Holocaust Survivor

Oral Histories

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Could you tell me your name please and where you are from?

My name is Alexander Ehrmann, I now reside in West Bloomfield, Michigan. I come from Czechoslovakia from a City called Kralovsky Chlumec, which became Hungary in 1938 and at that time the name of the town was Kiralyhelmec.

How large was your family in Hungary?

We were three brothers and three sisters and our parents.

Extended family in the same town?

The extended family, in our town we had an uncle, aunt and cousins. I did not know my uncle he passed away before I was born. I did know my aunt who also passed away while I was a kid and I knew all my cousins. They ultimately emmigrated from our town while they were still young before any of the persecution started. Voluntarily emmigrated in search of settling and pursuing their personal careers. Other than that, we did not have any family in our town.

How large was the town?

The town was about 3,000 souls of which there were about 200 Jewish families.

About a third to a half?

No, it wasn't, it was probably less than a third.

What did your father do?

We had several enterprises. We owned a small hotel, a very small hotel, six rooms. We owned a kosher restaurant and a tavern, which was operated jointly. We also owned a beer bottling franchise for one of the local breweries and we owned a wholesale liquor and wine trading firm. We also owned another part of our building that housed a large restaurant, non-kosher, which was rented out to a operator and it had several halls, dance hall and at one time it even had a bowling alley. Within the framework of the beer bottling plant we also had ice distribution in the city in the summer. We stored ice which we gathered during the winter, natural ice from the river, and we sold it in the summer to homes and to iceboxes, private iceboxes.

It sounds like you had some considerable interaction with the non-Jewish community?

Yes, we did. We were very much part of the community. We were very well regarded in the community. This, of course, gradually was reduced to practically zero when the Hungarians took over and we were annexed to Hungary. It started first by, they expropriated our licenses to begin with. One of the first anti-Jewish actions was they took away all licenses dealing with liquor, wine, beverages, alcoholic beverages from Jews. So, we lost our licenses there. They ultimately expropriated our property, our building, the land that was attached to it. They levied very high taxes and ultimately auctioned it off for the back taxes that we owed. We then moved into the

building that used to belong to my uncle and we started various agricultural related activities. We went into angora farming.

When was this, after the ...?

Yes, this was in 1939, the second half of 1939, when we lost our building.

You were in the region that became Slovakia?

No, we were the region that first became Slovakia and within a few days after it became Slovakia, it was partitioned off from Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovakia Republic was cut up into, we were three parts, Slovakia became an autonomous Republic, and Bohemian and Moravia were annexed to Germany as a protectorate. The Russian part of Czechoslovakia, the Russian Ukraine, the under Carpathian Ukraine was left alone and they were struggling, ultimately they were really swallowed by the Hungarians. They took it by force. But, even that part of Slovakia, the southern part of Slovakia, was sliced off and annexed to Hungary. So, we became in October of 1938, we became Hungary.

Before we go on to talk about ... let me ask you first a question about your father, to get a license was he a veteran?

Yes, he was a veteran. He was a veteran of the First World War. He, I really don't know why, it had some interplay for him to get the license. I wasn't around, of course. That was before I was born.

In the community before the War, before the Hungarians came, what was a routine day like for you and your family, what would you, you would have gone to public school or would you have gone to ...?

I went to public school. We did not have any parochial schools, not Jewish parochial schools. There was a Protestant parochial school. We went to public school. The school day began at 8:00 and usually we were out about 2:30, 3:00, at which time we went to the Cheder, and we attended Cheder till 7:00. 7:00 we were dismissed and went home. That was daily, five days a week. Sunday it was all day Cheder and school vacation time, it was every day Cheder. The day typically began with going to Shul for services.

Before school?

Before school. We attended evening services in Cheder, however, there were regular evening services in the synagogue. We had two synagogues, as a matter of fact. We had a main synagogue, and we had a Beth Hamidrash, which was attended by the more religious, by the Hasidim.

Did the children ever complain about all of this?

We? No. We complained, but not as such, it was natural, we were brought up in that spirit and we complained that we can't go and play, but we wanted to play particularly on a Saturday when we would have liked to play we had to go, my father wanted to go over the weekly material that we learned. He wanted to see what we really learned, what we really studied, that kind of complain. But not basic complaint.

Was your family considered particularly religious?

Yes, we were considered religious. My father wore a beard. My mother wore a sheitel. So did my sister when she got married, my older sister. We were considered religious. Our community, the Jewish community, was rather on the religious side. There were very few who were non-religious. There were maybe three, four, families who were not practicing religion. And even those families sort of did it in, on their own, in privacy because they did not keep their stores open out of respect. Even some wealthy people, there was a banker in town, a Jewish banker, one of the Jewish bankers, there were at one time three Jewish bankers in town, whose wife was very liberal, non religious person. She walked out of town, out of city limits and got on her horse drawn carriage to go to her farm and when she came back she got off the carriage outside of town and walked in. She would not drive through town on the Sabbath. So there was a lot of respect for the religion in our town.

Tell me something about your more vivid memories about your family life, for example, what would a Friday night dinner be like?

Friday night dinner, of course, we went to synagogue for services, Friday evenings services, as soon as we came home we started the dinner with singing Shalom Aleichem, there was Kiddush, conducted by my father and the whole family participated. The boys were given their own cups of wine to follow our father in Kiddush. After Kiddush we washed our hands

according to the ritual and we said the Hamotzi. Again, the boys were given separate small challas, two challas, just like our father, to follow in the same ceremony. And after the bread was sliced and eaten, we followed with the dinner, with a festive dinner. Typically, there was an appetizer served, soup, as a rule chicken soup or meat broth, and main dish, meat with whatever vegetables, and then there was dessert. Throughout the dinner there was a lot of ceremonial singing. The Psalms and Friday night traditional Jewish songs. It was concluded with Birkat ha-mazon, the after meal grace, which just as soon as two of the boys who were the Bar Miztvah age, we did it in a formal way as it is required with three adult people at the meal. After dinner there was usually family sat and talked, whatever daily actualities, family related matters, later on in an hour or an hour and a half after dinner my father would want to sit down and either relate to us from the Bible, from the Talmud, from his father, his father was an author of several books. He would talk to us about Torah related items. Every Friday night something was unless, there was something going on in the synagogue, in the winter nights, then we all went to the synagogue to listen to a visiting Rabbi, whatever. Otherwise, within the family circle there was some kind of Torah related activity. Either Friday night or Saturday during the day it was a custom to go over the entire weekly portion of the Torah and we were asked by our father to do it twice, there is a certain requirement that you have to read the Torah,

every sentence twice, and then the third time the Aramaic translation of it with the notes, singing it the way it's read from the Torah during the services on Saturday morning. So we did that either Friday night or Saturday during the day, or part of it Friday night and the concluding part of it during the day on Saturday. Then we went to sleep, Saturday morning it started again, we went to the synagogue. Returning to Friday night, we were regularly practicing going to the Mikveh before the Sabbath.

This is the ritual bath?

That's the ritual bath. All males were required to go to the ritual bath before the Sabbath entered. The Cheder let out early on Fridays. In the winter there was no Cheder Friday afternoon, so we were given enough time for that. The stores closed as a rule, I think it was ten minutes before candle lighting time, so that everybody had a chance, storekeepers really went during the afternoon and they went back to the store. All males went to the ritual bath. Some went even Saturday morning. I, myself, went a few times I remember, after I was Bar Mitzvah, I accompanied my father, or I just went on my own out of my own incentive. Services in the morning Saturday were around 9:00, they started about 9:00, and they lasted usually until about noon, 11:30. It was something we looked forward to. It was nice. It was nice to be together with the congregation, with friends, with neighbors, with people we knew. It was one form of getting together in a relaxed atmosphere. And, of course, there was the inevitable politicking. In

recess, during the reading of the Torah, we as children looked forward to it. It was something pleasant that I look back at always with pleasant taste.

Do you think that your family was what you would call close knit then?

Yes, we were a very close knit family. I think that really just about every Jewish family in our town was close knit. I do think that our family was more close knit than the average family, particularly on my mother's side. We kept up very close contact with my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, my uncles were dispersed, one of my uncles lived in Prague, which was almost 1,000 kilometers away from where we lived. Another uncle lived in Vienna, yet we had regular contact with them. Every Friday my mother would send off a postcard to every member of the family, that was a normal ritual. We visited, they visited us, children, we went for summer vacations, at least some of the children would go every year to our grandparents, to our maternal grandparents. We also visited our paternal grandparents, either for vacation or during Pesach usually, we went there. My grandfather, my father's parents lived in Hungary, when we were Czechoslovakia. So it was a little more complicated travelling there, we had to get a permit to cross the border and there was no direct transportation. We had to transfer in another city. So it was not as easy to communicate with them as it was with my maternal grandparents. The children also, aside from the petty fights that we had, we felt very close to each other and we were closer with each other. We respected the older

sisters and my older brother, when he said something, we were taught to abide by what they said.

It sounds like your father was the center of all this.

My father was the central figure of authority. My mother had a definite place in the family up on the top there. She was very much respected by all the children and by my father and visa versa. My father was respected by my mother. We saw that, we learned it, we copied it. There was no question about obeying either one of the parents, never. Petty disobedience, yes, when we did something we were afraid. My father didn't have to hit anyone of us. It was enough if he looked at us. Very seldom if I were to recall maybe three incidents when I was either slapped or hit by my father, even punishment as such, counted few times.

Was the community also close knit?

