

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection with Nesse Godin. This is tape two side A. You said you were able to work when you came to this country. What kind of work did you do?

I was lucky enough for some kind woman to take me in. She had a dress making and alteration place. And she took me in. And I really didn't know how to sew. But eventually, after a year, I became her manager for business and I managed the business for 26 years right across from Adas Israel It was called King Needlework Services. And I was there managing her business until she sold the business.

And my husband also-- we both didn't have any professions, and he also very little education. English was even harder for him. My cousins found a job for him to carry crates of glass because they had a friend who owned a glass company.

And some salesman there encouraged my husband to join the union and to learn the trade. So my husband was a glazier putting in not houses glass but the big buildings revolving doors that all goes into that part of the building trade. And he was with the union for 35 years. So we both worked, how do you say, manually. [LAUGHS]

What happened to your brothers after the war?

One of my brothers was liberated from Dachau, and we very united with him in Feldafing. Now, when my mom said that we should go to America and to-- she wanted to be with her sister, my brother stood there with tears in his eyes and told my mom that he could not do that. He has to go to Israel.

And he went to Israel in 1949, and he has been living in the city of Herzliya. He was the city manager for many years. He was one that was involved in the Zionist underground in the ghetto. And then after liberation in the camp he was involved in the displaced persons camp. He worked with the Bricha. So he wound up and lives in Israel. He thanks god he's still alive. He has two children.

My younger brother who's older than me five years but we call him the younger brother because he's the next in line, he- in my testimony there is a young Lithuanian friend helped him to survive. But he was liberated under the Communists. Could never get out.

Eventually he was accused of being a Zionist, sent to Siberia. He was one of the refuseniks. And because of what we did for Russian Jewry he was let go and he came to Israel 20 years ago. He worked in Israel as a director of an old age home. Two of his children married Americans from Baltimore. And now that he retired he came to live in Baltimore. He lives in Baltimore.

Do you feel as a survivor that you really are two different persons? One person on the outside to others and a different person on the inside?

You see, Gail, this is something that nobody ever asked me before. But I feel that way. There is me and the one that remembers. In my computer I write my memoirs, and that's what I call it. Me and my memories. [SPEAKING HEBREW] in Hebrew.

I am like two people. If I wouldn't be like two people, I don't think I could do what I'm doing. I don't think I could go out and speak about Holocaust and then go to a restaurant and eat. I couldn't go to the Holocaust Museum and see there and do what I'm doing and continue another life.

So some people may not realize, but most of us, the ones that survive the camps or in hiding-- I'm not talking-- I don't minimize the pain of survivors that came just before the war and came with their families. They had pain. They left their homes. They left some family. But we were the ones that were during the years of the Holocaust there.

Whether we admit it or not, there is two of us. Otherwise we couldn't live day by day. That one that live the normal life has to cope with the person that remembers. The person that remembers has to push the one that lived a normal life to do this obligation, that promise.

And I am that way. I know. I know. And people-- like a few people say to me see, you're so different now. You dressed up. You look so nice. And I think to myself, yes, there is two of me.

You were very young when you went through this experience. Was that a help or was that a hindrance? If you had been older-- a little older, do you think that would have made a difference? Or were you just as aware of the dangers even though you were so young.

You see I was young, but not that young. I was 13. At 13 you are aware. You know what's going on. But I'm sure many people have told you children were aware. Children of two knew how to hide of the sudden-- of the Nazis, going let me hide under the bed. Let me hide there.

When danger comes you know, somehow there is something-- I always say it's in your brain that prepares you for that danger, for something that's happening, to know to escape, to know to hide, to know to cope with certain situations. But I was 13, and I think-- I always say too, I must have been the right age at the right time.

If I would have been 13 when they would have brought me to Stutthof, I would have been dead. But I was 16. So there were some age that, sure, it maybe would have been easier if I would have been just two years older. I would have been more adult to begin with. Or three years older. I would right away have a job. I would right away have that certificate to go into the ghetto. So it was destiny. That's it.

What were your feelings with the Eichmann Trial in Israel?

My feelings about the Eichmann Trial was that finally at least one man is getting what he should get by trial, by the law of the land. You know, I always say I wouldn't drive a Nazi by the neck and choking because I wouldn't be any better than him. But I think if somebody commits a crime, they should be punished by the law of the land wherever they are.

