

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with David Bayer. Tape number 2, side A. OK.

And I was stationed in Sarafand. And one day I got called up to come to Tel Aviv. And I went to see the city. It looked beautiful. And I went around, met some friends, which I have a address to look for. And I didn't tell you what happened before. Should I go back?

Sure.

When I get off the ship in Haifa, I got off the ship, and they told me that you have two days to arrange your suitcases, your luggage, to put it away somewhere, whatever, you know somebody. And then you have to report to Tel Litvinsky. Because you join the army. I say, yes.

So I go to the gate. There was a guy, a sailor standing with a rifle. And I look at him. He looked at me. And then he jumped high, and he grabbed his head. He calls me, Meshuganah! Are you crazy? What are you doing here?

He recognized me from Fohrenwald. He was a sailor. And he says, I'm thinking how to get out of here, you're coming? He knew. He remembered me, I went to Panama from Fohrenwald. And he recognized.

He said, what are you doing here? He said, you're crazy. I want to get out. I'm trying to get out, and you're coming?

I started joking. And then I went to Tel Aviv, to [INAUDIBLE] and look for an address, a woman who my father and my grandfather in the whole Jewish congregation in my home town sent away to Palestine before the war. That woman I was going to look for.

She got married. She was a rabbi's daughter in my hometown. She got married with a local boy. And the community made the wedding, and they sent them away to Palestine. And since she knew me and I knew her as a kid, I used to pray in the synagogue. Because in Europe, they had synagogues. And also they had small congregations. And that's what we belonged to.

And so I was going to look for her. I had her address from somebody. So I looked at her address. I couldn't find her. I come to the written down address. There's nobody there. I was disappointed, and I take a bus and go back. On the bus-- on the bus I'm standing. Because all the seats are taken.

And there they have a habit, if a woman comes in, a man sits, a young man, he gets up and lets the woman sit down, like in Europe. Not like here. And I was already standing because I wouldn't let a woman stand and I'm sitting. so I was standing there holding my hands, and I say, look at that woman. I look at her. I look at her. And she looks at me.

And I said to her, "Touba?" What? She said, "yeah." She was annoyed, like I bother her. She doesn't know who I am. You know, and I start talking to her in Yiddish. And she just answers in Hebrew. Like, "why do you bother me? What do you want from me?"

So I said, "are you Touba [? Klemensberg? ?] Are you married to [? Mendal? ?] "Who are you?" In Hebrew, everything in Hebrew. So I said, "I'm David Bayer. I'm from Kozienice." I saw-- this woman I was looking for, and I saw her on the bus.

And she got really excited. She said, "oh, yeah." I showed her the address. She said, no I don't live there. I live in Dizengoff. I was not in Ben-Yehuda. It's the same number, but somebody gave me the wrong address. Ben-Yehuda. Address wasn't right. It was Dizengoff.

So she gave me. She said come to [INAUDIBLE]. I'm going right back. And that's what happened. I come back to her house in Dizengoff. And I all my luggage I left there. I told her what happened. I'm going to the army. You know, and I have nowhere to keep all the stuff. So she took it and put it in her closet.

She [INAUDIBLE]. But the thing is, coming back to my uncle-- oh, I didn't tell you about the uncle yet. OK. I'll come back to that. So she lived in Dizengoff. And I met her husband, and I met her son. And the husband also, because the son was born in Israel.

And then she has a brother, who ran away during the Second World War to Russia. And he came to Israel, which I met him, too. If he died over [? there. ?] And they were very happy to see me. So I got Landsmann. I got countrymen. I was glad that I found somebody.

They told me who was here, who came after the war, who lived here from before the war. And at the end, she told other people, so everybody found out that Manes Bayer's son came to Israel from Panama. He survived. You know, the whole-- all the friends, all the country people from my hometown knew already after a while.

All right, so going back to [INAUDIBLE] from the Negev I come to Tel Aviv. And I go around everywhere. I went to visit them, too. And then I would pass by Dizengoff or [INAUDIBLE]. Boulevard [INAUDIBLE].

Passed by. I was going on my way to the barracks, to sleep. It was late at night. And the barracks are where now the Hilton, the Sheraton, all the hotels near the ocean used to be barracks in 1948. Now it's beautiful, like Miami. So I stop at that kiosk, and then sit at the kiosk. It sells apple strudel, soda water, a kiosk with candy. Like a corner kiosk in a park.

You don't have it here, but in Europe and everywhere, they have-- like they have it on the mall. A kiosk is where they sell-- that man behind the counter takes care of everybody. And I went over to the counter, and I asked for a piece of apple strudel. I saw it. And I had a glass of soda water.