The community was close knit. We had one community. There was no division, no formal division. It was Orthodox. We had a regular tax, a Jewish community tax levied at every member of the community except those who were not financially able to pay. In addition to the, I am pretty sure it was a yearly fee like, pretty much like we have here, a yearly membership in the synagogue, we did not have synagogue membership as such, in addition to that, we had to pay for every fowl that was killed by the Shochet, which went into the community coffers.

What was that money used for?

It was used for number one, pay the Rabbi, pay the Schochtim, we had two, at one time, we had three.

These were the ritual slaughterers?

These were the ritual slaughterers. To pay the teachers in the Cheder. We had regular help, financial help, extended to those unfortunate in the community or even in the surrounding communities, who needed it. It was sort of like a free loan organization, even outright gifts. In addition to that, we had members of the community, there were some old widows who couldn't afford, either they were too old, or they were just plain poor, they had no income. My mother regularly, every Friday without fail, rain or shine, winter or summer, made no difference, we went to two women and brought half a chicken, raw chicken to them, some vegetables, some fruit, a challa, that was every Friday. In addition to that, there was an old man in the community who went around to every family and collected a challa or two, that was the only thing he collected and he distributed them among those who couldn't afford to buy or bake. It was a community minded congregation.

Was the Jewish community segregated from the non-Jewish community?

Geographically, no.

So you had neighbors who were non-Jewish?

Everyone had neighbors who were non-Jews, there was no such thing, it was a small town, there was no such thing as a Jewish area, or a Jewish quarter. There were some courtyards where two, three families, or maybe even four families lived together. Two or three of them were all Jewish, or maybe there was two Jews in a courtyard with three non-Jews. But other than that, even around the synagogue, there were Jews and non-Jews.

Did you experience any anti-Semitism before 1938?

Very little in the Czechoslovakian area, very little. The anti-Semitism that I can recall was mainly among my own age group, maybe a farmer's son would say, "you dirty Jew," or something like that. Usually it was a newcomer to town. Somebody moved into town. I had friends among the non-Jews, very close friends, we respected each other, we walked into each other's house, in spite of the fact that I knew well that I can't have more than a glass of water in their house. They called me on my Hebrew name, my Hebrew first name. Everybody in town called me on my Hebrew first name.

Which is what?

Which is Shaiye. I was not known, the only people who called me Alexander in the Hungarian version, which is something like Sander, the only ones who would call me is some members of my family, distant family, ironically.

So you didn't live your childhood in fear of anti-Semitism?

Not at all. My childhood was void of fear. The only probably self-imposed separation was the fact that we wanted to feel as Jews and my father told us you are different, you are a Jew, in a complimentary way, not in a derogatory way. And probably that's why, when the Hungarian era came, and we started to be discriminated against, the impact was very confusing. That threw us off balance.

How did that begin? What do you remember initially?

Well, the first strange experience, disappointing experience, was during the very first days of occupation we were considered occupied territory in the first few weeks of annexation, we were under marshal law. The Hungarian army was in our area and they were hostile to Jews. We were used to going up to army outfits, there was a mobilization in the last year, last probably ten months of the Czechoslovakian era, the Czechoslovakian army was on the border and our town was full of soldiers. We were used to walking up to them, they were one of us, and we were one of them. There was no problem there. When we approached the Hungarian soldiers, pretty soon we were pulled by our hair and, I wore payes, sideburns, some of them pulled out knives and threatened to cut it off. Some of them beat us up, treatment like that, and we couldn't understand why. Of course, we were told by our parents, we were told by friends, that the Hungarians are basically anti-semitic. They have anti-Jewish laws. The second anti-Jewish

law was passed when we were annexed to Hungary. We were told that it is an entirely different government with several different policies than what we are used to. So, it took us sometime until it sank in and we were conditioned to it.

Do you remember, say the night before annexation, or the day before, you were 12 years old at the time, how you felt as a child?

Yes, I was 12 years old. The night before annexation was Saturday night if I remember well. The local gendarme, the Czechoslovakian gendarme, were used to coming to our house, they were considered friends, we knew them, my parents knew them and as they were walking on patrol, they came in and out of our house. The windows were all tightly shaded, which was an anti-aircraft measure. They came in with their bayonets on and with their pistols and shoulder arms loaded.

How did you feel as a child?

I felt sort of proud that there is people that I know are heroes, if you will. I did not comprehend what it meant that there is going to be a change and what it means for us to change from Czechoslovakians into Hungarians. As a matter of fact, we were sort of looking forward to welcome the Hungarian army. Children, we were looking forward to that. It was just, as children, we liked to see soldiers and when they marched in and they were not friendly to us, we were disappointed. My parents, of course, did not share those sentiments. They knew what they were getting into. My

father was, of course, frequently visiting Hungary during the Czechoslovakian era and he knew what was going on. They were not happy about it at all. Not much they could do about it.

Was your town occupied by regular Hungarian troops or were they the free troops?

My town was occupied by regular Hungarian troops, namely the so-called free brigade or free troops, which was the equivalent of the Gestapo and the SS in Germany, was in the beginning, the Hungary occupation of the annexed land began about ten days before we were annexed and all the areas, the practice was that the free troops went in first. And just like the name denotes, they were free to do anything they wanted and they did. There was some killings, there were a lot of injuring of Jews, there were a lot of beating up on Jews, burning houses, in a town about maybe 35 miles away from ours, one of the families who was has the same franchise, the franchise of the same brewery as we did, their house and their entire business was burned down the very first night the Hungarians came in. They did a lot of damage and they did a lot of bad will among the population. By the time the Hungarians came and annexed us there was a directive holding these troops back one day or two days after the Hungarian troops marched in. So we saw, the first uniforms we saw was the Hungarian army not the free troops.

You had a small hotel, did you house any occupation forces?

Yes, as a matter of fact, the entire hotel, all six rooms, were taken by the Hungarian officers, occupying officers. We housed them for quite some time, I don't remember the exact time, but several weeks, we never got paid for it. We housed troops also. We had a big yard. We had large sheds, troops were stationed on our property in those sheds.

Did your father speak to any of these people?

Yes. At one time the field kitchen was housed in our yard, my father talked to them. He had several skirmishes with them, but as a rule he was able to find his way and get on their good sides. He was, my father was a very diplomatic man. He did not pursue belligerency and he found his way of getting along with whoever and whatever situation he was in. Then, we also housed one of the free troop officers in our hotel for quite some time. He was the commandant of the free troops in our area who turned out to be, to have an assistant, a Jewish man.

His assistant was Jewish?

His assistant was Jewish, who was distantly even related to us. He was from a community not very far from us where we had relatives. There was a so-called wonder Rabbi in that community, I'm named after him and so are probably, so were thousands of Hungarian and Czechoslovakian kids who were born right after his passing on.

What's the name of the community?

Kerestour, Bodrog Kerestour. The name of the Rabbi was Reb Shyele Kerestourer. Reb Shyele from Kerestour. This man came from that town. His boss, the officer came from the former county seat of our area who was in private life a school superintendent, a district superintendent. The man who visits schools and, that's superintendent, right? Later on, he returned to his profession and he visited us, I had occasion of talking to him in grade school when he visited us. Interestingly, this man was an intelligent man, an educated man, he was not a belligerent man. I guess he volunteered into the free troops, like it was all volunteer unit of the Hungarian armed forces. I guess he must have volunteered out of prestige, seeking prestige. We did not have that much problems with the free troops. They were already toned down when they came to our town.

Around 1939, or 1940, had you heard stories filtering in especially after the German invasion of Poland, were you hearing rumors about what was going on in Slovakia, what was going on in Poland?

Yeah, we heard rumors. We also heard actual reports of what's going on in Slovakia, in particular we heard rumors from Poland. But from Slovakia, we had close contact with them. We heard first it was young girls who were taken, then there were males who were taken, then again girls who were taken, deportation from Slovakia started about 1940 and they were not systematic and not on a total scale as they were done later on in

Hungary, or in Poland for that matter. We heard people disappeared, people were taken away, and they were never heard of. We also heard rumors that they were taken into Poland where they were machine gunned to their deaths.

What did you or your family think of that, how did you respond to it?

The general attitude was we talked about it very little, we listened to it. Grown-ups discussed it. Not much discussion was going on between grown-ups and children about it. As a matter of fact, we were sort of cultivating an attitude that it's not true and it's not going to happen with us. Whatever is going on in Poland, whatever is going on in Slovakia, or elsewhere, cannot happen in Hungary because Hungary is a civilized country in spite of all the belligerency that they were practicing. People would point to officials who were still had high positions in government. People would point to the fact that there were several newspapers who were either, which were either run exclusively by Jews, or they were predominantly Jewish owned and run.

Did you or your family experience any direct violent anti-Semitism when the Hungarians came or after they had come?

The only direct violence that we experienced was when I was in school later on when I had to attend once a week, there was a para military training of youngsters from age of 12, I think, up to military age and it ultimately graduated into armed training. We had to attend and whenever

we attended practically every time there was beating up of Jewish kids. It was not discouraged at all by the commanding structure of this outfit, sometimes they were even encouraged, the military trainers freely beat up Jews. They also beat up non-Jews as a matter of fact, that was part of the training, if they had to, there was disciplining done that way. But, by far, they didn't need an excuse or a reason to do it to Jews.

What about your family?

My brother, my older brother, would experience many times from stranger soldiers or from gendarmes, he was three years older than I am. I guess the gendarme would take more liberties with the older youngsters than they just didn't bother with kids my age. My parents I don't recall any direct violence that they would get involved with the Hungarians up till deportation time. There were other neighbors who would get into trouble with them. There were some families in 1941, there were some families who immigrated to our area from Poland and they became citizens, Czechoslovakian citizens. They settled, they inter-married, they either married a Czechoslovakian woman or they just acquired citizenship. They were deported and they were deported with violence. They were deported to Poland.

