

**Hildesheim, Benjamin**  
**March 26, 1996**  
**RG-50.106\*0023**

### **Abstract**

#### **File 1 RG-50.106\*0023.01.03**

Benjamin Hildesheim was born Beniek Hildesheim in Sieradz, Poland on August 21, 1929, to an upper middle class family with eight children. His father suddenly died in 1937 but his mother got a monthly pension from his business. The Poles were known to be violent toward the Jews after their Sunday sermons, but Benjamin had Polish friends he played with in his neighborhood. Five of Benjamin's siblings made aliyah to Palestine so Benjamin and two brothers were with his mother at the outbreak of war. The family members were put into a ghetto in their town until 1942, and then Benjamin was separated from his mother and put into the Lodz ghetto. Benjamin was adopted by Rumkowski, the President of the ghetto. Later, he was transferred to Auschwitz.

#### **File 2 RG-50.106\*0023.02.03**

At Auschwitz, Benjamin was placed in a satellite camp from August to December 1944 where he did farming. He spent a short time in Buchenwald and then was marched to Theresienstadt where he remained until liberation. He soon sickened and was placed in a Prague hospital where he recuperated and found the people helpful. From there he went to Budapest and was smuggled to Austria by the Hebrew brigade of the British Army and then down to the heel of Italy. In October 1945, he was taken by a British warship to Haifa, where he met his siblings and later fought in two wars.

#### **File 3 RG-50.106\*0023.03.03**

Benjamin served with the Israel Defense forces. He married an Israeli in March 1957 and soon divorced and married a woman from Brazil in 1962. They lived in Brazil with their three boys until 1985 when they moved to the United States. Benjamin learned Portuguese and worked in his wife's family factory. He is proud of his three children who graduated college in the US and work as professionals in research and engineering. He has a number of regrets including not talking about his Holocaust experience until his children were in their teens, not transmitting the Jewish heritage that his parents taught him, and accepting reparations from the Germans. He recalls that on at least two occasions during the Holocaust he contemplated escaping from the Germans. He believes that the Holocaust left him strong physically but not emotionally.

#### **File 1 RG-50.106\*0023.01.03**

00:00 Benjamin Hildesheim was born as Beniek Hildesheim in Sieradz, Poland, on August 21, 1929. His family consisted of five brothers and three sisters. Karola (?) was the eldest;

then came Wonsha (?), Mendick (?), Manya (?), Shemeck (?), Schmonick (?), Moshek (?) and then himself, the youngest. His father was Avraham and his mother was B'nacha Pregar (?). They were born in Kalash (?), Poland. The father's work was distribution of coal and wood by train from the coal mines in the surrounding towns to the bakery and retailers. Benjamin was born in a small town of 15-20,000 inhabitants of which there were 3-4,000 Jews. The Jews were mostly Zionists. He had many aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins in the surrounding towns whom he frequently visited. His father had four brothers and two sisters. They lived in the center of the town until 1939 when war broke out. They lived in a rented home on Calesta (?) Street, Number 2.

05:00 They lived in a Polish neighborhood, about a mile from the Jewish neighborhood. His father belonged to Mizrachi, a Zionist organization. His mother was the more observant parent and the one who imprinted religion in the home. They observed Shabbat and the holidays and kept kosher. Benjamin spoke Polish and understood Yiddish. His parents spoke Yiddish, German, Russian and Polish. Benjamin started school at age 7 in 1937. He attended a Jewish public school which was part of the Polish school system but only had Jewish children. It was mixed with both boys and girls. Benjamin attended private Hebrew classes at the Tarbut School in the morning and the Jewish public school in the afternoon. The latter had Polish teachers. His family belonged to a Mizrachi synagogue where Benjamin attended weekly classes. The family was considered upper middle class.

10:00 As a child he enjoyed ice skating and music but did not play an instrument. Benjamin's father suddenly died in 1937. His father had been in a partnership with two brothers, and his mother was then given a monthly pension so did not work. He told of concerns about anti-Semitism before the war as he had to be careful to stay away from churches on Sundays as the Poles, upon exiting church, would be excited to beat the Jews. Nevertheless, he played with Poles in the neighborhood. It was felt that the priest's sermons influenced the Poles' behavior. He tells of his brother who was assaulted with a knife by a young boy who was later punished by his own parents. Benjamin felt that he enjoyed a nice childhood despite the anti-Semitism. He heard of Hitler before the war from his father, who as early as 1932 heard on the radio about the Nazis coming to power. His father got the family together and encouraged the older children (one sister in high school and one at the University of Warsaw) to go to Palestine. One sister made aliyah and one got married, stayed at the University of Warsaw until she got pregnant, remained in Warsaw, and perished.