If the law of the land requires capital punishment, they should be killed. If it requires sitting in jail, they should sit in jail. But they shouldn't go around free. Somebody said to me one day, don't you think it's time to leave them alone? They're so old. And I said-- you know, in a presentation. I said, my father didn't get to be 48. He was killed when he was 47.

You did allude to this earlier about when you first came to the United States and you went to sit in the back of the bus and the Black people were sitting there by law. Because of what you went through I'm sure you're more attuned to what is happening around you. So were you involved with the civil rights movement?

I tell you. At that time with the civil rights movement I was so anxious to work hard, to help my children become good human beings. And I was mentally not ready to step into those demonstrations and so forth.

But I-- in my own way as I speak about the Holocaust, I always speak although there was-- in my town there were no Black people. But if there would have been there, they would have been killed. So indirectly I still preach of love among human beings regardless of religion and color or handicap or way of life.

When you pick up the newspaper or watch on television what's happening, let's say, in the former Yugoslavia or what's happening in Kosovo, does this, again, bring back memories to you?

You see, Gail, that thing is what's happening in the former Yugoslavia, it's a civil war. Just like when we had the Civil War before the United States came into being. When there is a civil war people get killed. And to compare pains to pains, tragedies to tragedies is not a good thing. It's a separate issue. One can be a heart attack while you're dying. The other one can be a bladder attack or something else that you can be cured of.

And sure, you feel terrible when you see a wrong being done. You know very well when there was a big-- supposed to be a big demonstration for Bosnia near the Holocaust Museum. Who was there? Just a few survivors and [INAUDIBLE] more people. The majority of the people, American people will not dare. Yes, we people that suffer are sensitive to

suffer, to pain. But to compare things, you cannot.

You know, I hate when people start to say-- they go up to me. What do you do about Bosnia? And I say, excuse me. Did I hear you very well? Did you say what do I do? What do we do? What do you do? Because I'm a Holocaust survivor I'm supposed to do it? We're supposed to do it together. They know my name in the White House. I'm sure they know yours too because we write letters all the time.

Are you more comfortable being around other survivors than non survivors?

No. No, for me not. For me not really. At the beginning when we came to the United States no one wanted to listen to us. My own family, my own aunt, she-- I don't know whether she of guilt or kindness-- she always said, don't talk about it. Zip your mouth. No, but you don't need to talk about it anymore. Too painful, too this, nobody want to listen.

So as I said before, we reached out to survivors. We talked among ourselves. But at this point really I have all kinds of friends. I have no problem to walk in a room where there are a bunch of strangers, and they become my friends if they are kind enough. So for me it's no problem. Personally, no.

You had also said before that your mother had advised talking about to your children what she and you and your husband had experienced. How do you do that with young children and yet not inflict too much pain? It's a very fine line. How did you resolve that?

OK, when my mother started to tell to my children about the Holocaust, she did not tell them how Jews were killed. She said how she personally avoided by miracle being sent to another camp. Again, we talk about Hanukkah. We talk about Purim. We talk about Passover.

We talk about all the miracles what happen in the Bible. We talk about many things, about Passover, how the firstborns were killed and all this. And we don't even think twice. We teach it out children. Why shouldn't we teach them about the Holocaust?

And especially with my children. Don't forget my daughter is 52 years old. My son is 48. My younger daughter was just 44. So that many years ago when they were little. But my mother always said, [? shoo, ?] you're not going to tell them they're sticking people into ovens or gassing them.

But you tell them there was this time, the Holocaust. Well, you know, that Nazis ruled Germany and they were terrible cruel to the Jewish people. Jewish people, many of them, you know, were killed during that time. And as the children got older, they learned more and more.

And my grandchildren-- Daniella is now 11 years old. But when she was nine I took her to the Holocaust Museum. So I took Josh when he was nine. Not to the Daniel's Story but the permanent exhibit. I did not let them look behind the privacy wall.

But they were ready. They were ready to see documentaries and so forth. I really think there is ways-- there are many books now especially to introduce children of that time. Same way like so many years ago was [INAUDIBLE] 50 some years ago it was Hitler.