And then there was two benches outside, some lady sitting there talking. And one lady yells out to the man behind the counter, Mr. Bayer something. So I thought that maybe she calls me. She was talking to him.

His name was Bayer. So I said, "your name is Bayer?" He said, "yes." "My name is Bayer, too. Bayer, where you come from?" "From Panama." "Panama? Where were you born?" He said right away "Poland."

Started questioning me and questioning me. He said-- he got nervous. He said, "ladies, I'm closing up. I'm closing up." "What's your father's name?" "My father's name was Menachem Manes [PERSONAL NAME]." "What was your grandfather's name?" "My grandfather's name was Moshe [PERSONAL NAME]." "Oh my God." "Who do you remember from home?"

I said, "I don't know. I was young. I don't remember much, but my mother told me a story when I was a kid. And a cousin of hers-- a cousin of hers has traveled to Israel by motorcycle. His name was Elimelech." "So Uncle Elimelech?" "Yeah, he's here. He's here. He lives in Bnei Brak."

He came out. He checked my ears. They're the same with the family. And this and that. He starts talking. He said, "closing. Where are you going?" I said I'm going to sleep in the barracks. He said, "no, no, no. You come in my house. Come with [? me." ?]

He took me. He was [? limping ?] [INAUDIBLE]. He was my uncle, some kind of uncle. He was my grandfather's brother. My father's father's brother. My father would be-- he would be my father's uncle.

But the other one is also relatives, is closer. Because my mother and my father were cousins when they married. So my mother and my father were assigned before they were born to get married. I even [? heard ?] that before. But my father was not even born, and my mother wasn't even born. Yet they put them together. If you have a boy and a girl, they will marry.

So it was arranged before they were born.

Arranged.

A match was made.

That's what happened. So the other one was also family, cousins. I remember our mother told me that he was a cousin. So this is not finished yet. So he took me home. He told me his story. He said he was in the Russian Army, this uncle who I met. And he surrendered to the Germans. And they caught him, and put him in prison, prisoner of war. The First World War. The First World War.

And he stayed in Germany after the First World War. He married a German Jewish woman in Germany. He stayed till 1933. In 1933, he went to Palestine. So that's why he wound up in Israel.

Then he said tomorrow, I will take it to see my daughter. She lives-- she's married. She has a child. OK. I go to see her daughter-- his daughter. We come in the house. Her husband is the guy who was next to me in bed in the camp in the army, which I knew him the whole time. And I never knew that this is my cousin's husband. His name is Jakob [? Asia. ?] [? Asia. ?] I didn't know [? Asia. ?] You know, Bayer not [? Asia. ?] So I didn't know.

So he was saying, hey, what are you doing here? Coincidence. And then my uncle introduced me to other cousins, which I never knew. One is named after my grandfather. A big, big family. And then I was discharged from the army. And I wanted to stay in Israel and work.

So my uncle arranged for me to get a job in a telephone company in Tel Aviv. Jaffa. Jaffa Tel Aviv. One of the uncle-- the cousins is a big, big, big shot in the telephone company. And so he gave me a job. What kind of job do I want? Everything I want. So I got a job digging ditches to put in new telephone lines in the ground with Yemenite Jews, Black Jews from Yemen.

And also, all my ra-- all my countrymen already knew that I am in Israel and doing this. So they lived not far from the area, Tel Aviv Jaffa area. And through that woman from my hometown, so every day somebody comes to my job where I was digging ditches and feeling sorry for me. Oi vey. That one woman came. She knew me from home. She said, "Manes Bayer's son digging ditches here in Tel Aviv? That's why you come to Israel? Are you crazy?" Everybody brought me grapes, brought me sandwiches. They felt sorry for me. Everyone felt sorry for me.

And my uncle didn't want me to go to work neither. He said, [INAUDIBLE] you go back to Panama. You'll be-- whenever you want to come, you can come.

He didn't want you to work in Israel because--

He didn't. It's nothing now. There was unemployment, a big unemployment. Immigrants keep coming and coming. There was nothing. It was very hard, very bad. People stopped on the benches in the parks. It was very bad.

Now, what year is this? It's about--

'48, '49.

OK.

Not '49. End of '49. I was there one year. It was bad. It was bad. During the war, there was nothing. They're just starting.

And you were out of the army because it was just--

No, the start. We made independence, and we win the war. The Arabs lost.

So.

And the immigrants keep coming from all sides.

OK.

There's no work. There's no work. It's very hard.

OK.

So he said, you can come back whenever you want. Which was a mistake, I would say. I should have stayed.

And dug the ditches?

I quit the job and left.

You could have found another job.

No, I didn't look for nothing. I left Israel.

OK.

