

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,680

2

00:00:04,680 --> 00:00:07,380

This is a United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:07,380 --> 00:00:10,260

interview with Michael  
Silberstein conducted

4

00:00:10,260 --> 00:00:15,510

by Gail Schwartz on October  
10th 1996 in Washington, DC

5

00:00:15,510 --> 00:00:16,950

at the Museum.

6

00:00:16,950 --> 00:00:20,460

This is tape number  
three, side A.

7

00:00:20,460 --> 00:00:24,630

And you are talking about  
your experiences in Auschwitz.

8

00:00:24,630 --> 00:00:29,580

OK, so I described a  
little bit the experiences

9

00:00:29,580 --> 00:00:33,630

that I had in the hospital,  
but then I digressed somewhat.

10

00:00:33,630 --> 00:00:38,520

And I mentioned the fact that  
our group of young people

11

00:00:38,520 --> 00:00:43,560

that we arrived, they called  
us a group, the Maurerschule.

12

00:00:43,560 --> 00:00:46,920

That is a German expression  
of saying like a bricklayer's

13

00:00:46,920 --> 00:00:48,390

school or what--

14

00:00:48,390 --> 00:00:50,610

I don't know whether  
that's that accurate.

15

00:00:50,610 --> 00:00:54,600

But basically what they had us  
for is any kind of labor that

16

00:00:54,600 --> 00:00:59,340

needed to be done, we  
did, outside of the camp.

17

00:00:59,340 --> 00:01:02,130

And we would be marched  
out and marched back in.

18

00:01:02,130 --> 00:01:03,840

And every time when  
we are marched out,

19

00:01:03,840 --> 00:01:06,090

they would count us,  
and marched back in.

20

00:01:06,090 --> 00:01:08,400

And by the way, I  
am sure that you

21

00:01:08,400 --> 00:01:11,610

have heard of the  
orchestra in Auschwitz

22

00:01:11,610 --> 00:01:15,630

playing when people  
were going in and out?

23

00:01:15,630 --> 00:01:18,830

I saw that.

24

00:01:18,830 --> 00:01:20,860

We experienced  
marching in and out

25

00:01:20,860 --> 00:01:23,790

and the band was  
playing, so to speak.

26

00:01:23,790 --> 00:01:28,800

And the band consisted of  
prisoners, just like I was.

27

00:01:28,800 --> 00:01:31,380

What were your  
thoughts about that?

28

00:01:31,380 --> 00:01:33,060

Bizarre.

29

00:01:33,060 --> 00:01:35,850

I mean, here you are  
facing death every day,

30

00:01:35,850 --> 00:01:37,770

and here they are playing music.

31

00:01:37,770 --> 00:01:39,780

And it is not that  
they wanted to.

32

00:01:39,780 --> 00:01:40,560

They had to.

33

00:01:40,560 --> 00:01:43,140

It wasn't a matter that  
they volunteered, you know?

34

00:01:43,140 --> 00:01:44,910

That was something

they had to do.

35

00:01:44,910 --> 00:01:47,220

By the way, by that  
time, we all had

36

00:01:47,220 --> 00:01:52,590

the regular striped  
prisoner uniform with a cap

37

00:01:52,590 --> 00:01:55,440

that we have all seen in  
the movies so many times.

38

00:01:55,440 --> 00:02:00,210

And I had my number here,  
with a yellow triangle

39

00:02:00,210 --> 00:02:02,580

denoting that I am a Jew.

40

00:02:02,580 --> 00:02:08,520

There were other prisoners  
that had their number

41

00:02:08,520 --> 00:02:11,190

and a different color triangle.

42

00:02:11,190 --> 00:02:16,440

Different color triangles  
would denote different crimes

43

00:02:16,440 --> 00:02:20,770

that the person might have  
committed against the state.

44

00:02:20,770 --> 00:02:24,230

But most of them were yellow,  
because most were Jews,

45

00:02:24,230 --> 00:02:25,570

so that was our cry.

46

00:02:25,570 --> 00:02:29,220

47

00:02:29,220 --> 00:02:35,910

When we were in Auschwitz,  
anytime you were in the camp,

48

00:02:35,910 --> 00:02:40,168

and when one of the SS  
would go by, and you know,

49

00:02:40,168 --> 00:02:42,210

you sort of-- they were  
in the camp all the time.

50

00:02:42,210 --> 00:02:43,418

You had to take your hat off.

51

00:02:43,418 --> 00:02:46,230

52

00:02:46,230 --> 00:02:49,470

And just going by.

53

00:02:49,470 --> 00:02:52,410

54

00:02:52,410 --> 00:02:56,980

And occasionally, you could  
see people getting beat up

55

00:02:56,980 --> 00:02:58,630

for some reason or another.

56

00:02:58,630 --> 00:03:02,760

Somebody didn't take  
their hat off fast enough,

57

00:03:02,760 --> 00:03:06,370

or it wasn't  
smartly enough done.

58

00:03:06,370 --> 00:03:11,620

Something that  
displeased that SS man.

59

00:03:11,620 --> 00:03:13,630

He could do with you  
whatever he wanted.

60

00:03:13,630 --> 00:03:15,850

There was no accounting for him.

61

00:03:15,850 --> 00:03:19,600

If he wanted to shoot me,  
that would be the end of it.

62

00:03:19,600 --> 00:03:23,830

If he wanted to push you around,  
and rough you up, and hit you

63

00:03:23,830 --> 00:03:27,310

with a rifle butt a  
little bit now and then,

64

00:03:27,310 --> 00:03:30,810

there were no consequences  
for him to worry about.

65

00:03:30,810 --> 00:03:34,410

66

00:03:34,410 --> 00:03:42,020

So that was a time and  
a fearful experience

67

00:03:42,020 --> 00:03:44,210

to go through, that  
day in and day out you

68

00:03:44,210 --> 00:03:47,300

never knew what was  
going to happen to you.

69

00:03:47,300 --> 00:03:49,370

But I-- to tell  
this little story,

70

00:03:49,370 --> 00:03:52,220

I backed off from the time  
I was in the hospital.

71

00:03:52,220 --> 00:03:54,110

I mentioned a hospital.

72

00:03:54,110 --> 00:04:02,000

And being in the hospital,  
I was there till the end,

73

00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:07,290

until Auschwitz was going  
to be liquidated again.

74

00:04:07,290 --> 00:04:09,950

75

00:04:09,950 --> 00:04:16,040

At that time, the war  
was not going very well

76

00:04:16,040 --> 00:04:18,920

for the Nazis, thank God.

77

00:04:18,920 --> 00:04:25,235

And the Russian armies were  
approaching Poland rapidly.

78

00:04:25,235 --> 00:04:27,830

79

00:04:27,830 --> 00:04:31,670

And actually, at that time, we  
wished we had been left alone.

80

00:04:31,670 --> 00:04:36,530

Because to us, the Russian  
armies were liberators.

81  
00:04:36,530 --> 00:04:38,870  
But they wouldn't leave  
us there, the Nazis.

82  
00:04:38,870 --> 00:04:42,770  
They decided to take  
all the prisoners

83  
00:04:42,770 --> 00:04:47,240  
and march us to another place.

84  
00:04:47,240 --> 00:04:50,540  
OK, before we get to  
that, what do you think

85  
00:04:50,540 --> 00:04:53,000  
kept you going in Auschwitz?

86  
00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:57,620  
Here you were 14  
years old, alone.

87  
00:04:57,620 --> 00:04:58,810  
What kept you going?

88  
00:04:58,810 --> 00:04:59,310  
Hope.

89  
00:04:59,310 --> 00:05:02,030

90  
00:05:02,030 --> 00:05:06,260  
I had a tremendous  
desire to survive.

91  
00:05:06,260 --> 00:05:08,940  
I don't know where it came from.

92  
00:05:08,940 --> 00:05:12,470  
And I don't know how  
it was instilled in me.

93

00:05:12,470 --> 00:05:19,670

But the hope that one day  
that nightmare must end,

94

00:05:19,670 --> 00:05:21,830

and will end.

95

00:05:21,830 --> 00:05:25,210

And I want to see that end.

96

00:05:25,210 --> 00:05:30,290

And I want to see a  
better life, a life

97

00:05:30,290 --> 00:05:34,060

like I had before  
the war started.

98

00:05:34,060 --> 00:05:39,200

A life that I was  
longing to have,

99

00:05:39,200 --> 00:05:45,650

and to experience, and to enjoy,  
the way it was before the war.

100

00:05:45,650 --> 00:05:48,480

I knew it could  
never be the same.

101

00:05:48,480 --> 00:05:50,060

I knew my mother wasn't there.

102

00:05:50,060 --> 00:05:52,850

103

00:05:52,850 --> 00:05:55,820

By that time, I knew  
my father wasn't there,

104

00:05:55,820 --> 00:05:59,570

because as I described  
before, my father was--

105  
00:05:59,570 --> 00:06:02,090  
when we arrived in  
Auschwitz, when he was sick,

106  
00:06:02,090 --> 00:06:05,640  
he went to the crematorium  
because he was sick.

107  
00:06:05,640 --> 00:06:08,280  
My mother was gone in 1942.

108  
00:06:08,280 --> 00:06:10,100  
Of course--

109  
00:06:10,100 --> 00:06:13,970  
But you did not know they were--

110  
00:06:13,970 --> 00:06:14,850  
they had died.

111  
00:06:14,850 --> 00:06:17,070  
You just knew you  
hadn't seen them.

112  
00:06:17,070 --> 00:06:18,920  
That is correct.

113  
00:06:18,920 --> 00:06:24,470  
I was more sure of the death of  
my father in 1944, being sick.

114  
00:06:24,470 --> 00:06:29,900  
And then I knew at that time  
what happened to my mother.

115  
00:06:29,900 --> 00:06:37,160  
However, knowing my mother,  
we knew what kind of woman--

116

00:06:37,160 --> 00:06:38,310  
she was a delicate woman.

117  
00:06:38,310 --> 00:06:43,070  
Not a-- and for us, it was  
difficult to comprehend

118  
00:06:43,070 --> 00:06:48,810  
that she would be able to  
survive what we had survived.

119  
00:06:48,810 --> 00:06:54,110  
When we thought about Auschwitz  
and about the conditions

120  
00:06:54,110 --> 00:06:59,040  
that women were subjected  
to, like my two sisters,

121  
00:06:59,040 --> 00:07:02,510  
my sisters said that they  
couldn't imagine my mother

122  
00:07:02,510 --> 00:07:04,530  
being able to do that.

123  
00:07:04,530 --> 00:07:05,510  
But you were right.

124  
00:07:05,510 --> 00:07:10,460  
At that time, we did not know  
for sure what had happened.

125  
00:07:10,460 --> 00:07:15,620  
So what kept me going,  
really, the tremendous desire

126  
00:07:15,620 --> 00:07:20,390  
to be able to live a life  
like I used to know that life

127  
00:07:20,390 --> 00:07:22,540  
can be like.

128  
00:07:22,540 --> 00:07:26,180  
And hope that it would end.

129  
00:07:26,180 --> 00:07:30,270  
And hope that maybe by  
persevering day in and day out,

130  
00:07:30,270 --> 00:07:32,090  
I may make it.

131  
00:07:32,090 --> 00:07:33,650  
That's what kept me going.

132  
00:07:33,650 --> 00:07:37,250  
That's what kept me going  
even after Auschwitz.

133  
00:07:37,250 --> 00:07:40,700  
Did you fantasize about any  
special food or anything

134  
00:07:40,700 --> 00:07:41,840  
when you were in Auschwitz?

135  
00:07:41,840 --> 00:07:44,600  
Yes.

136  
00:07:44,600 --> 00:07:49,970  
Piece of bread and a  
nice, hot bowl of soup.

137  
00:07:49,970 --> 00:07:53,180  
That was great.