Let's now talk a little bit about your work at the Holocaust Museum. What was your very first encounter with the museum? How did you first hear about it?

Because I have been involved in the community for so many years and because I have been speaking to so many groups, when the United States Holocaust Memorial Council was formed I was invited by Mr. [? Strohlitz ?] to come and participate in some kind of commemoration. Then I don't remember who at that time was in charge. They invited me to come and talk to the staff.

So I was in right away. And then there was Isaiah Kuperstein, and there was many people that prepared the educational.

Eli Pfefferkorn who was brought from Israel to work in the education department at the council. I'm not talking museum yet. So I was involved with that for many, many years.

When the plans started to be to have-- by Adeline Yates to have the Remember the Children, at least the exhibit in the children's museum because she thought she would die of cancer and she wanted to see that at least to happen, the council actually worked with the Children's Museum to have that special exhibit.

So right away they called me to make a tape about my life. And still in the children's museum they still have this video going, me talking about my life. That was done by the Children's Museum, a different video.

Then when they started to raise money they invited a small group of ours, the leadership of the Holocaust organization. By that time we were called already Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Friends. Previously it's known as Club Shalom. And we offered out help physically and a little bit monetary to have parallel meetings, you know, [? on group. ?]

And as I mentioned to you, Linda Kusmack, when she took over the Department of Oral History, I knew her from the Jewish community from other places. She called me and asked me if she could practice on me, if I could be the guinea pig. So my tape was really made the first-- one of the first tapes in the museum. I believe it was the first tape. And I'm sure they learned a lot after that what to do different things. And that's how I was involved.

So I got involved with the ID program because they needed desperately information about people. Not just people that survived but people that perished. And I had that information. And luckily I had pictures for my family because my aunt lived here. So I went on L Street many a times to work with ID program, with the education department.

With communication they needed people to talk to the media. They dragged me. You know, the people at that time-- I don't know if you were aware of Naomi [PERSONAL NAME] and [? Liz ?] [? Rose, ?] they were all in the communication department.

At that time, we didn't have a set speakers bureau in the museum yet. [PERSONAL NAME] Ashkenazy schlepped me back and forth. And quite a few of us got involved. But mostly we got involved with raising money for the museum. We did many [? power ?] meetings I mean [INAUDIBLE] members of our own Holocaust survivors organization.

And as the museum was ready to open they had a core of volunteers that were ready to do it, that knew already exactly where everything would be. And now at this point I'm involved still the education department. I speak at teachers conferences, students if necessary, groups of students.

I'm involved with communication. You see what you saw in the newspaper where it was written up in the Baltimore Sun last week. That comes through the communication. When they get a request they ask a few people who would participate.

And I'm involved still with development, which is the fundraising organization of the museum, to raise money. And I committed myself once a week for-- I'm at the desk in the museum on Wednesdays actually trying to get people to become members and donors. And people are generous, especially when they meet a survivor. They're very much so. I wind up sometimes three times a week in the museum and many times five times a week on behalf of the museum somewhere else,

You said you work with teachers and the education-- through the education department. How do you handle with non-Jewish teachers the element or the area of antisemitism and some of the roots of antisemitism?

You see, this is not for us survivors to talk about. Because I always felt-- I start my talk that I'm not a scholar, and I'm not a teacher. I am here to give you a personal testimony, what happened in my town, in my place, with my people.

Somewhere on the tape I corrected you about something about certificates. You see, and I make sure to say my place, my time, in that time. Because let's say somebody came to Stutthof a year before I did. May have been different.

So when people ask me about antisemitism I tell them this is a terrible thing, but I am not an expert on that issue. I suffer because of that issue. But I don't go into politics. This is not my job. This is the job of the educators of the museum, to get materials, to have backup, to do research. That's not my job.

Has working at the museum and being there and always seeing what's in the exhibits affected your memories of the Holocaust at all?

No, because there is nothing there to affect my memory because there's nothing of Siaulai. If you will take a tape of mine before the museum opened, it will sound exactly like this tape or each tape that you will look. Maybe if you allow me a little extra time, I can tell a little more about the situation than if somebody says, well, we just have one hour or two hours. But it did not affect at all.