15:00 All the children were close to the parents. The father was busy with his work and Zionist activity and not very strict, and the children had more contact with the mother. In 1937 Benjamin's father at age 47 suddenly got angina, had a heart attack, and died in a few days. Life changed emotionally for the family which disintegrated. The mother got depressed. Some of the children made aliyah. The eldest got married and moved to Kalash (?), a neighboring city. His house seemed like something was missing. His sister,

who studied Polish literature at Warsaw University, stood in the corner at lectures as a protest to the faculty. The people had freedom of movement as Poland was a democracy.

- 20:00 Anti-Semitism was deeply rooted in the Polish people as it was disseminated by the Polish church based on the belief that the Jews had killed Jesus. Their belief was primitive and ruthless with their only goal was to kill the Jews. He saw the Polish fascist movement boycotting Jewish shops and writing on them "Jews to Palestine" and "Don't buy in Jewish shops." They had so many relatives around the nearby towns so did not miss integration into Polish society but they did not want to be bothered. In 1932 they were well-off, not hungry and had a phone and a radio. Benjamin felt they led a rich life. He was fearful of the wild *shegetz* (gentile boys). They were brought up to be respectful, but the Poles beat up women and children. During the war, his synagogue was turned into a stable for horses. Before the war there was no killing, just anti-Semitic posters.
- 25:00 When the war began in September 1939, his family fled to a neighboring city away from the front. When they arrived, they found it had already been bombarded by the Germans. His mother had panicked as she heard about the things the Germans did to Jews. Some German Jews had come to Poland as they were denied German citizenship, and the Poles did not accept them so the Jews lodged them temporarily in different homes. They came with few clothes, and one German/Jew wanted to sell him a bicycle, but his mother refused so he cried. His family packed up their belongings, and their uncle hired a horse and carriage for their belongings, and they walked about 14 kilometers (10 miles) to Danny Kaye's birthplace. The Germans were throwing gas bombs, and the people were screaming and placed wet rags in their mouth as thought they were being gassed but they were just bombs. They stayed overnight as they had relatives there.
- 30:00 Their belongings, including his sister's car, were confiscated by the Polish Army so they had to return on foot. His brother-in-law got sick and died. **Tape 1, Side B** They moved on to another town which was occupied by the Germans. At first they thought the world would stop the war. It was thought that the French and the English would defeat the Germans, but they were mistaken. The Russians defeated the Germans. An agreement was signed dividing Poland between the Russians and the Germans. Many Jews fled to East Poland which was taken over by the Russians. Benjamin's 17-year-old brother left for Russia along with two cousins. They reached Warsaw and were surrounded by the German Army. They saw planes daily bombing Warsaw. One brother was wounded. His mother later found his brother with a broken arm in a hospital. Benjamin remained with his mother and two brothers.
- 35:00 The rest of his siblings were not with them; one sister was married and the rest were in Palestine. The food supply was insufficient, and his mother cried. In Spring 1940 they were put into the ghetto in their hometown. When their town was occupied by the Germans, they went to their home for a few months. In 1940 they were driven into the

Jewish quarter and the ghetto was closed. They could only leave if they had work orders. Benjamin remained there until the ghetto was liquidated in 1942. Sometimes he went on errands for others. His aunt bought flour to make cookies which she sold to Polish families. He looked Polish so he smuggled them out of the ghetto which helped the family to obtain some money. He was frightened and proud of what he did. On these errands he tried to stay away from the Polish children who knew him as they would denounce him. He was 10 years old at the time. When he saw familiar children, he would hide in nearby houses. In 1941 his mother was called to the Gestapo as a letter had reached her from Palestine that went through Spain. The Gestapo suspected she was a spy. The letter was from Benjamin's youngest brother, Shmuel (?) who made aliyah in 1938. His married sister had a farm in Palestine so his mother asked her to take him and she did.

