Hass, Irving
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Abstract

Irving Hass was born on May 18, 1925 in Ruscova, Romania, the oldest child of an observant family; he had five sisters and a younger brother who died of pneumonia at age nine or ten. His father, who had served in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War 1, was a supervisor for a lumber manufacturing company; he was away all week, coming home on Fridays. His mother raised the children and tended the family's garden. Irving attended a Romanian public school and a cheder before the Hungarians came. Early in the war, his uncle in America sent food packages to the family. When the Hungarians took over, there was food rationing; there was no public school for the Jews; many men were taken for labor; they had to wear a yellow star. The Germans came in with the Hungarians.

Soon his family, along with the other Jewish families in Ruscova were marched to a ghetto in Vişeu [Note First transcription has this as Wishov. Second transcription notes this as Vitsyuv. However, Vitsyuv is in the Ukraine and is further from Ruscova than the distance Irving Hass indicates. There are many sources that mention Vişeu de Sus as having a ghetto.] From there they were loaded into cattle cars and taken to Auschwitz. His five sisters and parents were taken to the crematorium, and he was sent to the barracks. One day he jumped out of the barracks and got into a line of people being transferred to Theresienstadt, where he was put to work building a highway. He survived by placing paper under his striped uniform for warmth and stealing raw potatoes at night to ease his hunger. From Theresienstadt he was sent to another camp and then to Flossenbürg. As the liberating forces approached, there was a forced march to a forest where the Germans machine-gunned those still alive; Irving was shot and taken to a hospital by an American.

After the war he started looking for his family. Emily Post helped him get on the ship *The Ernie Pyle* and he arrived in New York on June 20, 1947. After a short stay with HIAS, he was placed in the custody of his uncle. In New York, he was given treatment for a nervous stomach condition. He was drafted into the US Army and succeeded in fighting the anti-Semitism of his Sergeant by "going to the top" and informing the Colonel. Mr. Hass studied how to read blueprints and tells of his many promotions and transfers during his working years. Mr. Hass believes that remembering his father's teachings helped him through the Holocaust and in life.

Transcript
Tape One, Side A

Interviewer: My name is Anthony DiIorio and I'm at the home of Mr. Irving Hass in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, and I'm here on behalf of the Holocaust Museum in Washington to interview Mr. Hass about his experiences during the Holocaust. Good afternoon, Irving.

Irving Hass: How are you doing? Nice meeting you.

Interviewer: A pleasure meeting you and your wife.

Irving Hass: Thank you.

Interviewer: Perhaps we can begin by telling us when you were born and where you were born.

Irving Hass: I was born on May 18, 1925 in a town named Ruscova [Riskeva, Riskeve, Riskova, Riskovi, Ruskava, Ruskova, Visha Orom, Visooroszi], Romania. My father was working for a lumber manufacturing in a … fifteen miles from Ruscova; and we were a nice family together. He used to work all week and used to come home on … only on Fridays, Saturdays from his work. I went to Hebrew school, which was called cheder, and I went to the regular school. And was a quiet town, and we were really happy, like you say, as a family. My father always says … said to me — education and to be believing what you heard and done; that will carry you far, and I always believed in my father and mother. And at one day, in the early time, we were here in the war zone with Germany. And it was still Hungarian at one time — occupied, Hungarian-occupied, our town. And later on then the Romanians came back, and it was going back and forth; I cannot remember exactly. The town — we had two synagogues and about two or … I would say, 350 Jewish families. And we had our own house, and we lived close to the police department. And then we used to see how time changes, because of this war going on with the Nazis. My father read good German, and he was telling us what the Germans were doing. And we heard the word, "Eisenhower"; and I heard about … talking about Eisenhower and the command and so on. And then he got a hold of … he brought a German newspaper, which he's got where he was working. And … and then was reading; and I could read already real good German. And it was telling what the war … Hitler … was going on. And one day, they came in and took some … certain people from our town in advance; and like … they send them to a labor camp, which is … young boys actually … which in the early, let's say in the twenties and twenty-five. And we never heard from them, you know. Then the Hungarians came in; which we were under Hungary when the Nazis took us. And they took us to a … a place where we … we assembled — in synagogue, church; wherever was room. And then they start marching us out — which is a town — it's about 40 miles from Ruscova, called

Vitsyuv [Vitsev, Wiciow]. [Note First transcription has this as Wishov. Second transcription notes this as Vitsyuv. However, Vitsyuv is in the Ukraine and is further from Ruscova than the distance Irving Hass indicates. There are many sources that mention Vişeu de Sus as having a ghetto.] I don't know how to spell it now — but Vit … Vitsyuv and there we're transported, loaded … loaded in trains, cattle car. My father was a traveled man, and he know that this is something not to believe; and he was saying: *Oh God, help me.* So they loaded us in the car with all German soldiers with mixed-in Hungarians which … from the Hungarian army. And whatever we could take — we left the tables and kitchens, everything … you know … with the … the food on the table; and we just took whatever we could grab. In Vitsyuv, the transport which they loaded us in cattle cars, and then they sealed it, and we traveling. And going around, my father recognized, he says: *Oh my God, we are no more in … in Hungary, we are in Poland.* And he says: *God — where could they take us to Poland?* We didn't know about Auschwitz; we didn't know about anything, and here we are … going at night. They didn't give us anything to eat, and people were drinking their urine in the rail … in the car, crying; and we had some … some of them were already suffocated to death in that railroad car. It took us about three and a half days to reach the destination.

Interviewer: What time of the day did you get into the …?

Irving Hass: We got into … I would say, in the morning, about eleven o'clock — in the morning.

Interviewer: Do you remember when this was?

Irving Hass: It was … I think … it was in 19 …. I … I would know it was in, uh, early — end of April — or early … about … about — it was still snow. It was about April.

Interviewer: Late April, early April?

Irving Hass: Yes. They opened the railroad cars, and then there was all SS men — in front of the cars; and they unloaded us. We stay … we …

Interviewer: What did you have with you?

Irving Hass: I had no baggage, nothing. That's all I had, my clothes; and my father carried a valise. I don't know what he took in his valise. Maybe he took whatever jewelry; maybe he took whatever — his praying things. And — my mother had the little girl with her and my four sisters.

Interviewer: So your entire family …

Irving Hass: Entire family; there was a man with a stick and said: *Left* and *right*.

Interviewer: German or Hungarian?

Irving Hass: German; this was in … in Auschwitz. That was Poland, and we arrived in Auschwitz. And as we were going, I don't know what side I was going. It was the left or the right; and he was segregating. And that's the last time I saw my father and mother and my four sisters. I don't — say five sisters. It was four … five sisters; my father and mother and five sisters; and my mother was crying. They took me away, and I wound up in the barracks; wooden barracks in Auschwitz. I thought I saw chimneys there and smoke and people going around. And the sleeping on a wooden shelf; it's like a shelf — staggered. And one day in Auschwitz, people were assembling to go. And I didn't care where they going; I jumped out of the barracks, and I got in the line. And the line was lucky; we were transferred to … Theresienstadt. And … and … Theresienstadt, I don't know what that camp, that Theresienstadt, and we were …. Find out we were, I … I was out of Auschwitz. And I even was lucky; I didn't get a number on my arm. I …

Interviewer: Was this by cattle car as well?

Irving Hass: Yeah; and I didn't care, I didn't realize it. I … this transport, there were people lining up. In … in Auschwitz, could have been maybe to go to the crematorium, I didn't know. I was lucky that transport was going to Theresienstadt to work. And I wind up there, I was no more in Auschwitz; I was in Theresienstadt. And from there I was working.

Interviewer: How long were you in Auschwitz then?

Irving Hass: I would say I was in Auschwitz not more than four days. That was my luck because I got myself in that transport. And that from … from God — gave me to mix myself in with the other people.

Interviewer: So you took the initiative …

Irving Hass: Initiative.

Interviewer: … to join this transport?

Irving Hass: I didn't know where they were going.

Interviewer: No.

Irving Hass: I took the initiative, and this saved my life.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Irving Hass: And I would … I … I would probably have been … been burned in Auschwitz just like my father and mother and five sisters. I was working in Theresienstadt there, and they were … they were taking us out to work. And we were working … working on a highway, to make a highway. I remember we had — the stones had to be standing up and flat. And each one, individual, put in by hand. And they had machinery they put me in; they were grinding stones. Today's date, I have to yell sometimes; I think I'm there. People tell me, don't yell when you talk to me. Now, and it … my wife couple of times said, and some people also when I talk and I forget myself — because I was working with a guy next to the stone machine, we couldn't hear each other. I was screaming to … to say a word he should understand what … what it mean … what I'm talking. And from then on I'm thinking. I'm looking — still on this machine; and that I'm talking. So we were … I worked in there for … it last for about, I would say, nine or ten months.

Interviewer: What kind of people were working?

Irving Hass: All mixed people from all over. I met people in …. I met an … a Italian with me in the barracks.

Interviewer: So this transport …?

Irving Haas: Transport was all mixed, the people from … from … from Poland; from … from — there's no Romanian. Romanian did not send that time people to concentration camps. I know for a fact because the … we were in the Hungary. I was born under Romanian, and then the … the Hungarian took over. And … and our town was full of troops with Hungarians; soldiers with the … with Germans, all integrated.

Interviewer: Were there many Jews in this transport?

Irving Hass: All Jews.

Interviewer: All Jews; okay, all Jews.

Irving Hass: And this transport was all Jews when I went Theresienstadt. And they were from … even from Italy; Jews there, because we was … we were talking.

Interviewer: Did you have a … a uniform?

Irving Hass: They gave me that stripe.

Interviewer: The striped uniform?

Irving Hass: That striped uniform, and it really was …. While we talk … wherever I get a hold of paper, and had paper, I wrapped myself around — under the uniform; kept you warm. And we were getting one meal a day which is … a … la [?] … water and whatever. And I still did not care what I do; so I was sleeping in the barracks, and I was going at night to go into places where I stole potatoes. I was small, and I crawled underneath; and the guys used to tell me: *You're gonna be shot*. I says: *What can I worry about to be shot?* I came back with … with potatoes — raw potatoes, and we were eating. I came back with … with whatever. Think I went there in … in the … in the place at night, and I took chances. And my luck was always with me, with my chances. Then we got another transport, and they … and they sent me out to another camp. And that … that transport, we were working in a factory. We were making some kind of a — I don't know what … what it … what it called — some kind of a powder, or some kind of a …. We were bagging in bags or something.