I went back to Panama by ship. I went to New York.

Now, why did you go back to Panama? Because you had other contacts.

Because I had nowhere else to go. I had a passport, Panamanian passport, Panamanian [INAUDIBLE].

Was there anywhere else that you would like to have gone?

United States.

But you couldn't get a visa?

I came here to New York. So what happened--

Later.

When I quit Israel, I said goodbye to everybody. I took a ship, a ship called Neptunia. I forget the ship name. Neptunia? [INAUDIBLE] Neptunia. [INAUDIBLE] I walk around the ship, and look at the railing, the railing. I give a look. David Bayer scratched up on the railing with a knife. Neptunia. My name? I was not on that ship.

I start to investigate. I was on that ship. The ship was named [? Joann David. ?] [? Joann David. ?] The ship left Holland to Curacao when I went from Europe to Panama. On the same ship. They changed the name to Neptunia.

I sailed from Haifa to New York on that ship. When I came to New York, I had a transit visa, a transit to go through the United States to Panama. When I came to New York, I was locked up in Ellis Island.

What was that like?

They locked me up on Ellis Island because the guy, the inspector looked at me and said, I don't trust you. You're going to jump ship. Which he was right. I wasn't planning to go nowhere. I wasn't planning to go to Panama. I planned to sneak into York with a transit visa and stay. He locked me up in Ellis Island. And I had to send a telegram or a telephone number-- I don't remember what it was-- to my friend here in Washington.

My friend Sam Spiegel lives here in Washington, the one who we were together, in Europe together. He went here.

When I went to Panama, he went to the United States and lived in Washington. They got married in Germany, but they live here. And he had to put in a bond \$500 to let me out. So I could come to visit him in Washington. That's what I did.

And they give me one month to stay. And then I had to go to Panama. I stayed more than one month. And I tried to stay, but they sent me a telegram about everything, about vacation. We're going to lock you up if you don't go out on this and this day. We're going to pull you. You'll be here illegal. And I had to leave. So I left for Panama. And I stayed there until 1955 in Panama.

And what did you do when you were there?

In Panama, I lived in [INAUDIBLE] eight years. I lived in Panama City. I worked for a man named Carlos [? Renet, ?] also in the leather shoe business supply. That was very good. Not very good. I made a living, and I had an apartment, and a single life. You know.

Have a good time?

Very good time.

Mm-hmm.

And I had cars. A different life. And in 1955, I came here.

Now, if you were having a good time and you had a good life, why did you want to leave Panama?

I wanted-- I wouldn't get involved with non-Jewish girls. I wanted to marry somebody else, and I wanted to leave my name Jewish.

You did want to marry a Jewish girl?

Yeah, that's what I wanted.

And there were so few-- too few Jews?

In Panama, there were not. And I was involved with too many other Christian girls, and they wanted to get married and all that stuff, and I didn't.

And what about your religious life at that point?

It changed. I still believe in God.

And when did that start to happen?

After Israel.

In Israel.

And after the war, I still have-- I still have a little bit of doubt. I'm not-- I'm not so religious like I used to be. I only go to the synagogue twice a year. Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah. That's all. Sometimes. But--

In Israel, can you say what happened that you started to believe again?

I was born in it. When my grandfather and my father were so religious that God was everywhere. And I couldn't just let it go, you know?

So it was just a part of you.

It was a little bit disappointment in the beginning, but-- and then there's always-- I always had doubt. Always maybe, maybe there's something. Why did I survive? You know, maybe there's a reason. Why did I survive? Why me? Why not my father? Why not brother, my sisters? My mother? She was 40 years old, not even 40.

And you yourself struggled a lot to survive.

Oh, yeah. I struggled.

What kept you going?

The will live is all. Not because-- I didn't want to give in. I didn't want-- I don't give in. I don't give in nothing. I never give in. I don't give in now either. I don't-- I don't-- if I don't agree with something, I keep on disagreeing. I don't-- I'm not wishy-washy.

OK.

If I don't like something or somebody, I tell them. I say, I don't like you. The truth. I'm working with a German young man in the museum. German, German, German. And I like him. But I still tell him that I don't like Germans. Which everybody said, shh.

What is a German German man doing working in the museum?

He is-- he is a volunteer. The government pays him.

Which government?

The German government pays him to come here to work. He chooses to work in the Museum instead to go to the army.

Oh, I see. So it's a temporary kind of thing.

So he chose this.

Instead of the army. OK.

And there was one two years ago in the Museum. His father was an SS-man. he probably killed a lot of Jews. And I told him. I said, I don't like the Germans. And this German boy is willing to do anything for me. He wanted to write German paper for me. Everything he wanted to do for me. And I still tell him the truth. I can't be a hypocrite.