138  
00:07:53,180 --> 00:07:56,540  
You know, it is--

139  
00:07:56,540 --> 00:08:02,240  
the level of hunger determines  
what you are longing for.

140

00:08:02,240 --> 00:08:05,210

141

00:08:05,210 --> 00:08:10,370

If you are-- today, when you  
say you're hungry between meals,

142

00:08:10,370 --> 00:08:12,120

you're not really hungry.

143

00:08:12,120 --> 00:08:14,210

You'd really like another meal.

144

00:08:14,210 --> 00:08:17,180

And what you're looking  
for is fancy foods.

145

00:08:17,180 --> 00:08:19,970

But when you're  
really hungry, really,

146

00:08:19,970 --> 00:08:22,940

fancy foods don't very  
often enter your mind.

147

00:08:22,940 --> 00:08:24,620

You want basic.

148

00:08:24,620 --> 00:08:31,040

Basic bread, butter, soup.

149

00:08:31,040 --> 00:08:34,780

That's the kind of food  
that I was fantasizing.

150

00:08:34,780 --> 00:08:38,590

And of course, once you have  
that, now you want more.

151

00:08:38,590 --> 00:08:42,100

When you were by yourself, what  
were you very private thoughts?

152  
00:08:42,100 --> 00:08:44,680

153  
00:08:44,680 --> 00:08:54,190  
I thought about my  
parents very much.

154  
00:08:54,190 --> 00:08:58,950  
But the thought of my  
parents were a comfort to me.

155  
00:08:58,950 --> 00:09:02,590

156  
00:09:02,590 --> 00:09:08,320  
You know, Nobody can  
take away your thoughts.

157  
00:09:08,320 --> 00:09:11,080  
What you have up here  
in your head is yours.

158  
00:09:11,080 --> 00:09:13,220  
They can take everything away.

159  
00:09:13,220 --> 00:09:20,470  
And I think that good thoughts  
that you had in your life

160  
00:09:20,470 --> 00:09:22,870  
are with you all your life.

161  
00:09:22,870 --> 00:09:26,680  
And they can be  
extremely comforting.

162  
00:09:26,680 --> 00:09:28,060  
And they were to me.

163  
00:09:28,060 --> 00:09:31,150  
Just the thought of

being with my mother,

164

00:09:31,150 --> 00:09:35,740  
and how she was, and my father,  
and the care and the love

165

00:09:35,740 --> 00:09:40,180  
that I got kept me going.

166

00:09:40,180 --> 00:09:43,720  
Did you attach yourself  
to an older man at all?

167

00:09:43,720 --> 00:09:44,490  
No, I did not.

168

00:09:44,490 --> 00:09:48,660

169

00:09:48,660 --> 00:09:51,480  
I didn't have the opportunity.

170

00:09:51,480 --> 00:09:57,120  
And maybe I didn't have it  
because I didn't seek it.

171

00:09:57,120 --> 00:09:59,510  
I wasn't looking for it.

172

00:09:59,510 --> 00:10:02,330

173

00:10:02,330 --> 00:10:05,120  
I wasn't looking for it.

174

00:10:05,120 --> 00:10:07,690  
And again, did you ever  
think of trying to escape?

175

00:10:07,690 --> 00:10:10,260

176

00:10:10,260 --> 00:10:12,220

No.

177

00:10:12,220 --> 00:10:15,700

When at that time I

looked over the situation,

178

00:10:15,700 --> 00:10:18,520

it was so hopeless,

it was so impossible,

179

00:10:18,520 --> 00:10:22,710

that to me it was not even

a thought to be entertained.

180

00:10:22,710 --> 00:10:25,730

At that time, to me

as a 15-year-old.

181

00:10:25,730 --> 00:10:28,480

Perhaps if I was a

25-year-old I might

182

00:10:28,480 --> 00:10:31,670

have had different thoughts.

183

00:10:31,670 --> 00:10:36,580

But at that time, escape

was an unattainable kind

184

00:10:36,580 --> 00:10:41,290

of goal for a 15-year-old

under the circumstances.

185

00:10:41,290 --> 00:10:43,720

There were other

people that tried.

186

00:10:43,720 --> 00:10:46,587

I don't think there

were any successes.

187

00:10:46,587 --> 00:10:48,295

They tried, and they  
died in the process.

188

00:10:48,295 --> 00:10:51,280

189

00:10:51,280 --> 00:10:55,050

The things that sometimes  
stick in your mind

190

00:10:55,050 --> 00:10:57,790

is seeing other  
people die, a hanging.

191

00:10:57,790 --> 00:11:00,700

192

00:11:00,700 --> 00:11:03,650

These things you never forget.

193

00:11:03,650 --> 00:11:06,700

You never forget.

194

00:11:06,700 --> 00:11:10,630

Let me tell you something.

195

00:11:10,630 --> 00:11:13,090

Sometimes people say,  
gee, I wouldn't do that.

196

00:11:13,090 --> 00:11:15,460

I wouldn't do that.

197

00:11:15,460 --> 00:11:22,240

That is-- they can put--  
they or anybody else

198

00:11:22,240 --> 00:11:29,690

can put so much terror into  
you, or into any person,

199

00:11:29,690 --> 00:11:33,940  
that you will just  
about do anything.

200  
00:11:33,940 --> 00:11:38,270  
Good people, good  
people, people that

201  
00:11:38,270 --> 00:11:41,480  
never thought they would do  
certain things, they would.

202  
00:11:41,480 --> 00:11:46,070  
When you see your  
family being shot

203  
00:11:46,070 --> 00:11:48,230  
because of a minor  
infraction, the next time

204  
00:11:48,230 --> 00:11:53,100  
you are told to do something,  
you're probably going to do it.

205  
00:11:53,100 --> 00:11:57,320  
Especially if you know that  
the rest of your family

206  
00:11:57,320 --> 00:11:59,210  
is at risk if you don't do that.

207  
00:11:59,210 --> 00:12:01,980

208  
00:12:01,980 --> 00:12:06,920  
So there is a tremendous amount  
of terror that was instilled

209  
00:12:06,920 --> 00:12:10,910  
in us that we obeyed a lot  
of things that maybe today we

210  
00:12:10,910 --> 00:12:12,650

wouldn't.

211

00:12:12,650 --> 00:12:17,960

But at that time, you  
do what you're told.

212

00:12:17,960 --> 00:12:21,170

And we have experienced that.

213

00:12:21,170 --> 00:12:24,050

When you see somebody being  
hung because of something

214

00:12:24,050 --> 00:12:25,700

that wasn't that important.

215

00:12:25,700 --> 00:12:28,730

216

00:12:28,730 --> 00:12:32,660

When you see people being shot  
or beaten up for something

217

00:12:32,660 --> 00:12:34,310

minor.

218

00:12:34,310 --> 00:12:36,410

Next time, when you're told--

219

00:12:36,410 --> 00:12:41,600

or you're confronted with  
a similar situation, when

220

00:12:41,600 --> 00:12:44,960

the SS tell you to do  
something, or not to do it,

221

00:12:44,960 --> 00:12:48,335

you're going to sort  
of fall in line.

222

00:12:48,335 --> 00:12:58,670

And that's what we  
were made to be.

223  
00:12:58,670 --> 00:13:05,610  
We were desensitized  
and dehumanized

224  
00:13:05,610 --> 00:13:14,440  
to a point where our behavior  
became less than human.

225  
00:13:14,440 --> 00:13:22,810

226  
00:13:22,810 --> 00:13:31,430  
Where the things that you might  
have done, and you might have

227  
00:13:31,430 --> 00:13:37,070  
thought that you'd never do  
under normal circumstances,

228  
00:13:37,070 --> 00:13:40,000  
you do them after you  
are subjected to--

229  
00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:41,440  
for years.

230  
00:13:41,440 --> 00:13:44,480  
Not just for a day or  
two, but for years--

231  
00:13:44,480 --> 00:13:51,590  
to such a reign of  
terror, to such fear.

232  
00:13:51,590 --> 00:13:57,220

233  
00:13:57,220 --> 00:14:07,940  
The punishment was so quick,  
so absolute, so instantaneous,

234  
00:14:07,940 --> 00:14:16,690  
that when you saw what  
happened to others, that you

235  
00:14:16,690 --> 00:14:17,784  
have become--

236  
00:14:17,784 --> 00:14:25,300  
you become, sometimes, less  
than what you'd like to become.

237  
00:14:25,300 --> 00:14:26,800  
That's what happened  
to a lot of us.

238  
00:14:26,800 --> 00:14:37,520

239  
00:14:37,520 --> 00:14:40,430  
When you would go  
outside of the camp,

240  
00:14:40,430 --> 00:14:45,710  
you said you were taken outside  
of the perimeter of the camp,

241  
00:14:45,710 --> 00:14:48,720  
what was that like?

242  
00:14:48,720 --> 00:14:52,070  
We were marched out.

243  
00:14:52,070 --> 00:14:55,850  
And I remember a couple of  
times, vaguely remember,

244  
00:14:55,850 --> 00:14:59,090  
working on some road  
clearing things.

245  
00:14:59,090 --> 00:15:01,740

And we were guarded.

246

00:15:01,740 --> 00:15:05,470

And if we did what we  
were told, we were OK.

247

00:15:05,470 --> 00:15:08,470

248

00:15:08,470 --> 00:15:10,550

If you didn't, you were pushed.

249

00:15:10,550 --> 00:15:13,370

You were-- there's always  
a soldier with a rifle butt

250

00:15:13,370 --> 00:15:16,910

to let you have it  
if you didn't do.

251

00:15:16,910 --> 00:15:18,800

Not only if you--

252

00:15:18,800 --> 00:15:21,590

even if you did it, but  
if he didn't like the way

253

00:15:21,590 --> 00:15:25,100

you were working, the  
way you were doing it,

254

00:15:25,100 --> 00:15:27,950

you would get a push or a shove.

255

00:15:27,950 --> 00:15:33,170

And it got to a point that we  
didn't even think of it as--

256

00:15:33,170 --> 00:15:35,300

so you got shoved,  
you got pushed.

257

00:15:35,300 --> 00:15:37,310

You got some black  
and blue marks.

258

00:15:37,310 --> 00:15:39,440

But you're OK.

259

00:15:39,440 --> 00:15:44,630

And you do that every-- because  
you know how much worse it

260

00:15:44,630 --> 00:15:47,340

might have been.

261

00:15:47,340 --> 00:15:58,500

The same SS man, the same fellow  
that hit you with a rifle butt,

262

00:15:58,500 --> 00:16:02,790

or pushed you around, or did  
something to you to rough you

263

00:16:02,790 --> 00:16:06,660

up, he could have shot you.

264

00:16:06,660 --> 00:16:11,640

So you are almost  
grateful for the fact

265

00:16:11,640 --> 00:16:16,530

that he only pushed you  
around a little bit,

266

00:16:16,530 --> 00:16:18,330

because at least  
he didn't shoot me.

267

00:16:18,330 --> 00:16:20,960

268

00:16:20,960 --> 00:16:27,860

That's the kind of  
situation that you were in.

269

00:16:27,860 --> 00:16:33,110

And when you are in  
these situations,

270

00:16:33,110 --> 00:16:36,860

it actually makes you a  
different human being.

271

00:16:36,860 --> 00:16:40,130

272

00:16:40,130 --> 00:16:45,770

You don't have the  
luxury to think

273

00:16:45,770 --> 00:16:49,730

about some niceties that  
you would like to think,

274

00:16:49,730 --> 00:16:55,760

some human kindness, some things  
that you would like to do,

275

00:16:55,760 --> 00:17:02,915

because you are so concerned  
with your own survival.

276

00:17:02,915 --> 00:17:09,092

277

00:17:09,092 --> 00:17:11,050

What were some of things  
you were forced to do?

278

00:17:11,050 --> 00:17:15,520

279

00:17:15,520 --> 00:17:23,140

I personally was not forced to  
do anything other than work.