Interviewer: Where was this?

Irving Hass: I … I don't remember the town. It was close to … what it … to — back to the Polish — it … it's a German …

Interviewer: OK

Irving Hass: … where back to the Polish-German border used to be. The Polish occupied it after the war.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, that would be near Kościan [ph?]

Irving Hass: Near Kościan, yeah. That … that … there was a town there, I don't remember there; and they … we were marching in the town, and … and then going back and so on. And I worked there for approximately six months. And after that, they … they send us to Flossenbürg. Flossenbürg was already closer to — what'd you calling — in the middle of Germany. And there I came into the camp, and it was completely … oh my … they had already … they had gas chambers there. I know for a fact because there a sign, Arbeit Macht Frei; brause bads — fine showers. And in that place, I remember they had … they had … because a guy was telling me: *We give you a shower there*. And they also had, in that … in Flossenbürg they had a camp — in the camp the people were gassed taking a shower; when they thought they were going to take a shower. I was working in this … this labor kommando which they call, labor kommando. And we were going out … outside of town, and were … cleaning highways. We were … we were going and … and lifting, what you call it, railroad tracks. We worked on railroads and everything to correct whatever, and then we even worked in homes, big family homes — in …

in their garden. We did all … all, whatever … whatever work we did for this time; and … and from Flossenbürg, they picked some kommandos. And a kommando I would say, from us must have been maybe 30, 40 people with about four, five SS men.

Interviewer: When did you arrive in Flossenbürg?

Irving Hass: In Flossenbürg, I arrived in 19 …, by the end of … of, I would say, August of 1944.

Interviewer: August of '44; so in … in those … from spring until August you had been to Theresienstadt and then to Kościan [see Note above].

Irving Hass: Kościan, there; yeah.

Interviewer: And then to Flossenbürg?

Irving Hass: Flossenbürg; Flossenbürg was my last camp before the liberation. And there … where … in that Flossenbürg, I met a fellow from my town — in camp. Then I also met a cousin which is the … the son of that picture; that was his son, my cousin. And I couldn't believe it — what happened, and I said: *You know, and I tell you, whatever the SS do, I am not gonna go hungry, whatever I can, I'm going to …*. They marched us from Flossenbürg to different labor places. And the war started going closer and closer. We also heard all kind of guns coming in. And then from Flossenbürg — it was May, I would say, about April … April … April 20 or April … in April, the end of April — they marched us into a forest … heavy forest. And that must have been, I would say, the day … the beginning of May. And they set up machine guns, and they killing us out … start killing. By luck, I … was saved in a tree; and I heard after that …, I watched from under the tree — I was laying down. They thought, all the Germans thought, that we were all killed out. We were about 40 people from the entire thing … were … a … alive. Some of them were shot in … in … in legs and some were …. I got shot in … in … from my shrapnel — in my … in my right arm. And I was sitting there; and then the Germans changed their clothes, and they disappeared.

Interviewer: How many people were … were shot at this …?

Irving Hass: It must have been, I would say, close to about 300 people.

Interviewer: And you saying …

Irving Hass: So when I was liberated, I remember an American soldier took me, and they already had the Ger …. The … the American people had Germans on trucks to

come and show ‘em what … what happened in … in the forest; the dead people there. The Americans took the Germans back to the forest to pick up the … the dead people — to bury ‘em.

Interviewer: How many people survived this?

Irving Hass: I would say, we … we … I … I — from my memory, because I was the only one who couldn’t walk, I was weighing … weighing only 70 pounds; all my bones were sand, and this soldier picked me up. And he saw me bleeding, and I got some bandage around me and took me to a place. And he gave us chocolate; he gave us the best food we could ever … I could never remember; and we were really hungry. And he was saying to … in English — which I didn’t understand — how they taking the Germans to pick up the people there. And they … they took them by … by the hundreds, you know, load them on trucks, to … to bury them. I got caught — typhoid, which I didn’t know it was. I had a high fever, and I had a loose stomach. And here, this American soldier touched me, and he said I have a hot … very hot, cold, something — temperature, a very high temperature; and took me to hospital in Schwandorf [Schwandorf in Bayern]. That’s where it happened, close to Schwandorf.

Interviewer: Schwandorf is where you were liberated?

Irving Hass: That’s where I was liberated. I didn’t know when the war ended. But then I found out the war … I was in Schwandorf hospital, which the hospital was Catholic; the nuns were there. I didn’t know at time — they cut me the fever off, and they brought me back to my weight. And I really … I could see in pictures after that I was completely …. And after that, they let me loose, and I started home looking for my family. And I was seeing lists were coming out all over, and I traveled to München; and then I wind up in Frankfurt where I met some of my townspeople with an American soldier. And this soldier sent away my … my picture to America to find I found my uncle yet. And so he sent — my uncle sent me a letter which his daughter wrote and send me some clothes. And this soldier brought me a package and was already contact with my cousin. And my cousin was … was saying, wrote me and says we going to take him soon. And this was going around until 1947. For two years, I was sitting around in Germany going from one place to another — to finding people. In Frankfurt, I met this woman, Post …

Interviewer: Emily Post?

Irving Hass: Emily, was an Emily Post. I don’t know if she … she was a correspondent or something … or something working for the UNRRA. And she saw me, and she says to me: *Okay, you come to this and this office and sign up.* They sign you up,

and I got on a transport to come to America. In May … in May … in June of … June, early part — I have … I have the picture of the ship I came over.

Interviewer: The name of your ship, *The Ernie Pyle*.

Irving Hass: And she said to me that we sign you up and everything; got the papers and everything. All of a sudden I got a call, he says: *You are … you are going … to* …. Where is the destination from Germany, where the ship's going?

Interviewer: To Bremerhaven?

Irving Hass: Bremerhaven. You are going to Bremerhaven tomorrow, and I was up on going to Bremerhaven. In … in June I was loaded for … on that ship in Bremerhaven and arrived in New York, June 20, 1947 on the ship *Ernie Pyle.* He was a correspondent; later on, I found a correspondents for the paper in the United States, and the ship was named after him. And here in the United States, I came and Children's Committee. And I was holded in a place in the Bronx; I don't know the name of the place — HIAS or something — 'til they find out to get me organized in the United States. Then my uncle came and had to prove that he could indeed support me and so on, and I was given custody to my uncle. From then on, I was going here, and working, and go to night school, and … and joining like wherever I looked for some family stuff — somebody to find in the United States.

Interviewer: When did you realize that you had lost your family?

Irving Hass: I realized when in 1945. People came back from the … the area where I— because I met people that were there at home — they says: *Nobody there.* I knew right away. The … the day we arrived in Auschwitz, and we are unloaded; the next day my family must have been burned. The next day; they didn't give them a day.

Interviewer: Everybody was sent in the other direction?

Irving Hass: The other direction. I don't remember where the left or right; the left was … was still alive or the right was still alive. That's all I remember — you go left and right. My entire family stick together. And the soldier himself got a stick and hit me — says: *You go there*. But from my family, I was the only one to separate; to go on the … on the side where … where know … to be in labors.

Interviewer: Now, could you describe to us what it was like growing up in your town?

Irving Hass: In my town — was a … a … was a small little town, and everybody was working. And it was a … it was not, you know, a millionaire's things; my father made a living. And the living, what you say — you had four meals a day … three meals a day; and we're a close-knit family. Served up the holidays wherever, you know, and so on; and stick together with the … with the Jewish people. And whatever news we heard through something — in the school — we went … we had — and our … so on. And we had fields, we were working on corn fields — picking corn and so on. And then after the … we bring in the vegetables and the corn, we were putting them away, you know, for the winter time.

Interviewer: So your family, in addition to a home, you had gardens?

Irving Hass: We had a garden, our own garden.

Interviewer: Who worked on that? Your mother?

Irving Hass: My mother worked on the garden, and I … I was used to helping out with my mother, ever. We had our own geese, you know; we have our own chickens, you know, and …. I know … I know geese and chickens we had, because we … on certain holidays we killed a goose or something, you know, and prepared it.

Interviewer: Now you mentioned you had five sisters? Were these younger sisters?

Irving Hass: All … everything was younger. I was the oldest …

Interviewer: You were the oldest.

Irving Hass: … in the family. Next to me was a brother who died. Prior, I would … I would say, about a — he … he died in the — he must … must have been at that time, maybe about — when he died, about nine or ten years old. He died of pneumonia. He caught a cold and, you know, a small town before you get to the doctor — the doctor had to came … had to come from ten miles, which is a town named Petrova [Petreve].

Interviewer: And your brother, he was the next oldest?

Irving Hass: Next oldest, yeah. All of them down the line from me, the other sisters. We … we were a … a family with — all my relatives had a big family. My mother's sister, she had eight … eight children. And … and we were six, you know.

Interviewer: Did your grandparents live in your house?

Irving Hass: My grandparents, the grandfather died about eight months before …. He died about age — in his eighties, with a book on his back. My grandmother also lived

in … lived in the house, and she died about when I must have been five or six. But for my mother's grand … the grandfather, they … they lived also in town. And he didn't … he came to the concentration camp in … in his early stage. Was a very religious man and [unintelligible], used to get up early in the morning, about five o'clock in the morning, said already prayers, saying prayers and so on.

Interviewer: Was everyone in your family Jewish?

Irving Hass: Yes.

Interviewer: Could you describe the religious life of your family?

Irving Hass: We were very religious, especially my father and grandfather. My father worked for a … for a big company, and were all mixed people, you know. And he was a supervisor for that manufacturing. They were making lumbers, cutting lumber for a lumber mill, manufacturing lumber for homes; and they were shipping to Romania to big railroad cars and so on. And he was a … a supervisor of about eight or ten people.

Interviewer: Was this in Petrova?

Irving Hass: That's in … that's in a different town which we call Krievei [Repedea, Oroszko, Ruszkirva].

Interviewer: Krievei.

Irving Hass: Krievei.

Interviewer: Krievei, OK.

Irving Hass: I know if you heard of it?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Irving Hass: Krievei, that's like what I said; that's about ten miles was away from us. I know when I was a kid, and I used to walk up myself, walk where he was working for a couple of days. And I just try watching him and sitting there, and I'm off school. And I … I went to a Hebrew school, which a yeshiva, and then like a half a day in regular school and the rest of the day …. My … my schooling was eight hours a day.