Mm-hmm.

I like him, but he probably a nice guy. I don't know how to-- and still I have my doubts in my mind. So why do I do that? Why do I-- why don't I treat him-- you know, I was talking about Austria. And he was there. So I said, I felt guilty that I said it, but I had to say it. But the Austrian is the same as the Germans. And he puts his head down.

Let's go back to, you were leaving Panama because you wanted to marry a Jewish woman, and there were just not much--

It was not the only reason. This was a reason why I came here, because I could have gotten involved with a Christian woman here, too. But I wanted to marry Jewish because I wanted to have Jewish kids and Jewish grandchildren.

So you were getting ready to settle down. And you were how-- 55, you would have been about 33?

Mm-hmm.

And so how did you get to the United States?

I came from Panama to Miami.

Yeah.

Miami, I took a bus, which was a mistake to Washington, because a friend of mine lives here. And then I went to visit New York, the other friend. That's how I do it. I have friends. I have a lot of friends. Everywhere I go, everywhere I go, not only in this country, all over the world there's people from my hometown, which we were friends during the war, before the war.

Are most of your friends from your hometown or survivors?

No, not most of them but the majority.

Mm-hmm.

Your closest friends, would you say, would be from your hometown?

Yeah. All my friends are from my-- which I have a lot of friends here, too, which are not from my hometown, but I can count on my people from my hometown. They are sincere, and we know each other from home. My parents-- my parents and their partners were friends.

Now, how did you meet your wife?

I went to visit a friend of mine in New York, which still friends with him. I still talk to them every week on the phone. And he lived in the same city that my wife lived, and she knew my wife, so they introduced me to her. That's it.

Love at first sight?

No, I met her a few times.

Yeah.

[INAUDIBLE].

And is your wife American born?

American.

American born.

Born, yeah.

Jewish?

Yeah.

So with all of the people you knew from Europe, you married an American born woman. From all of the people you knew from Europe, you married in America born woman.

American, yeah.

Yeah. Why do you think that was?

I don't know. My wife asked me the same question.

[CHUCKLES]

I don't know. Fell in love. That's all. It was time to get married.

And you have two children.

Yeah.

And what was that like for you to have children born?

This was the only thing in my life, the children. If not for the children, I wouldn't be worth nothing. I don't count. I know nothing. I wasn't supposed to survive. I'm not supposed to be here.

So you were not supposed to--

I'm supposed to be here.

Why do you say that?

I was destined to die. I was not-- why did I survive?

Well, how do you explain that to yourself?

I don't know. I have no idea. I cannot explain it. This is the question I keep asking all my life. Why me? What did I do so big, so good that I should-- not my father, which was a-- my father was a prophet. My father was a man who never harmed a fly. Or my mother. That's all she did is pray. Every time you'd see her, she prayed. My mother had no hair. She cut her hair off. She wore a wig just for the religion, for that purpose, that no men should look at her, only her husband.

So it's hard to make sense of it all.

I don't understand it. So all these years, a free-- free-- free ride. I got a free ride. 50 some years, I don't know why I survived.

Are you active in survivor groups at all?

Yeah, very active.

What groups are you in?

Holocaust Survivors and Friends, Washington Holocaust Survivors and Friends, [INAUDIBLE] Washington. I'm their mailman.

What does that mean?

I mail all the flyers every month. We have 247 members. Survivors and friends. we have more friends than survivors.

And what does that mean, friends?

Friends is people like you or anybody else who wants to join and give us a donation or give us a-- and be a member, and belong to us and to the organization. They come to meetings and so on.

And the organization is important to you.

Sure, it's important. It's very important. We get together. For instance, we're going to go the 23rd for the memorial service in the rotunda, the Capitol rotunda, for the memorial service. Every once a year, we do that. We all go and meet for the independence day of Israel. And we meet for memorial services.

You know, the money, we donated the money. We get money in donations. We donate and we give it away. We don't keep nothing. Every year, from about \$10,000, we give it away. We give it to Red Cross. We give it to other organizations that can help people.

That's all we can do. And we're getting older. And we're dying away. Everyday-- in that article he writes about how many people are dying away everyday.

The article that's in The Post today about the Shoah Foundation?

Right. And--

So you're a volunteer at the Museum.

In the Museum. I've been working in the Museum since it opened up. I work in the registry.

Now, when the Museum opened, did you begin working at the registry then?

Right away.

Right away. And why did you volunteer to work at the Museum?

Well, I'm retired. I don't do nothing anymore. And you see, I work because it's very interesting. I find a lot of interesting-- a lot of people are coming there to look for, search for any kind of relatives and friends. There was a case, one case which I was working. A woman in New York wrote a letter to the registry. And she's looking for a certain man who was her boyfriend before the First World War in Bialystock, Poland.