280

00:17:23,140 --> 00:17:26,770

I was never forced  
to do anything

281

00:17:26,770 --> 00:17:33,430

that would be an ugly thing  
to do for a human being.

282

00:17:33,430 --> 00:17:41,490

I was never forced to do some  
harm to one of my friends.

283

00:17:41,490 --> 00:17:44,490

And there were some  
people that were.

284

00:17:44,490 --> 00:17:46,570

And I don't want to  
be critical of them.

285

00:17:46,570 --> 00:17:49,630

Believe me, I don't.

286

00:17:49,630 --> 00:17:53,260

Because again, when your life  
is at stake, you do things.

287

00:17:53,260 --> 00:17:55,930

I never-- I was  
lucky enough never

288

00:17:55,930 --> 00:17:59,590

to have been confronted  
with a situation

289

00:17:59,590 --> 00:18:02,070

like the Sonderkommando was.

290

00:18:02,070 --> 00:18:07,240

I suppose you know people  
that had to help dead bodies

291

00:18:07,240 --> 00:18:09,400

to put in the ovens,  
other prisoners.

292  
00:18:09,400 --> 00:18:11,960  
I mean, that's a horrible job.

293  
00:18:11,960 --> 00:18:13,960  
That's a horrible thing.

294  
00:18:13,960 --> 00:18:16,220  
Who wants to do that?

295  
00:18:16,220 --> 00:18:17,350  
But people did that.

296  
00:18:17,350 --> 00:18:20,030

297  
00:18:20,030 --> 00:18:21,670  
And when I say  
that they did that,

298  
00:18:21,670 --> 00:18:23,890  
I am not being critical of them.

299  
00:18:23,890 --> 00:18:26,260  
I'm merely saying that  
happened, because I

300  
00:18:26,260 --> 00:18:27,940  
don't know what  
I would have done

301  
00:18:27,940 --> 00:18:29,580  
under similar circumstances.

302  
00:18:29,580 --> 00:18:32,340

303  
00:18:32,340 --> 00:18:36,650  
So I myself was never  
subjected to something

304  
00:18:36,650 --> 00:18:44,930  
that was of that-- of  
the magnitude of imposing

305  
00:18:44,930 --> 00:18:48,920  
harm on someone else that  
I had just described.

306  
00:18:48,920 --> 00:18:50,960  
But that was just  
the matter of luck.

307  
00:18:50,960 --> 00:18:53,690  
Somebody else was  
picked to do something

308  
00:18:53,690 --> 00:18:56,120  
that he didn't want to  
do either, but he had to.

309  
00:18:56,120 --> 00:18:58,730

310  
00:18:58,730 --> 00:19:01,880  
Were you in Birkenau  
in October '44 when

311  
00:19:01,880 --> 00:19:04,950  
the crematorium was blown up?

312  
00:19:04,950 --> 00:19:05,450  
No.

313  
00:19:05,450 --> 00:19:09,290

314  
00:19:09,290 --> 00:19:10,280  
Did you hear about it?

315  
00:19:10,280 --> 00:19:10,780  
Yes.

316  
00:19:10,780 --> 00:19:13,730  
But I thought that it was  
blown up later than that.

317  
00:19:13,730 --> 00:19:14,630  
Maybe I'm wrong.

318  
00:19:14,630 --> 00:19:17,190

319  
00:19:17,190 --> 00:19:18,620  
October '44.

320  
00:19:18,620 --> 00:19:21,690  
October 7th, 1944.

321  
00:19:21,690 --> 00:19:27,080  
No, maybe-- no, I was  
then in Auschwitz.

322  
00:19:27,080 --> 00:19:29,480  
I was then in Auschwitz.

323  
00:19:29,480 --> 00:19:31,130  
What was the reaction of people?

324  
00:19:31,130 --> 00:19:33,450  
I didn't know that  
it was blown up.

325  
00:19:33,450 --> 00:19:35,750  
How was it-- when  
you say blown up,

326  
00:19:35,750 --> 00:19:37,000  
the Nazis didn't blow it up?

327  
00:19:37,000 --> 00:19:37,970  
No, no.

328

00:19:37,970 --> 00:19:40,640  
Some of the prisoners  
smuggled in some explosives,

329  
00:19:40,640 --> 00:19:42,200  
and then they were hanged.

330  
00:19:42,200 --> 00:19:43,160  
Yes, they were.

331  
00:19:43,160 --> 00:19:46,460  
I did not know of that incident.

332  
00:19:46,460 --> 00:19:49,130  
I thought that you were  
talking there about the blowing

333  
00:19:49,130 --> 00:19:51,390  
up of the crematorium.

334  
00:19:51,390 --> 00:19:56,190  
When the Nazis left in  
1945, they blew it up.

335  
00:19:56,190 --> 00:19:56,960  
It's still there.

336  
00:19:56,960 --> 00:19:58,460  
You can see the ruins.

337  
00:19:58,460 --> 00:20:00,560  
I thought that that's what  
you were talking about.

338  
00:20:00,560 --> 00:20:01,477  
You're talking about--

339  
00:20:01,477 --> 00:20:02,210  
The resistance.

340  
00:20:02,210 --> 00:20:03,170  
The resistance.

341  
00:20:03,170 --> 00:20:04,340  
I was not aware of that.

342  
00:20:04,340 --> 00:20:07,220

343  
00:20:07,220 --> 00:20:11,010  
Were you aware of any other--  
any resistance actions?

344  
00:20:11,010 --> 00:20:15,060

345  
00:20:15,060 --> 00:20:16,980  
The answer is no.

346  
00:20:16,980 --> 00:20:21,130  
There were rumors, but I did  
not know too much about it.

347  
00:20:21,130 --> 00:20:23,130  
Again, even if  
there was something,

348  
00:20:23,130 --> 00:20:24,300  
nobody would confide.

349  
00:20:24,300 --> 00:20:27,420  
Nobody would tell me,  
that I was too young.

350  
00:20:27,420 --> 00:20:29,700  
You know, I mean, you had  
to be of a certain age,

351  
00:20:29,700 --> 00:20:32,940  
of a certain physique,  
for certain things

352  
00:20:32,940 --> 00:20:34,110  
to be able to do.

353  
00:20:34,110 --> 00:20:36,660  
I was a boy, not a man.

354  
00:20:36,660 --> 00:20:38,730  
When you were  
outside of the camp,

355  
00:20:38,730 --> 00:20:41,430  
did you see any villagers?

356  
00:20:41,430 --> 00:20:43,470  
And if so, how did  
it-- what was it

357  
00:20:43,470 --> 00:20:44,925  
like to see someone  
who was free?

358  
00:20:44,925 --> 00:20:48,210  
You know, some people working  
in the fields or whatever.

359  
00:20:48,210 --> 00:20:48,710  
Yes.

360  
00:20:48,710 --> 00:20:51,800

361  
00:20:51,800 --> 00:20:53,400  
That's a good question.

362  
00:20:53,400 --> 00:20:58,350  
When you see that,  
you feel like,

363  
00:20:58,350 --> 00:21:01,680  
gee, I would want to be there.

364  
00:21:01,680 --> 00:21:04,641  
To be free.

365

00:21:04,641 --> 00:21:07,230

It is such a feeling of--

366

00:21:07,230 --> 00:21:12,600

almost of envy, to be able to  
be that person that is free

367

00:21:12,600 --> 00:21:14,430

that works the fields.

368

00:21:14,430 --> 00:21:16,980

And that's what they  
want when they want it.

369

00:21:16,980 --> 00:21:19,400

In the evening they go home.

370

00:21:19,400 --> 00:21:20,640

That's the feeling.

371

00:21:20,640 --> 00:21:22,770

Because it's not only  
that you are thinking

372

00:21:22,770 --> 00:21:26,070

of the comfort of their home,  
but that they are not living in

373

00:21:26,070 --> 00:21:28,110

fear everyday.

374

00:21:28,110 --> 00:21:29,550

Living in fear was--

375

00:21:29,550 --> 00:21:33,090

probably for me it was the  
most difficult thing to do.

376

00:21:33,090 --> 00:21:35,886

377

00:21:35,886 --> 00:21:37,220  
Day to day fear.

378  
00:21:37,220 --> 00:21:40,200  
Maybe for somebody else  
it was a different thing,

379  
00:21:40,200 --> 00:21:42,930  
but for me, fear  
was-- hunger was bad.

380  
00:21:42,930 --> 00:21:44,610  
Everything was bad, obviously.

381  
00:21:44,610 --> 00:21:46,810  
You could die of  
hunger and so on.

382  
00:21:46,810 --> 00:21:56,100  
But the fear of what the  
next day is going to bring,

383  
00:21:56,100 --> 00:21:59,640  
and not having my family,  
not having my parents.

384  
00:21:59,640 --> 00:22:03,240  
That was probably the most  
difficult thing for me.

385  
00:22:03,240 --> 00:22:07,320  
Because, again, the  
thought of your parents--

386  
00:22:07,320 --> 00:22:10,530  
the thought of my parents,  
of my mother and father,

387  
00:22:10,530 --> 00:22:13,770  
was extremely comforting to me.

388  
00:22:13,770 --> 00:22:17,430  
So if you had the knowledge that

maybe one day when you survive

389

00:22:17,430 --> 00:22:21,870

you will see them again, that  
was an overwhelming force

390

00:22:21,870 --> 00:22:22,870

wanting to survive.

391

00:22:22,870 --> 00:22:27,460

392

00:22:27,460 --> 00:22:30,090

So that kept me going.

393

00:22:30,090 --> 00:22:31,740

That kept me going.

394

00:22:31,740 --> 00:22:35,610

The most difficult that I  
had to cope with was fear.

395

00:22:35,610 --> 00:22:38,580

And maybe it affected  
me personally worse

396

00:22:38,580 --> 00:22:39,700

than somebody else.

397

00:22:39,700 --> 00:22:43,800

But that's the way I  
felt it at that time.

398

00:22:43,800 --> 00:22:49,110

And not having my  
family, being alone.

399

00:22:49,110 --> 00:22:51,310

Being alone is very tough.

400

00:22:51,310 --> 00:22:57,600

Not just being alone like

you can be alone today.

401

00:22:57,600 --> 00:22:59,310

That's one thing.

402

00:22:59,310 --> 00:23:02,130

But being alone to  
a point that you

403

00:23:02,130 --> 00:23:08,070

know that you are so completely  
insignificant that if you would

404

00:23:08,070 --> 00:23:12,450

die now, it wouldn't  
mean a thing

405

00:23:12,450 --> 00:23:14,340

to anybody that is around you.

406

00:23:14,340 --> 00:23:15,980

Nothing.

407

00:23:15,980 --> 00:23:20,280

It's just-- that's it.

408

00:23:20,280 --> 00:23:24,210

Just like a little worm dying.

409

00:23:24,210 --> 00:23:26,940

So that was difficult.

410

00:23:26,940 --> 00:23:29,580

Did you have any contact  
with the women's camp at all?

411

00:23:29,580 --> 00:23:31,500

None.

412

00:23:31,500 --> 00:23:33,720

There were no-- none.

413

00:23:33,720 --> 00:23:35,970

There were no women in our camp.

414

00:23:35,970 --> 00:23:37,860

And I-- no.

415

00:23:37,860 --> 00:23:39,840

There were no  
contact with women.

416

00:23:39,840 --> 00:23:42,870

You didn't see any women  
working or marching?

417

00:23:42,870 --> 00:23:47,760

I saw women when we went  
outside occasionally.

418

00:23:47,760 --> 00:23:51,120

But we didn't go that often.

419

00:23:51,120 --> 00:23:56,130

But to answer your question,  
I had no contact with women.

420

00:23:56,130 --> 00:23:58,140

I might have seen them.

421

00:23:58,140 --> 00:23:59,490

Sometimes not the prisoners.