Interviewer: Public school?

Irving Hass: Public and … the public was mostly, I would say, maybe ten hours.

Interviewer: Ten hours.

Irving Hass: Public was first, and then I was going to the Hebrew school.

Interviewer: This was a Romanian … Romanian public school?

Irving Hass: It was a Romanian public school.

Interviewer: And how many grades did you …?

Irving Hass: I finished up I would say, the … the fifth going into the sixth.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started going to public school?

Irving Hass: I would say we go there at about five and a half. I … and I was born in May; this gave me a lead — because I was already, you know, fi … five … six years. In the sixth year I was in school.

Interviewer: So you were five and a half when you started?

Irving Hass: In cheder I was started already, about five.

Interviewer: Five. So you were five and a half when you started going to public school; and when did you stop going to public school?

Irving Hass: I stopped going to public school — Jews [unintelligible], I would say, when the Hungarians came in. They … they had no schools for us.

Interviewer: So you would have been fifteen?

Irving Hass: I would have been fifteen. The … the Hungarians took over from the Romanians. There was no schools for us.

Interviewer: And then the Hebrew school, that was until your Bar Mitzvah?

Irving Hass: Yes. I was not taken Bar Mitzvah.

Interviewer: No?

Irving Hass: I don't even have the chance to be Bar Mitzvahed. Bar Mitzvah, I think, was exactly that time when they came.

Interviewer: The Hungarians?

Irving Hass: Yeah. We were still there, but my father couldn't make a Bar Mitzvah because of the Hungarians.

Interviewer: Were … was your family orthodox?

Irving Hass: Yes, my family was orthodox. My … my grand … my father was strict … strictly man in the religion — completely.

Interviewer: Which languages were spoken in your home?

Irving Hass: In my home was spoken — my … my father and mother were not [unintelligible] — we should understand; we spoke Hungarian.

Interviewer: So Hungarian speaking?

Irving Hass: Then we spoke Yiddish and wherever we spoke Romanian, my sis … my sister that time they learned some there. I don't know anything about Hungarian in school — my schooling was Romanian.

Interviewer: Romanian; but you … you knew Hungarian from your father?

Irving Hass: From … from my father and mother.

Interviewer: Did anyone know German in your family?

Irving Hass: My father spoke German.

Interviewer: Your mother was busy raising kids?

Irving Hass: My mother was busy but she understood German; but Hungarian she really understood good.

Interviewer: So your mother spoke Hungarian? Hungarian …

Irving Hass: And Yiddish.

Interviewer: And Yiddish. No Romanian?

Irving Hass: No Romanian.

Interviewer: And your father, did he ever use Romanian?

Irving Hass: He spoke … wait a minute. He spoke Russ … Ukrainish.

Interviewer: So, Russian?

Irving Hass: Like a — we were closer to Ukrainian there; my father spoke that Ukrainian. We called it Russian at that time.

Interviewer: Or Ukrainian.

Irving Hass: Ukrainian, yeah, he spoke that thing. He spoke Romanian and Hungarian — my father spoke the languages.

Interviewer: So he … he knew Hungarian, Romanian, Yiddish, German, and Russian?

Irving Hass: We didn't call them …. In my town, they didn't call 'em, we call 'em, not Russian; we call 'em, I don't know. They were …they were speaking like … like Russian. I still remember words — what was Ukrainian.

Interviewer: Did your father serve in the Hungarian army?

Irving Hass: Yes; my father served in Austria-Hungary army; this I got to tell you — he was a lieutenant. And I never know too much geography until I find out here, when the … the Americans are talking about Kazakhstans, you know. He was in a prisoner by the Russians in the southern, what you call it, not Afghan; there was … people were fighting there.

Interviewer: In … in southern Russia?

Irving Hass: What you call that — that little country where they were … are fighting right now?

Interviewer: Azerbaijan and Armenia?

Irving Hass: Not Armenia, there is another one which is a country by itself and … and …

Interviewer: Georgia?

Irving Hass: And Georgia, what is the name of the capital there?

Interviewer: Tbilisi.

Irving Hass: Tbilisi! My father used to talk to him of Tbilisi; I didn't know where it is. He says I was in Tbilisi. And he was also in the Afghanistan as a prisoner in the … in the First World War. My father serves in the First World War, right. He was about eight years, he said, and during the war — from 1914 or something to 1920 something; the Bolsheviks — oh, he was telling me. Tashkent … he was in Tashkent also, if you heard. I don't know where … where this is, in what camp.

Interviewer: Capital of Uzbekistan?

Irving Hass: That's what he was in … in Tashkent. And he was talking to … to his friends, my father; and he was telling about Tashkent, you know, during the war. That's where he was — in Tashkent; Tbilisi, Tashkent.

Interviewer: And your father met your mother after the war?

Irving Hass: Yeah, my father met …, yes. He met her in … in Ruscova [Riskeva, Riskeve, Riskova, Riskovi, Ruskava, Ruskova, Visa Orom, Visha Orom, Visooroszi] and he was from Dragimiresht [Dragomireşti, Dragomerfalva, Dragomirest] like I said.

Interviewer: So he moved to Ruscova?

Irving Hass: Yeah, he moved there and we lived in Ruscova — because of my … with my grandfather.

Interviewer: Would you know when they married?

Irving Hass: Oh boy.

Interviewer: Obviously it was before you were born.

Irving Hass: I … I say — whatever — I … I would say, my father … he was saying … he was … when he got out of the army he must have been 20. He … he married about age 26, I think.

Interviewer: Yeah; OK. That would be 1922 … 1922, 1923 — that's close. You were born in 1925, and you're the oldest.

Irving Hass: No, I was … he was married before.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I'm saying he would have been … he was married three years before you were born.

Irving Hass: Yes, so this … is about 19 … must have been 1920.

Interviewer: But after he came back from Russia?

Irving Hass: Uh huh. I think after the … the revolution, then all the prisoners came back — that's right. He was with Austro … I don't know what army — must have Austro-Hungary. I know that's why he was in the army.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did he come from a big family?

Irving Hass: My father came from … from only — they had two brothers; two people — no, very small family — two … two … two boys.

Interviewer: Was he the oldest?

Irving Hass: He was the youngest.

Interviewer: Youngest of two …

Irving Hass: My uncle was older than him.

Interviewer: Okay, the youngest of two boys. And your mother, she came from a large family?

Irving Hass: My mother came from a large family.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did she have?

Irving Hass: Let me see. Three sisters … four sisters, okay … and one uncle is still living — in … in … my mother's brother in Italy. From a family of seven.

Interviewer: So she was one of seven children?

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: She had one brother or two brothers?

Irving Hass: Two brothers.

Interviewer: Two brothers and four sisters. And also religious?

Irving Hass: Very religious, yes.

Interviewer: What kind of schooling did your mother get?

Irving Hass: I would say my mother mostly had maybe five years, six years schooling; five or six grades. We didn't talk about it too much, you know.

Interviewer: Her big plan was to get married and have a family?

Irving Hass: Yeah, because I … I'm just saying, my mother really was tall compared to my father — was … he was shorter than her. [Note says something in background.]

Interviewer: So your mother was primarily a housewife, raising children …

Irving Hass: Raising children

Interviewer: and helping with the garden …

Irving Hass: With the garden —

Interviewer: Your father …?

Irving Hass: The garden was her pro … her project — and raising children. We also had … always had fresh vegetables, and that things you can never forget. She also sewed

clothes for the sisters and so on. We builded a house I remember; when I was about eight that we moved into a new house.

Interviewer: Your father's lumber? Did you use the lumber that …?

Irving Hass: I don't know where, probably. The house was a very nice … very nice house, and we took our grandfather. Our grandmother died, his … his … his mother. And we had a special room made for him. And about five years ago, some of friends from here went to Romania from New York, and called me up and says: Y*ou know, your house is still standing where you lived*. We lived right across the street from the police department. And my … our house was new. And I … I would say, we must have been about five years old when we were took away from the Germans. And he was saying, your house is still there. I says: *I don't want to know about it.* He went through from New York. He went to … to Romania to the cemetery and saw it. And he says you can't even recognize it; the cemetery, everything is completely destroyed and so on. Then the Russians more modernized the town, you know, since after the war; it became Russian again.

Interviewer: From Romania?

Irving Hass: Yeah. I think now it's … it's Romania back.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Irving Haas: You see, always back and forth it's going to be. That's why when my birth certificate came, it was in Romanian.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Now as the oldest, you probably had more responsibilities.

Irving Hass: I would say I have to help out with … with my mother, you know, and with the sisters. We got prepared when … when Saturday came — the Sabbath, we … we couldn't do any work. She had to cook Friday for … for the … for the meal for Saturday and everything was put in the oven. You know, and … and like you say — you didn't have a … have a wooden stove, and you burned wood to make the heat in the house — you know, not modern heat.

Interviewer: What did you want to be when you grew up?

Irving Hass: My father always said to me — you're going to be a lawyer. And to be a lawyer, I did not have enough schooling when I came to this country. I probably could — I had to go first to learn English. Then from going from the fifth grade to start going to college, and I could have probably been a lawyer. And he was always saying, you know: *This is a lawyer*. I was good in school. And I was so — to give

you a thing that happened — I had a … a teacher in Hebrew school. He was so strict, and he was threatening. He was threatening that he was going to tell our father that we were bad. Four boys of us, me and two other boys, run away. That time we run away back to another town which is Petrova [Petreve], which is about eight miles, you know; we run away. We went into a barn, and it was thundering and raining and storming, and they couldn't believe; and they were looking for us — all over towns and everything. And finally they found us and: *What are you doing here?* We were crying — four of my friends, and he says … and he says: *The father threaten … the teacher threatened us to tell the father that we were not studying what he … he taught us.* So that's why we run away. And they … and they found us, and we sorry as the day that never happened; we run away.

Interviewer: Why did he threaten to tell that story?

Irving Hass: He threatened to tell them … he was threaten us to tell our fathers that we were no good this week in school because we didn't do our homework.

Interviewer: Is that true? Did you do your homework that week?

Irving Hass: We didn't do it; we … we goofed off.

Interviewer: You goofed off?

