00:59:13,950 --> 00:59:17,450 where we, knee-deep, we had to go and feed the fish.

1353 00:59:17,450 --> 00:59:19,580 And I can't remember anymore what we did,

1354 00:59:19,580 --> 00:59:22,730 but we fed the fish and we cleaned the place.

1355 00:59:22,730 --> 00:59:26,600 And then I stole once a fish, and they caught me.

1356 00:59:26,600 --> 00:59:29,420 I put it in my shirt and it was sort of moving still.

1357 00:59:29,420 --> 00:59:31,160 I didn't kill it, I guess.

1358 00:59:31,160 --> 00:59:32,060 And then I was put--

1359 00:59:32,060 --> 00:59:33,810 You slipped a live fish inside your shirt?

1360 00:59:33,810 --> 00:59:35,600 Well, I sort of hit it.

1361 00:59:35,600 --> 00:59:37,850 I thought I killed it, but I didn't.

1362 00:59:37,850 --> 00:59:39,680 And when you're standing at attention,

1363 00:59:39,680 --> 00:59:42,950 you couldn't do anything, and this thing was moving.

1364 00:59:42,950 --> 00:59:45,960 So they caught me, and I was put in--

1365 00:59:45,960 --> 00:59:47,460 I wasn't beaten.

1366 00:59:47,460 --> 00:59:51,500 I was put in a punishing kommando, which

1367 00:59:51,500 --> 00:59:54,590 was cutting wood in the woods.

1368

00:59:54,590 --> 00:59:58,490 It was huge, pine trees, oaks.

1369

00:59:58,490 --> 01:00:01,920 Actually, it wasn't a punishing, it was just a bad, worse deal.

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01:00:01,920 --> 01:00:05,560 But it wasn't where everybody was punished was sent there.

1371

01:00:05,560 --> 01:00:07,880 But they sent me there because it was much worse

1372

01:00:07,880 --> 01:00:09,530 than being in the fishery.

1373

01:00:09,530 --> 01:00:11,750 And so I took it as a punishing kommando,

1374

01:00:11,750 --> 01:00:14,390 but it wasn't really everybody that was caught

1375

01:00:14,390 --> 01:00:16,700 doing something was there.

1376

01:00:16,700 --> 01:00:19,190 And then I was doing that until--

1377

01:00:19,190 --> 01:00:22,218 I was there for about two months, and at which point

1378

01:00:22,218 --> 01:00:24,260 I only saw my father at night because at night we

1379

01:00:24,260 --> 01:00:27,510 came back to the barracks.

1380 01:00:27,510 --> 01:00:30,800 And so then a tree went through my leg, and--

1381 01:00:30,800 --> 01:00:33,890

1382 01:00:33,890 --> 01:00:34,940 How did the tree--

1383 01:00:34,940 --> 01:00:36,500 A tree went through my leg.

1384 01:00:36,500 --> 01:00:37,920 How did that happen?

1385 01:00:37,920 --> 01:00:42,290 Well, it was as we cut the tree, a branch went through it.

1386 01:00:42,290 --> 01:00:46,950 So then I-- this was in December, end of December.

1387 01:00:46,950 --> 01:00:50,430 And actually, my father, before this even happened,

1388 01:00:50,430 --> 01:00:51,340 my father was sick.

1389 01:00:51,340 --> 01:00:56,180 He had-- what do you call the--

1390 01:00:56,180 --> 01:00:57,440 A bee sting?

1391 01:00:57,440 --> 01:01:01,790 Not a bee sting, but he had a sore on his neck. 1392 01:01:01,790 --> 01:01:04,640 It's called a bee something.

1393 01:01:04,640 --> 01:01:10,430 Anyway, they wanted to send him to Auschwitz to the hospital.

1394 01:01:10,430 --> 01:01:12,860 And anybody that was sent to the hospital, of course,

1395 01:01:12,860 --> 01:01:13,980 that was the end.

1396 01:01:13,980 --> 01:01:16,130 So I always was against that, and I

1397 01:01:16,130 --> 01:01:19,992 told the doctor not to send him because we were together.

1398 01:01:19,992 --> 01:01:21,950 And so they didn't send them, but meanwhile, he

1399 01:01:21,950 --> 01:01:24,230 was getting worse and worse.

1400 01:01:24,230 --> 01:01:28,970 And then it so happened that I had to be sent to the hospital

1401 01:01:28,970 --> 01:01:31,240 because I was bleeding.

1402 01:01:31,240 --> 01:01:33,200 And at that point, they couldn't send him,

1403 01:01:33,200 --> 01:01:36,650 so we were separated anyway, and I was sent to the hospital.

1404 01:01:36,650 --> 01:01:39,375 And then they evacuated the camp.

1405 01:01:39,375 --> 01:01:41,000 Then, of course, he died in Buchenwald.

1406 01:01:41,000 --> 01:01:43,490 But I survived because in Auschwitz--

1407 01:01:43,490 --> 01:01:46,980 I'll come back to that later.

1408 01:01:46,980 --> 01:01:49,190 So at that point, I was sent to Auschwitz.

1409 01:01:49,190 --> 01:01:50,030 To the infirmary.

1410 01:01:50,030 --> 01:01:53,700 To the infirmary, and they took care of it.

1411 01:01:53,700 --> 01:01:56,907 And I was there for about three weeks, four weeks.

1412 01:01:56,907 --> 01:01:58,490 Who took care of you in the infirmary?

1413 01:01:58,490 --> 01:01:59,200 Doctors.

1414 01:01:59,200 --> 01:02:00,260 German doctors?

1415

01:02:00,260 --> 01:02:01,340 Jewish doctors.

1416

01:02:01,340 --> 01:02:02,750 Jewish Germans?

1417

01:02:02,750 --> 01:02:05,150 Jewish doctors.

1418

01:02:05,150 --> 01:02:08,790 What kind of equipment they have, materials?

1419

01:02:08,790 --> 01:02:10,730 I think they had sophisticated equipment

1420

01:02:10,730 --> 01:02:14,420 because they had done surgery, all kinds of very sophisticated

1421

01:02:14,420 --> 01:02:16,560 types of surgeries.

1422

01:02:16,560 --> 01:02:17,820 You had your own bed?

1423

01:02:17,820 --> 01:02:18,620 I had my own bed.

1424

01:02:18,620 --> 01:02:20,390 Were you given enough food?

1425

01:02:20,390 --> 01:02:23,030 I was given enough food.

1426

01:02:23,030 --> 01:02:27,410 It was-- I was all right there until, of course,

1427

01:02:27,410 --> 01:02:34,750 until the 18th,

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when Germans left

1428 01:02:34,750 --> 01:02:36,785 and the Russians who were coming very close.

1429 01:02:36,785 --> 01:02:40,940

1430 01:02:40,940 --> 01:02:41,760 But can you--

1431 01:02:41,760 --> 01:02:43,310 Sure.

1432 01:02:43,310 --> 01:02:46,000