422

00:23:59,490 --> 00:24:01,800

Sometimes we just saw the  
villagers when we went out.

423

00:24:01,800 --> 00:24:04,170

The question that  
you had just asked.

424

00:24:04,170 --> 00:24:06,920

But I had no contact with women.

425

00:24:06,920 --> 00:24:12,575

426

00:24:12,575 --> 00:24:14,200

Well, is there anything  
else you wanted

427

00:24:14,200 --> 00:24:18,966

to add about Auschwitz  
before the march,

428

00:24:18,966 --> 00:24:21,170

that you can think of  
that we haven't covered?

429

00:24:21,170 --> 00:24:24,070

I can't think of  
anything right now.

430

00:24:24,070 --> 00:24:26,530

Did you see any  
of the birch trees

431

00:24:26,530 --> 00:24:28,330

at Birkenau over the fence?

432

00:24:28,330 --> 00:24:30,160

Yes.

433

00:24:30,160 --> 00:24:32,920

I saw them three years ago.

434

00:24:32,920 --> 00:24:37,030

When you saw them in 1944,  
how did that affect you?

435

00:24:37,030 --> 00:24:42,540

436

00:24:42,540 --> 00:24:44,859

I don't even know whether  
I noticed them then.

437  
00:24:44,859 --> 00:24:49,260

438  
00:24:49,260 --> 00:24:50,400  
I wasn't looking at the--

439  
00:24:50,400 --> 00:24:52,920

440  
00:24:52,920 --> 00:24:56,460  
beauty of life outside.

441  
00:24:56,460 --> 00:24:59,580  
There were birch trees and  
there were other things.

442  
00:24:59,580 --> 00:25:05,720

443  
00:25:05,720 --> 00:25:09,039  
In 1944, it didn't mean  
much to me at that time.

444  
00:25:09,039 --> 00:25:14,310

445  
00:25:14,310 --> 00:25:18,990  
OK, and then we'll start  
talking about the liquidation

446  
00:25:18,990 --> 00:25:20,310  
of Auschwitz in a moment.

447  
00:25:20,310 --> 00:25:27,860

448  
00:25:27,860 --> 00:25:30,490  
Before we continue,  
I just wanted

449

00:25:30,490 --> 00:25:31,960  
to ask you some more questions.

450  
00:25:31,960 --> 00:25:36,340

451  
00:25:36,340 --> 00:25:39,220  
Were the other prisoners  
that you were with Jewish?

452  
00:25:39,220 --> 00:25:41,380  
Or were there some  
non-Jewish prisoners?

453  
00:25:41,380 --> 00:25:43,190  
We're talking about  
Auschwitz now.

454  
00:25:43,190 --> 00:25:44,500  
Some were not Jewish.

455  
00:25:44,500 --> 00:25:48,250  
The majority were, but there  
were non-Jewish prisoners.

456  
00:25:48,250 --> 00:25:49,900  
And you came in  
contact with them?

457  
00:25:49,900 --> 00:25:51,100  
Did you talk to them?

458  
00:25:51,100 --> 00:25:52,120  
Yes.

459  
00:25:52,120 --> 00:25:54,420  
Yes.

460  
00:25:54,420 --> 00:25:56,380  
The situation that  
I described when

461

00:25:56,380 --> 00:26:00,520

I went to that hospital and  
the doctor was not Jewish?

462

00:26:00,520 --> 00:26:02,890

I described that in some detail.

463

00:26:02,890 --> 00:26:06,580

And there were others.

464

00:26:06,580 --> 00:26:08,710

There were others  
that were not Jewish.

465

00:26:08,710 --> 00:26:10,540

There were political prisoners.

466

00:26:10,540 --> 00:26:12,160

Any conversations  
that you remember

467

00:26:12,160 --> 00:26:15,460

with the non-Jewish prisoners?

468

00:26:15,460 --> 00:26:20,290

Not that any stand  
out in my mind.

469

00:26:20,290 --> 00:26:21,820

But I knew that they were--

470

00:26:21,820 --> 00:26:26,410

well, that was a known fact  
who was Jewish and who was not.

471

00:26:26,410 --> 00:26:30,070

You were saying that  
you felt very alone.

472

00:26:30,070 --> 00:26:32,590

Was there ever a time  
in Auschwitz when you

473

00:26:32,590 --> 00:26:36,550  
didn't think you could go on?

474

00:26:36,550 --> 00:26:46,320  
Well, I suppose that there  
might have been some times,

475

00:26:46,320 --> 00:26:48,510  
but not very often.

476

00:26:48,510 --> 00:26:55,860  
I really felt that I  
must go on as best I can.

477

00:26:55,860 --> 00:27:01,130  
I did not know whether I  
could make it through the war.

478

00:27:01,130 --> 00:27:05,690  
Perhaps that's what your  
question implies, that I ever

479

00:27:05,690 --> 00:27:07,580  
think that I couldn't go on.

480

00:27:07,580 --> 00:27:11,600  
If the same life would continue  
for a much longer time,

481

00:27:11,600 --> 00:27:14,280  
obviously I wouldn't  
be able to make it.

482

00:27:14,280 --> 00:27:16,400  
So yeah, there were times.

483

00:27:16,400 --> 00:27:20,690  
There were times that you  
think that you may not

484

00:27:20,690 --> 00:27:22,230  
be able to go on.

485  
00:27:22,230 --> 00:27:26,210  
As a matter of fact, I  
experienced those times more

486  
00:27:26,210 --> 00:27:30,590  
in Mauthausen than I  
did in Auschwitz, which

487  
00:27:30,590 --> 00:27:34,200  
I'll talk to in a little while.

488  
00:27:34,200 --> 00:27:38,390  
In Auschwitz, did your  
feelings about being Jewish

489  
00:27:38,390 --> 00:27:42,645  
stay the same, or  
change in any way?

490  
00:27:42,645 --> 00:27:44,270  
Because of what you  
were going through.

491  
00:27:44,270 --> 00:27:45,080  
Yes.

492  
00:27:45,080 --> 00:27:50,860  
Well, let me say that  
when I was liberated,

493  
00:27:50,860 --> 00:27:57,215  
and I was 15 years old,  
I was an angry young man.

494  
00:27:57,215 --> 00:27:59,930

495  
00:27:59,930 --> 00:28:06,320  
I didn't want to have much  
to do with my religion.

496

00:28:06,320 --> 00:28:09,170

And there were two  
types in the camps.

497

00:28:09,170 --> 00:28:11,930

Some that became  
extremely religious,

498

00:28:11,930 --> 00:28:17,000

and some that sort of felt  
that the religion let us down.

499

00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:21,200

I was one of those that  
thought that they let us down.

500

00:28:21,200 --> 00:28:30,290

Because what we have seen  
happen to very, very pious Jews,

501

00:28:30,290 --> 00:28:36,260

that dovened all their life,  
and they did everything

502

00:28:36,260 --> 00:28:40,610

that the Torah would  
instruct them to do.

503

00:28:40,610 --> 00:28:43,250

And what they did  
to them, I was--

504

00:28:43,250 --> 00:28:45,680

I rebelled against that.

505

00:28:45,680 --> 00:28:47,870

And it took me many years.

506

00:28:47,870 --> 00:28:49,615

Many, many years.

507

00:28:49,615 --> 00:28:52,130

As a matter of

fact, I didn't start

508

00:28:52,130 --> 00:28:55,160  
getting into the Jewish way  
of life until I got married.

509

00:28:55,160 --> 00:28:58,580  
I suppose it was my  
wife's influence.

510

00:28:58,580 --> 00:29:01,430  
Until I had my own  
children, that I

511

00:29:01,430 --> 00:29:04,550  
felt that they needed  
a Jewish education,

512

00:29:04,550 --> 00:29:06,290  
bar mitzvah and the whole thing.

513

00:29:06,290 --> 00:29:09,920  
And I wanted them to  
have a Jewish identity.

514

00:29:09,920 --> 00:29:12,260  
I wanted them to  
know who they are.

515

00:29:12,260 --> 00:29:16,370  
Just like who-- they wanted  
them to know who I am,

516

00:29:16,370 --> 00:29:20,010  
their mother, their  
grandparents, who they were.

517

00:29:20,010 --> 00:29:25,935  
So while I was in  
Auschwitz, I did not--

518

00:29:25,935 --> 00:29:29,380

519

00:29:29,380 --> 00:29:35,290  
religion was more of something  
that I was disappointed in.

520

00:29:35,290 --> 00:29:38,580

521

00:29:38,580 --> 00:29:42,000  
And some of my friends  
were very different.

522

00:29:42,000 --> 00:29:43,420  
They prayed a lot.

523

00:29:43,420 --> 00:29:50,546

524

00:29:50,546 --> 00:29:52,260  
I didn't pray that much.

525

00:29:52,260 --> 00:29:55,060

526

00:29:55,060 --> 00:29:58,840  
Although, you know,  
you always turn to God

527

00:29:58,840 --> 00:30:02,740  
when your life is at  
stake, because that's

528

00:30:02,740 --> 00:30:05,980  
the only thing that you have.

529

00:30:05,980 --> 00:30:14,230  
And I would say that so did I.  
And perhaps from what I just

530

00:30:14,230 --> 00:30:18,070  
told you, that might have  
been somewhat hypocritical,

531  
00:30:18,070 --> 00:30:19,240  
but that's the way it was.

532  
00:30:19,240 --> 00:30:37,880

533  
00:30:37,880 --> 00:30:41,510  
This is tape three,  
side B. Do you

534  
00:30:41,510 --> 00:30:46,930  
remember any of the names  
of the Nazi personnel?

535  
00:30:46,930 --> 00:30:50,120  
Any names that you can recall?

536  
00:30:50,120 --> 00:30:53,360  
No, I really can't.

537  
00:30:53,360 --> 00:30:58,010  
I mean, everybody knew  
the Auschwitz commandant.

538  
00:30:58,010 --> 00:30:59,480  
His name was Hoess.

539  
00:30:59,480 --> 00:31:03,440  
But I've never seen him.

540  
00:31:03,440 --> 00:31:09,980  
I really don't recall any  
other names of other officials,

541  
00:31:09,980 --> 00:31:14,090  
of the soldiers, of the SS men.

542  
00:31:14,090 --> 00:31:16,850  
I do not recall any names.

543

00:31:16,850 --> 00:31:22,870

Names of any of the  
other prisoners or kapos?

544

00:31:22,870 --> 00:31:24,110

No, I can't remember.

545

00:31:24,110 --> 00:31:28,520

546

00:31:28,520 --> 00:31:31,130

OK, now it's winter.

547

00:31:31,130 --> 00:31:34,670

And the next change.

548

00:31:34,670 --> 00:31:42,720

Now it's winter of 1945.

549

00:31:42,720 --> 00:31:46,500

I don't remember whether  
it was January or February.

550

00:31:46,500 --> 00:31:47,180

January.

551

00:31:47,180 --> 00:31:48,030

OK.

552

00:31:48,030 --> 00:31:52,920

And when the Auschwitz  
was being liquidated,

553

00:31:52,920 --> 00:31:58,500

they marched us,  
all prisoners, it

554

00:31:58,500 --> 00:32:00,060

seems like they  
marched us for days.

555

00:32:00,060 --> 00:32:02,100

I don't remember how many days.

556

00:32:02,100 --> 00:32:03,870

But I remember there  
was night and day.

557

00:32:03,870 --> 00:32:07,170

558

00:32:07,170 --> 00:32:10,180

And it was winter.

559

00:32:10,180 --> 00:32:13,380

It was very cold.

560

00:32:13,380 --> 00:32:16,380

And there were many  
prisoners, many people,

561

00:32:16,380 --> 00:32:22,050

that fell by the wayside because  
they just couldn't go on.

562

00:32:22,050 --> 00:32:25,260

And when they did, they were  
left there or they were shot.