Irving Hass: We were playing similar to baseball with a stick and throwing to a ball. And we were afraid, for the father was strict. He was going to give me a punish that you don't get this and so on.

Interviewer: Strict father. And you were a good student. Were you a good student because your father was strict?

Irving Hass: The father was … was … I would say, yes. Today I would say yes; I could never forget my father. I repeat and think my father's words. My mother was just plain, but my father …. My mother was a soft woman, really quiet, you know, in everything, you know. I remember the day when I said I'm … I'm sorry some days I said "no" to my mother. I wanted to go to my friend; and she asked me for something, and I was going to my friend. I didn't obey her, and then I came home; I was sorry. I says: *I'm sorry what I did.* She says: *Okay, we get it done anyway.* She asked me to do a job or something. In … in today's date, I'm … I'm thinking the words why … why I didn't obey her. Sometimes it come to you.

Interviewer: If the war hadn't happened …?

Irving Hass: If the war wouldn't happen, I would probably be a lawyer.

Interviewer: You would have continued schooling?

Irving Hass: Continue school and I would have been there, like to live on and go to higher education.

Interviewer: Where would you have gone to school?

Irving Hass: In the … in the school would … would be gone is right in Sighet [Sighetu Marmaţiei, Maramaros Sighet, Máramarossziget, Sighetul Marmatiei, Sigut, Sihat, Syhot Marmaroski, Sziget] which is a big city of Máramaros [Maramureş, Marmaţiei] or Satu Mare [Sakmir, Saktmar, Sathmar, Sătmar, Szatmár, Szatmarnemeti]. Satu Mare was another big — which a lot of people there.

Interviewer: So you would have gotten your law degree and then …?

Irving Hass: I … I would have been a lawyer, yes. I was the only boy in the family, and they were really treating me … I was thinking right now. With five sisters, to be one boy because my brother died, and he was really … my mother and father was really … take preference on him.

Interviewer: What was your younger brother's name?

Irving Hass: Heschel.

Interviewer: Heschel. So you would have become a lawyer, and would you have remained in Ruscova?

Irving Hass: I would probably; I don't know where I would remain, but Ruscova was not the place for a lawyer. Maybe Poian which is further up, another town there, would be more industrialized, would be for a lawyer.

Interviewer: Now, you must have, as the oldest, watched your sisters grow up.

Irving Hass: I watched my sisters, and I really liked my sisters, you know. And I always separated, sometimes, they … they were fighting. The little one, you know, were always going where the big one is going. I'm talking to Hudia [sp, ph?], you know. And I remember good, and then the … the mother will say take care of the little sister, Sarah, you know. Sarah was the youngest.

Interviewer: Yeah, so Hudia was fighting …

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: … with … with whom?

Irving Hass: Fighting with the… the other, with Heichu [sp, ph?]; and saying this, you do this, and telling the mother something, you know. There was always a fight, and I was the only boy. I couldn't mix in, you know; but I stick up 'cause I like my sister. I really stick up with my sisters. Really, during the war, I couldn't believe from five sister, one sister, her friends — about ten friends from her class survived.

Tape One, Side B

Five friends of her survived and they came to the United States. I couldn't

Irving Hass: … believe my sister was close to the mother and they would not want to separate.

Interviewer: What did your oldest sister want to be?

Irving Hass: This I don't know. My oldest sister was … you know girls at that time; she wanted to go to school and probably be a … a teacher, she wanted … or to make instructing how to sew or something, what … whatever.

Interviewer: She attended public schools?

Irving Hass: She attended public school, yeah. That's where the picture is from, the public schools.

Interviewer: All your sisters …you were saying when the Hungarians came?

Irving Hass: When the Hungarians came in and took over from the Romanians, our schooling was already segregated. But the anti-Semitic … the Jews had it no way.

Interviewer: This is when the Hungarians come in?

Irving Hass: When the Hungarians come in.

Interviewer: How was it under the Romanians? Before we …?

Irving Hass: Under the Romanians, we … we were much treated much better. One … one uncle of mine, which is my mother's brother, lived in Romania; he survived. He did not have … not one man from … from Romania, which I know, went to concentration camp. All the Jews survived were only the Romanians.

Interviewer: In your town, can you think of any bad experiences that you had under the Romanians?

Irving Hass: They had … the minute the Hungarians came in, and they started going against the Jews and hitting; the local people, the Ukrainians, started painting things and

calling names and finding, you know. When Christmas came, we couldn't even go out the street because they say we killed Jesus.

Interviewer: These are the Ukrainians now?

Irving Hass: Yeah. And when Christmas came, they were dressing up and to go with bells, you know, like on Christmas Eve. And we were afraid to go out of the house because at that time they were really going and really beat you up or something.

Interviewer: What about the Romanians?

Irving Hass: The Romanians, we didn't have too much problems.

Interviewer: No … no problems?

Irving Hass: So far, I … I … I went to school under the Romanians; and the teacher was from Romania. She was playing the piano in our school, and we used to surround her, teaching us whatever, you know; and … and I would say that under … the … he was the … the kai … the … the king, what's his name?

Interviewer: Carol?

Irving Hass: Carol, yeah. And he was … wasn't … maybe later on there was something in the Romanians; maybe in deep … in deep Romania. Anti-Semitic was in our town, the Romanians; we had no problem.

Interviewer: So your teacher was fair?

Irving Hass: The teacher was fair; the … the police, the gendarme — we used to call them.

Interviewer: That's right, they were your neighbors.

Irving Hass: They were our … our neighbors, gendarme, that's what the … the Romanians called them. And they were nice and everything.

Interviewer: Your classmates — you had non-Jewish friends?

Irving Hass: Yes; and they … they were not — some Ukrainians, we had trouble in the classroom.

Interviewer: But otherwise?

Irving Hass: Otherwise, you know, in … in … in the school was really very nice, in school which I … which I … which I remembered.

Interviewer: And your father did all … did well in the business?

Irving Hass: My father made a living in the business. And he was working for a company was not from … not far from Romania. And this was mostly shipping material. You see, the town where I … where I lived — ten miles was a big lumber. They cut lumbers you know like in Washington, the state of Washington. And from this lumber … lumbering business is big business. He built materials at home. Like you said, we built … we built a house from … from the lumber.

Interviewer: Your father worked out of town?

Irving Hass My father worked out of town for … since I remember him.

Interviewer: Now, when you were going to school, before the Hungarians come in, had anybody in your family heard of Hitler or the Nazis?

Irving Hass: I didn't.

Interviewer: You had never heard of either?

Irving Hass: No.

Interviewer: And there were no Germans?

Irving Hass: I never know …

Interviewer: No Germans around?

Irving Hass: … the Germans completely, no. Only when the Hungarians came in we already had never saw a plane in our town. When the Hungarians came in, we saw planes like … like a scouting planes flying around all over.

Interviewer: Do you remember when the Hungarians came in?

Irving Hass: Oh boy; must have been … been … been, I would say look up in history when they took over that … that territory.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Irving Hass: It was right from Czechoslovakia, they took over from. I think the Romanian took Satu Mare. They came over; the … the Máramaros was completely became Hungarian.

Interviewer: Hungarian, Cluj, yeah, yeah. This was between classes. I remember you were saying you had finished class, but before you could continue school in the fall …

Irving Hass: There was no more school.

Interviewer: There was no more school, because of the Hungarians …

Irving Hass: They came in, that's correct.

Interviewer: You would have been fourteen, fifteen years old at the time. Do you remember the reaction of your family the day the Hungarians came in?

Irving Hass: Oh, my … my father said that time, he didn't like it. And he says right away that they going to be tied in to the Nazis — and they already tied in to the … to the Germans. My father knew the Germans because in the factory where he was working, there was this college graduate — and a doctor, and the son was a doctor; he was very friendly with the president of the plant. And the son was a doctor, and he was saying already what … what … what to be reading papers and listening to news. They had broadcast radios and so on and the … the … the … this guy, the president … of other … of Hungary was a Miklós — what's his name — Miklóshy [sp, ph?]?

Interviewer: Horthy.

Irving Hass: Horthy, Horthy — yes. Horthy was tied in to the Germans. And … and he's saying it's not going to be good. And my father foresee that.

Interviewer: So your father had some idea of how bad the Germans might be?

Irving Hass: How bad the Germans might …, right.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Did he have any trust in the Hungarians; as someone who had fought in the Hungarian army--?

Irving Hass: No, the Hungarians occupied Romania. They took some houses away from us and put into the … to the … they put the … the troops, you know, to station there. They slept in some homes.

Interviewer: They took some of your property away?

Irving Hass; Not of our property, they took some other … other homes.

Interviewer: Other homes, but not your house?

Irving Hass: Not my house. They took some other homes where it was convenience. We were near to the … to the police, and that maybe saved us.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. But your father, who had been in the Hungarian army, had been born a Hungarian citizen — he was afraid of becoming a part of Hungary?

Irving Hass: That's correct. My father know what … what was up to. He couldn't believe it when … when they came in, and he saw right away. He already spoken to my mother. Whenever he wanted us not to understand, he was speaking Hungarian in the house, you know, so we don't understand what they were thinking. And … and I know we didn't. And then my father was talking to his friends, you know, and so on. I know he's going his friends, and they were talking politics — what's gonna happen. And he said it doesn't look good, and he didn't believe that this Hungarian is gonna sell us down to the … to the Nazis completely. That Horthy did that.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that when your father, your family, spoke Hungarian, it was not out of love, but just for …

Irving Hass: Just before they were educated and they spoke the language.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. What else happens after the Hungarians come in? Do you remember things that happened?

Irving Hass: They picked certain people, like I said before, which they needed for labor camp.

Interviewer: Young men?

Irving Hass: Young men. To … then they were working and building defense lines. And I remember they were building in from big lumber trees and making that a tank could not go through — with holes, you know, like zigzagging. And then they come back, working on the day; and come back. So did my father. They took him certain days; he couldn't go to work.

Interviewer: So sometimes you father was drafted to work?

Irving Hass: Drafted to work; and so … and then all of a sudden, they take the younger guys, and they transfer them to Ukraine.

Interviewer: But not your father?

Irving Hass: Not my father.

Interviewer: Did he continue working in the lumber?