She and her family emigrated to the United States. The boyfriend was left in Poland, in Bialystok. She promised that they're going to get married. They're going to get together. Or he will come to the United States or something. Meantime, she got married in New York with somebody else. She had children, the children got married. Her husband died. She was left alone.

When she was left alone, she wrote a letter to the Museum to ask about that boyfriend she left in Europe before the First World War. OK. Sarah, my boss, gave me the assignment. Said, Dave, you look for it. Guess what. I find him. I find them in Argentina, in Buenos Aires. I look for him in all kind of books. I look for him in all kind of memorial books.

I picked up the telephone, and I called Argentina, Buenos Aires. I telephoned in Spanish, which I speak Spanish. And I asked for him. And there was an old man. He spoke Yiddish and Spanish with me on the phone. He realized that I speak Yiddish. He says, yeah, I speak Yiddish. So And he said, he's here. He asked me about how old he was. 72, 73. He said, no, he's 79.

And he gave me his address and telephone number, and we got them together. I don't know whatever happened. That's what I like to do.

So that was a success story.

That's what I did. And a lot of them are like this. I have a lot of stories like this. There's so many people. I was-- there was-- I was sitting there working. And I learned how to punch a computer, which I never knew. And I translate a lot in Polish, from Polish to English. Not a lot. Some of them. And in Yiddish. Yiddish is a lot of documentation and books and everything else, which I managed very good. Yiddish, I like Yiddish.

And a lot of people are coming in with letters written from Russia in the 18th century. And they're coming in, all documents. And I translate them, and tell them what it is. So this is very interesting. And also, there's so many things that I do.

Let's turn over the tape. And then we can talk about that. This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with David Bayer. This is tape number two, side B. Could you talk about when the Museum opened, why you decided to volunteer?

Well, the Museum was looking for volunteers. And there was a young lady named Sarah who worked in the Museum. She asked our organization for volunteers. And I met Sarah, and I liked her very much. She's not Jewish. And she works in the Museum. And she is the best you ever have there.

Sarah Ogilvie is her name. So I decided to work for her. And I told them that if I have to work for somebody else, I don't want to work. And so far worked for her five years.

You say that you work in the registry. Was Sara Ogilvie in the registry?

Yeah, right. And she is my boss. And she is excellent.

And how often do you go to the Museum?

Once a week, sometimes twice.

And the reason you are in the registry is because you wanted to work for Sarah?

Yeah, and I like it. And I don't want to go nowhere else. And the work is interesting. And the guys and the girls, whoever worked there are good, nice, nice people. No conflict, no nothing. We get along very well. And nobody bosses you around. They are all friendly and nice. Nice group.

All of them. They way I work, especially I keep it a lot with them. And we talked a lot about all things. And there's a man there, Pete. He's a volunteer, a German Jewish guy. Very intelligent. He knows everything. And that's the way people I like. I like people who knows everything, have something to learn from them. And I'm working now on a list of people who got killed from the area called Zamosc in Poland.

And I'm putting it in the computer now. Very interesting names. Sometimes I hit a name from my hometown. People from my town who went away to Zamosc and died around this area. I used to work the list of French Jews. I see a lot of things, things like that. Also the names, I'm an expert in names. It's my hobby. For instance, how do you write Polish names in Polish?

Everything is written in Polish and in German. And in English sounds differently, a lot of names. So I put them together the way it's supposed to be. Like, for example, you know, like Bayer. You could write B-A-Y-J-I, it will still sound Bayer. In English, you would have said "bay-jah," isn't it? A J. Actually, my name was "bay-jah."

In Poland?

In Poland, my name was-- is Bajer in Polish.

B-A-J-E-R.

Yeah, Bajer. It is Bajer. In Polish.

So it's pronounced Bayer.

Yeah.

In Polish. But it's spelled B-A-J-E-R.

Yeah, but here, this would be "bay-jer."

Mm-hmm. So you changed--

I didn't-- I didn't want to change the sound.

So you changed the letter to keep the sound the same.

Same.

And that's interesting.

And in Spanish, this will be "beh-khar."

So your name at birth was David Bajer, spelled B-A-J-E-R.

Actually, it's-- but the sound. The writing is different in every language, you see? You have to-- in Spanish, this would be "bay-jer."

Mm-hmm. Back to the Museum. Through your work in the registry, did you look for more people that you hadn't found yet?

I did look for a lot of them. I find them, a lot of them, too.

You did find them?