What the museum did for me is help fulfill that promise that I made to those women. When I sit there at the desk and I look at our visitors and there is people of every race and every religion, of every size, small and young, and I sit there and I say, beautiful ladies, I promised you to remember you. I'm doing it here.

You know, I don't even call it a museum. I call it the most wonderful institution of learning for humanity. How to behave, what hatred can do, to respect each other, to love each other. So it has nothing to do with memory.

I don't go upstairs in the research-- to research what I'm going to say. I don't look at notes as you can see. As long as my memory is working, I will continue to share it. Good and bad. Once people will tell me that my memory's failing, maybe that will be time to stop.

Once a man asked me how long do I think at my age I can go around speaking at schools. And I told him-- without mentioning names, I told the gentleman, I said, maybe I won't be able to work and you'll have to push me on my wheelchair. But as long as my memory serves me, I will continue to do so.

Friends of yours who are survivors but who are not volunteers at the museum, do you try to encourage them to become volunteers?

We encourage-- every single meeting we encourage people to come and give their testimony so the whole picture of every little town and every place would come together. We encourage people to come to help out. There's so many people that speak many languages. Some of the men that had to work and couldn't up to now do so, we encourage them to get involved. We think it's very important for give testimony, help in every which way they can.

Do most of them agree to do it, do you find?

I tell you, Gail, you have to understand. Let's say a young guy like me that survived the Holocaust came here, worked hard, now he's retired, it's fine for him to go and to help and to do. Take another guy that had a family before the war. Have wife, three, four children. They were all killed. After the war he built a new family. Can you expect him really to come?

Can you-- I wouldn't even encourage a person like this to come. Maybe I would say, do you feel like doing some translation for the museum? You think you want to do it? Can you do it? It's not across the board that everyone is the same and can do it.

Yes, maybe, I can do what I'm doing because I did survive. I was a kid. I wasn't yet part-- I didn't have yet my own children, own husband before the war. So you have to understand that. You cannot compare why can she do it, why can't he do it? Cannot do that.

What is your relationship with the other volunteers at the museum who are also survivors or witnesses?

I tell you, I find all the volunteers, whether survivors or not survivors, and even staff, we are like a big family. Sometimes we agree, sometimes we disagree with your own sisters and brothers. But in general I think it's a beautiful

relationship.

It's a beautiful-- although it's a difficult place to work in, we always love to see each other. We have a lot in common. Especially I feel that they are all doing my job. They're helping me to fulfill my promise to remember those people.

Does that also hold true for the non-Jewish staff?

Definitely. Definitely. I tell you, we survivors are asked many a times to come and speak to new staff and to like introduce them what this museum means to us. And every time they do it myself or other survivors, my friends do that, those people come over and they will say, you need your hug today? Let me give you a hug. They will-- it's different. They become different people.

You know, many of these staff apply for a job. They need the job. They are not there-- they don't come through the door because they promised to remember somebody. But once they meet the survivors, the whole thing becomes different. Their feeling becomes different.

You know, some kids that worked there from the beginning, wonderful young man, and they got the better opportunity to found a better job. You know, they can't move on. They feel like they're guilty that they are leaving the museum. You are the first one I have to tell. I feel bad, but you know, I need the money and so forth. I understand that. And it also makes me feel good that they are so compassionate about it.

So sure, we are all different-natured human beings. We all have our good days and our bad days. I'm sure many days maybe I come in, I'm not that nice as I should be. So is everybody else. But in general we are a wonderful family there. That's my feeling really deep in my heart.

Are there any particular parts or exhibits at the museum that you identify with?

I can identify with every part of that museum because I went through every phase when you start upstairs on the fourth floor. See, some people were just, let's say, in the ghettos. Some people, they were just in hiding. Some people just can tell prewar or Kristallnacht.

But I went through the whole business. Prewar, during, the ghetto, the concentration camp, the labor camps, the death march, the whole thing. So every place. We had a program-- I don't know if you were there-- a family event that we did as a fundraiser. And I worked with Shari Werb from the education department. And we used my family picture how everybody is remembered in that museum. And there was every place.

When I see the train I was there. When I see the ghetto I was there. When I look at the Kovno ghetto-- you see the Kovno ghetto is very similar to the Siauliai ghetto because it was the same einsatzgruppen, battalion, that did all this.