Irving Hass: He continued … he continued working both ways, where they took him. Wherever a day free, he went back to work wherever he can. But when they took the younger guys to Ukraine, and then we found out that they were … they killed them there. Before even we heard they resist the Nazis. In Ukraine, they killed a

lot of people, and we … we heard about it from some — and what you call this; like people come back and escapes and so on.

Interviewer: You were too young for this?

Irving Hass: I was too young to go and work in a labor with a pick and shovel. I was only a kid.

Interviewer: What else happened to you?

Irving Hass: They gave us rations because we didn't have food. They … they already restrict us on food what we could eat.

Interviewer: So you had rationing already?

Irving Haas: You couldn't get certain … certain commodity. The Jews would not get it.

Interviewer: What about school?

Irving Hass: I … I didn't go to school.

Interviewer: You stopped going to school …

Irving Hass: I stopped going to school.

Interviewer: … or did they tell you, you can't go?

Irving Hass: I … I stopped going to school.

Interviewer: What about your sisters?

Irving Hass: Neither did they go to school.

Interviewer: So even the youngest stopped going to school?

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you remember why that was so?

Irving Hass: I think the teachers weren't there. The … the teachers from Romania went … went back or something. They had no teachers in my … in … in my town.

Interviewer: Uh huh. So Romanian teachers left?

Irving Hass: The Romanian … all the teachers left. There was no Hungarian … Romanian teachers.

Interviewer: So school closed?

Irving Hass: School for the Jewish people — were no schools. We were going just to cheder — Hebrew school.

Interviewer: Were there any Hungarian teachers, Hungarian schools?

Irving Hass: I don't … nothing I could remember.

Interviewer: What about movements? You know — you're walking in public?

Irving Hass: Walking in public; I could walk maybe a mile. We were close to the synagogue. And we were completely restricted like to go; we couldn't go no place. I couldn't travel to a different town.

Interviewer: So what did … what did your family do during these years of Hungarian occupation?

Irving Hass: They … they were just trying to live it through. Whatever … whatever mo … mother grew in the garden, we were eating. And whatever corn we would have; we would have every morning — cornmeal. To make it with boiling water, cornmeal, we had a mill which grinded corn. From corn to make flour. So in the morning that's all I remember since I was — I would say, since I … I …. The… the Romanians were not …. That's all we had was cornmeal for breakfast.

Interviewer: Cornmeal.

Irving Hass: Cornmeal — you make it with water, and it boils; you mix it in. Mămăligă they call it, okay. In Romania, they call it Mămăligă; so we had every morning Mămăligă and milk. And the only way we could get milk is to know some of these people in town. Some of these Ukrainian people. I don't know what you call it, Ukrainian there I remember the word what you called that people. And the milk we used to get from cows, and we milk it right. Or we had our own cows. My uncle had a cow, and we get milk from him, and we only lived about half a mile.

Interviewer: And your sisters, what were they doing on an average day? You think back.

Irving Hass: From an average day, what sisters did, give her a pencil and a piece of paper and draw. And if it's cold, we would sit and looking out of the window. And if it's summer, they were sitting out on the … on … on … on outside.

Interviewer: And they couldn't work.

Irving Hass: They couldn't work, correct.

Interviewer: Too young to get married?

Irving Hass: They're tree … they're children.

Interviewer: No school?

Irving Hass: No school and they were just educating themselves whatever they could get a hold of and read.

Interviewer: Were there … were the Jewish schools — did they expand in any way, during this period?

Irving Haas: The Jewish school ex … expanded but they mostly concentrate on boys.

Interviewer: Boys, yes.

Irving Hass: Girls were very limited time to go to … to school — to Hebrew school. They was concentrated mostly on boys.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did your family ever consider leaving?

Irving Hass: The only one would consider leaving, he says, where would we go? My father used to say, you're going to — if you leave, you have another problem. You don't know nobody, and you got the same thing all over again. Especially you got a … you got a mark on yourself — you're Jewish. That's the minute he said, right away, you're Jewish, you … you identified yourself. So you can't go. If you want to go to Budapest, want to go to Bucharest, you couldn't. At that time, I don't know how strictly the borders were, and I would say the borders were strict. But there were still packages coming in. Only Czechoslovakia was free.

Interviewer: Until the Nazis came?

Irving Hass: 'Til the Nazis. But I'm talking free from America to get mail. I know my uncle was shipping packages.

Interviewer: Your uncle in America?

Irving Hass: In America — shipping packages to us. We could not receive it in Romania; we could not receive it in Hungary — only Czechoslovakia. And they had to go — I remember my father had to go about 40 miles — to go with a wagon. A guy would take him to go into the Czecho … into Czechoslovakia, which is … was against — he smuggled in to get the package. And in the package was clothes — whatever they got. I remember peanut butter — which I never had peanut butter

in my life; and here comes a package and two jars of peanut butter. This was a delicacy when we got it. Oh my God, we were fighting. The clothes …

[Note Interviewer and Irving are talking over each other.]

Interviewer: Your uncle in America, the uncle in America — he's your … on your … father's side.

Irving Hass: Father's side …

Interviewer: Father's brother.

Irving Hass: Yeah. Shipped it to an address in Trboušany [Note This Czechoslovakian town is way more than 40 miles from Ruscova. Ruscova is at a far distance from Czechoslovakia; Ruscova is closer to Ukraine where there is a town called Trebušany. It is more likely to be able to be smuggled into Ukraine in a night than into Czechoslovakia.] I remember the … the town. Trboušany was Czechoslovakia, and that's why we had to go and pick up the package. And pick up the package at a … at night — get yourself smuggled into Czechoslovakia; across the border and bring in the package. If you get caught, you probably be shot.

Interviewer: How long did this go on — this … life?

Irving Hass: This was going on for about, I would say, eight to ten months, a year.

Interviewer: So the Hungarians come in. The …

Irving Hass: The Hungarians came in, was already … we already almost converted to Nazism then. The Hungarians were with the Nazis. But the Hungarians with … had with them — Hungarian soldiers were with about three or four special Nazi Gauleiters with them already. They were planning what was going to happen to us.

Interviewer: Now when … when is the ghettoization? When was the … the yellow st … badges and … and the … the story that you began with the — the, you know, the cattle car and the trains?

Irving Hass: The yellow badges was coming on already when the Hungarians came in with the … with a bunch of Nazis, what are called Nazi soldiers. And they were trying to identify us. If you wanted to go out of the house, you couldn't have out of the house without a yellow badge and star. Another thing, the Jewish girls were making this, and they looked nice decorated on their clothes. You know, everything we would look and something, you know, and all of a sudden a nice yellow star is … is on the dress, or on the jacket — sewed on; and is decorated.

And this is just to understand it between the townspeople. Our townspeople — to … to know who is who.

Interviewer: When did you first see Germans — in Ruscova?

Irving Hass: The Germans — I saw them with the … with the Hungarians. When they … when they marched into our town with the … with the Hungarian army — with horses; with all kind of tanks — all kind of cannons, vehicles. You … oh my God, we were scared to death, you know, from the windows looking how the soldiers walking in with this armament. And then with … with the Hungarians, they were marching in. But there, already, was with each unit, was already a German assigned to them.

Interviewer: Were you ever forced to move out of your house?

Irving Hass: ‘til they came us and took us away.

Interviewer: ‘til the spring of ‘44? [Note previous transcription has ’42, but it is difficult to really discern what is on the tape. According to many documents, Germans came to this area of Romania in 1944.]

Irving Hass: They only took away … only took away certain homes where … where they wanted to have their headquarters.

Interviewer: So there was no ghetto in Ruscova?

Irving Hass: In … in … in Ruscova, right away they took us to Vişeu (Vişeu de Sus, Vişeul, Felshevisho, Ober Visho, Ober Wisho, Oyber Visheve, Vishya, Viso). [Note First transcription has this as Wishov. Second transcription notes this as Vitsyuv. However, Vitsyuv is in the Ukraine and is further from Ruscova than the distance Irving Hass indicates. There are many sources that mention Vişeu de Sus as having a ghetto.] And … and … and … and there’s — the ghetto was in Vişeu. But I was lucky; we were at least eight, ten days there; and they took our transport. That’s where the ghetto. But they march us about 30 miles. Everybody, you know, walking; we had to walk 30 miles — whatever baggage we had.

Interviewer: So from Ruscova to Vişeu, you had to walk?

Irving Hass: Had to walk. And from there — where a railroad car; there was a railroad already.

Interviewer: And how much time did you have to get ready for this trip?

Irving Hass: Time — was not even maybe four, five hours. They just came. You in this area — wherever we were, there in the ghetto —there was a ghetto. What you call this a ghetto or a … a … a …. They took from so many towns; there must have been thousands of 'em, you know. And they … they were all in transport.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Irving Hass: So we from Ruscova — we were staying in one area.

Interviewer: In … in Vişeu?

Irving Hass: In the Vişeu we get in one area. When the transport came, we were going in the transport.

Interviewer: I mean in … in Ruscova.

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: When in Ruscova, you're told to go to Vitsyuv [Note probably Vişeu].

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: How much time did you have to get ready for that trip — for the walk?

Irving Hass: For the walk, was three … maybe two days.

Interviewer: Two days to walk there. And what did your family take? The whole family's together …

Irving Hass: I don't … I only remember my father had a valise, and my mother had a valise; and we had absolutely nothing — the children.

Interviewer: And the children walked?

Irving Hass: Whatever … yeah …

Interviewer: All the children walked?

Irving Hass: Yeah, all of us. Whatever … whatever my father had in the valise, I would say, he might have some dollars — because my uncle, when every time he send a letter, there was a twenty. Because I remember as a kid … as a kid, I open a book, and I found there two twenties — American twenty-dollar bills. And I see to my father — he says, you know, he has to go to change it — to Vitsyuv [Note probably Vişeu]. You know, we had to go and trade. You couldn't spend it, you got to get — but there was people, you know, who was dealing with it. And he had to trade

them in. But when my uncle sent a letter — was a twenty-dollar bill. He sent it for my grandfather; for my father. And my grandfather, I told was like this [?]— spend; because he used to get a twenty dollar bill. I know when Passover came, he sent us money for wine. You know, before all this happened, and buying wine and so on — everything to prepare for the Passover.

Interviewer: So you're walking to the … to … to Vitsyuv [Note probably Vişeu] and all you have are the two suitcases. And who is pushing you to walk; these are Hungarian police?