What about your sister, any experience of anti-Semitism in their life?

Well, my older sister got married in 1939 and on her wedding night there was violence. The gendarme came into the hall on our own premises

where the wedding feast was going on and they rounded up all the males to come to the station, beat them up right there. They took them out first into the courtyard and they were beating them, then they marched them off to the station, and they interrogated them individually and beat them up in private.

Do you know why? Just random, arbitrarily?

The excuse they used was that there was anti-Hungarian singing going on that they were praising the, at that time, Slovak president, and that we were using really the wedding for anti-Hungarian organization, that was the excuse. One of my cousins from a neighboring city was beaten up so badly that he came back in the morning to our house, he was black and blue, the very next day he went home to his hometown which was about, maybe a hundred kilometers away from us. The very next day he picked himself up, went off to Prague, across the border into Slovakia, then into Bohemia, and he found his way to London. That's how he was saved. He lives in London until today. Had it not been for that incident that he was beaten up here, he may have perished during the war.

Did anyone else who ....

Pardon me, the bridegroom was even beaten up, my brother-in-law.

Were you taken with them?

No.

Just the men?

We were left at home to stay.

Were there any other people who you knew who were taken in the transport and they returned, anyone who escaped from the train, or escaped from the camp?

Yes, there was one man in particular who lived in my grandparents' hometown in Slovakia. He was taken away from his family and he was taken to Lublin-Majdanek. He escaped from Lublin. He came home and ultimately on his way to looking for his family he came by our house, our hometown, and he told us his story. He told us that he came home in the wee hours of the morning. He knocked on his bedroom window. Instead of opening the bedroom window, the third or fourth window down the sidewalk opened up and he saw the sleepy head of the police chief looking out. He immediately grasped the situation, he knew the police chief moved into his house and his family is not there. He, of course, assumed the worst and acted as drunk and disappeared, crossed the border into Hungary, came into that town where my cousin lived, the one who went to London. His brother had married one of my cousins from that town so he went, that was his first stop where he went and he found out that his family, his wife and children, are really in Hungary, so that's how he came to us. And he told us this story. Well, we saw him off on his way to his wife, we knew where his wife was also, what city, we saw him off, we gave

him some money. When he left, I overheard my parents saying, "well you know that Ernest always exaggerates."

What did they think he was exaggerating about, what stories did he tell you?

He told us that he was in a concentration camp. And to us the whole concept of a concentration camp was something unheard of. We never heard of anything like that. When we heard reports of concentration camps, we imagined a prison like a prison-of-war camp and we just couldn't understand why they would take Jews into prison camps for the fact that they are Jewish. And then he told us about it, that's where he was, we just dismissed it as exaggeration.

Did he describe what he saw, what he experienced?

They were talking at length with my parents, I don't recall, we were asked to leave the room when they got into discussions. But I did overhear my parents talking among themselves and saying that he is exaggerating. Whether they said it so that we can hear it and that we don't get scared, I don't know. I do know that the general attitude of the Hungarian Jews was, it is not true. It is not something that can happen to us.

Tell me a little bit about events that just preceded the deportation.

Well, maybe briefly I'll describe the progression of persecution that we were subjected to. Like I said, the first experience of persecution was in that para-military training, as well as in school. I was attending high school already at that time and I was given non-deserved bad grades. I was told

next year I can't come back because there is only a limited amount of Jewish students who will be admitted to high school and I was told in no uncertain terms that I am expected to register in grade school for next year. In the interim, teachers as well as the other students, were doing their best to make my life intolerable in classroom. Everybody was required to wear a uniform cap, a sort of a military type cap. Jews were not allowed to wear it. So there was automatically a separation already. Jews who were recognizable as such. In the winter we were required to wear a certain type of overcoat with particular type of buttons, boutonniere type of coat, and Jews were not allowed to wear that. When we attended the para military training we had regular khaki colored military type caps. Jews were not allowed to wear that. Ultimately, we had to wear a yellow band, an arm band, in that training. We were sent for about a year after the Hungarians came in we attended these para-military trainings. It was really on my level at least, it was first exercises, gymnastics, but then the Jews were segregated and we were not allowed to partake in their exercises, we were sent into the quarry to, quarry stones, for public buildings, whatever. We had to produce, if I remember well, two boys had to produce a cubic meter of slab, of stone. I was 13 years old.

Let me interrupt you for just a second. Was your father experiencing any kind of discrimination at this point?

Well, he was experiencing high taxation, he was experiencing exclusion from, denial of being able to appeal measures that were, he was told he has to discontinue selling, he appealed, his appeals were denied. Gendarmes would come by, they dragged him, marched him to public offices for hearings, like a prisoner, like a criminal in the street. He had to walk in front of them. They didn't do that with other people who were called in, they simply were called in, you have to appear in court, or you have to appear in the tax office, and they were expected to appear. My father had an "honor guard" accompanying him to the offices.

Because he was a respected member of the Jewish community?

Because he was such a "respected" Jew. This type of discrimination.

If he would return from a session of that sort, what would it be like at home?

He was, first of all we were very anxious, we didn't know what's going on until he came home. We had no telephone. He couldn't call, we just had to, my sister would go up to the office, my older sister, and try to find out, came back, "no, he is inside, I couldn't get to him, I couldn't find out what's going on." There was a lot of anxiety at home until he appeared. Once he came home he was very down. Psychologically it had a very bad affect on him. My father suffered a lot psychologically. And so did my mother. My mother suffered from seeing him being dragged through that

kind of treatment as well as it touched her naturally, on her own level. We knew, we as children, my older brother and my younger brother, sensed things are not going right and we had no explanation for it. We were told by our parents, be careful! When you associate with non-Jews, try, be nice to them! Don't, limit your activities with them because ultimately you'll experience disappointment and you'll get into fights. They are being told by their peers a Jew is a non-desirable citizen. We were cautioned by our parents, we were told stay away. We experienced it on our own. We were not welcome among the non-Jews. In 1940, the first general public measures that they did was naturally taking away licenses, trades were denied to Jews. We were taken away part of our rations. We were, food rations. We were given a third, half, of what other people would get, flour, sugar, shortening, fat, was rationed. Textiles were rationed, clothes were rationed. And very soon as things were going, as Hungary got deeper and deeper involved in the War, Jews were denied totally their rations. We were out to get our food on our own, yet it was not allowed, it was black market, we had to buy our food on black market and black marketing was punishable by all kinds of severe fines and jailing. So it was a very bad situation and we were told by our parents to go and get flour from farmers, do it in a way that they don't find us. They had to use us as children because they were counting on the gendarmes not checking children, what they carry. We carried sugar in our school bags, things like that.

Did you understand what this was all about?

Yes I did. Yes I did. I went when I was 14 years old, I went to do farm work so that I can earn wheat and corn and produce and potatoes, that was one way Jews were allowed to get food, to earn their food. When I was 15 I went with my older brother, volunteered to do dike work on the river, which earned us extra rations of sugar, flour, and pork, and we were helping our family that way. That was already a cover for us to be able to go out and buy on the black market more food. We had a legitimate way of bringing food into our family. There were other families who were jailed because they found food in their houses and they had no explanation on how they got it.

By 1941, were you in a ghetto yet?

No, we were put in a ghetto in 1944. In 1943 Jews were already restricted from travel. German troops were in Hungary, but there was no occupation. In late winter in 1944, the Germans officially occupied Hungary.

Let's stop for a moment here and we'll come back and talk about 1942-43 period.

You mentioned earlier there was some Hungarian families who were deported to Poland.

Yes, the Polish Jewish families who settled in our area.

You had told me earlier that there was a friend of yours who brought his family back from Poland to Budapest.

That was a family who were our neighbors, the two boys in the family and two girls, they were all the ages of my sisters and my older brother. We were very close with them and they were taken, deported to Poland.

When they came back did he relate any specifics, things that he had seen there?

We didn't see the family when they came back. They were taken to a different town and they lived under assumed names. We didn't see them anymore. We did talk to the son, he was a frequent visitor to our house. He was in the labor force of the army when his parents were taken away. He was born in Czechoslovakia, so they couldn't touch him. But he was telling us where he found them, how he found them, how he tracked them down and where he placed them, of course, when he came back he needed help. We were in communication with the parents.

What did he tell you was going on in Poland?

He was telling us stories about these people who were let loose on the other side of the border and the Polish authorities were hostile, they rounded them up some of them were killed. Some of them were made to dig their own graves and then shot on the perimeter of the ditch and then fell into the ditch. He was telling us about some more fortunate who made it into towns and they were trying to find their ways to settling and the resistance they were encountering from the Polish people we already at

that point heard how hostile the Polish population was to Jews period. Very few of them were willing to extend any kind of help. Some did.

Did you believe stories of mass graves?

The mass grave stories that we heard were four or five people only. We did not hear about the mass graves that we know of today. Certainly not the dimension of Babi Yar or anything like that. These were the mass graves that we heard and yes, we did believe it. We believed it probably for, if I look back at it now, I believe it probably because we read stories about the pogroms, about the behavior of the Cossacks, the Russian people, the Ukrainian people, and the Polish people in previous persecutions. I read books on that, so we did believe that. What we did not want to believe was the behavior of cultured people like the Germans and the Hungarians, that's what we didn't want to believe. Getting back to this man, he was telling us how he had to bribe his way. He talked to other Jews who were on the other side, who were wandering and hiding... picked up leads where he can find his parents. He succeeded in finding them, not far from the border. He found his two parents and one sister. He also found the second sister, eventually they were separated, how I don't know really. He brought them all back across the border, bribed his way back across the border. He hid them in a town in the Carpathian Ukraine, which was now Hungary and then he came back home, talked to my parents, went into central Hungary, acquired papers for his parents and

his two sisters and located them separately, I don't know exactly where they were til today. But they were not together. The two sisters were separate from each other and the parents lived in another town. And he cared for them. He had some money. They were relatively well off and they had relatives also, he took care of them. This man, incidentally, made it through the Holocaust, he came home and he was a very disturbed man, a very deep emotional man. He did not want to get married. As much as we talked to him after the War, he gave no reason, he said, "I don't want to get married." In 1947, he died, of heart failure. He couldn't cope with all that he went through. He was one of the victims of persecution who could never readjust to life anymore.