Oh, yeah. There was a man who researched books. He researched. He wanted to write a book or something about his family. He used to come every week. Every Wednesday, he used to come to see me. And he looked for all kind of documents. Like a family tree he wanted to make. And he looked in the Jewish books, because a lot of Jewish books I had to translate for him, and read to him, and tell him what it is.

Also, there was a woman came up to the Museum, and looked for me. She waited for me. Why? Because she saw my name in a book. A book from Kozenice. I'll show it to you.

I'll turn that tape off while he's looking for the book. Back with the book.

She went into a library somewhere, and she saw that book, a book like this.

This is the Memorial Book of Kozenice.

Kozenice. And she looked in that book and she saw my name. Also, she saw a cousin of hers, a relative, a picture of him and a name. And she wanted me-- she came up to the Museum. And the Museum has a book like this, too. And she wanted me to tell her about that cousin.

His name was Zygmunt Halputer. And he had a store. And he was my father's age. He had pharmacy store in Kozenice. And she told me stories about him. And she wanted to find out more, and more, and more. I told her whatever I knew

about him, that he was such a good man, that he doing the occupation. He was a so-called collaborator. And he that's why he survived.

And his whole family disappeared in the camps. His wife was a nice woman. And he has a son, a nice. Guy. But the father was no good for nothing. He killed a man in Germany after the war, accidentally in a car accident. Also in a DP camp in Landsberg.

And so she was searching the family here in that book. You could find out so many things.

So you learned about the book from this woman, or you knew about the book?

I knew about it. No, I knew about it. I donated the money to make that book.

Ah.

This is memorial books from people who survived the war. They made the book. All the survivors from Kozienice contribute to make that book, to not to forget our people. That's why we call it memorial book. And there's about 500 books in the Holocaust Museum from a different kind of little towns. Majority is Yiddish and Hebrew, but we had it in Hebrew and Yiddish, but we made it now in English.

And it's not just American survivors, survivors who are in America, who contributed?

No, this is from all over the world-- Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Australia, from everywhere here, here.

That's a very impressive thing.

And there's pictures, where anybody has left after the war. I didn't have any, so I couldn't give any pictures. I came out naked. I had nothing, These are twins, two friends of mine. One is still alive.

But now you have the pictures that other people were able to save in the book.

Yeah, there's people-- there's some of mine too, but I am showing it here. Oh, that's me here. I'll show you that.

So this is a picture of you in the memorial book. And who is this with you?

This is not long ago.

Yeah.

Maybe 10, 15 years ago.

At the monument in New York. What is the monument?

It's a cement-- a monument-- a memorial monument here. All these names written up there.

OK. And who are the other people in the picture?

Berneman. He died. [INAUDIBLE] would be alive. They're friends of mine. And Sam Spiegel, this is a friend of mine who lives over here.

Yeah, you mentioned him several times.

This is me. And then there's my wife somewhere here, too. No, she's not. She's supposed to be here. I don't know. This is a memorial in the cemetery. The New Jersey cemetery.

Yeah. OK, well, thank you for showing me that. Let's get back to Museum. Is there anything else about the Museum that you would like to say?

The Museum? What should I tell you about the Museum? The Museum is the only best institution in the world. If not for the Museum, a lot of people would not have ever known anything what happened, especially the kids. We have to show the kids, the whole world how it is.

Some people never knew that happened, something like this. And a lot of people don't want to know. It's too horrible, horrible to know. That's why a lot of my friend survivors didn't want their kids to know what they went through.

And what about you? When did you tell your children? How old were they?

From the beginning. My boy, my daughter, they knew right away, maybe were seven, eight years old.

And did you sit her down and tell her, or did it just gradually came out--

Gradually, gradually, gradually.

--with various things? And what was-- did she have any reactions to it that you want to talk about?

They did have. My son is very bitter because of what happened to me and to my family. My daughter doesn't show it. She knows about it. She tells other people about me and things like this.

So she talks about it.

Yeah, she talks about it to her friends, at the synagogue, to her job. And my grandson-- my grandson is going to be 13-years-old. He knows about the Holocaust a lot. He wants me to go to his school to speak to the children next month. He told me yesterday on the phone. He said, I want you to go to-- I will talk to my teacher. I should go to talk to the children.

Are you going to do that?

Yeah, I go.

Have you talked to school groups before?

Yeah.

And what is that like for you, to talk to children about it?

I get very upset thinking about my sister, my brother. My sister was 8-years-old.

So it reminds you of them.

Yes. A lot of times I get very uptight-- upset. Very upset. I have a lot of nightmares sometimes.

You do?

A lot of-- I dream all the time about it. All the time. Never goes away. Especially at night. All the time.

And during the day, it's on your mind a lot?