Irving Hass: Hung … Hung … no, there was Hungarian and what you call — Ukraines.

Interviewer: Ukrainians … Hungarian and Ukrainian guards.

Irving Hass: Guards. And in Vitsyuv, [Note probably Vişeu] we already had Germans there, completely staffed with Germans, directing to get loaded in the railroad cars.

Interviewer: And it took you two days to … to get there and, of course, nobody knew what was going to happen next.

Irving Hass: We didn't know. Maybe my father knew they were going to transport us someplace, but he didn't know there … there is a crematorium. But when … when I sat, we were on the railroad car already, traveling nights, a couple of nights or so on, and he says we're in Poland. And my father recognized, when, you know, he traveled that by train … so. And all of a sudden we found ourselves in Auschwitz, and we get out — open the doors in Auschwitz in the morning; 'bout ten, eleven o'clock. And every railroad car, and my God, we saw thousands of people on the side. And … and these Germans with these whips and so on — left and right and left and right.

Interviewer: Now, during the walk from Ruscova …

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: Who were you walking with, you recall?

Irving Hass: I was walking with my townspeople.

Interviewer: I mean with anyone in particular?

Irving Hass: I was walking with my father, and then was walking with three of our neighbors. And [Note hear a lot of rustling of paper] this particular girl was my neighbor, and the brother … here [Note hear a lot of rustling of paper] — Slomowitz [sp, ph] was his name — here. [Note hear a lot of rustling of paper] He's my age; this is

the sister and brother — in New York. We were walking all together. But I did not get in the same transport.

Interviewer: No, no. I'm … we're … we're still look … looking now at the walk.

[Note Interviewer and Irving Hass are talking over each other.]

Irving Hass: The walk, we were walking the entire …

Interviewer: Do you remember talking or being silent?

Irving Hass: Talking — no you couldn't talk. You surely talked to each other — in Yiddish, and these guys were just march and keep on going. But you couldn't …. I think they … they took the entire town in one time. Three hundred of families from Ruscova was marched out on the same day.

Interviewer: And then how many days did you spend in Vitsyuv? [Note probably Vişeu]

Irving Hass: In Vitsyuv [Note probably Vişeu], I would say maybe two or two and a half. And I did not come all of us on the same transport. That's why they segregated us, and some what happened, maybe in different barracks or something. I remember we … I was, from my town, from the Vitsyuv [Note probably Vişeu], must have been at least …. Even my cousins, him did not come on my transport which is my … my mother's — my … my aunt.

Interviewer: Mother's brother?

Irving Hass: My mother's … my mother's …

Interviewer: Brother-in-law?

Irving Hass: Brother-in-law — didn't come on the same transport. He came two days later. So I'm … I have a memorial … that every … I know in the Jewish, after the death, you got to know when your father died, you have a date. My date — I took the day arrived in Auschwitz.

Interviewer: Do you remember the date?

Irving Hass: The date arrived in Auschwitz I would say is … is in … in the month of May. So I'm taking it to maybe May … May … May 12th to 14th. Whenever a Jewish holiday comes out in May, I'm taking — we called it like bäumen [sp, ph] in Jewish [Note beymer is Yiddish for trees], this is a tree day. Trees is planted, and I took that day for mine …. Because when I know they came to Auschwitz, they

had no … not two days even left over. They undressed them right away naked, and they … and they … and they feed them to the ovens.

Interviewer: Now who put you on the train in Vişeu; were the Hungarians and Ukrainians again?

Irving Hass: No, there was already Germans.

Interviewer: Germans.

Irving Hass: Germans with the Hungarians but the Germans were completely …

Interviewer: In command?

Irving Hass: In command. They were telling what railroad car and they … everything is gotten in railroad cars.

Interviewer: Were you able to eat anything when you were in Vitsyuv? [Note probably Vişeu]

Irving Hass: In Vişeu they gave us — one meal, I remember, is bread. And they had a soup or something. And people which have in the … smuggled in the — you know there was people, when they came from …

Interviewer: Carrying food.

Irving Hass: Carrying food; and maybe my father and mother had some food in there.

Interviewer: Yeah; that's why I was asking you whether they …

Irving Hass: So I think, in the valise, for my sisters. I know my mother was … was given something to eat. But when we were in the railroad cars, we didn't have nothing to eat. And that thing was really … which I have known for a fact — people were crying and drinking their urine — children.

Interviewer: Your family was in one car?

Irving Hass: We were all in one car.

Interviewer: The other people in the car were from the town?

Irving Hass: Also, there were about three or four families in the town. There was other people from Vişeu, from Leordina [?], from different towns.

Interviewer: So you knew a lot of the people that were in the railroad car?

Irving Hass: So I would say I knew … about … I would say about more … more than eight or ten people from the … from the same town was in that car.

Interviewer: In that car; plus your family.

Irving Hass: My family. And I … I would say because we didn't … and they were so tight in the car; and I'm not kidding you. Pain [?] from standing; we were just sitting down on top of each other. And … and cramped in there; and when we were hearing somebody screaming, and there were the SS — riding on top of the cars and the side of the cars. Each car got a …. You see, when … when from Vișeu, the transport came in — no more Hungarian. Were all German troops 'til you hit Auschwitz.

Interviewer: On the train?

Irving Hass: On the train. They were already in command to take on guards on the train — everything.

Interviewer: You still have your suitcases … inside the train?

Irving Hass: Inside the train, yes. But not too … too many people had the suitcases. They didn't take away anything for you from the ghetto. Whatever you carried with us; if you can't drag it, you drag it. In Auschwitz, there was the unpacking. Because when I said when I saw the things, you know, from the Nuremberg Trial — that booklet, and that showed how … how they unloaded people; and they had everything to get undressed. People had dollars or diamonds — whatever — sewed in. All of them were taken away. And then they cut their hair. And they were even saving the hair to make mattresses or something.

Interviewer: Now in the … in the cattle car — who were you sitting with? Do you remember …?

Irving Hass: I was …

Interviewer: … what it was like?

Irving Hass: I was sitting in the cattle car mostly next to … was her father. This girl was also in the cattle car with me.

Interviewer: Friends your age?

Irving Hass: That was my age, and … and she died of tuberculosis; this what I'm saying.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did … did you talk much? Was it … was the train quiet or was it noisy?

Irving Hass: I wasn't able what to talk; I didn't know what to talk. I was talking oh my God — I hear the people were crying. Food, we were thinking of food.

Interviewer: So if you had to describe what it was like — crying?

Irving Hass: We were crying all the way. We were crying and yelling, and … and really saying: *Why did God do this to us?*

Interviewer: Yeah. So crying … yelling.

Irving Hass; And … and yelling, something that said: *I need … I want a drink; I … I'm dying.* And certain people were … were actually squashed there. I know for a fact there was a couple of people dead on the car which I don't know.

Interviewer: Two people died there.

Irving Hass: Two or three people in the car.

Interviewer: Any food — no food at all?

Irving Hass: We didn't get any food.

Interviewer: Toilet facilities — nothing?

Irving Hass: No toilet facilities. Even the windows were with … with wires.

Interviewer: So it was dark inside?

Irving Hass: Dark inside, we had no light. When all of the sun, you're getting up, but the people — the men mostly — my father is … was right by the window — see what's going on. And I was right next to him; staying to …. He … he was lucky; when he got in, he got to a window. And by the window he was seeing what's going on, and he was telling us. He says: *We are …* He figured it out right away — *we're in Poland.* He recognized the Poland because the train had to stop to water up the engines. And he saw these … these things, you know. 'Cause I couldn't see anything, you know. Dare and I begged to … I liked to see it; he couldn't even lift me up. And try to go three, four days in a car; we have no light, and you don't … you can't see what's going down outside. My father could … could see in the windows, and the other people could see in the windows. And then we were so glad when we opened up the car in Auschwitz — oh my God. And they told us that time: *Oh you're going to go …* — **Arbeit Macht Frei**, they have all these signs in Auschwitz.

Interviewer: What's the first thing you saw when they opened the car?

Irving Hass: Germans — lined up. And some other cars were unloaded already. And our car got unloaded; there was five or ten cars in front. People — oh my God — holding their children on their hand. And … and they were with whips and sticks — you name it. You know to … to get a sample, each railroad car had to be in the right … right assemble in the front of the car; and then they were marching them off right to the camp through the gates.

Interviewer: As you got out of the car, your family stayed together?

Irving Hass: Mine daughter … mine — I say, my sisters would not leave the mother. That's why not one survived. You see, if they would've separated from their mother to be individual, you know, they would probably have the whip to go to the left too, because the … the kid looked real good, you know, not undernourished — my sisters, you know. And they would go; but the other girls … My sister's friend which gave me the other picture, she said: *I separate from my mother. They put me away when they unloaded me in the car. I didn't know where my mother was.* And my sisters all stick to the mother. They holding hands when they got off the railroad car.

Interviewer: All of them walking? Nobody being carried? The little girl walking?

Irving Hass: Everyone. They not allowed to carry anything. The little one even walked. And the last time I saw my family, un … we unloaded. And I can't forget it 'til this date. The unloading of Auschwitz — that's the last day I saw my family.

Interviewer: Your father — was he still with your mother?

Irving Hass: My father with my mother, together with the five sisters.

Interviewer: So they were all sent together?

Irving Hass: All sent together. And I know for a fact, they were burned the same week or the same day when they arrived. Because my sister would've been survived if they would be separated. My sister was an aggressive girl — the big one, Sheindel [sp, ph?].

Interviewer: Sheindel.

Irving Hass: Yeah. She was an aggressive girl like that; I couldn't believe it. When I met this … her friends in New York after liberation, I met one in New York, and one in … in … in Frankfurt, and they said: *Maybe Sheindel is alive.* And I start, still corresponding and finding from HIAS, Red Cross; and all of them, even after I was in the United States — couldn't find any.

Interviewer: So Sheindel is the most aggressive — the strongest girl in your family?

Irving Hass: The strongest girl from all of them, she was a really aggressive. Loved the mother — I'm telling you — always, just like, you know, for mom and everything, you know. And she didn't want to separate. And the kid did not know where they going; they want to be together as a family.

Interviewer: How would you describe the other girls?

Irving Hass: The other girls were the same, but they're not so more attached, because, you know, she is the … she was the leader. The other was … the other one was a follower.