These people who were originally Polish citizens who had become Hungarian citizens, when were Czechs and Hungarians deported, can you tell me about just the process in your town, say how were you ....?

We were deported, of course we were no longer Czechs, we were automatically became Hungarian citizens. We were deported in spring of 1944, to be more exact, the day after Passover, the day after last day of Passover. It was a Saturday, the last day of Passover, and just about 1:30, 2:00 in the afternoon, word was leaked out through one of the officers in the gendarme that they got orders to round up the Jews and get them into a neighboring city where we were going to be housed in a ghetto. Ghettos are being formed all across Hungary and the Jews are to be extricated

from their communities. At first, there was disbelief, but we recognized that it's a fact. I remember I was out at one of my friend's house at a local tailor's house, when my friend came over he told me he just heard from his parents somebody came over from another family and told them the story and they are going over to meet with a neighbor and other neighbors are coming over, the elders of the community are going to meet and talk things over and what to do. My parents went also to the meeting and by about 5:30 in the evening word was out that yes, it's going to be done and that everybody was asked to hide, dig valuables into the ground, and cover them, hide them, whichever way we can, give it to neighbors if we have neighbors that we think are reliable, because we are hoping that ultimately the thing will blow over and War will end and if not, the whole family, some survivors will come back and we will want to be able to come home to something. At that point, there was already facing up to reality. That night we were working in the dark, no light was, we could not put on any light. We went down to the basement where there was a dirt floor, dug holes in the basement and we hid silverware and candlesticks, packed them in big milk cans, metal milk cans and other metal vessels, put them away in the ground. We picked up the wooden floor, and dug down under the wooden floor and we put down these heavy, I think they call them ship cases, that they used to have those hinged trunks, right, we had one of those wooden trunks with metal things, filled them with linens and stuff

like that and we put it under the floor. We dug in the garden, the flower garden, the flower beds and we put away some valuables there. My mother and my sisters opened up seams in our suits, and sewed up paper money, paper bills. We had some dollar bills, American dollar bills that we, every member of family was given a sum of money and sewed up into the suits and we knew that was the suit we were going to take with us. We were at the sort of on the edge of the town, our house was on the end of town, there were about four or five other Jewish families who lived further out. The furthermost Jewish family was the local, millner, the owner of the flour mill. We saw about 5:00 in the morning we saw the gendarmes marching down in pairs, three or four groups were marching past our house, and we knew they were on their way to pick up those families. We saw them marching the families past our windows. We expected them to come to our house, sure enough about 4:30 in the morning they knocked on our door, gave us the order to, the way we heard it, we were told the day before we wouldn't be able to take with us more than one bundle of package, just as much as we can carry with us. We were told that we were given, I don't remember, 15 minutes or 5 minutes, or half hour, I don't remember exactly the amount of time to pack up and go. That's exactly what happened. We were, of course, ready for them and they took us to the synagogue. They gathered all the Jewish families to the synagogue, filled up the synagogue, then those who couldn't stay in the, there's no

room for them in the synagogue, the Rabbi's house was a big house also adjacent to the synagogue, filled that house up with families. They brought in Jewish families during the day and next day from neighboring villages.

How long were you kept there?

Two days.

How many people do you think were there?

[Sigh] I don't know, I guess about 310...350 families all total. And then the afternoon of the next day, we were marched down to the railroad station where there was a train waiting for us, a cattle train, and they took us into a neighboring city about 30 kilometers away and that's where we were let go, they told us we cannot leave town, we have to find our own quarters, where to live and ultimately they told us within about two weeks they would concentrate us into the Jewish area of that Jewish quarter of that city and, they'll enclose us with barbed wire, they told us openly what's going to happen to us and then we will await further orders. And that is exactly what happened.

It was from there that you were deported to Auschwitz?

We were deported from there to Auschwitz in a similar manner. They had four transports from that ghetto. We were in the third transport. There were two transports that left before us. The streets were, first there was voluntary subscriptions to transports, through the intermediary of the Judenrat, the council, the Jewish Council, the gendarme came into the

ghetto and they told us we need so many families, I think it was about 400 families, for a train, the first transport is going to leave on such and such date, we need volunteers whichever way you want to do it, you are responsible for getting us those families into the synagogue and we will take them. There were some volunteers, others were by means of some kind of lottery and they were drawn out of a hat and they went. There were some families who through connections were able to get out of it. In any case, we knew that ultimately everybody would have to go.

Let me ask you a questions first, at this point your parents were with you?

Yes.

Your older brother had gone to Budapest?

My older brother who incidentally lived in Budapest, but he was called up to the army. He was called up to the labor force of the army. He came home on the first day of Passover, on yom tov. My father didn't admonish him for it at all. He came home and he stayed with us. He came to the ghetto with us. In the ghetto the council of our region got together and decided that, that, in consultation with the boys, there were several boys of his age who were called up similarly, in consultation with them they decided that, yes, they would go to the labor force because we don't want to have everybody in, caught in the same fate, whatever is going to be. So, he left about three weeks before they deported us. He went into the labor force.

We'll come back to talk about your brother in Budapest. Your father at this point, had he shaved his beard?

They made him shave his beard, everybody had, an order came out at one point that everybody has to shave his beard. I don't remember exactly how many days before deportation it was, but it was very close to deportation. And he shaved his beard, and uh.....

What effect did that have on you?

It was a, I didn't know how to cope with that. I at one point told my father that "you look very funny." My father told me that was not a very respectful remark and that haunted me, that incident haunted me for a long time afterwards. It was very unusual, I never saw my father shaved. I always saw him with his beard. He had a nice trimmed beard and when he shaved his beard, he didn't look very pleasant. He had deep lines on his face, he was a very worried man and I didn't like what I saw. Neither did I like, I guess, other people who shaved their beard, but my father was closest to me.

Tell me something about the transport to Auschwitz, what do you remember about that?

The transport to Auschwitz they rounded us up in the synagogue, we were together the family again we took a limited amount of our belongings with us and we were in the synagogue about 24 hours. It was subhuman treatments, the gendarme came in, they were beating people, kicking people as they were sleeping. They came in the middle of the night. I

don't know what they were looking for, probably just to harass us. Next day at one point they commanded us out into formation out of the synagogue on the street marching to the railroad station. They loaded us on cattle cars and they, the train took off with us in the direction of Slovakia, north. Before they loaded us on the train, they brought postcards to us from families who were taken in previous transports saying messages to the fact that we are together, the entire family, doing farm work in such a such location, in central or southern Hungary and we were told that was where we were going also. When the train took off into the opposite direction, we tried to explain it by saying that well, they are taking us into, onto the main railroad line which is north of us and they will take us back to Hungary. That didn't happen, of course. When we came into the next big city, where incidentally, my brother was in the labor camp, after a brief stopover, they moved us again north from there into the direction of Poland, so again we said they probably don't want to use mainlines with our train, they want to keep the mainlines open for military movements. Even after we crossed the Polish border, we still were hoping that they are going to take us to Hungary.

Had you heard of Auschwitz?

We heard of Auschwitz already at that point. We heard of Auschwitz, and we didn't want to believe that such thing exists. Auschwitz was not known, in geography classes. We never heard of Auschwitz - there was no such

city. It was, of course, Oswiecim, which was a little village, it was an insignificant village, it wasn't even on the map. When we arrived in Auschwitz, we arrived at night.

How long were you on the train altogether?

Three days.

Before we talk about the arrival, do you remember anything that happened on the train, were there specifics, what was it like in there?

It was very crowded, families were trying to keep together, women and men and children were together in a cattle train. There was no provisions made for sanitary requirements.

What did people do who had to go to the bathroom?

We made our own pots. Pots that were taken on board, we hoped that we would be able to use them for cooking. We curtained off a corner of the train which was designated for a john and women went in there in privacy and men went in there in privacy. What kind of privacy was it?
Right next to it there were people sitting. We emptied these pots through the little window and we were yelled at by the sentry, by the guards who were accompanying the train for doing that. We were given no food, of course, but we had food from what we took with us. No water, we had a little water whatever, as long as it lasted us from what we took on, bottles that we took on with us. I remember an incident, my father was at that point already quiet always, there was very little talking being done. There

was a family, a father and a mother and two adolescent girls who were sitting right next to us. We knew them from the city where the ghetto was. I knew the family, I went to school in that city, I went to Yeshiva in that city, and good looking girls, you know, my age, and I was in conversation with them. And my father sort of looked at me, I don't know what was going through his mind, but I felt sort of, that maybe my father doesn't like the fact that I'm in such serious circumstances I'm pursuing idle conversation with the girls. These are the kind of thoughts that the conflict was within me how to face up to reality, not being able to face up to reality, escaping from it by doing conversation with girls. There was another lady, a spinster who I also knew from town. She was a well travelled woman, she took along her housecoat with her, that was an oriental embroidered housecoat with a dragon on the back. She asked to be permitted to go to the window because she wants to enjoy the passing scenery. My father was telling my mother "she doesn't want to face up to reality, she's interested in scenery." Remarks like that. We stopped in my grandparents' town about 4:00 in the evening. And my mother looked out the little window and here she recognized a young man standing on the railroad station about five tracks away. She yelled out and sent a message to Treitels "...if there are any Treitels in town" the Treitel family being my mother's family, to tell them that Bertha Treitel just went through with her family in the train. The man looked, whether he heard us or not I really

don't know I have no way of telling, and we moved out of that town towards the Polish border. So there was another period of facing up to what's going to come and we denied it, we didn't want to face up to it. In any case, when we arrived in Auschwitz we saw the flames of the tall chimneys, we smelled the smell of burning flesh.