Can you enlarge on that a little more about the similarities? Similarities in the Siauliai.

Very similarities. When you see-- when I talk to someone one time that in Siauliai at one point the ghetto wasn't called a ghetto. It was called a concentration camp. And some teacher criticized me. Now, when you go to the Kovno exhibit you see exactly that that's what happened in Kovno too. It was called at one time a concentration camp because the system changed.

So a lot of things as you go through the life-- there were more Jews in the Kovno ghetto than in ours. It was a little different. In our ghetto also we tried very hard at the beginning to have a school. But then the Germans found out that if you have a school, you have kids. The kids are not supposed to be there. But when I go to the Kovno exhibit I can identify a lot with our ghetto.

How do you keep your emotions in check when you go through the Kovno ghetto?

Well, this is where I become the second person. How do I keep my emotions in check right here? How do I keep it when

I speak to a group? Many times I feel like I'm going to break down. And then I say, Nesse, you cannot break down. Because if you will cry, you are not going to bring that message that you promised those ladies a long time ago.

And you know, many times my heart cries, my neck chokes up, my eyes may become glassy. But I try very hard not to break down. I may come home and cry. I might drive my car home and cry all the way home. I may not sleep the night after. But I try very hard, very hard not to break down. This is me, you know. We all have our own makeups. Some can do it. Some cannot.

So what do you attribute your inner strength to?

To a commitment to my people. To a commitment to humanity. To a commitment and a promise. I hate to repeat myself, but how is this world going to get better if they don't know really how bad it was? If we cook a cake-- bake a cake, how can we improve it if we don't make it and taste it and see what's missing?

You know, it's a comparison. You really have to know what's wrong, what messes things up. Now, if you don't know that hatred messes things up. How would you know? Many times I ask kids, let's say, if you don't like something, what do you say? I hate spaghetti. My grandson Josh used to say he hates spaghetti. I'd say, Josh, you want spaghetti? You know baba hates spaghetti. Now, how can you hate a spaghetti?

Throw it out from your language. I dislike it. I hate the way she looks. I hate her hairdo. I hate this. I hate that. Do we use it? No. And this is through really commitment and thinking about it what you want to do in your lifetime. That's how you do it.

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection with Nesse Godin. This is tape number two side B. And you were talking before about using the word hate with children.

You see, the most important now is to teach children, if we can do it somehow, to learn a little bit to change the way of language too. Because you know, when you hate, when you say the word hate you get angry. And then if I don't like it, it's already-- you have a different mood. And if we can teach kids a little bit more to use more positive language, I think they would change. I really do.

Language is powerful. Yes. As you've gotten older do you think more about the Holocaust than you did, or did you always think of it all the time and there's no such thing as more or as-- do you understand what I'm saying? As you've gotten older is it occupying more of your thoughts each day or night?

OK, Gail. If I would say to you that I think of it every minute, it is not true because as I'm doing the interview with you I turned around, and I looked at the door, and I said, gee, I hope that door is clean. So if I would say I think of it all the time, every minute of the day, I would be lying to you.

But from my heart and my soul there is not a day going by that I don't remember the Holocaust one way or another. Not a day going by that I forget those children that were taken in that selection. There's not a day going by that I don't hear in my ears the cry of their mothers.

Not a day goes by that I don't remember whether I passed by a factory or something that reminds me of this crematoria chimney that consumed their bodies. And not one day goes by, Gail, for my heart and my soul that I forget the promise that I made to those women, those women that maybe helped me survive, to remember them.

So you live your day. You go shopping. You worry what you eat. But something in between is there. I sit down to watch television. What do I look in the TV guide? What do you look in the TV guide? Tell me, when you go to watch television?

This is your interview.

[LAUGHTER]

My interview. You see, the first thing I look is is there a special on the Holocaust? Is there something about the Nazis? Why do I look for it? I keep on thinking was there a reason to it? Maybe somewhere in between the lines I will understand why all these young people joined the wrong crowd and became SS men.

How could a man that goes to church go out the next day and kill human beings? So this is how my life-- again, the two of me. The one that wants to leave, that wants to go shopping, wants to go to social, wants to go out, wants to enjoy the children, and the other of me that is still every single day.