- 40:00 He gave his life at age 21 to the War of Israel Independence. The ghetto that Benjamin lived in was very crowded. Two to three families lived in one-and-one-half or two rooms. They squeezed in, but as long as they were together, his mother was thankful. She wanted Benjamin to continue his schooling, so she went to a family where the mother, a graduate of the Sorbonne, spoke many languages, was a musician and had a boy the same age as Benjamin and asked her to give lessons to Benjamin. He received lessons in grammar and French until 1942. He enjoyed listening to the older son, who was about 19 or 20, play violin. In one small room, the family of four slept, cooked, and played Beethoven, Mozart, and Chopin. There were no schools at the time, just private schooling. Benjamin had other children his age to play with. The curfew started at sunset, but the children would run from entrance to entrance to play together. Sometimes the children were taken away for forced labor. They were happy to have a chance to get some bread.
- 45:00 The children went with groups of older people to clean the streets. At first his brothers went to labor, and he was left alone. Later he went and cleaned homes, irrigated vegetables, and took care of plants. He was never seriously sick during the war. When he was 12 or 13, he was separated from his mother and was transferred to the Lodz ghetto. It was liquidated, and he was placed on the right. At age 14, he was 6 feet 1 inch and the same weight as today. He was starving but did not get sick. Benjamin had an emotional crisis when he was separated from his mother's arms. About 700 to 900 people from the ghetto were sent to a monastery where they stayed overnight with no sanitation. The gates opened at midnight and such strong light was put on them that they could not see. There were dogs, screams and shouts.
- 50:00 Benjamin could not find his mother and later had a nervous breakdown. At sunrise they went to the Lodz ghetto in wagons. He was amongst the youngest. He arrived in September 1942 all alone and did not know what to do. It was a bitter winter, and he had no bed and no heat. The President of the Ghetto Council was Rumkowski. There were

no stores in the ghetto and no windows. He and a cousin (his uncle's son) asked for bedclothes. Benjamin was full of lice. His sweater was infested so attempted to get rid of the lice by pouring cold water on it but was unsuccessful. One night he awoke screaming as he was bothered by the lice. After a few months Rumkowski adopted him along with nine other children. Benjamin saw his picture in the Holocaust Museum.

55:00 Before the war, Rumkowski was director of an orphanage, and in the ghetto, he organized orphanages. An office in the ghetto took care of children but could do very little. The original Lodz residents adopted some children from the neighboring towns. Benjamin felt that it was fate that Rumkowski adopted him. Some families that adopted children took advantage by taking the rations away from the children for themselves. They were so hungry so Benjamin does not blame anyone. Some people would place their dead relative in a wardrobe to secure their ration. People's feet swelled from the hunger and they would die when the swelling reached their heart. Carriages went along the streets daily to pick up the dead bodies. When the Germans demanded children, Rumkowski would go to the mothers and obtain them. Benjamin could not understand how Rumkowski could do that; he should have killed himself instead.

60:00 Kochuf (?), a pedagogue in Warsaw, went along with the children he cared for. Rumkowski had more food than others as he as was the elite, the elder of Yehudim. He came with the people from Lodz and asked who was the eldest and the president and they picked him. When Lodz was liquidated, they were transferred to Auschwitz. Rumkowski wanted to create evidence that he did good, so he took a rich Berlin banker's daughter, one from Prague, and Benjamin because his father was popular in his town, and adopted them. Benjamin had five brothers and sisters in Palestine.

63:00

## **File 2 RG-50.106\*0023.02.03**

00:00 Benjamin Hildesheim lived in Marysin along with nine other children adopted by Rumkowski in the Lodz Ghetto. This was Rumkowski's summer home and he visited the children on the weekends and ate with them. The house had seven rooms with a kitchen, dining room and a piano. One of the children was a girl from Prague who had studied vocal singing at the Prague Opera House. She was two or three years older than Benjamin. A pianist came and played the piano. Benjamin felt they had a cultural life with lessons and courses, and they were not as hungry as the others in the ghetto. He thought the people in the Lodz ghetto were hungrier than those in Warsaw because there were more people placed in the Lodz Ghetto from the surrounding area. Lodz was kept to make shoes for the Germans on the Russian front. Benjamin thought that Rumkowski knew where they would be deported to when Lodz was liquidated. Rumkowski

suppressed all forms of revolt and accepted the German's instructions to have mothers give up their children. Benjamin was 12 years old at the time and concerned there would be no future if the children were given up besides the sentimental reasons and bonds between mother and child. His group worked in a factory where they learned the profession of electrical and ironwork.