Were these your first impressions, with doors opened and what?

At that point the doors were not opened yet. People told us, well we're here, this is it, there are the chimneys, there are the flames, are those, is that a flame of gas burned? We heard about gas chambers why would the flames be burning, why would they burn gas. People said well, that's flames of fat, human fat, they are burning people who were brought in before us. Stories were weaving and we were guessing and my personal reaction was it's not true, these are exaggerations. The doors opened and we heard dogs barking, strange words were thrown at us, we finally recognized them as German. We saw people in strange prisoner uniforms, striped uniforms, we didn't know what it was. We asked them, "are you Jewish?" "Of course I'm Jewish." We asked them about the uniform they are wearing. They says "you are going to wear the same uniform." They were Polish inmates who were there who were doing the kommando of processing the new arrivals. The German sentry with the dogs were yelling at us to get into formation and start walking up to head of the train. Well, we got off the train, we were yelled off the train, and we started walking.

We were, my two parents, my older sister, with a 2 1/2 year old son on her arms, my other two sisters and my younger brother were with me and we lined up, my parents in the front, my older sister, my next oldest sister, according to age. I recall one incident, my mother asked my sister to let her carry the little boy. Whether she knew that that's a chance for my sister to save herself or not, I don't know. But, my sister's answer was "no, mother, he is my son, he is my responsibility, I'm going to take care of him." And she held onto him. We were marching, Dr. Mengele was there standing at the head of the line and motioning people left in line with his hand, with the gloves on his hand. My father was motioned to his left. My mother was motioned to his right and my oldest sister with the baby was motioned to his right. My two sisters followed after my father and just before he was to tell me which way to go, he called back my father and asked him "what are you doing, what's your profession?" My father told him "farmer", he said "show me your hands." And of course he showed him his hands, so he told him in German, "you're a damn liar, go the other side." We didn't know of course at that point what it meant, we were hoping that he is being sent to maybe a camp for elderly, for older people, and is going to be treated according to his age. We were told to go to his left and there were again sentries with dogs telling us, yelling at us, to keep moving and go into that direction. It was getting daylight at that time already. We kept on looking back, hoping that my father will follow us

and who is coming after us. We saw, it wasn't hard to realize for us, it was all younger people who came after us, men and women, and we were ordered to walk down an alley between barbed wire fences into the direction of the area where the de-lousing and bathing was afterwards. On the way down we saw big piles of pine tree branches and suitcases burning. We thought it was trash being burned. It wasn't until we walked up closer that we saw tall, 8, 9, 10 ft. tall piles moving and we heard babies crying, they were burning live babies in those piles of these branches and suitcases and clothes and whatever. We were made to walk on by the dogs. We found ourselves in an area where there were barracks and we were ordered to shed our clothes, inmates shaved our heads and underarms and private area. We were segregated men from women at that point. We were told you have to enter a bath area and take a shower. By then we were sort of wondering are we going to get showers or gas and it was sort of cutting in and out on us, this is real, unreal, well it was real baths, real showers, so maybe there is no gas. At the other end of the bath barracks we were given prisoner clothes, shoes, and we were told to march on into the same direction. It was production line set up systematically one barrack after the other, baths, clothes, issuing of clothes and shoes and then we came ....

These are prisoners issuing them - were they talking to you at all?

They answered questions and they were giving us questions which we thought was very crude and vindictive. Little did we know why they are

behaving like that. To them it was an everyday happening. We asked them what's going to happen us. They pointed towards the chimneys, "see those chimneys", in yiddish they were telling us, "that's where you're going." We asked them "do you know what happened to our parents?" Same answer, "that's where they are, they're going up in smoke." Some were kinder, we asked them where they're from. We were of course looking for people from area, Slovaks. They told us what we can expect, brace yourself to it. They gave us an education, they were not allowed, they told us we are not allowed to talk to them, so there is very little we can tell you. We are playing with our lives, we are risking our lives if we talk to you. It took about three, four hours, that we went through this process and during that time we had interaction with these people and they gave us an education, they told us where we are.

Were you beaten at any time in this?

Not really, we are just threatened with dogs. We were not beaten, no, not even the prisoners they were not. Later on we were beaten by prisoners, we were beaten by Kapos we didn't know, of course, what a Kapo meant. We found out very soon we were given the education what it is, we were beaten by SS troops who were walking in the camp. We were herded into an area where they put us up later on. We passed through some tables that were out in the open where prisoners were sitting and they were registering us. They were called Schreibers, meaning registrars. They took

our names, addresses, at some points they took our hometown areas, nationalities, professions, whatever, personal data. We were given a number. I was given the number 90052. That was my number. And that number stayed with me all along. I was not tattooed. We were told by some of the prisoners we are shown the numbers and they told us you will be tattooed probably. Like I said, we were not tattooed. They told us to remember this number and we did, of course. We were then brought into a barrack, this is your barrack, find yourself a bunk, this is where you are going to live.

How long were you there?

We were in Auschwitz just a few days, about three or four days.

You were with your brother?

Pardon?

With your brother?

Yes, I was with my brother. We were very careful not to get separated. I met my sisters in that camp, that was a very large camp, it was Lager "C" that had a ditch running through the center of the camp. A deep ditch, it was about eight feet or so deep no water in it. And on the other side of that ditch there were barracks. And on the other side of the barracks there were more camps. Later on I found out that that camp was a family camp where one of my uncles was there with his wife and daughter. We made no contact with them but we saw women walking in prisoner uniform

on the other side of the ditch. We yelled over to them, "do you speak Hungarian?" Do you? They answered "yes," in Hungarian, "where are you from?" And they told us they are from my hometown. I didn't recognize them, I knew those girls very well. So when they told us who they are, they were shaven, their hair were cut off. I asked them about our sisters, they said, "yes, just stay there I'm going to call them". They called our two sisters, they were together. I had a started loaf of bread under my arm. I jumped into the ditch climbed up the other side and gave it to them. At that point I saw a SS coming with a dog, so I jumped back and said goodbye to them and walked back in among the barracks and just stood there and looked at each other and said things to each other, be careful, take care of yourself, take care of each other, did you hear anything about our parents, and we asked them the same questions until we were told to get lost. That's the last I saw my sisters until we came home.

They survived?

They survived. And we met up.

What did you eat while you were in Auschwitz?

We were given, the last thing we were given after clothes and after shoes, we were given an enameled sort of a deep dish and we were told to hold onto that, that's going to be our eating dish. And we were given a spoon and a fork - no knife. We were then told to go by a certain barrack where we would be given food. We were given a very thick soup, which we were

told was made of Doergemüse, naturally we inquired what's Doergemüse, it's dried beets and some cracked barley or cracked wheat, some other dried vegetables, dehydrated vegetables were boiled up with water and that was our food. Here and there there was a sliver of meat. We almost were going on that we were being fed human meat and so on, which wasn't true of course, but you know people were spreading all kinds of things. We were told that the soap we were using was human, was made of human fat, which was true, of course. We were, ... SS would come in, we were milling around, it was pretty disorganized but you know I guess they weren't worried about us, we were within barbed wire and at that point we said to ourselves, God knows how big the camp is. There is camp after camp after camp and we were all secured. There were towers, watch towers of course around us.

What was your state of mind at this point, how did you feel, physically and mentally?

Very, very disorganized and very worried, afraid. I have to learn how to speak German, otherwise I will be lost. Where are our parents? What's going to happen to us? Where are we going? Are they going? They must want to keep us alive otherwise they wouldn't have dressed us in prisoners uniform and give us clothes, whatever bad it is, they gave us clothes and soap and dishes and they are giving us food. I couldn't get myself to eat the food. I didn't dare throwing it away. I was afraid somebody's going to see me, so I just kept the food in my dish, I ate some of the bread and

then I passed it on to my sisters, that was bread brought in by prisoners that they were giving us. I wasn't able to eat the food during my stay in Auschwitz. Not even, we got a ration of margarine and some kind of a jam which they called marmalade.

Were you worried about starving?

No, no I wasn't. I figured sooner or later I'll eat it, I'll be hungry enough and I'll eat it. It wasn't my first encounter with hunger as such. I went hungry already before during the time when we didn't have enough food and there was a period when we had to eat flour or bread that was moldy. We had to hide flour and mice got into it and there was droppings in it, things like that. So we were already exposed to eating subhuman food. So I knew that sooner or later I'll be conditioned to it and I'll eat, if they'll give us enough food. But at that point I wasn't able to eat it. Whether it was the aversion to the food, probably it was a psychological state that I was in. I just couldn't eat.

You were there for three days so they must have sent you to another camp or another labor camp?