Yeah. Anytime we come together, the survivors, we talk about it. Every time we talk about it. Yesterday, I talked about

it. Always talking about fighting back. This is my-- this was my-- I did fight back once. Didn't help.

I didn't understand you.

I didn't tell you about this. It must be the tape. I was once-- I escaped once from Pionki. I didn't escaped from a munition factory in Pionki.

Yeah.

Me and a friend of mine. And there was a Pole who was working in the field. And he wanted to catch us and give us over to the Germans for 10 liters of vodka. And he was cutting wheat. And he swung at us with the-- but lucky that friend of mine, he was bigger and taller than he is. And he grabbed him. And I think he cut him, too. I don't remember.

I didn't see it. He made me run away. He made me run. And he said, you run, and I will take care of him. I don't know what he did to him. Either he cut him, or he cut himself. I don't know. I ran back to the camp. Didn't have nowhere to go. You didn't have where to go.

Because a lot of people in this country ask, why didn't you resist? Why didn't you run away?

Who asks you that?

Oh, yeah. A lot of Americans. A lot of American people ask this. You know, American Jew, even the Israelis ask the same question. Do you know, when I came to Israel I put a Band-Aid on my tattoo. I didn't want them to know that I was in a concentration camp.

You didn't want them to ask.

I kept it to Panama. That's it. I didn't tell them no stories. Because they looked down on the survivors, because we didn't do nothing to fight.

So they gave you a hard time, even in Israel.

In Israel, the survivors didn't have a good life at the beginning. But they showed them later on, when they fight with the Arabs. Most of them was survivors. They came from Cyprus and from Germany, from Europe, and they fight. And a lot of them died. A lot of them died.

So how shall we conclude this interview? What would you like to wind up with?

What can I say? This is-- the only thing is that I'm glad that I live in this country. Because this is the most democratic country in the world. There's no [? country ?] like this nowhere. Maybe too much democratic. But this is the country to be.

But still this could happen everywhere. This could happen-- it's happening in our times somewhere else, but it's happening. Maybe not such a big horror like the Holocaust, but smaller Holocaust. And we allow it, it will be a bigger one.

If we allow Israel to go under, there will be another Holocaust in Israel. The Arabs will slaughter the women, the children, and everybody else, and throw them in the ocean. And the world will stand still. Come too late. Come too late. You all come too late.

When I was in Jaworzno, I was praying for aeroplanes planes flying over, English and Americans. And we prayed, please let them drop the bomb over here with us, with them together. Nothing happened. They went.

Then all of a sudden, one plane made a U-turn. And he flew that big airplane, the bombardier plane, and dropped one

bomb, maybe a 500-pound or maybe more. And guess what. It fell right in the kitchen, right in the [? compass, ?] in the middle. It Killed. Maybe 30, 40 people of prisoners and Germans. One plane.

They could have-- he could have smack up the whole camp. He could have smack up all the railroad tracks. The railroad tracks to Auschwitz, to Birkenau, to Jaworzno, to Blechhammer, to Bergen-Belsen, to Gleiwitz, to all the cities. The railroad, the communication. They had the best communication in Europe.

In Europe-- here they have railroads, nice railroad. But over there, the railroad tracks is like a net, the whole country. Here we have planes. Over there, they have trains. The trains. And also here we have good roads. And there is trains. That's all, the most important. The most important is trains. Europe is millions of trains.

That's why the Germans had it so easy. Took 80 wagons. 80 wagons to take my hometown to Treblinka. One whole city in 80 wagons to liquidate. Stuffed 100 people in a wagon. You know what it means, 100 people in a wagon? Sardines. We couldn't-- you cannot turn. You cannot sit down. You have to stand.

There's no way to sit down. You're left on your feet. It's like you're hanging one on top of the other. And then the floors are full of a disinfective. And it chokes you. You could describe it, describe it, describe it 100,000 times, but if you feel it, you could--

You don't feel it on your own flesh and blood, on your own body, you cannot imagine how this was. It's like somebody said, I have a pain in my leg. A pain in the leg. But when the person who had the pain, he is the one who knows exactly how the pain is.

So another person can't ever understand.

You only know your own pain. You cannot experience someone else's pain. Impossible.

Well, you've been very generous to try and help understand a little better.

There's a saying. The Hebrew people say, no matter how much-- no matter how much pens you have, no matter how much-- all the water will be ink, and all the woods will be pens, and all the sky will be parchment, you cannot write up everything. You don't have enough. It's not enough. Not enough trees in the woods as pens. There's no end to it. There's going to be a million years stories.