- 05:00 They learned how to use the fire to make accurate instruments. Others in the ghetto were envious of the ten children. A song was composed about having a good time while the cemeteries were getting filled. Some of the group of ten survived and went to Israel. Benjamin went with them as he had siblings there and had lost his family. He went with Itzhak Kline (?), a friend from his hometown who was in Auschwitz and Hyman Crimonofsky (?) who was from a nearby town. Kline went to the same school in Palestine with him, and Benjamin went to Canada. Benjamin got married and divorced and went to Brazil. Now one girl is in Sweden and two are in the U.S., but he does not know how to contact them. He thinks their names are Gainze (?), Helga and Lucy. After work the group of ten came home and had reading circles with a lady supervisor, Kafkova (?) from the elite Czechoslovakian-Jewish society. The war caused her to be separated from her husband.
- 10:00 Her husband and two sons were in London with the Czech government. One son was in the Royal Air Force in Bhutan. After the war they returned to Czechoslovakia with the exiled government. Later Benjamin went from Thereisenstadt to Prague. Kafkova (?) was responsible for them and had to create testimony. She survived the war and met her husband in Prague after the war. They remained until the putsch, the Socialist Prime Minister, was overthrown in 1950 [1948]. They returned to London and went to Israel in 1956. One child went to Australia. Benjamin met Chaim Katvosky (?) on a Tel Aviv street and he left and is probably not alive now. The group of 10 received clothes and some food so they did not starve. There were 60 to 90,000 Jews in transit at a time in Lodz on their way to Auschwitz.
- 15:00 Benjamin arrived in Auschwitz in August 1944, soon after the arrival of the Hungarians. They had been told that they were going to work camps where they would get more food and would stay together. They had arrived in Lodz in cattle cars and they left in cattle cars. They did not suspect that they were going to camps with gas chambers. In Lodz they had received clothes from those who had been gassed and cremated but the leadership did not discuss it. It took a day and a night to reach Auschwitz. They arrived before sunrise as they saw the moon in the sky and lamps from the camps. Suddenly the cattle cars were all opened and the SS were shouting, screaming, and beating them up, dogs were barking, mothers were screaming and babies were being thrown in the air. They were put in lines, left and right, still without knowledge of the gas. They saw, behind the barbed wire, women sitting on their knees for punishment. They were

shocked to see a man throw himself on the barbed wire fence. There were children his own age.

- 20:00 The Russian front lines were at the gates of Warsaw at this time. He was told that when you go through the selection, you should pretend that you are older, say you have a profession, and pinch your cheeks to look healthy. Three of his group were not selected and were taken to the bath. On the way they saw people moving stones from place to place. One of them called out that they were going to live. He had to take off his clothes, get disinfected and shaved and showered. After the shower, he got clothes of former inmates. He saw others waiting for the shower and did not realize that they were waiting for the crematorium. Benjamin believes that all Jews should visit Birkenau to pay homage to those who died there. He was taken to the empty barracks that had formerly housed the gypsies who had been burned alive the day before. The Capos searched them for valuables. The Polish Capos searched the Jews and the Jewish Capos searched the Poles. Every day they had to strip naked for “Appel” where they stood outside for selection.
- 25:00 They would stand for hours without food and people fainted and died. He got separated from his friends and went to a satellite camp of Auschwitz where he remained until December 1944. The satellite camps supplied the food for the concentration camp. They had farms where the prisoners fertilized and grew beet roots and potatoes. He was in Birkenau just a few days where he got the number “7605B” and then to Auschwitz. The Polish village changed into a concentration camp, and he received more food than in the Lodz ghetto. He was happy to get tattooed which meant he was getting out of Birkenau. The tattoo was performed with a toothpick dipped in ink. He was with children 13 to 16 years old and some worked in an ammunition factory, but he worked on the farm.
- 30:00 Benjamin said he wore a striped uniform. If anyone got sick, they were taken three miles to the crematorium. Every six months they were taken to the shower and were terrified but it was simply for delousing purposes. **Side B** They usually shaved a strip of their hair down the middle. He remained at the satellite camp for a year. Auschwitz was liquidated in December 1944 when the Germans arrived at the gates of Krakow. Everyone had to walk in the bitter cold, as it was 30 degrees below zero, to the railway station. They only had wooden shoes and ill-fitting uniforms. They were loaded into open train cars. In the camp, their food consisted of soup with some meat and vegetables, a piece of bread and potatoes. Secretly they acquired carrots on the farm, but Benjamin’s brother was hanged for it.
- 35:00 The train traveled days and nights except when it was bifurcated to side tracks as the other trains were busy. The trip took about a week in the bitter cold. They had no sanitation and were happy to have snow to lick. When they reached Buchenwald, they were stripped naked and had to run outside to the shower and afterwards again run