They, uhh, on the third day, maybe it was the fourth day, we were told to line up again. There were tables out on the open with people sitting behind the tables and writing and we were told to line up and go through those tables and we were told, they asked our number and we were told we are going on a transport. "Where are we going?" "We don't know, you'll

find out. Go, move on, next." We were then walked out of that camp to the railroad siding, loaded us on cattle cars again and they moved us out. The first city we knew that we were passing through was Kraków. So we knew we were going back into the same direction as we came from. We came through Kraków to Auschwitz. So we were hoping we were going back to Hungary maybe. We asked the sentry who was with us and he told us "we don't know ourselves." We were taken to Warsaw. The trip lasted, it was an overnight trip, and again we were met by more SS with shepherds and we were yelled on our way marching through one part of the city and we were led into the Warsaw ghetto, which at that point was already surrounded by a tall brick wall with barbed wire fence on the top of the wall and brick watch towers.

Were you told of the rebellion?

We were told of the rebellion in the camp by other inmates already there. At that point we met the inmates and we were brought into the camp that was to be our living quarters for the rest of the stay in Warsaw.

Did you hear any stories about the rebels?

Yes. We were told stories just like we know it now. We were also told that some made it out. We were also told that some made it to Israel and at that point we didn't know whether it was fabricated or they really got feedback through the Partisans. We were told that there are Partisan activities in the city and that from time to time they have contact with

them. We were also told that within the ghetto we were pointed out a building that was at the other end of the ghetto, there was a tall building prison called the Pawiack where they kept political prisoners, Pollacks and all kinds of other prisoners, but we have no contact with them. We were told by the prisoners that there is the Gestapo headquarters which is housed within the ghetto, they showed us the building, which is adjacent to the camp, and told us about another camp, barracks, that the old camp they referred to across the street that was put up right after the rebellion and housed prisoners who came then, older prisoners. We had contact with these prisoners in work, at work.

The work you were doing, you were sent there to clear away?

We were sent there to clear the rubble and salvage whatever is salvageable material, building material there is in those buildings. We were told that the last survivor of the rebellion that they encountered was a 17 year old girl who was shot on site as soon as she was brought up from basement. She was incoherent, all gray hair and when they entered the basement as they were cleaning the rubble, they found her father dead, decomposed already. And they found food in the basement. And we were told that other survivors met similar fates, nobody got out alive from those who they found. We were told about the struggle of the people in the ghetto, about the phosphorous bombs that were thrown at them. We were told about the people who supposedly escaped and they made it into the ranks of the

Partisans on the outside and that they have contact with those people. Then we were told about at least one person who they know they made it into Israel, or Palestine at that time. We were, we didn't have any formal contact with the outside world. Our only contact was a matter of fact a Polish foreman who was a resident of the city and he came in, he was employed by a salvage company who bought the bricks and plumbing and whatever salvageable material there was, from the Germans and transported it out into the city. He came every morning and left every evening after we went back to camp.

As someone who was raised in such a religious family, from a religious perspective, what was going through your head? Were there ever any services that you saw conducted in the barracks in Auschwitz or in Warsaw?

Yes, we had as a matter of fact, a famous Klausenburger Rabbi was with us. He had regular services every morning and every evening in his barrack.

This is in Warsaw?

In Warsaw. We were invited to partake in services. I never went to services partially because it meant for me to get up earlier, partially I don't really know why, I didn't, but there were regular services there. There was tefillin available, we found tefillin, we found prayer books, and we found taleisim.

Was there any cynicism among the prisoners at that point?

Some. Some of the prisoners were laughing at us, they were making fun of us, they told us "it's not going to save you anyways, it's not going to do any good for you, you're crazy." Others kept their distance and they just looked on silently. Others, of course, took part in the services because they believed. For myself, I found myself more time than not saying part of the prayers at least in the morning and in the evening.

How was it that no one found out about the services taking place, that none of the guards or the Kapos?

Once we went through the gates coming back from work, there was no guards inside. Only guards were in the towers, in the watch towers. We were guarded and we were supervised by prisoners, Kapos and people who were put in charge, so called block Altesters who were the elders of the block of the barrack. The lager Altester who was the top administrator of the prisoners. When he found out about the Klausenburger Rabbi, he came into camp, he lived outside of camp, proper but within the ghetto. He had his quarters. He came in and he went for a personal inspection, he met the Rabbi, he talked to him and his reaction surprisingly was that he provided extra food, extra rations of bread, of jam, to the Klausenburger Rabbi, so he can sustain himself and he allowed the services as long as everybody reported to work. He exempted him from work.

This is a German prisoner?

That was a German prisoner, we were told that he was a former judge, who was imprisoned for some political reasons.

Let me ask you a question about your own participation in that, do you think that you were losing faith at this point or did you ever?

I was at least questioning. I did not lose faith. I kept on coming back and convincing myself that, yes, God is part of it, this is a conscious happening of his will and for whatever reason he may have for it I wasn't questioning it. I was, of course, reared that way, I was brought up to believe in that manner. Of course I questioned why. I had no answers and I was, that's where I stopped. Whether it was an automatic protective reaction for me to stop there, or was it really the outcome of my education and rearing, I don't know. It was probably a combination of both, but I put myself through the whole Holocaust period in that state. It wasn't until after I came home where I alienated myself from the religious practices. I never disassociated myself from God as such. But, I stopped praying, I stopped, I ate non-kosher food, I ate pork for several years after liberation after I came home. I came back to religion around 1957. I moved to New York and I moved into a religious environment and it was all familiar grounds for me, ultimately I started practicing again and I came back to eating only kosher food and praying every day. But there was a period when I questioned at least the sense of the religious practices.

I think we can stop here now.

(Beginning of Tape 2. Begins in the middle of a sentence)

.....so there are 45 persons on one side of the, in one third, and 45 in the other third of the car. We were sitting in each other's lap, squatting on those blankets. After just about 3 1/2 days of travelling in the train also, when we got out of the train our flesh was literally in pieces and our seats from that damp, hard blanket, we were not allowed to get up, we had to avoid sitting down. We were so hungry. Once they fed us canned meat, salted meat.

Salted meat?

Salted meat. No bread, I'm sorry, once we got bread also. We got no water whatsoever. There were urine was passed around in cans for drinking. I myself tasted urine which I guess luckily I didn't drink enough of it to hurt me. By the time we arrived in Dachau we were totally flattened by the trip, we were at the end of our physical strength, we were starving, we were in good condition yet because in Warsaw the food we got was relatively nutritious. We got a good reception in Dachau, we were told to stay on a big appellplatz, on a big open field and they put out metal drums for our personal needs and we were told to try to, we were told by inmates who came, medical inmates who came among us, try to void and pass your bowels. They gave us coffee, what they called coffee, first to drink and then they started feeding us bread and soup. It was only, we arrived in Dachau early in the morning about maybe 8:00 in the morning.

It wasn't till the evening that they took us into barracks. They put us up and those barracks were old, worn, but relatively clean and they gave us, they line us up for food, they gave us a regular evening meal, which consisted of soup, with meat in it, thick soup, gave us a good ration of bread, margarine, again, jam. Somewhere along the line we even got some fruit. Breakfast was again a very light soup, they even gave us sometimes choice of either a soup or coffee, a couple slices of bread. Lunch they gave us again heavier one dish meal and again evening meal repeated itself. There was a lot of conscription going on by trades, by conditions, if somebody complained that they didn't feel good or had problems or had open wounds, we were treated.

It sounds like that the prisoners then were covered with their own excrement and urine and told to use group latrines, barrels of some sort. Was there any illness from all this that people...?

Yes, there were people who had to be hospitalized as a result of the trip, as a result of their reaction to the conditions we were going through. As for myself, I literally had to dig my bowels out with my fingers, that's how bad it was. I got out of it relatively easy. I was in good physical condition, so was my brother. I know of people who, I never saw after Dachau, they went into hospital and they never made it. They were older people. I saw people who were in bad shape with open wounds, there were people who were, they accumulated water, they had to be treated for that. We were

taken away from Dachau in one of the first transports and we were brought to Muhldorf where we were assigned labor at a post where they were building an underground factory.

This is Muhldorf?

Muhldorf.

How long were you in Dachau?

We were in Dachau less than a week, about maybe five days, four and a half days. I can't recall exactly the amount of days because it is sort of fading out already, but I know it was less than a week. When we arrived in Muhldorf we arrived in a forest. We were taken, marched from the train to that forest into a barbed wire area where there were some tents pitched inside the barbed wire area. We were told this was going to be our camp. We were given some food. Next morning my brother and I were taken out of that camp into a camp, a formal camp with barracks, with wooden barracks, about maybe three miles away from there next to an airport and we were put up there. They had military barracks there, the SS who were manning the camp were in those barracks. There was a woman's camp about 10 barracks or so in that complex and there was a total of about maybe 30 or so barracks where we were housed. There were some prisoners who were there who came directly from Auschwitz. There were several transports that came there before us. We had proper kitchen facilities in that camp, we had a hospital barrack, we had a storeroom

barrack where one of the SS officers lived. He was in charge of the supplies, clothes and food and within about three or four days we were assigned to march out to the area where the construction was going on. At that point, they were, all they were doing really is they had small narrow track trains, construction trains, lorries, they were transporting gravel, making an artificial mountain which turned out to be a hangar type huge structure of about maybe six feet thick concrete wall, maybe even thicker than that, which was supposed to be bomb proof and when that was finished we started to scoop out the gravel from under this bowl shaped structure and that was to be an underground aircraft factory. The ultimate main work area was dragging cement bags 50 kilos, 100 lbs. cement bags on our backs walking up wooden planks about twenty feet tall to top of cement mixer machines and pouring those bags into the machines. The ready mixed cement was then taken away with these lorries to pour into the ground. That Kommando, the cement Kommando it was called, was a very effective killer. They didn't need any gas chambers, they didn't need any executions, nobody survived that commando for more than a few weeks. People were literally within a few days the cement, the dust got onto their lungs and they dried up, just dried up developed maybe tuberculosis or whatever. Their lungs were affected. Their faces became, people started looking like birds, their noses like beaks, that's how effective

that cement was. And they developed water retention problems, cankers, open wounds that didn't heal.