Interviewer: So the other girls were following Sheindel?

Irving Hass: Following what Sheindel — what she was doing. Whatever Sheindel was saying, the other kids were following — the other sisters. And they really — because I'm … I'm just saying — they were like a teacher, the big one. In … in home, they were always listening to — the … the sisters were listening to her.

Interviewer: And as you got off the train, and you were walking and then getting separated, did anybody have any idea what was gonna happen? What did you think was gonna happen?

Irving Hass: I didn't even know it was an oven. I didn't even know what Auschwitz was. Like I said before, they put me in a barrack in wooden shelves. That's … that's what we were sleeping — no mattress, no nothing. And the same clothes which I had as I came. Two days went by, and nothing happened. When I saw these people lined up outside, they were ready to go and to tattoo you. When I saw these people lined up, I get out of the barrack, and somebody didn't see me. I crawled out and formed in a line. People stay in line and falled in, and … and here they took us to a railroad; and I'm on a railroad car. My God, I says: *Where we going?*

Interviewer: You didn't know.

Irving Hass: I'm out of Auschwitz. That's the only—

Interviewer: You knew that Auschwitz was a place to leave.

Irving Hass: I didn't know what is going on in Auschwitz, but I see the people — pushcarts, and walking,

Interviewer: You didn't want to stay.

Irving Hass: And I didn't want to stay. And I don't know what got into me. There time, somebody came in and pushed me get out of that barracks and hang on to the transport. I was going right there and standing in the line; and there is all the counting. And the guy counts and says, *March*. And all of a sudden we start walking; we walk to a railroad. And we were … we loaded in railroad cars again and here in two days …

[Interviewer and Irving Hass talking over each other.]

Interviewer: Same kind … same kind of cars?

Irving Hass: Same kind … same kind of railroad cars, and I'm going wind up in … in that camp.

Interviewer: Theresienstadt?

Irving Hass: Theresienstadt.

Interviewer: And when you got there, what was your impression?

Irving Hass: When I got there, then I saw — at least I know they're not going to kill us. They unloaded us, and they gave us some bread. And they gave us …

Interviewer: Germans?

Irving Hass: The Germans … some kind of a — what you call it — soup from … made from — cabbage soup. And I see somebody … we going to be somebody there, because they put us in clothes. They gave us the striped suits. I didn't have a striped suits in … in … in … in there.

Interviewer: In Auschwitz.

Irving Hass: In Auschwitz.

Interviewer: So you didn't get your striped suit until you …

Irving Hass: Until I get into Theresienstadt.

Interviewer: Until you get into Theresienstadt.

Irving Hass: That's what I'm saying. Today's date, I cannot get away thinking what pushed me to get into that line. People was telling me that they're in Auschwitz, they got into a line because they were tattooed and to go away. I was not tattooed, I was …

Interviewer: Were you showered? Were you … your hair wasn't cut — nothing?

Irving Hass: Nothing was cut, and I was out from Auschwitz by … by sheer luck; to get into … All of the people there had tattoos and everything because I met them. They says: *What's your number?* I didn't want to say it.

Interviewer: Do you know what just occurred to me? What you said about your sister being aggressive and strong and a leader, was true of you.

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, if you didn't have a younger brother to follow you; but you were aggressive.

Irving Hass: Yes, I was aggressive.

Interviewer: You seized the initiative.

Irving Hass: I … I was aggressive.

Interviewer: You got on that line.

Irving Hass; I was aggressive in stealing from … from … from under the wires; I went out at night. I could have been shot and killed to steal potatoes because I know where the potatoes are during the day. I passed by, and they had the potatoes; and I came back in the barracks and shared it with my friend. I stole three potatoes and came, and we didn't have too much big pockets. And I bring into the barracks, and then we were eating raw potatoes; and it was like sugar.

Interviewer: Do you ever wonder why you were aggressive, considering — I remember now — the story you told me? When you were a student, and you were afraid that your father was gonna punish you for being a bad student; now, then you weren't aggressive. Right?

Irving Hass: That's right, that's right.

Interviewer: The change occurs. Does it occur during this trip? You had never been aggressive before?

Irving Hass: Yes. It's … it's … it's … it's when I was already in Theresienstadt and that's the time …

Interviewer: When you were alone?

Irving Hass: Alone … I was figuring … I didn't … afraid for myself for that. I was not afraid for death. I was afraid, and this guy who was next to me, he says: *Don't do this*. He says: *We are good friends; you gonna get killed.* He says: *Why should I get killed with … with … the guy's going to kill you with the stick or something, or*

with a gun? I want to see a full stomach. And I took chances, and everything was luck with me.

Interviewer: Well, you could die without food too.

Irving Hass: And I tell you, say and that was more luck when they took us out and shot … shot us out there. And then when I saw the American troops were parading the Germans in trucks to go and pick up these people; they took you, people go pick 'em up, and they couldn't get over — the Germans — how many Jewish people were killed in that forest. We had to bring them down; they packed them like sardines. And I … to this day, when I was liberated, wherever, I saw these trucks coming with these people on, and I said to myself, you know. And … and I could tell you — to live when I was marching in Flossenbürg and so on, they were marching us. I wanted to drink water, and it was wet from the trucks, from the tires going there; and there is water assembled. I didn't care if I died or …. I grab my fingers and grab water and drank.

Interviewer: From the puddle?

Irving Hass: From the puddle. And you know something; you learn something here from doctors. You could survive days if you have to have liquid in you.

Interviewer: You need to have liquid.

Irving Hass: You need to have liquid in you.

Interviewer: That's right.

Irving Hass: And that liquid — I was telling this in New York to a doctor when I was going, after when I came here. In … in New York when I came here, I was suffering from ulcers. And I couldn't sleep, and it was ruining my stomach. And I went to doctors. They couldn't help me 'til one guy came and tells me, he says: *This is the doctor you go to 5 … 50 … 555 ½* — and what is the — *Park Avenue, Dr. Katz.* He's the only doctor. He was taken that time — in '49, in '50 — very high, expensive, you know. He's a big guy. So the minute I sign in there is a nurse and another doctor, and he was telling me: *What are you doing here? This is only for rich people — the president of Rippoli [sp, ph?] — he has ulcer, he's worried for his business. What are you doing here?* The doctor said that. Takes me in and … and talks to me. And these doctors were giving me all kind of things — to medicine — and it didn't help. Oh God, I'm almost … He says: *You give the nurse …* In the Sam [sp. ph?] [Note could be Sam-A] where I work in the textile, let me go to the doctors whenever; never docked me a nickel. He said to me:

Ulcers are getting from worried. You have no money, what are you worried about? I says, I told him about from where I came; he says: *You give the nurse a dollar; whatever you can. You go out.* He gave me more time than the guys who paid him $500, this Doctor Katz. And he said: Y*ou know, we found out, you don't have ulcers.* I still have the paper in a box.

Interviewer: What did you have?

Irving Hass: He says: *You got a nervous stomach, which when you eat it, it does not digest.* Five doctors didn't find out. And you go to a specialist, and the guy very expensive. And he says; he give me an example: *You eat a pickle, a pickle is very hard to digest.* I met my wife, I couldn't eat cream cheese and jelly, and chicken; you ask her. All these years I went with her, until this Dr. Katz gave me a certain diet and gave me medicine to eat up. He says: *And the stomach will eat food to digest, the chemicals,* and it becomes energy or whatever. He says: *That lays in your stomach and doesn't digest in system.* He gave me these pills, and all of a sudden I feel better. A month later he says: *Oh God, you all right?* And I come back; he says: *You follow this.* And then a month later I go back, and he says: *Now,* I said to him, *we gonna have a good pastrami sandwich.* And I …. She says: *God, you're gonna get sick again.* [There's a sound as if knocking on wood three times.] Never got sick …

Interviewer: Ever again.

Irving Hass: And that Dr. Katz found out what happened to me. And I went back, and I said: *I'm Doctor … whatever you wish yourself, I double it for you, but you help me.* And … and that guy helped me; 50 … 955 ½ [Note probably means 555 ½ as above] is the address on Fifth Avenue. And that guy found out the problems. Three or four doctors from organization send me in the hospital. They thought I got ulcers or something. This … give you [unintelligible] … didn't help. You go to a spe …. He really, and he gave me tests — drinking hot water, drinking this, and he came in and he says: *You have no ulcers.* That's good news, and he right away prescribed it. And he gave me this booklet; a booklet he gave me. And I still got it; she saved it in a box. Since … this and I still got … and … and he took it away. And today's date, [There's a sound as if knocking on wood twice.] knock on wood; all these years.

Interviewer: You spent a few months in Flossenbürg?

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: You lived right inside the camp. What was it like?

Irving Hass: Flossenbürg was segregated — wouldn't — no Flossenbürg, I think, was also a camp that gassed people. And they had people in different barracks — for working. And I could tell you like I was an aggressive. I was hungry in Flossenbürg, and the garbage cans were standing idle. I went to the garbage cans and picked up food and ate. Wherever I can, I … I … I … I did. Is always … I was for survival.

Interviewer: Who was in your barracks?

What kind of people were in there?

Irving Hass: People were … That's what I say; I met people from all over.

Interviewer: All over.

Irving Hass: All over; I did not meet in Flossenbürg … one member I met from my town is about six months later. He was in another barrack, and all of a sudden [? Somewhat unintelligible] I saw; and we were working together. He says: *Where are you?* And he told me and what …

Interviewer: What was a typical day like?

Irving Hass: They woke us up six o'clock in the morning, and they work from six right away — no matter roll call [? Somewhat unintelligible], to heat, to rain, shine. And we worked 'til about six o'clock.

Interviewer: In the evening. Any meals?

Irving Hass: They gave us one … one meal there at work which is other like you say … They gave us that soup — was like gold to us — cabbage soup … cabbage soup.

Interviewer: Cabbage soup.

Irving Hass: They put this cabbage, and they … they cooked it in water; and … and that's what we ate. And it was delicious — I tell you. When you're hungry, you eat it like everything. But … but when I was in the work, I was always obeying the orders — I should not get in trouble. I could not … one fellow who was work with me — he was, I think, from Poland — and I said: *Listen, hold on to me,* when we were marching. He said: *I cannot march no more; that's it.* And that's all I hear, *poof.* Everybody in the transport we were marching; they couldn't walk further, they killed you. And somebody picked 'em up. And I begged him: *Hold on, let's go.* And I … and … and he says: *I can't do it no more.* And I did whatever, you know, to get to survive. And that's one thing — my survival was the … was the …

Tape Two, Side A

Interviewer: Okay; we were talking about …

Irving Hass: Flossenbürg.