When you look in the mirror what do you see? What face do you see?

When I look in the mirror I see my own face now because I learned to be happy with my face. You know, and I look in the mirror and I say, thanks God I don't see anymore that person that survived the Holocaust. Thanks God that those eyes look-- eyes and the face is a little chubby.

And then I look again in the mirror, and I see my scar. And I say, wait a minute. It's not just your face that looks the way it looks. There is more to it. There are the scars of the Holocaust. This is what I see. And I'm telling you sincerely.

You know how many times I rush, I put on my makeup, I look. I look. Is this good? Is that good? And I'm happy with what I see. But I also see that scar of the Holocaust. And that scar maybe helps me to do what I need to do for humanity.

That scar maybe helps me to make sure that no children like me that would be scarred for life. That scar helps me to go out and share and teach and spread love and give that hug and ask for that hug with a hope that this world will do more hugging.

What did you tell your children about your scar? How did you present it to them?

When they were little I used to say it's a boo boo. We called it a boo boo. A hurt. You know, a little hurt, a boo boo. And as they got older I said it's from the war. And then they could understand I told them I was hit over the head with the other side of the gun.

And luckily that it didn't become an open wound at that time. The scar is really the after effect because I had a terrible infection. If I would have been an open wound, maybe they would have shot me. They hit me. I had a slight concussion. I couldn't hear for some-- I don't know how many days. And my eyesight was blurry. It wasn't a death march.

And in the barn my face swell up like this, like a balloon. And then a little hole opened up and some puss started to come out. The stench was terrible. You could smell the stench was terrible in that barn anyway.

And after liberation, you know, for a whole year they cut it and they did it and, and I told them I was hit on the head. And in Munich in the hospital they didn't want to put down in the records. Because now in the record says that I had TB of the glands. It's not true. I was hit on the head. That's what the records say.

So you see even after the war when we were in those German hospitals did we trust those doctors? Could we have confidence in them? When they gave us a shot for something what did we think?

You know, when my mom was in the camp just before liberation to give shots to the people to die, they told them they're giving them flu shots. And they were given-- so lucky that some of the guards gave those shots and they didn't know exactly where to give it. A piece of flesh came out.

So when we get the shot right after liberation in a hospital, in a German hospital when I came to Munich. When I was delivering my baby did I think, is he going to choke my baby, the German doctor? You know, people don't realize what happened after.

See, now, so many years later it's a different generation. But then when we had to live among our murderers for so long



your country opened the gates and said, come on, you people. Come in. That's it.

How did you regain confidence as the years went on in others?

You know what? I don't trust people. [LAUGHS] I still don't. I'm not going to pretend that I do. I need a person to come and say to me I'm a good human being. I met some teacher that came up to me in the museum a few years ago when we still had Marcia [? Sobell, ?] the adult education with the education department. And teacher said to me, my father was an SS man.

I said, why are you telling me that? What are you doing? Are you an SS man? She said, no, I teach the Holocaust, and I teach people how wrong it was. I said, sure. So you are just like me. I teach the Holocaust, and I tell people how wrong it was.

But if I see an old guy that is arrogant and that says, how do you know that it happened, and where did you get those documents, and where this, I don't trust them. So you know, it's fancy to say things-- sometimes people say what looks good. I say it the way it is. Sure, because I survived the Holocaust, because I was there I am suspicious of people that do wrong.

Are you suspicious of doctors today still?

Not really my doctors. But in Germany after the war?

But I meant later on.

No. No. No. But in Germany, right after the war, when I had to go to give birth to my child or when I was put in the hospital after I came to Bavaria and I had all these surgeries I told them I was hit on the head. So why now when we look it says I have TB of the glands?

I didn't have any TB of the glands. I was hit on the head on the other side of the gun. So they could still write what they wanted. They could still do what they wanted. It was difficult for victims to be among their murderers at that time.

What do you attribute the inner strength that you do have? Was it to the way you were raised do you think?

I was-- I told you I was a spoiled little kvetch, what we call little kid. I don't know if I have such inner strength. The only thing is I really was brought up to have faith, to have human kindness, to be charitable, that if you make a vow, you should keep it. And that's what I'm doing.