563

00:32:25,260 --> 00:32:26,340

There was no help.

564

00:32:26,340 --> 00:32:29,120

And we kept being marched.

565

00:32:29,120 --> 00:32:38,240

We kept on marching  
until we got to a place

566

00:32:38,240 --> 00:32:42,800

where there were railroad  
stations, huge stations.

567

00:32:42,800 --> 00:32:45,710

I don't remember where it was.

568

00:32:45,710 --> 00:32:47,195

They put us on cars.

569

00:32:47,195 --> 00:32:50,300

570

00:32:50,300 --> 00:32:51,425

But they were not enclosed.

571

00:32:51,425 --> 00:32:54,130

572

00:32:54,130 --> 00:33:00,930

They were cars that  
were halfway open.

573

00:33:00,930 --> 00:33:02,390

They didn't have a top on it.

574

00:33:02,390 --> 00:33:06,860

575

00:33:06,860 --> 00:33:11,600

And to some degree,  
it was an advantage,

576

00:33:11,600 --> 00:33:15,110

because we were able to  
cuddle up and keep warm.

577

00:33:15,110 --> 00:33:18,950

They didn't give us water, so  
as we would be traveling along,

578

00:33:18,950 --> 00:33:22,330

we would be able to scoop  
up some snow, I remember,

579

00:33:22,330 --> 00:33:25,730

and put some snow into our

mouth, which kept us going,

580

00:33:25,730 --> 00:33:31,040

because sometimes you need  
water more than you need food.

581

00:33:31,040 --> 00:33:31,880

And we traveled.

582

00:33:31,880 --> 00:33:34,510

583

00:33:34,510 --> 00:33:38,980

And there were trains going  
in various directions.

584

00:33:38,980 --> 00:33:42,610

I ended up in Mauthausen.

585

00:33:42,610 --> 00:33:45,390

I know that some of  
the people that I know

586

00:33:45,390 --> 00:33:48,250

ended up in some  
camps in Germany.

587

00:33:48,250 --> 00:33:51,770

588

00:33:51,770 --> 00:33:53,540

But I ended up in Mauthausen.

589

00:33:53,540 --> 00:33:58,540

590

00:33:58,540 --> 00:34:03,960

And during the trip, people  
would die in the car.

591

00:34:03,960 --> 00:34:06,660

592  
00:34:06,660 --> 00:34:10,270  
And I remember we would  
stop, and the dead people

593  
00:34:10,270 --> 00:34:11,350  
would be taken off.

594  
00:34:11,350 --> 00:34:13,960

595  
00:34:13,960 --> 00:34:16,050  
And we would stop  
in an open field.

596  
00:34:16,050 --> 00:34:19,969  
There was no-- it wasn't a  
railroad station, so to speak.

597  
00:34:19,969 --> 00:34:21,250  
And then we would continue on.

598  
00:34:21,250 --> 00:34:24,030

599  
00:34:24,030 --> 00:34:26,090  
And again, we didn't  
know what we were going.

600  
00:34:26,090 --> 00:34:27,980  
But when we finally  
got there, we

601  
00:34:27,980 --> 00:34:30,980  
knew that we were in Mauthausen.

602  
00:34:30,980 --> 00:34:34,027  
What was your physical condition  
when you left Auschwitz?

603  
00:34:34,027 --> 00:34:35,110  
How would you describe it?

604  
00:34:35,110 --> 00:34:37,934

605  
00:34:37,934 --> 00:34:38,434  
Fair.

606  
00:34:38,434 --> 00:34:43,420

607  
00:34:43,420 --> 00:34:48,620  
I think the march  
weakened me quite a bit.

608  
00:34:48,620 --> 00:34:51,800  
When I started the  
march, it was fair.

609  
00:34:51,800 --> 00:34:54,080  
By the end of the  
march, I was much weaker

610  
00:34:54,080 --> 00:34:59,520  
because of continuous physical  
activity of just marching.

611  
00:34:59,520 --> 00:35:02,022  
Did you march by yourself?

612  
00:35:02,022 --> 00:35:03,230  
With all the other prisoners.

613  
00:35:03,230 --> 00:35:04,022  
But I didn't know--

614  
00:35:04,022 --> 00:35:06,382  
Yeah, but I meant was  
anybody very close by to you?

615  
00:35:06,382 --> 00:35:09,094  
No.

616

00:35:09,094 --> 00:35:10,640

So you were alone in a group.

617

00:35:10,640 --> 00:35:12,330

Yes.

618

00:35:12,330 --> 00:35:12,830

I was.

619

00:35:12,830 --> 00:35:13,913

That's a good description.

620

00:35:13,913 --> 00:35:16,040

I was alone in a group.

621

00:35:16,040 --> 00:35:22,630

And and we arrived

at Mauthausen.

622

00:35:22,630 --> 00:35:30,990

And I can't recall the exact  
detail when the train arrived

623

00:35:30,990 --> 00:35:35,420

and what station

it arrived there.

624

00:35:35,420 --> 00:35:38,630

But from where we

arrived, they marched us

625

00:35:38,630 --> 00:35:41,240

to the main camp, Mauthausen.

626

00:35:41,240 --> 00:35:44,560

627

00:35:44,560 --> 00:35:48,850

And they put us into barracks.

628

00:35:48,850 --> 00:35:54,545

And for the next three months, we didn't do anything.

629  
00:35:54,545 --> 00:35:57,970

630  
00:35:57,970 --> 00:36:01,080  
It was cold.

631  
00:36:01,080 --> 00:36:03,720  
It was dirty.

632  
00:36:03,720 --> 00:36:07,590  
We didn't have facilities to wash.

633  
00:36:07,590 --> 00:36:11,330  
I remember sometimes getting some soup, and trying to--

634  
00:36:11,330 --> 00:36:12,480  
oh, coffee.

635  
00:36:12,480 --> 00:36:14,260  
Not soup, but coffee.

636  
00:36:14,260 --> 00:36:16,140  
And rather than drinking the coffee,

637  
00:36:16,140 --> 00:36:19,740  
we would take a little bit and wash our hands.

638  
00:36:19,740 --> 00:36:25,790  
And a lot of us got lice.

639  
00:36:25,790 --> 00:36:28,790

640  
00:36:28,790 --> 00:36:31,800  
I was one of them.

641  
00:36:31,800 --> 00:36:35,760  
And then it-- food was meager.

642  
00:36:35,760 --> 00:36:38,640  
We were packed so tight  
in one of the barracks.

643  
00:36:38,640 --> 00:36:42,690  
I mean, it was tightly packed.

644  
00:36:42,690 --> 00:36:46,980  
And they didn't do anything,  
day in and day out,

645  
00:36:46,980 --> 00:36:52,230  
for a couple of months,  
maybe six weeks.

646  
00:36:52,230 --> 00:36:54,120  
Then we went to  
another camp that

647  
00:36:54,120 --> 00:36:58,920  
was a satellite of the  
Mauthausen complex.

648  
00:36:58,920 --> 00:37:01,545  
Not too far away, and I  
don't remember where it was.

649  
00:37:01,545 --> 00:37:04,335

650  
00:37:04,335 --> 00:37:06,500  
Was that Gusen?

651  
00:37:06,500 --> 00:37:09,370  
No, I don't think so.

652  
00:37:09,370 --> 00:37:12,920

653  
00:37:12,920 --> 00:37:14,010  
But it might have been.

654  
00:37:14,010 --> 00:37:17,130  
I really don't  
remember the name.

655  
00:37:17,130 --> 00:37:18,195  
And it was in a forest.

656  
00:37:18,195 --> 00:37:22,190

657  
00:37:22,190 --> 00:37:23,900  
And they packed  
us-- again, it was

658  
00:37:23,900 --> 00:37:29,140  
temporary tents, large  
tents that they packed us

659  
00:37:29,140 --> 00:37:30,370  
in by the thousands.

660  
00:37:30,370 --> 00:37:33,050

661  
00:37:33,050 --> 00:37:36,320  
And again, we were there  
just doing nothing.

662  
00:37:36,320 --> 00:37:37,910  
Lived in dirt.

663  
00:37:37,910 --> 00:37:40,600

664  
00:37:40,600 --> 00:37:49,360  
And we-- it is in Mauthausen  
that I was beginning

665

00:37:49,360 --> 00:37:52,380  
to feel weaker and weaker.

666

00:37:52,380 --> 00:37:58,740  
And it was in Mauthausen that  
I was beginning to have fears

667

00:37:58,740 --> 00:37:59,730  
whether I'll make it.

668

00:37:59,730 --> 00:38:10,430

669

00:38:10,430 --> 00:38:14,720  
And one day, there were rumors.

670

00:38:14,720 --> 00:38:17,855  
People were saying that  
the guards are gone.

671

00:38:17,855 --> 00:38:22,100

672

00:38:22,100 --> 00:38:26,510  
And a lot of us, first,  
you don't believe it.

673

00:38:26,510 --> 00:38:28,700  
And second, we  
were afraid to get

674

00:38:28,700 --> 00:38:36,870  
to the perimeter of the  
camp, being afraid that you'd

675

00:38:36,870 --> 00:38:38,215  
get shot if you get too close.

676

00:38:38,215 --> 00:38:41,000

677

00:38:41,000 --> 00:38:43,580

But after a day, we found  
out that it was true.

678

00:38:43,580 --> 00:38:48,300

679

00:38:48,300 --> 00:38:55,670

And it was I believe  
May 5 or May 6.

680

00:38:55,670 --> 00:38:58,300

I think the war ended May 8.

681

00:38:58,300 --> 00:39:02,980

I think it was maybe a day  
or two before the war ended

682

00:39:02,980 --> 00:39:10,240

that the American armies  
liberated Mauthausen.

683

00:39:10,240 --> 00:39:19,900

And by the way, I have since  
met an American Jewish soldier

684

00:39:19,900 --> 00:39:26,340

in Newburgh, New York that was  
part of the liberating force.

685

00:39:26,340 --> 00:39:29,980

And it was quite a meeting  
between him and me.

686

00:39:29,980 --> 00:39:32,320

It was at a time  
when I was giving

687

00:39:32,320 --> 00:39:38,170

a talk to the high school  
in Newburgh, New York.

688

00:39:38,170 --> 00:39:41,950

And I gave a talk to the  
entire social studies group,

689  
00:39:41,950 --> 00:39:44,410  
several hundred kids.

690  
00:39:44,410 --> 00:39:48,100  
And he was one of  
the people that

691  
00:39:48,100 --> 00:39:52,420  
was on the panel to give a  
perspective of a soldier that

692  
00:39:52,420 --> 00:39:55,220  
liberated camps.

693  
00:39:55,220 --> 00:39:59,170  
And it was interesting that  
when I told my story, not

694  
00:39:59,170 --> 00:40:03,370  
in the depth that I am telling  
it now, he came up to me,

695  
00:40:03,370 --> 00:40:05,170  
and he was very proud.

696  
00:40:05,170 --> 00:40:07,660  
He says, maybe I was one of  
those that liberated you.

697  
00:40:07,660 --> 00:40:10,240  
And I said, wonderful.

698  
00:40:10,240 --> 00:40:13,630  
And it was a wonderful sight.

699  
00:40:13,630 --> 00:40:16,680  
It was an unbelievable sight.

700  
00:40:16,680 --> 00:40:18,550

Let's go back a  
little bit in time

701  
00:40:18,550 --> 00:40:20,920  
before we talk about liberation.

702  
00:40:20,920 --> 00:40:23,500  
When you were leaving  
Auschwitz, did they

703  
00:40:23,500 --> 00:40:25,690  
tell you where you were going?

704  
00:40:25,690 --> 00:40:30,970  
And how did you know you were  
supposed to leave on the march?

705  
00:40:30,970 --> 00:40:33,170  
No, I didn't know  
where we were going.

706  
00:40:33,170 --> 00:40:35,290  
I did not know  
where I was going.