Musulmann?

From cement.

They were Musulmann?

They were, that's where we became familiar with the word Musulmann. We literally saw people keeling over as they were walking with the cement, that they became machines, even if they didn't have anymore strength, they just walked with those cement bags. We saw them keel over, fall off the plank, or fall on top of the machine, dead. Just keeling over and going dead. Every day there were wagons, there was a Kommando, to pick up these dead people and take them.

Can I ask you again, what kinds of things went through your mind when you saw such events?

At that point, at that point, I started developing this attitude already in Warsaw, particular the trip from Warsaw into Dachau. I developed an attitude of saving myself at any cost. In any given situation, there was only one going thought from my mind, save yourself. Whether it was getting a bigger portion of food or getting a better warmer coat, or better shoes, or getting out of a bad Kommando into a better Kommando, instinctively avoiding selections into bad transports. That was the superior thought in my mind. So was it in my brother's mind, and other fellows that I knew.

And that's how you coped with Warsaw?

I just shut the world out of my mind. I had an invisible thing around me, a protective field around me and I was watching out for myself, help my brother as much as I could, help other prisoners if I could. And that wasn't my own, it wasn't peculiar to me only, other prisoners did the same thing. Some succumbed to inhuman behavior, but pretty much in Muhldorf we were out to save ourselves. We sort of felt that the end must be nearby. We were, we got away from the Auschwitz treatment naturally when we got out of Auschwitz. In Warsaw they handled us relatively easy because I guess they wanted to have production out of us. It was in Muhldorf where they subjected us to this condition with the cement, there were some Kommandos, some satellite Kommandos that were related to the construction, I got into an electrician Kommando at one point, there were carpenters, there were other related Kommandos that were better, they didn't have anything to do with cement and they were not exposed to that danger. But, it was sort of a death factory of its own, new transports came, replacements, man, material came, arrived, the only way out of there was through death. People were taken away, they died, and they were taken away. There were two transports, two major death transports out of the camp while I was well. One of them was a selection out of the blue sky, Mengele came into camp and he just selected people out and they took them to a Dachau area extermination camp and another one was they

selected out people who were not in that good physical condition, took them away, and they brought in new replacement, I guess that was just about the time when Auschwitz was liquidated out of the, and they were squeezing in the prisoners into central Germany.

You said when you were well?

There was a third one and I fell ill. Everybody was infected with lice. In spite of efforts put up by prisoners to keep clean, we were defenseless to lice. And they carried fleck typhus with them and people got infected and developed high temperature and died. I fell ill with typhus in April 1945. My brother literally saved me. He was in the kitchen and he, first I was put up in my barrack. The block Alteste was an Hungarian older Jew and he tolerated me staying in there. He didn't report me that I didn't go to work for a few days, but then they had to take me. They would not take me into the hospital, but they took me to the area of the camp that was reserved for the typhus infected inmates and I was there and my brother kept bringing coffee and aspirin. We had no other medications and that kept me going until one night they apparently decided to evacuate that part of the camp and my brother found out, somehow. He went after one of the SS officers who he knew through a kitchen and he begged him, literally begged him, to save his brother. He came in, called my name, and the name of another fellow who was from an area not far from our hometown, who also had a brother in the kitchen. Somehow they had an

affinity for kids, these bastards, the SS, and two kids came up to them and begged for their brother. It was my lucky moment. He came in and he got us out of there. There was a third fellow who actually came over to my bunk and shook my conscious. At that point they stole my clothes off me. I wasn't aware of it, I was in my shirt. He woke me up and said "they are calling your name come on let's go up there" and he dragged me out front to the door and the SS told me to sit down there and told the other boy sit down and wait for me. He marched us out the camp into the hospital barrack. The third boy hid in the latrine under the boards, until they emptied the camp, they loaded the whole camp on the train, that's the last, nobody came back for those people. They treated me, I don't even know how, what they did with me in the hospital, but I recovered sufficiently to be released into the barracks and I made it out of there. So did this other fellow and this third boy he told us the story what happened, we kept quiet about it and he's alive, he made it all the way home. I slowly, through the help of my brother again thanks to rations and whatever he could give me, he got me some more potatoes and bread, I recovered. Very shortly after about two, three weeks later they evacuated the whole camp. They put us on a train again and we were travelling back and forth, it was only really central and upper Bavaria that was un-occupied by that point, either by the allies or the Russians on the east. Ultimately, we were liberated by the American forces.

Let's stop just a minute, I'd like to go back you told me a story a little while ago about a religious service in Warsaw, sometime ago you also told me a similar story about a service in Muhldorf.

Yes, we had Yom Kippur services, Kol Nidre, on the eve of Yom Kippur. In our barrack, our camp was predominantly Hungarian, but in our barrack there was a man who we knew from back home, Grunberger who was there with his son. He was a relatively young man, in those days about maybe, what, 35, his son was my age and he wrote down services, the text of the services, on a cement bag, brown paper, with a pencil, two, three, sheets of it and handed it out. We got permission, we convinced the Hungarian block Alteste to let us scrub up the barrack, hang paper on the windows, we lit candles, after dinner other people from other barracks came in, it was packed, jam packed and the guard was posted out at the door just in case some SS come in. He conducted services by memory. It was a beautiful and encouraging experience. Next day, of course, we marched out to work and the SS found out that it's Yom Kippur. Some people, I guess, asked permission to stay in because it's a holiday, whatever. There were some people who did that. When we came in after work, they denied us food. They told us it's Yom Kippur, you don't have to eat, no food. That was our Yom Kippur in camp. There was another experience, of course it was a private experience, Passover came around and that was a time when just before when I came down with typhus. At

that point, I made the, in Muhldorf I got out of the cement the very day, the first day I worked there, I only stayed there half of a day. I worked my way ultimately into the kitchen. When heavier bombing started, I was taken out. I was older, two years older than the level of the kids who were, the age level of the kids who were in the kitchen and I was commanded out to go out at night and work the bombed damages. One morning I came in from the city with a Kommando from digging trains out, my brother as a rule was waiting for me in the morning with part of food, he gave me cabbage. I was trying to observe Passover and not to eat bread and that was about second or third day into Passover and I couldn't eat the food, I didn't feel good. That's when I came down with typhus. But after that point, I would eat bread, so that we talked about religion before, it was with me even through this experience. I really never gave it up and it must of helped me a great deal to have that faith, that blind faith.

Were you thinking always of a reunion, were you thinking of your family?

I was thinking of my family. I knew that my parents are gone. I pretty much expected my older sister have gone, by then we knew all the stories, whatever inmates who came from Auschwitz, who went through the whole experience, we met up with inmates who were there fourth or fifth year already. But I had high hopes for my brother, that my older brother, will be re-united with us.

Tell me what happened to him.

Well, he made his way up to Budapest somehow, after he went into the labor unit of the army. Ultimately, he got himself Hungarian gentile papers and he got into the Free Corps, to that Hungarian SS, it was called the Arrow Cross instead of the Hakenkruez, they had the Arrow Cross. Their insignia was a cross with arrows and he wore the uniform of a master sergeant in that outfit. There were fellows who came back who were saved by him, who came back into our town and into neighboring towns. They told us about it, third or fourth day when they found out we were back, they came into town and they told us exactly what they knew about my brother. Budapest fell to the Russians in I think on the 23rd of February. My brother signed for money that he picked up from a gentile family that our family had money and my uncle used to be partners with him and he left money with him and he made arrangements whoever comes from the family for money, to give them. He signed on the 19th of February for money. Supposedly, that very day or the day after, he had an accident. He always walked with his side arm cocked. They were telling us stories that it happened people, there were other fellows who were in the uniform also, in the underground, and they were recognized, so they just took out their arms and they shot the soldier who recognized them and that's how they saved their lives. He went into a movie theater, now one of the fellows who came back to our town was in that movie theater. He heard the shot and he saw my brother being taken away with an ambulance into the

hospital. Apparently, he got on the operating table, the bullet went into his thigh. They got him on the operating table, and they recognized him being circumcised, circumcision was not being done among gentiles in Europe and they took him, the practice was, whoever was recognized, he was taken to the Danube and shot. This fellow told us that he heard from other people who supposedly followed him as he was being taken from the hospital to the Danube. How authentic that story is, I don't know, but, of course, he never came back.

Was he working with Wallenberg?

He was working with the underground and he was taking regularly people into the protected houses of the Swedish consulate, who we now know that these houses were manned, were supervised by Wallenberg. We didn't know right after the War there was such men as Wallenberg, the personality was publicized really years later, but that's what he was doing. There were survivors who came back to us and told us that he was taken into that house by my brother. The practice being that my brother would see a Jewish fellow being marched by other three guard members, and he having the rank went over to him, "hey comrade, let me take care of this damn Jew." Took him off his hands and marched him into the protected house. So, we were hoping for my brother to come home, of course, he didn't. My two sisters came home, they were together, incidentally in a similar fashion. They went to other concentration camps, aircraft parts

factories. My younger sister, who's older than I am, but she is the younger of two sisters, developed a permanent skin disease from the acid that she was working with, plating the parts. They came home before us.

In terms of thinking of the reunion, what exactly do you think helped you to survive all of this?