I'm not any stronger or any wiser or anything else than anybody else. I just am doing what I need to do, what I promised to do with the hope that we'll make it a better world, that by knowing the truth, by knowing exactly what happened. Not hearsay, we were there. We still remember it. And with the hope that it would never repeat itself.

What do you think the response should be to Holocaust deniers?

You know very well people that want to do evil will do evil. Holocaust deniers pick up everything that they can to make them credible, yeah? For instance, somebody in the museum told me that he saw on the internet on a denial page my name. What was my name connected there?

I was in Stutthof, right? In the documents of Stutthof there is a recipe how to make soap from human fat from Stutthof in documentation. And one time somebody may have said to me, you know, on public everywhere somebody must have asked me what do you think about this? Is that true that they make soap of human fat?

And I didn't say yes, and I didn't say no because I'm very careful what I say. I just said, how would I feel if they did make soap of human fat. How would I feel if I bathed at one time in the concentration camp? Could have been soap of my father's fat. And that's what they put in. They have put in all kinds of [? mindsets. ?]

So deniers, there's no use arguing with them. The only important thing is to tell the truth, to have as much testimony like this as possible. Not just from survivors. From liberators, from people that were there, and even from SS men that are willing before they die to tell the truth what they did. And that's the only way.

You know, when people start asking me, I said, where do you think we have all these documents from? The survivors didn't take pictures. It was the Nazis. Germany was very obsessed about taking documentation, keeping them. If I would have been a German leader, I would shred all this documents. They didn't shred it [INAUDIBLE] They gave it to us.

I always say, the most wonderful government of Germany [? of now ?] supplies us with all this documentation. So I don't believe in arguing with deniers. Go learn for yourself. Go find out the truth. Go in archives, go in universities, go study, and you'll see the truth what happened. The Germans don't deny the Holocaust. They don't.

Do you think you'll ever visit Germany?

I don't think I could visit Germany. I don't know, Gail. It may be very difficult for me now in Lithuania too. But somehow I had once an experience. I was supposed to go for Passover to Israel many years ago. I don't remember now how many years ago.

And El Al airline the last minute went on strike. And my travel agent called me, and she said the only way you can go is on Lufthansa. And I said, no problem. But when I came to Frankfurt and I hear the word aussteigen, disembark, I lost it. I lost it, I tell you.

And it was the year that there was so much terrorism and shooting in [INAUDIBLE] airport. So the Germans meant very well. They had a special room that they took all the Jews that were traveling. [INAUDIBLE] the Jews. Maybe all the passengers. But that's all I could hear. All the Jews get your suitcases and go there.

And I was-- and then I had the key. Jack went to get the suitcase. And I was going to give him the key. And some older somebody on the airport, he pushed me. He went, you know, don't go. And I started to yell, you pushed me around here enough. Right away they send a younger German in. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] Dear lady, can I help you?

You know, I had to be tranquilized to go to Israel with the Librium at that time. So I had this experience that was a negative experience, and I don't know if I would like to do it again. I don't think I could. I try very hard. Although I speak German fluently I don't like to use the language.

I had to go a few weeks ago to the German embassy. And I asked my daughter to go with me. It was traumatic for me. You know, it was traumatic just to go in there and this German speaking. And I knew that this is friendly people, but it was difficult. So I don't think I have any business there. And even to Poland and Lithuania I'm going because I need to go. But I don't think I'll ever go again.

Is there anything that we haven't covered that you would like to talk about?

I don't know. You see, Gail, we always talk about many things, and I always think I cover most of what I remember and how I feel. And maybe if we are well and alive in a few years you come back and maybe we'll fill in a little more.

Well, as someone else said, it would take me six years to tell you-- it would take me six years to tell you what happened during those six years.

It isn't even just the six years, you know? I found out that through the years that I have a selective memory. I tell what I want to tell. Other things is too painful. You protect yourself a little bit.

So as time goes on, you get older, and you feel sometimes, well, maybe I should tell that. Maybe I should say that extra thing. And that's why as you come back you hear sometimes a little extra information. Well, I'm glad I could help out.

Well, I hope I can come back and hear in the future. Thank you very much, Nesse, for doing this interview.

Yeah, also I like to have a copy of that release form. Thank you.

This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with Nesse Godin.