707  
00:40:35,290 --> 00:40:37,870  
We were just going wherever  
they pushed us to go,

708  
00:40:37,870 --> 00:40:41,770  
whichever way they directed  
the hundreds of people

709  
00:40:41,770 --> 00:40:42,970  
that were marching.

710  
00:40:42,970 --> 00:40:46,060  
What were you wearing?

711  
00:40:46,060 --> 00:40:50,800  
The clothes that we  
had in Auschwitz.

712  
00:40:50,800 --> 00:40:52,600  
Did you have anything  
on your feet?

713  
00:40:52,600 --> 00:40:54,070  
Yes.

714  
00:40:54,070 --> 00:40:56,680  
Yes, I had--

715  
00:40:56,680 --> 00:40:59,500  
I don't remember if they  
were wooden or other shoes,

716  
00:40:59,500 --> 00:41:03,010  
but I had something  
on my feet, yes.

717  
00:41:03,010 --> 00:41:08,220  
And I had a jacket.

718  
00:41:08,220 --> 00:41:10,270  
As a matter of fact, I  
think I had a blanket

719  
00:41:10,270 --> 00:41:13,180  
that I wrapped myself around.

720  
00:41:13,180 --> 00:41:15,940  
And that's how I  
kept warm, or as warm

721  
00:41:15,940 --> 00:41:18,250  
as one could possibly keep.

722  
00:41:18,250 --> 00:41:26,530  
And that's how . marched, that's  
how we got to the station when

723  
00:41:26,530 --> 00:41:30,760  
we were put on the trains and  
they took us to Mauthausen.

724  
00:41:30,760 --> 00:41:32,080  
How did you sleep on the march?

725  
00:41:32,080 --> 00:41:33,020  
Did you stop at night?

726  
00:41:33,020 --> 00:41:34,060  
Did they let you sleep?

727  
00:41:34,060 --> 00:41:36,880  
Yes, we stopped at night.

728  
00:41:36,880 --> 00:41:40,488  
And we stopped at night  
simply because we wouldn't

729  
00:41:40,488 --> 00:41:41,530  
know where we were going.

730  
00:41:41,530 --> 00:41:45,605  
It was very dark, so the  
guards themselves had to stop.

731  
00:41:45,605 --> 00:41:47,980  
I mean, don't forget that as  
we were marching, there were

732  
00:41:47,980 --> 00:41:51,010  
guards, SS on each side of us.

733  
00:41:51,010 --> 00:41:57,040  
Every few feet, or every few  
hundred feet there were guards.

734  
00:41:57,040 --> 00:42:01,450  
So when it got  
nighttime, we would stop.

735  
00:42:01,450 --> 00:42:04,220  
But we would stop anywhere.

736

00:42:04,220 --> 00:42:06,100

It could be in the field.

737

00:42:06,100 --> 00:42:09,880

It was just determined,  
we're going to stop now.

738

00:42:09,880 --> 00:42:13,420

And we would lie down.

739

00:42:13,420 --> 00:42:17,350

And we would sit  
down, or lie down,

740

00:42:17,350 --> 00:42:20,380

take a nap as best we could.

741

00:42:20,380 --> 00:42:22,390

And then early in  
the morning, as soon

742

00:42:22,390 --> 00:42:24,790

as it started  
getting light, up we

743

00:42:24,790 --> 00:42:28,270

went and started marching again.

744

00:42:28,270 --> 00:42:31,690

What did they give you to eat?

745

00:42:31,690 --> 00:42:32,680

Some bread.

746

00:42:32,680 --> 00:42:34,150

Yeah, they did  
give us some bread.

747

00:42:34,150 --> 00:42:39,570

I remember getting  
a portion of bread.

748

00:42:39,570 --> 00:42:42,240

I don't remember whether  
we had soup or anything,

749

00:42:42,240 --> 00:42:45,870

because there were no  
facilities to cook or anything.

750

00:42:45,870 --> 00:42:49,570

But I remember  
getting some bread.

751

00:42:49,570 --> 00:42:51,790

Did you stay in the  
middle of the line?

752

00:42:51,790 --> 00:42:54,310

Did you purposely take  
a position in line,

753

00:42:54,310 --> 00:42:57,310

or did you just walk  
wherever you were?

754

00:42:57,310 --> 00:43:00,790

I just walked wherever I could.

755

00:43:00,790 --> 00:43:01,990

There was no planning.

756

00:43:01,990 --> 00:43:04,500

There was no plan that I  
should be here or here.

757

00:43:04,500 --> 00:43:09,048

I just went along  
with the crowd.

758

00:43:09,048 --> 00:43:10,840

I don't think there  
were any good positions

759

00:43:10,840 --> 00:43:13,470  
or bad positions.

760  
00:43:13,470 --> 00:43:15,050  
Were people helping each other?

761  
00:43:15,050 --> 00:43:16,960  
Did you notice that?

762  
00:43:16,960 --> 00:43:18,250  
Yes.

763  
00:43:18,250 --> 00:43:22,540  
People were helping  
each other, especially--

764  
00:43:22,540 --> 00:43:23,950  
I noticed that.

765  
00:43:23,950 --> 00:43:27,980  
Especially if somebody was a  
little older and couldn't walk.

766  
00:43:27,980 --> 00:43:31,570  
We just-- legs gave in.

767  
00:43:31,570 --> 00:43:33,430  
Everything gave in.

768  
00:43:33,430 --> 00:43:37,930  
And I remember people  
grabbing that person

769  
00:43:37,930 --> 00:43:43,990  
and helping them how to walk,  
because once you fell down,

770  
00:43:43,990 --> 00:43:46,000  
that was the end.

771  
00:43:46,000 --> 00:43:49,290  
But there were people that

were helping others, yes.

772

00:43:49,290 --> 00:43:55,350

773

00:43:55,350 --> 00:43:57,210

What was it like to  
see people fall down

774

00:43:57,210 --> 00:43:59,790

and not be able to get  
up, when you saw that?

775

00:43:59,790 --> 00:44:05,100

Yeah, it was sad and  
fearful, because you

776

00:44:05,100 --> 00:44:08,550

knew that if you fell  
down, the same fate that

777

00:44:08,550 --> 00:44:12,460

befell on that person is  
going to happen to you.

778

00:44:12,460 --> 00:44:17,130

So again, the fear that I  
have described before so often

779

00:44:17,130 --> 00:44:19,140

was with you.

780

00:44:19,140 --> 00:44:21,270

And the sadness was with you.

781

00:44:21,270 --> 00:44:28,650

Here is a perfectly normal human  
being, like me or anybody else,

782

00:44:28,650 --> 00:44:32,160

and you knew that that was  
the end for that person.

783

00:44:32,160 --> 00:44:33,090

Not old.

784

00:44:33,090 --> 00:44:36,850

I don't mean old

like I am old now.

785

00:44:36,850 --> 00:44:42,110

Maybe in their 30s,

maybe in their 40s,

786

00:44:42,110 --> 00:44:45,120

that struggled to survive.

787

00:44:45,120 --> 00:44:47,650

But some couldn't.

788

00:44:47,650 --> 00:44:51,800

Some people are physically

stronger than others.

789

00:44:51,800 --> 00:44:53,420

You need nutrition.

790

00:44:53,420 --> 00:44:56,270

You need food to

sustain yourself.

791

00:44:56,270 --> 00:45:00,290

But some people are naturally

stronger than others,

792

00:45:00,290 --> 00:45:01,350

physically stronger.

793

00:45:01,350 --> 00:45:04,430

That is the way we are made up.

794

00:45:04,430 --> 00:45:09,710

So as sad as it is,

the stronger ones

795

00:45:09,710 --> 00:45:13,370

were able to survive easier  
than those that were weaker.

796

00:45:13,370 --> 00:45:15,690

You know, the survival  
of the fittest.

797

00:45:15,690 --> 00:45:17,540

And that's what happened.

798

00:45:17,540 --> 00:45:20,330

Did you think of other things  
while you were marching,

799

00:45:20,330 --> 00:45:22,760

or did you just  
concentrate on marching?

800

00:45:22,760 --> 00:45:26,906

I think I was just  
concentrating on marching.

801

00:45:26,906 --> 00:45:30,950

There was one time  
that I thought

802

00:45:30,950 --> 00:45:35,480

that I was able to sleep  
while I was marching.

803

00:45:35,480 --> 00:45:42,430

People say it's impossible, but  
I felt I was able to doze off.

804

00:45:42,430 --> 00:45:45,650

And my head would bob up and  
down, and then I would come to,

805

00:45:45,650 --> 00:45:46,760

and you kept on marching.

806

00:45:46,760 --> 00:45:49,820  
Because there was one time that  
they marched us for so long.

807  
00:45:49,820 --> 00:45:54,050  
We were so tired, and you  
just have to keep on going.

808  
00:45:54,050 --> 00:45:56,000  
There is no option.

809  
00:45:56,000 --> 00:45:57,740  
So you just have  
to keep on going.

810  
00:45:57,740 --> 00:46:03,260  
And we were tired.

811  
00:46:03,260 --> 00:46:05,510  
Sometimes we were tired  
for the lack of food.

812  
00:46:05,510 --> 00:46:06,900  
That was all the time.

813  
00:46:06,900 --> 00:46:08,480  
But then you get  
tired because you

814  
00:46:08,480 --> 00:46:10,760  
needed some rest, some sleep.

815  
00:46:10,760 --> 00:46:13,010  
So yeah, I remember that.

816  
00:46:13,010 --> 00:46:16,040

817  
00:46:16,040 --> 00:46:18,805  
Were you ever pushed on  
by some of the guards?

818

00:46:18,805 --> 00:46:21,360  
Did they ever attack you?

819  
00:46:21,360 --> 00:46:26,130  
Not during that march,  
because I was able to keep up.

820  
00:46:26,130 --> 00:46:26,630  
No.

821  
00:46:26,630 --> 00:46:29,690  
Others were  
especially, but as long

822  
00:46:29,690 --> 00:46:34,040  
as you were able to keep  
up, there were unfortunately

823  
00:46:34,040 --> 00:46:36,170  
enough people that  
could not keep up

824  
00:46:36,170 --> 00:46:40,070  
that they were prodded  
along and pushed and so on.

825  
00:46:40,070 --> 00:46:42,740

826  
00:46:42,740 --> 00:46:45,530  
Then when you got  
to the train station

827  
00:46:45,530 --> 00:46:47,900  
where you were put  
in the open cars,

828  
00:46:47,900 --> 00:46:50,090  
did you still not know  
where you were going?

829  
00:46:50,090 --> 00:46:52,790  
That's correct.

830  
00:46:52,790 --> 00:46:56,000  
I did not know  
where I was going.

831  
00:46:56,000 --> 00:47:01,130  
They didn't tell us that we  
were going to Mauthausen.

832  
00:47:01,130 --> 00:47:05,600  
What is it like to not  
know where you're going?

833  
00:47:05,600 --> 00:47:07,040  
Well, there is that uncertainty.

834  
00:47:07,040 --> 00:47:15,560  
But I'll tell you something, by  
that time, things were so bad,

835  
00:47:15,560 --> 00:47:19,580  
we were, and I was so  
resigned to whatever

836  
00:47:19,580 --> 00:47:23,250  
that I really didn't care.

837  
00:47:23,250 --> 00:47:25,220  
I didn't care  
where they send me,

838  
00:47:25,220 --> 00:47:29,670  
because wherever they send  
me, it's going to be bad.

839  
00:47:29,670 --> 00:47:31,680  
So it didn't matter to  
me whether it was-- they

840  
00:47:31,680 --> 00:47:32,990  
could have said Mauthausen.

841

00:47:32,990 --> 00:47:34,430  
They could have said Oshkosh.

842  
00:47:34,430 --> 00:47:35,410  
It didn't matter.