outside to get their clothes. This was January 1945. Some of the prisoners arrived with frostbite and got gangrene. Benjamin had severe pain in his toes which indicated that his legs still had life. He shouted in pain and poured cold water on his toes. It was painful but it helped his circulation in a few days. He was selected for Zeiss, the center of optical instruments in Germany near Weimar. When Allied forces and the Russians came to Polish territory occupied by the Germans, the prisoners were taken on an SS march. They walked a long time without food.

40:00 The Czech people placed food on the side of the road so they could pick it up on their way to Theresienstadt. The dead had been left behind and you could see the red blood from those who could not walk and were shot. It was a beautiful night (in April 1945) and one could clearly see it. Theresienstadt was a transitory ghetto on view for the Red Cross. The Swedish Red Cross told the Germans not to kill the prisoners as they would bear the consequences. Until he was liberated by the Russians on 8 May 1945, he laid on a bed in the underground *Kazerne* [barracks] with the Germans guarding them. Upon liberation, he left the ghetto and walked to the railway station where he saw English and American war prisoners.

45:00 The Red Cross was taking them to Prague so he followed them. Benjamin ate a piece of pork and got sick as his stomach could not digest it. He developed a high fever and intestinal infection with convulsions and threw up on the way to the railway station. The Germans were fleeing and left jewelry and gold on the road and people picked it up. He picked up so much bread that his bag got too full and he had to leave it behind. He was placed with Russian soldiers in a Prague hospital on May 9<sup>th</sup>. German snipers were in towers shooting at the citizens. He remained there a month and thought the Czechs were wonderful and caring. He has visited several times since as the people embraced him after he experienced such horrors. He can tell another odyssey on how he got to Israel. When he was liberated, he thought the world would carry them on silver trays for their suffering and this was so in Czechoslovakia. He was forbidden to return to Poland where he thought he would find his eldest sister. He thought she had Aryan papers and had survived. She had refused to give her child to the church so she smuggled herself into the ghetto.

50:00 Later he found out that she along with her child had been shot. Mr. Fisher, an aristocrat married to an Austrian, hid during the war in Prague near the hospital. He saw Benjamin when he was recuperating and sitting on a chair in front of the hospital. He revealed he was Jewish and Mr. Fisher took care of him and told him about the pogroms against the Jews. Benjamin's friend Chaim arrived and later made aliyah to Palestine. Benjamin, too, wanted to go. He went with a Hebrew brigade and was smuggled to Budapest and there were rumors that from Romania one could make aliyah to Israel. The Red Cross could not send him to Israel as there was no White Paper as yet. Benjamin tried to notify his siblings that he was alive so went to the Prague Post Office. All travel was free at the



time as many prisoners besides the Jews were returning home. Benjamin wanted to mail a message to Palestine. He had memorized his sister's address, but the Post Office had no record that her address existed and would not mail it. A man standing nearby said that her town exists, and the message was sent and received.

55:00 Benjamin was the youngest in his family and the only survivor. He went from Prague to Budapest and was smuggled to Austria by the Hebrew brigade of the British Army. They took Jewish children to camps in Palestine. They went from Graz, Austria, through the Tyrol Alps down to the heel of Italy. They were placed in villas and taken care of. They were the first of 700 orphans children under 16 that the British government granted affidavits for Palestine. Later Benjamin was educated. He arrived in Palestine in October 1945 and it felt like a dream come true. When he awoke before sunrise and saw the sun rising behind the Carmel Mountains, he felt like he was in heaven. The British army ship that was used during the war took them to Haifa where he met his siblings and went to Beit Shemesh.

60:00 Benjamin fought in the War for Independence with the Palmach, part of Haganah which was the defense force of Israel. He helped free Batsheva in the Negev and participated in 1956 in Suez-Sinai War when the Egyptians retreated and they annihilated them in the mountain passage. They were 2 miles from the canal. In 1962 he was in Brazil.