I can't forgive. I can't forgive the Germans. I can't forgive the Poles. I can't forgive other people. I cannot forgive one man in my hometown, this Moshe Bronshtein. He put my two friends to death. He give them over to the Germans, because they had typhus, and they shot them.

My best friends. We were childhood friends from babies. Who were at school together. We went to cheder together. We went fishing together. We went riding together. We went mischieving together. We went everything together. And he was [INAUDIBLE].

He turned them over to the Germans, and the Germans shot them because the two boys had typhus. So the man I cannot forgive. He got killed in Auschwitz. His two sisters live in Israel. I saw them, but I never said nothing to them. No hello, no nothing. I just saw them. They come to a gathering [INAUDIBLE].

Her mother-- his mother used to say, we shouldn't pray for another king. We shouldn't pray for another king. But Hitler was taking over Poland. We shouldn't pray for another one, a better one, but somebody else. He's here, let him be here. We shouldn't pray for another king.

The Jews always prayed. Because she had it good. She had wood in the house for the fire. She had food because her husband-- her son was working with the Germans. So we shouldn't pray for another king. That's what she said.

And she was an old lady, and I was a youngster. I never forget it.

You heard her say it?

Yeah.

Yeah. Well, there's a lot-- a lot you remember.

I remember thousands of things. I remember names. I remember-- Ah, what I remember. In my tape, what you saw--

Yeah, the Shoah tape.

--is not even 1% what I remember.

Sure, sure.

Not even 1%.

Sure. Is there anything else that you would like to say here before we stop?

I don't know. You ask me. Tell me about you have in mind.

Well, you've already--

What you want me to tell you.

You've already told us a whole lot.

Well, maybe you don't want to have to ask me. Just tell me.

No, I think I've asked everything that I had in mind to ask you. And you've also told us quite a bit more than that.

And also I am not such a good in forgiving people.

Mm-hmm.

I cannot forgive. But that's what these rabbis are telling me. They're asking me. They're talking about it. And it's the whole world should forgive. But I can't do it.

Mm-hmm.

I can't. I don't know how. I would be a hypocrite if I do it. Can't forgive.

Well, shall we stop here?

I will die soon. How many years do you think? Three years, four years? All of the survivors are going to be gone in a short time. Because we're getting a list in the Museum. My department, where I work. And I just find one guy who comes to mind, died in New York. [? He ?] was my [? age. ?] 75-years-old.

[? Fine ?] young man. We were in camp together, everywhere together. All of a sudden, I didn't even know. I didn't even [INAUDIBLE]. I got the paper [? who died. ?] I'm getting the paper. [? I gave him a look, ?] he died. I couldn't believe it. I had to call New York to find out for sure.

More sadness.

Hmm?

More sadness.

Yeah.

Yeah. And his wife is a-- [INAUDIBLE] I called her. And then was a young man, who I thought he was dead. I'm sitting in the Museum, and he comes up to the registry, he and his wife. And I'm with another woman who works in the Museum, to check on some papers.

So in the registry, we have a register form. Enlarged frame, my name, the picture of mine for a Sample. Everybody should know what [INAUDIBLE]. Benjamin [? Mead ?] is one. I'm the other one. Two more hanging on the wall with frame, very nice picture.

And people come and they look in and see. So the guy comes up there. And we tell him to take my picture and my name. So he says, who is-- where is he? So we told him, [? David is ?] downstairs for lunch. So he starts shaking. Sit down. And I said, this is my friend. We grew up together in my hometown. His name is [? Langer. ?] His name is [? Langer, ?] that boy.

He lives in St. Louis. I didn't know he was alive. He came to St. Louis with his wife to Washington. He was in Missouri. And he saw my picture. I walked in, he jumped. I mean, I couldn't hold him. He was so-- he was a little bit sick, too. I think he is paralyzed or a stroke or something.

So we were-- his father was a matchmaker. He was a block away from us. And we went to school together. We went to cheder together. He saw this picture here. He's a father and two sons. I didn't know. I didn't even know he was alive. I thought he was dead.

So everybody else was taking pictures over there, watching us, how we're embracing, how we-- I said, thank God, I thought he was dead. And he thought I was dead.

Yeah. And then there was one guy who I met in Miami. Mantelmacher, lives in upstate New York. He said, [INAUDIBLE]. That's what they call me, a [INAUDIBLE]. In Polish, my name is [INAUDIBLE]. [INAUDIBLE] I can't believe that you are alive. But he saw me with my burned hand going on the transport to Auschwitz from Pionki. He said, nobody-- the Germans don't keep a person like this alive. They throw right away in the oven. And I survived.

Yeah, that's a good story. Well, let's stop here.

OK.

Thank you very much for giving your testimony.

And I hope I had better stories to tell.

[CHUCKLES]