843  
00:47:35,410 --> 00:47:38,110

844  
00:47:38,110 --> 00:47:40,560  
We just got on a  
train and we went.

845  
00:47:40,560 --> 00:47:42,270  
And if they  
mentioned Mauthausen,

846  
00:47:42,270 --> 00:47:45,130  
it wouldn't have meant  
anything to me at that time.

847  
00:47:45,130 --> 00:47:47,130  
And if they had  
mentioned another camp,

848  
00:47:47,130 --> 00:47:49,630  
it wouldn't have meant  
anything to me at that time.

849  
00:47:49,630 --> 00:47:54,760  
So the resignation  
was, I don't care.

850  
00:47:54,760 --> 00:47:59,110  
Simply because the conditions  
that we were in already

851  
00:47:59,110 --> 00:48:02,230  
by that time, there sets  
in almost a condition

852  
00:48:02,230 --> 00:48:06,640  
of resignation,

which is pretty bad.

853

00:48:06,640 --> 00:48:09,430

And I thought that--

854

00:48:09,430 --> 00:48:11,260

that was the time

in my life that I

855

00:48:11,260 --> 00:48:17,340

was sort of beginning to feel

whatever happens, happens.

856

00:48:17,340 --> 00:48:19,710

Did you know that this

kind of experience

857

00:48:19,710 --> 00:48:24,930

was happening in many places to

thousands, millions of people?

858

00:48:24,930 --> 00:48:28,320

Or did you feel that it

was only where you were?

859

00:48:28,320 --> 00:48:30,240

Oh, no, we knew that

it was happening

860

00:48:30,240 --> 00:48:34,490

to Jews in other places.

861

00:48:34,490 --> 00:48:36,330

How did you know that?

862

00:48:36,330 --> 00:48:37,860

It was just a known fact.

863

00:48:37,860 --> 00:48:38,970

I mean, it was--

864

00:48:38,970 --> 00:48:42,540

I didn't know it  
through any news media.

865  
00:48:42,540 --> 00:48:44,880  
But it was just known that--

866  
00:48:44,880 --> 00:48:47,480  
I mean, we knew what  
was happening to Jews.

867  
00:48:47,480 --> 00:48:49,590  
I was one of them.

868  
00:48:49,590 --> 00:48:52,050  
Jews were going  
all over the place.

869  
00:48:52,050 --> 00:48:55,010  
And we knew that there  
were other Jews that

870  
00:48:55,010 --> 00:48:58,140  
were experiencing the  
same kind of things

871  
00:48:58,140 --> 00:49:01,050  
that I was experiencing,  
that we were experiencing.

872  
00:49:01,050 --> 00:49:04,260  
Whether it was in Mauthausen,  
Auschwitz, or many other camps.

873  
00:49:04,260 --> 00:49:07,200  
We knew that there were many  
other camps, because everybody

874  
00:49:07,200 --> 00:49:10,590  
knew of Dachau, because the  
Dachau was built even I think

875  
00:49:10,590 --> 00:49:14,820  
before World War II started.

876  
00:49:14,820 --> 00:49:17,300  
So we knew of  
concentration camps.

877  
00:49:17,300 --> 00:49:18,840  
We didn't know  
about all of them,

878  
00:49:18,840 --> 00:49:22,380  
because there were so many.

879  
00:49:22,380 --> 00:49:25,530  
I mean, you get to know only the  
ones that maybe you know about

880  
00:49:25,530 --> 00:49:27,480  
that your family is affected.

881  
00:49:27,480 --> 00:49:30,870  
I did not know that my  
mother was sent to Chelmno.

882  
00:49:30,870 --> 00:49:33,630  
It's only later that  
we found that out.

883  
00:49:33,630 --> 00:49:35,550  
So there were many camps.

884  
00:49:35,550 --> 00:49:36,840  
I know my friends--

885  
00:49:36,840 --> 00:49:39,630  
that may not be relevant  
to my story now--

886  
00:49:39,630 --> 00:49:43,710  
but I know my friends had the  
people that went to Belzec.

887  
00:49:43,710 --> 00:49:45,450

You've heard of Belzec.

888  
00:49:45,450 --> 00:49:49,560  
And to other camps that we--

889  
00:49:49,560 --> 00:49:52,760  
at that time, I did not  
know that they existed.

890  
00:49:52,760 --> 00:49:57,870  
And of course, we all know  
about the Treblinkas and the--

891  
00:49:57,870 --> 00:50:00,270  
oh, I'm thinking of  
another one that was near

892  
00:50:00,270 --> 00:50:02,010  
Lublin, and the huge, huge--

893  
00:50:02,010 --> 00:50:04,320  
Majdanek.

894  
00:50:04,320 --> 00:50:06,780  
We knew about those major camps.

895  
00:50:06,780 --> 00:50:09,660  
And most of the major  
camps were in Poland.

896  
00:50:09,660 --> 00:50:13,380

897  
00:50:13,380 --> 00:50:18,550  
When you were on this open  
car traveling to Mauthausen,

898  
00:50:18,550 --> 00:50:20,160  
and you told this  
very touching story

899  
00:50:20,160 --> 00:50:23,220

about reaching for  
the snow to get water,

900  
00:50:23,220 --> 00:50:25,740  
what did that taste like?

901  
00:50:25,740 --> 00:50:29,715  
Well, it tasted cold,  
and it tasted good.

902  
00:50:29,715 --> 00:50:30,930  
[LAUGHTER]

903  
00:50:30,930 --> 00:50:35,880  
It was-- and I wasn't the  
only one that was doing it,

904  
00:50:35,880 --> 00:50:36,450  
of course.

905  
00:50:36,450 --> 00:50:40,320  
Everybody needed  
something to put--

906  
00:50:40,320 --> 00:50:43,800  
but I remember that we  
needed it more even than food

907  
00:50:43,800 --> 00:50:48,150  
at one time, because  
we were dehydrated.

908  
00:50:48,150 --> 00:50:51,150  
We were dehydrated,  
and we needed something

909  
00:50:51,150 --> 00:50:52,320  
to get into our mouth.

910  
00:50:52,320 --> 00:50:54,640  
And the snow was great.

911

00:50:54,640 --> 00:51:00,500

The snow-- it's possible that  
it helped us with our lives.

912

00:51:00,500 --> 00:51:03,950

I don't want to exaggerate  
it, but perhaps it did.

913

00:51:03,950 --> 00:51:06,320

Because the snow felt  
good, putting some snow

914

00:51:06,320 --> 00:51:07,930

into my mouth.

915

00:51:07,930 --> 00:51:10,490

And that was because  
the cars were open

916

00:51:10,490 --> 00:51:12,020

that you could reach out.

917

00:51:12,020 --> 00:51:14,150

And you scoop it out.

918

00:51:14,150 --> 00:51:18,050

We had-- some people  
had little pans,

919

00:51:18,050 --> 00:51:20,600

little and put it on a  
string, I don't know,

920

00:51:20,600 --> 00:51:24,710

with a piece of cloth,  
and as the cars were--

921

00:51:24,710 --> 00:51:26,510

the train was moving.

922

00:51:26,510 --> 00:51:30,590

And it wasn't really  
moving at a great speed.

923  
00:51:30,590 --> 00:51:33,350  
So you could sort of scoop  
out and have some snow.

924  
00:51:33,350 --> 00:51:36,212

925  
00:51:36,212 --> 00:51:39,130  
Do you remember the taste?

926  
00:51:39,130 --> 00:51:39,630  
Cold.

927  
00:51:39,630 --> 00:51:42,600

928  
00:51:42,600 --> 00:51:44,080  
The cars were open.

929  
00:51:44,080 --> 00:51:46,150  
Did anybody try to jump out?

930  
00:51:46,150 --> 00:51:53,297  
The cars were open, but  
there were SS on each car.

931  
00:51:53,297 --> 00:51:54,130  
In the car with you?

932  
00:51:54,130 --> 00:51:55,900  
In the car-- I mean,  
they were sitting,

933  
00:51:55,900 --> 00:51:59,030  
and of course they would  
change when the car stopped.

934  
00:51:59,030 --> 00:52:04,290  
So they may have two or three  
hours of duty on each car.

935

00:52:04,290 --> 00:52:08,620

And I did not know  
if anybody wanted

936

00:52:08,620 --> 00:52:11,710

to jump out, because  
the situation was such

937

00:52:11,710 --> 00:52:16,420

that if you looked around, you  
knew that you couldn't make it.

938

00:52:16,420 --> 00:52:23,080

Now, of course, people  
get into desperation.

939

00:52:23,080 --> 00:52:25,120

And you will do  
anything, even though you

940

00:52:25,120 --> 00:52:27,460

know that you're going to die.

941

00:52:27,460 --> 00:52:30,850

Because what do  
you have to lose?

942

00:52:30,850 --> 00:52:34,030

Then you might just  
as well try to escape.

943

00:52:34,030 --> 00:52:36,550

And if you die in  
the process, so

944

00:52:36,550 --> 00:52:40,390

be it, because if you  
don't, you may die anyway.

945

00:52:40,390 --> 00:52:41,600

It's one of those things.

946

00:52:41,600 --> 00:52:46,600

But I have not seen  
that in my car.

947

00:52:46,600 --> 00:52:50,110

I did not know of  
it if anybody tried.

948

00:52:50,110 --> 00:52:52,130

How did people relieve  
themselves in the cars?

949

00:52:52,130 --> 00:52:55,530

950

00:52:55,530 --> 00:52:56,440

Right in the cars.

951

00:52:56,440 --> 00:53:00,730

952

00:53:00,730 --> 00:53:03,890

I was trying to describe  
that when we went

953

00:53:03,890 --> 00:53:06,230

to Auschwitz, same situation.

954

00:53:06,230 --> 00:53:08,550

How do people  
relieve themselves?

955

00:53:08,550 --> 00:53:20,770

And I don't recall exactly  
how we did it on those cars.

956

00:53:20,770 --> 00:53:23,620

I don't remember.

957

00:53:23,620 --> 00:53:28,530

One kind of relief is  
easier to do than the other.

958

00:53:28,530 --> 00:53:31,660

I don't remember, but I'm  
sure that had to be done.

959

00:53:31,660 --> 00:53:36,710

960

00:53:36,710 --> 00:53:39,950

Were you able to sleep on the  
car while you were in the car?

961

00:53:39,950 --> 00:53:40,450

Yeah.

962

00:53:40,450 --> 00:53:42,100

How?

963

00:53:42,100 --> 00:53:46,570

Just being crouched next  
to a lot of other people.

964

00:53:46,570 --> 00:53:50,770

And sometimes being crouched  
with a lot of other people

965

00:53:50,770 --> 00:53:53,130

being close to you, you keep  
each other warm that way.

966

00:53:53,130 --> 00:53:55,910

967

00:53:55,910 --> 00:53:58,280

There is body warmth.

968

00:53:58,280 --> 00:54:00,980

And yeah, we were  
able to doze off.

969

00:54:00,980 --> 00:54:04,970

I mean, not sleep like we  
talk today, sleep in a bed.

970  
00:54:04,970 --> 00:54:06,320  
But sleep, yes.

971  
00:54:06,320 --> 00:54:09,497  
We were able to doze off,  
get some rest in the car.

972  
00:54:09,497 --> 00:54:11,330  
Because there was nothing  
else you could do.

973  
00:54:11,330 --> 00:54:14,920

974  
00:54:14,920 --> 00:54:17,050  
Did people talk to  
each other in the car?

975  
00:54:17,050 --> 00:54:18,360  
Yeah.

976  
00:54:18,360 --> 00:54:22,060  
Yes, people did,  
but I don't remember

977  
00:54:22,060 --> 00:54:25,060  
about having any  
discussion with anybody

978  
00:54:25,060 --> 00:54:29,440  
that I would remember that had  
an impact on me or anything.

979  
00:54:29,440 --> 00:54:32,590  
It was survival kind of talk.