Well, like I said before, I'm sure to a great extent it was my blind faith. Another part of it was being able to develop that protective shield around me and close out the world from me. But, I know that I was feeding on the hope to come back and meet up with my family. Meet up with my brothers, I kept on telling myself, my brother, he is okay. Anyways, he is a hero figure in my youth, always. An older brother, he was a good looking young man, he was, he learned a good trade while he was young, he went off to Budapest, he was, the whole family looked up on him, looked at him as somebody they have high hopes for. And I just, talking to my brother, we both believed, that he is going to be home. He will wait for us at home and we really have nothing to worry about. We don't have our parents, but we have our older brother waiting for us at home. He will be replacing our parents. As it turned out, I'm sure that void not having my parents at that age affected my whole life.

How do you think it affected your life, the experience of the five years?

Well, for one thing, for a long time, for many years, maybe even now, I always considered myself, the immediate years after the war, just about five

years younger than I actually was. I always considered myself younger. I sort of closed off that period of about five years in my life that were bad and I shut out that period from my life and I literally, mentally I considered myself that much younger. When I was 30, I considered myself 24 or 25 and so on. Maybe now that gap is even wider. I don't consider myself 57 years old that I am. Maybe I consider myself 40, mentally. So, I got over the actual Holocaust period by putting that protective shield around me, a mental area that all I care for is today and tomorrow, save myself, straddle through this period and the end is near.

Do you think that it stayed with you?

No, something else I developed that I know now, I didn't know that of course, but now I know, I am conscious of it. That developed into, I came home and suddenly I find myself facing the responsibilities of a new life. I was a young man then, I was 19, 20 years old, 21, 22, 23 years old, and I don't have a trade, I don't have education, ready to look to get married age wise, I don't have the will or desire to get married. Frightened, I was frightened that I thought of it, that I found a family, that I'll establish a family, I don't want that, that's not my job yet, not my task yet. I pushed myself away from that kind of thoughts. Finally, I got myself to start to learn a trade and to start to catch up with education, but there was always the difficult decisions I skimmed over. Ultimately, I developed an attitude that I put myself floating up at a certain height and I just floated over the

difficulty that I didn't want to face up to and that stayed with me to some extent even today. And to a very intense stage in a period of my life particularly when the kids, when my two sons started to be, when they were about 10 years old, that area, which goes back only 5, 6 years ago, 8 years ago, when I went into business. I worried about the everyday things that were involved with business, planning and so on. But when it came to a difficult stage where I felt I can't handle it, just skim it over, bridge it over, it will work out, something will happen. And that something will happen I suspect was a derivative of my blind faith, the religious faith, that carried me through concentration camps. So there is a connection, of course, but it was a different type of acting, and re-acting that was the post war period that I conditioned myself to in the post war period that it was during the war. Of course, I paid my price like any other survivor. My family, I went so far with my wife about talking about the Holocaust period, talking about my experiences, not further, I didn't want to, at one point I decide always I don't want to go any further. With my children it's a different, I told them certain things. Even today I don't, I try, but I still find myself not talking to them about my experiences, no automatic discussions. I have to get myself, I want to do it because I just want to get them into it, so that they know, but I can talk to you, I can talk to somebody else about it. I wasn't able to for a long period except with prisoners, with fellow inmates, with fellow survivors, there were certain types of conversation about experiences

that I was able to do. I was, for a long time, for many years, I was not able to get myself to cry, to break down and cry. No real emotions, no sympathetic emotions really. I went to a funeral, I didn't get involved really on a close basis to it, I was keeping myself away. I did not want to open up any valves to the hurt that I was carrying inside.

Did you cry during the experience? When you found out about your parents for example, did you cry then?

I cried once in Warsaw. There was a Sunday afternoon that we got off from work and we were just let wandering around, we were free to go to a barber's if we wanted to, to do whatever we wanted on this Sunday afternoon and I wandered away from my brother somehow, I don't remember exactly, but I know that I came, I sat down behind the wall of the one of the barracks and I just couldn't stop with crying. There was another time when I cried in Muhldorf, which was similar circumstances except that it was right after the incident that allied planes came over our camp, they came down and they shot at the inmates and one of my very close friends, a Yugoslav boy, was shot into his abdomen and he died before they could do, within a half an hour and then it was the next day or the weekend after that, I found myself in a similar mental stage and I broke down and cried. After that, there was one time, when I lived in Montreal and I was in business and things were very difficult for me and I sort of, I was driving from one customer to another, I had to go through a

part of town that was relatively long drive, about a half an hour's drive, delivering some goods, and I pulled over, I just put my head down on the steering wheel and I cried, I felt as if I'm back in prison, I'm back in a concentration camp, the economical condition, the condition in business, I was in a tight, I didn't know what was going to happen with my business and I broke down and cried. But even after that, for many years, I was not able to cry. It wasn't until really recently. First of all, six years ago I was hit with a viral infection and nerve damage in my legs and I was on vacation in St. Martin, I got into a tiny small hospital there. In that experience I was frightened again and I was afraid that I was paralyzed and I was afraid that paralysis was going to, it was moving up, it stopped at my hips, but I was afraid it was going to go up and I didn't know what was happening to me. I started crying then. I made it home, my wife was with me, and I made it home to Sinai Hospital here and after that, I had, I broke down. I broke down and cried for no reason, daily, several times a day. Since then I had periods, even during services, religious services, Sabbath services, there would come certain times when I would cry. But, peculiarly I was never, never able to concentrate on the memorial services, on Kaddish, on Yahrzeit, observing Yahrzeit after my parents I know the date when they were exterminated. Not until the communal Kaddish that we said in Washington at this last gathering when, after President Reagan talked, the whole arena got up and we recited Kaddish. I broke down and

cried, that was the first time I was able to connect to the loss of my parents.

Are you affected in similar ways with memories from the camp experience during the day, you say you went to services and sometimes you've wept at this period of distress, does that happen on other occasions too, when you hear a Kol Nidre services, for example, do you think that service in Muhldorf?

When I, practically every Kol Nidre, I think of my childhood Kol Nidres. Kol Nidre was a service that was very emotional to us at home.

Not the one at Muhldorf?

No, no. I never connect to that. I connect back to my childhood. But when I think, when I do think about that Kol Nidre service in Muhldorf, it's one of the very rare emotional experiences that I had in concentration camps. I don't even know whether I, maybe I had a couple more, when I, I know that I was thinking I was grateful to my brother when I realized, that I, I made it already. I know I was emotional in my thoughts towards my brother. I have another experience when I met up with a Rabbi in Muhldorf who was a contemporary of my grandfather and he had a Schtubel in my grandfather's town and my grandfather used to go to services to his Schtubel. He told me that he knows the exact day of the Yahrzeit of my grandfather, that my grandfather never made it to Auschwitz, he died before ghetto on this and this date in which city he told me. So I sort of related to him in, and cried and that was another

emotional experience. But, when I think back, you know when I partake in Kol Nidre services now, it's interesting that you ask but I never connect really to that one. I go back to my childhood, to my past.

Do you frequently during the day remember things, do things pop into your mind?

Yes, oh yeah, practically on a daily basis, I go back in my memory to the Holocaust, one experience or the other, one stage or the other. I still have nightmares whenever I get into a mental condition that I go through difficult period, I have nightmares. I use to have nightmares more often. I'm now on a more levelled out psychological state then I use to be. But when I look back at it, I had some very difficult years. I don't know whether it's the gathering or it's just the age or the time that has elapsed, I sort of feel that I am finding myself. As a matter of fact, the gathering when I was back with the fellow prisoners with the fellow inmates, many times I felt I'm back in concentration camp. I observed the behavior of some people, that they were behaving the same inhuman way, in a degraded subhuman fashion. My reaction to that was, maybe twice I reacted to it, I got jittery but it was a generous sort of charitable reaction to that, they can't help it. My own personal reaction to it was that, to the gathering, I sort of felt I have arrived. My liberation is completed. That was the first time I felt that really, that I am, okay I am now somebody, I am really out. In spite of my family, in spite of having a wife and children

and certainly beautiful children and a beautiful wife, that was the first time I felt that I am out of concentration camp.

In the few minutes that are remaining, is there anything else you'd like to add?

Well, I never had really the feeling that I'm glad that I survived. Often I've asked myself why was I picked to survive, why not my brother, okay not my parents, but why not my brother? Why not my sister, why did she have to hold onto that child? As much as I loved that child, I really did. When the kids came, I could not get myself to be glad, of course I was glad, it was my flesh and blood, when I was getting married, I was glad that I am getting married, I found somebody who is I consider suitable for sharing my life with. It wasn't until the last few years, and I'm very sorry for it, I know that I've hurt my children, I know that I've deprived my wife of experiences of really being able to share, but it's now starting to develop in me that gratitude that I made it back, including my gratitude to the United States for liberating, as much as misgivings as I may have for not doing enough and not doing enough in time and so on and so forth, but there is, I'm conscious of the gratitude to the United States and to the allied forces and to Canada for finding a homeland there. I have the desire to go out and teach and tell my story to people who don't know, so that future happenings can be avoided. I believe that can be done, whereas before I used to say, I don't want to talk about it because you don't understand it anyways. You don't know, you can't relate to my

experiences, only mine, private, I can relate to it. Maybe another fellow survivor, but you wouldn't dare, you don't know what it is. You gonna look at me like crazy, I'm telling you stories that is unbelievable and you think I made it up, just like I made up, just like the attitude I took when our friend came home from Lublin and we said he exaggerated, that was my attitude before. Now, I want to go out and share my experiences to others. So that they can learn from it, so that I can teach and this is why I am involved in the Holocaust movement, this is why I am involved in going out and talking to classes. I want to give of myself and maybe through this interaction I will be able to reach out and connect to my own children and to my wife. I was not able to work that out yet.

You connected today, thank you.