62:00

### **File 3 RG-50.106\*0023.03.03**

00:00 Side A starts out with Benjamin Hildesheim living in Palestine. He explains that he fought with the Israel Defense forces because he was idealistic and believed that the Jews could only survive as a people if they had their own land. This would enable them to be treated equally with other people. Although he survived, he felt he paid a high price as his 21-year-old brother, who had escaped the Holocaust, died in the war leaving a child in the kibbutz. It was a terrible loss for Benjamin as this brother was only four years older than him so remembered him much more than his much older brothers and sister who immigrated when he was six years old. Now his brother's son is 49 years old with three children in the kibbutz.

05:00 Benjamin said he served with other survivors as the Israeli forces was made up of those who lived in Israel and the newcomers. He still feels close to those he served with and still meets them and feels like they are his brothers. In March 1957 Benjamin married an Israeli which was soon after the first Sinai war. They had no children and got divorced as the marriage did not work out. In 1960 Benjamin met his current wife who was touring Israel at the time. She returned to Brazil and after corresponding for two years, they decided to meet in Zurich in 1962. They called her parents that they were engaged and went to Brazil where they got married. They had three children and remained in Brazil

until 1985. They are all now in the US. Two children are at NIH and one at NCI. One has a PhD and one in molecular genetics who passed with high grades. Benjamin had completed his education in Israel where he graduated from the Ben Shimon Agricultural School which Perez attended.

- 10:00 When Benjamin completed school, he did not want to live on a kibbutz as he wanted to remain an individual. During his two year stint in the army, he took a two-year electronics course and became an electrician. Afterwards he obtained a position as an overseas radio technician for Israel, which he kept for 12 years. In Brazil he worked in his wife's family furniture factory in technical sales. Benjamin did not trust the Brazilian school system for his children so entered them in the American school for children of company employees. When they attended school in the U.S., they stopped studying as the classes were so easy. His children completed 12 years of school preparing them to enter U.S. colleges. His children Allan and Jeffrey were admitted to Washington University in St. Louis.
- 15:00 They did postgraduate work at George Washington University and Johns Hopkins. Benjamin learned Portuguese in Brazil and came to the US a year after his wife came in 1984. They came to the US to be with their children. It took the family five years to obtain permission to immigrate to the US. They left their property and sold their house. One son, Jeffrey, finished high school in Massachusetts, is in *Who's Who*, and attended the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He became an electrical engineer and is now doing post-graduate work. One son is doing research in molecular genetics to defend his thesis and another is an epidemiologist at NCI.
- 20:00 Benjamin believes that the war left its mark on everyone. He feels strong physically but not emotionally. After the war, he dreamt of his mother which made him cry, but the dreams stopped when he got married. It seemed that his wife substituted for his mother. He still shakes when he speaks about his war experiences as he feels emotional inside. Now he feels he was in error that he did not transmit his experiences to his children until they were 15 or 16 when they learned about it in school and questioned him on his number. Benjamin blames himself on not transmitting the Jewish identity that his parents gave him to his children. He does not frequent synagogue except for the High Holidays when he attends with his children. He took his children to visit Israel. He had contact with his brothers and sisters in Israel until the 60s. Benjamin permitted his children to read about the Holocaust. He did not want to be the one to tell them about the cruel world as he felt that was the exception, not the rule.
- 25:00 He did not want reparations from the Germans. Part of his compensation went to Israel to buy arms for defense. He said that all the survivors received compensation for their days of labor in the concentration camps. In 1994 his family requested that he apply for reparations so he did. They wanted the Germans to pay for what they had done, but later

he regretted asking for the reparations. Twice Benjamin thought of escaping from the concentration camp. The first time was when he was sent from the Lodz ghetto to Auschwitz at age 14. He thought to take food and hide in the cellar until the Russians came. He knew they were just 50 kilometers away at the gates of Warsaw, but he did not want to be alone. The second time was when Auschwitz was liquidated. He thought to hide in a barn that was full of straw to feed the animals in the winter. There were rumors that everything was going to be set on fire so he decided to go on the death march for fear of being burned to death.

30:00 Benjamin said that he kept going because he had siblings and an instinct for survival as he maintained hope of being with his siblings in Palestine who were free. **Side B** He was never seriously ill in the camps except for diarrhea. He now suffers from rheumatism and arthritis due to insufficient clothes when he was exposed in open wagons to the bitter winter.

35:00 Currently he is 66 and feels fortunate to be as healthy as he is. The psychological damage he suffered as a child is still part of him. He never gave up. He believes that humankind is not what he witnessed during the five years of horrors. Benjamin hopes that this recording is not used for lucrative purposes other than for documentation at the Holocaust Museum.

37:00