980  
00:54:32,590 --> 00:54:34,900  
When will we get some bread?

981  
00:54:34,900 --> 00:54:36,650  
Do we get some water?

982  
00:54:36,650 --> 00:54:38,500  
How long will the trip take?

983  
00:54:38,500 --> 00:54:40,240  
That was the discussion.

984  
00:54:40,240 --> 00:54:42,690  
There was nothing else  
that people talked about.

985  
00:54:42,690 --> 00:54:45,550  
It was basic things  
that we talked about, as

986  
00:54:45,550 --> 00:54:46,960  
to how are we going to make it?

987  
00:54:46,960 --> 00:54:48,610  
How are we going  
to get some water?

988  
00:54:48,610 --> 00:54:50,150  
Yeah, maybe rumors.

989  
00:54:50,150 --> 00:54:52,620  
Yeah, next stop we will  
get some bread, maybe.

990  
00:54:52,620 --> 00:54:56,320  
But that's what we talked about.

991  
00:54:56,320 --> 00:54:59,020  
And again, did any of the older  
men-- when I say the older men,

992  
00:54:59,020 --> 00:55:01,140  
I mean the ones in their 30s--

993  
00:55:01,140 --> 00:55:06,220  
try to be a support to  
you young teenagers?

994  
00:55:06,220 --> 00:55:07,140  
In some cases.

995  
00:55:07,140 --> 00:55:15,200

996  
00:55:15,200 --> 00:55:17,980  
Everybody had to take  
care of themselves.

997  
00:55:17,980 --> 00:55:21,640

998  
00:55:21,640 --> 00:55:26,250  
I can't stress that  
strongly enough.

999  
00:55:26,250 --> 00:55:35,460  
And I wouldn't-- you don't feel  
that if somebody didn't, that

1000  
00:55:35,460 --> 00:55:36,960  
that was anything bad.

1001  
00:55:36,960 --> 00:55:38,490  
It wasn't, believe me.

1002  
00:55:38,490 --> 00:55:41,220

1003  
00:55:41,220 --> 00:55:45,130  
Everybody was so very  
busy with themselves.

1004  
00:55:45,130 --> 00:55:48,210  
We all know that there  
were acts of heroism,

1005  
00:55:48,210 --> 00:55:54,300  
and acts of kindness,  
and acts of selflessness.

1006  
00:55:54,300 --> 00:55:57,580  
We all know that.

1007  
00:55:57,580 --> 00:55:58,620  
And that went on.

1008  
00:55:58,620 --> 00:56:02,930

1009  
00:56:02,930 --> 00:56:06,350  
I personally at that time  
did not experience it.

1010  
00:56:06,350 --> 00:56:09,520  
That's all I can  
tell you on that.

1011  
00:56:09,520 --> 00:56:13,720  
But obviously, there were.

1012  
00:56:13,720 --> 00:56:15,520  
Now you've arrived  
in Mauthausen.

1013  
00:56:15,520 --> 00:56:20,290  
What was your very first  
impression getting there?

1014  
00:56:20,290 --> 00:56:24,910  
We arrived at Mauthausen  
and it was winter.

1015  
00:56:24,910 --> 00:56:29,430

1016  
00:56:29,430 --> 00:56:33,110  
And it was getting dark.

1017  
00:56:33,110 --> 00:56:35,980

1018

00:56:35,980 --> 00:56:38,947

And again, they wanted  
us to go through a bath,

1019

00:56:38,947 --> 00:56:39,655

through a shower.

1020

00:56:39,655 --> 00:56:44,450

1021

00:56:44,450 --> 00:56:46,025

And it was-- night was falling.

1022

00:56:46,025 --> 00:56:48,920

1023

00:56:48,920 --> 00:56:55,100

And we were told to wait, to sit  
there outside, hundreds of us,

1024

00:56:55,100 --> 00:56:57,860

until daybreak.

1025

00:56:57,860 --> 00:56:59,090

We were exhausted.

1026

00:56:59,090 --> 00:57:01,130

We were tired.

1027

00:57:01,130 --> 00:57:03,320

And I remember  
people, older people,

1028

00:57:03,320 --> 00:57:05,960

the older guys were  
saying don't fall asleep.

1029

00:57:05,960 --> 00:57:08,930

Whatever you do,  
don't fall asleep.

1030

00:57:08,930 --> 00:57:13,560

Because it is so cold  
that if you fall asleep,

1031

00:57:13,560 --> 00:57:15,230

you may never get up.

1032

00:57:15,230 --> 00:57:17,690

It was just too cold.

1033

00:57:17,690 --> 00:57:21,170

And I remember the  
people saying it.

1034

00:57:21,170 --> 00:57:22,910

And I tried not to fall asleep.

1035

00:57:22,910 --> 00:57:25,610

But it was very hard.

1036

00:57:25,610 --> 00:57:30,140

And I think that some  
people that did fall asleep

1037

00:57:30,140 --> 00:57:31,280

didn't wake up.

1038

00:57:31,280 --> 00:57:33,404

They died.

1039

00:57:33,404 --> 00:57:36,900

It was very cold.

1040

00:57:36,900 --> 00:57:40,560

And then early in  
the morning, we

1041

00:57:40,560 --> 00:57:42,460

went through some bath, showers.

1042

00:57:42,460 --> 00:57:45,900

1043  
00:57:45,900 --> 00:57:52,920  
And after we took the showers,  
we went outside, naked, cold,

1044  
00:57:52,920 --> 00:57:56,170  
and then they gave us clothes.

1045  
00:57:56,170 --> 00:57:58,270  
Then they gave us clothes.

1046  
00:57:58,270 --> 00:58:03,480  
And then we were assigned  
to go to certain barracks.

1047  
00:58:03,480 --> 00:58:10,390  
But the arrival and the  
scene that I just described

1048  
00:58:10,390 --> 00:58:11,860  
stands out in my mind.

1049  
00:58:11,860 --> 00:58:15,700

1050  
00:58:15,700 --> 00:58:17,800  
It was a difficult situation.

1051  
00:58:17,800 --> 00:58:22,210  
Cold, and I remember people  
saying don't fall asleep,

1052  
00:58:22,210 --> 00:58:24,420  
because it's bad.

1053  
00:58:24,420 --> 00:58:26,800  
And we tried not to,  
but sometimes you can't.

1054  
00:58:26,800 --> 00:58:27,820  
I mean, you're so weak.

1055

00:58:27,820 --> 00:58:29,170

You're going to fall asleep.

1056

00:58:29,170 --> 00:58:30,830

What can you do?

1057

00:58:30,830 --> 00:58:33,580

And some fell asleep and they  
were OK, but some fell asleep

1058

00:58:33,580 --> 00:58:36,310

and they were not.

1059

00:58:36,310 --> 00:58:38,950

So that's what I remember.

1060

00:58:38,950 --> 00:58:40,550

Did it look like Auschwitz?

1061

00:58:40,550 --> 00:58:41,050

No.

1062

00:58:41,050 --> 00:58:41,800

Did it remind you?

1063

00:58:41,800 --> 00:58:43,230

How is it different?

1064

00:58:43,230 --> 00:58:44,550

Very different.

1065

00:58:44,550 --> 00:58:48,970

Barracks, the  
landscape, everything.

1066

00:58:48,970 --> 00:58:50,770

It looked different.

1067

00:58:50,770 --> 00:58:53,650

In what way?

1068

00:58:53,650 --> 00:58:56,020

I think that in

Mauthausen in the barracks

1069

00:58:56,020 --> 00:59:01,540

that I was in were wooden huts.

1070

00:59:01,540 --> 00:59:03,910

They were more primitive

than even Auschwitz.

1071

00:59:03,910 --> 00:59:10,140

1072

00:59:10,140 --> 00:59:14,340

The toilet facilities

were extremely primitive.

1073

00:59:14,340 --> 00:59:16,170

They also had a barracks

like I described

1074

00:59:16,170 --> 00:59:21,030

in Auschwitz and Birkenau that

had one long barrack with seats

1075

00:59:21,030 --> 00:59:23,430

and holes and that was it.

1076

00:59:23,430 --> 00:59:28,770

And again, we were only

allowed to go at certain times.

1077

00:59:28,770 --> 00:59:31,005

And, you know, pretty soon

you discipline yourself.

1078

00:59:31,005 --> 00:59:34,699

1079

00:59:34,699 --> 00:59:40,170

And we were packed in very

tight in the barracks.

1080  
00:59:40,170 --> 00:59:43,450

1081  
00:59:43,450 --> 00:59:46,190  
And I remember, again, that  
we were outside the barracks,

1082  
00:59:46,190 --> 00:59:48,110  
that we were huddled together.

1083  
00:59:48,110 --> 00:59:54,180  
Many of us lean against  
each other to keep warm.

1084  
00:59:54,180 --> 00:59:56,710  
Of course, spring was  
coming, March, April.

1085  
00:59:56,710 --> 00:59:59,700  
So the weather was  
getting better.

1086  
00:59:59,700 --> 01:00:04,230  
But in January,  
February it was cold.

1087  
01:00:04,230 --> 01:00:07,050  
And in March it's very cold.

1088  
01:00:07,050 --> 01:00:10,770  
So I remember these scenes.

1089  
01:00:10,770 --> 01:00:13,090  
But Mauthausen looked  
very different.

1090  
01:00:13,090 --> 01:00:16,800  
And the way it looked different  
is the way it was built.

1091

01:00:16,800 --> 01:00:18,960  
I think it was more primitive.

1092  
01:00:18,960 --> 01:00:24,060  
I think it was terrible.

1093  
01:00:24,060 --> 01:00:27,810  
It was as bad in every  
respect, probably as Auschwitz.

1094  
01:00:27,810 --> 01:00:31,110  
It's not quite as notorious.

1095  
01:00:31,110 --> 01:00:32,760  
You know, not quite  
as well known,

1096  
01:00:32,760 --> 01:00:34,290  
although Mauthausen  
is well known.

1097  
01:00:34,290 --> 01:00:37,090

1098  
01:00:37,090 --> 01:00:39,540  
It was a bad camp to be in.

1099  
01:00:39,540 --> 01:00:42,980  
Many, many, many  
thousands died there.

1100  
01:00:42,980 --> 01:00:47,990  
I mean, by the tens of  
thousands died in Mauthausen.

1101  
01:00:47,990 --> 01:00:49,660  
They couldn't make it.

1102  
01:00:49,660 --> 01:00:51,420  
I think they had a  
crematorium there.

1103

01:00:51,420 --> 01:00:53,190  
I don't know for sure.

1104  
01:00:53,190 --> 01:00:56,395  
Did you see the stone  
quarry at Mauthausen?

1105  
01:00:56,395 --> 01:01:00,200

1106  
01:01:00,200 --> 01:01:01,310  
I don't know.

1107  
01:01:01,310 --> 01:01:04,130  
I might have seen it  
and didn't realize it

1108  
01:01:04,130 --> 01:01:07,700  
that that was the stone quarry.

1109  
01:01:07,700 --> 01:01:09,590  
Yes, I've seen some quarries.

1110  
01:01:09,590 --> 01:01:11,060  
I've seen stones.

1111  
01:01:11,060 --> 01:01:12,360  
And I might have seen it.

1112  
01:01:12,360 --> 01:01:15,110  
But for some reason  
now, the stone quarry

1113  
01:01:15,110 --> 01:01:21,170  
became sort of a famous  
or infamous site.

1114  
01:01:21,170 --> 01:01:23,900  
And I might have seen it, but  
at the time that I saw it,

1115  
01:01:23,900 --> 01:01:29,790

I didn't realize that  
it was anything that

1116  
01:01:29,790 --> 01:01:32,970  
would become that well-known.

1117  
01:01:32,970 --> 01:01:35,720  
But yeah, there  
were quarries there.

1118  
01:01:35,720 --> 01:01:37,000