Interviewer: Flossenbürg and a … and a typical day. And I think you were talking about the kapo.

Irving Hass: Yeah, the kapos; and another thing, too. Some of the kapos, which really bugged me in Flossenbürg, was also one of ours.

Interviewer: One of your kapos was …?

Irving Hass: One of our own people.

Interviewer: From Ruscova?

Irving Hass: From …. No, Poland.

Interviewer: Polish — Jewish you mean.

Irving Hass: Polish Jews was always on the kapo. And I couldn't get over one of our own … and our … one of our own would hit us. And the reason — he probably get preference treatment from the Nazis.

Interviewer: So your … your kapo was a Polish Jew? Or was …

Irving Hass: Not mine.

Interviewer: No, nearby.

Irving Hass: Near the other labor … labor kommandos was … was … was … Because when I find out, and the guys were talking: *You see this guy, he says we gonna beat him up or something.* Okay, but it happens. But I … my kapo was a Ukraine.

Interviewer: Ukrainian kapo.

Irving Hass: And he was worse than ever.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Irving Hass: And I tell you something, when I was reading with the Ukrainian, it really bugs me too, you know. And a lot of 'em was mostly collaborated with the Nazis, just complete. They were wearing these black uniforms.

Interviewer: The kapo?

Irving Hass: The kapos, you know; they got black uniforms — where the … where the Germans gave them. I don't know what kind, special made for this camp. You recognize right away that he's one of …. And wherever they … they were going with Germans, he and … and the Germans were with us together.

Interviewer: Were you ever punished for anything?

Irving Hass: The only thing I was punished … is … was to stay in the cold for an hour and a half. And I thought I'm not going to live through that. In Flossenbürg, they made me stay with … with a pair of … the pajamas and sandals — stand for four hours. And I thought I'm not gonna make it; but I said to myself, I am gonna make it, and I'm gonna make it, I'm gonna make it. To myself — really just talking by myself. And the reason for this happened — he caught me with the … with the … not caught me stealing. He caught in my pocket, a potato, and he asked me where did I get it. I says: *I found it.* And I [Note probably means 'he'] says: *Where did you get it?* I says: *I found it.* Now where did I find a potato — he has to find it on the floor. I didn't; which is how he caught me. *Where did you find this potato?* That really … he first gave me a couple 'sss' … [Note this is a sort of hissing sound.] with the sticks, you know. And then he says: *Stay out there. Tomorrow morning you're going to stay*; and that's what it will — my punishment.

Interviewer: What time of the year was this?

Irving Hass: And that wasn't — I would say, time of the year, I would say, was close to maybe February, March.

Interviewer: February, 1945?

Irving Hass: February of 1945.

Interviewer: So it was winter?

Irving Hass: And that was cold, and I'm telling you it was cold.

Interviewer: Did you have newspapers under your clothing at that time?

Irving Hass: At that time I didn't, because he grabbed me right away out. I always was telling my … my … my … my friends to get yourself away from cold. Wherever they find … wherever they find a paper, wrap yourself around the paper. I don't know where … where … where it came to me — on my own mind. I tried it once, and the paper kept me warm. People were shivering.

Interviewer: This was after …?

Irving Hass: This was after, yeah. People were shivering, and that paper was really like … something in me.

Interviewer: Did he … did you ever see him punish other people?

Irving Hass: Yeah, yeah, yeah [? Slightly unintelligible]. He was … he was … If a guy goes in sick or …. And I used to tell the guys, I says: *Don't you* …. He … they can't go on over to work; the guy's in pain. Like he's saying, he calls in sick — not calls in [unintelligible], he says to the guy: *I can't go* — he sits down. They take him in the … in the … in the hospital; whatever they had. He used to — next time, we don't know where he is; never know where he is. What they did to him?

Interviewer: Did you see any executions?

Irving Hass: Uh-huh. Hanging I saw a lot. In … in … in Theresienstadt, they always wanted to show what will happen. And they … they lined us up in … in hanging — about five or six of 'em at one time — hanging. Shoo … to shoot with a gun was an easy killing — which I saw quite a few of 'em. And then they had a lull [? unintelligible] in the carts. In Theresienstadt I was also in a kommando with carts to … with frozen bodies. I handled the frozen bodies and helped them with the three of us. And used to bring them to a place and throw them into … into a ditch. They have dug a ditch, but ….

Interviewer: What did a person have to do to get hanged in Theresienstadt? What was their crime?

Irving Hass: He tried to run away or not to go … not to work. He run away, and they caught him, OK. If they caught him, they bring him back, and they right away made …. Quite a lot of people wanted to escape; and this one thing — I did not want to escape. And I don't know what happened to me. The only thing that's absent [? unintelligible] from Auschwitz, I was going on transport; whenever I went to camp, I was not ready to escape; 'cause I knew when you escape, they gonna get caught. You cannot be hidden.

Interviewer: Well, where you gonna go?

Irving Hass: Go. And another thing in the transport, the … the … the bombers used to go on over and over. And you see the dive bombers, diving against us. And we got some of us in the transport; they didn't know who we were and got killed.

Interviewer: So, some American planes bombed your transport?

Irving Hass: They didn't know … they didn't know who it was; and by accident. But what it got me — all the … the thing after the war I heard … no American bombers — they knowed the intelligence — couldn't bomb Auschwitz. They would have saved millions; it would have … so maybe a million Jews would have been killed, whoever was in Auschwitz. And they could have bombed it and destroyed the railroads. And the railroad tracks were never destroyed.

Interviewer: Was Flossenbürg ever bombed?

Irving Hass: Flossenbürg was bombed during the minutes what you call the … during the end of the war when we already in the forest — they bombed it. But they didn't bomb it completely. They bombed it before the tracks.

Interviewer: Because of the military action going by, nearby …

Irving Hass: The military; you see, the military was already going. And the Germans were already given up. Like I said — they shot us there and started escaping. I know the Third Army was the one who liberated … liberated me. And then a few days later, the war ended. I think it was almost the end of April when I was liberated, and I was in the hospital. And then April, May … May something, May 8, I think, the war ended.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Irving Hass: Which I was in the hospital; and I found out the war ended.

Interviewer: May seems to be a big month in your life.

Irving Hass: May is a good month in my life because I was born in May. May, I was the last … I was caught in … in the … in the transport there.

Interviewer: Yeah; but it's also the month you went to Auschwitz.

Irving Hass: Yes, and I … I … I'm telling you it's Taurus they call it, and that's something.

Interviewer: You're a Taurus?

Irving Hass: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, at Flossenbürg, we were talking about executions. Did you see hangings at Flossenbürg?

Irving Hass: Yes.

Interviewer: Anybody you know?

Irving Hass: I didn't know anybody what … what was hanged. So we kept — I said there were two different sections in Flossenbürg. In Flossenbürg, I didn't know why … why that was so sections. Quite a camp — there in Flossenbürg. And they had different type of labor set-up. Some of 'em were working in factories, and some of 'em were working on the roads and special projects.

Interviewer: When you saw these executions, and you saw those people dying, did you think they were lucky, or they were unlucky?

Irving Hass: Sometimes I think that they were lucky. When I was … I feeling downgraded, like I was so cold and hungry, I said: *I wish I would be on the hanging list.* And then in my mind came that, *Oh no, it's not gonna go on forever; you gonna survive.* And that's one thing … two … two things came to my mind — I … I wished I would be there, and then I thought to myself: *Oh no, I'm gonna survive.* And I did survive. The mostly lucky day when I survived is that shooting in that forest. And to that day's day, I cannot forget.

Interviewer: Saved by a tree?

Irving Hass: Saved by a tree, and then to have typhus — people die of typhus — and survived. And when I was telling this to people, they couldn't believe that I had typhus in 1945 and survived because Schwandorf there was a close hospital there. And a lucky soldier caught me, and get me to the hospital. I don't even know today's date who it was.

Interviewer: Looking back — all this — what was your worst moment?

Irving Hass: The worst moment is always thinking to myself, and thinking, it says: *Why did this happen? There is no God.* I said: *I don't believe in any God*, to myself. *How can this be, to human beings to be like animals? We're cattle in the cattle cars,* and that's all I was thinking to myself; always thinking. And I says: *If I ever survive,* I said to myself, *If I ever survive, I wanna make sure that this'll never happen again*; *and with everything I could do.* And this came out, and I bring it up in the army. I was drafted in the United States Army. I was transferred from Camp Gordon, Georgia to Camp Meade in Maryland, in Washington. We were working in a highly classified complex. And there was a … a Sergeant Willingham — very anti-Semitic — okay. And there was a Jewish holiday. The Jewish holiday came out from a Colonel Tullis — was his name. All Jewish personnel are accused for the Yom Kippur holiday.

Interviewer: Ex … Excused.

Irving Hass: I mean excused … for the Yom Kippur holiday to go to preserve the holidays. So I didn't know there was two other Jews. All of a sudden I find two other Jews, one guy from California and one guy from New York. One guy was Levin and one guy was Morris [sp, ph?]. Typewriter — they had a typewriter company. Sergeant Willingham comes out and says: *Okay you Dutchman,* to me, *you are gonna work your butts off over the weekend to clean the warehouse.* Entire window — which is a quarter of a mile long with windows in washing. We reported, and we cleaned the windows. And this guy Morris says to me: *I'm gonna get a box of nails. I'm gonna put his tires; I'm gonna fix him up.* I said: *Morris, you're not gonna put a nail so long as I am here. I am going to the colonel; tell him what happened.* He wrote the orders, you know; shows you. And when I was telling this to my wife, I go to the sergeant; I says: *I want to speak to the colonel. No, you go to the captain.* I go to the captain, I says: *Captain, I want to speak to the colonel. Can I help you?* I says: *Captain, I'm sorry; this is the colonel's problem.*

The chain of command I went. He had to … to let me go. The captain tells me; he says: *Irving … Hass,* he called me, *get yourself nice dressed-up. Make, sure your ties are right and … and you're authorized to see the colonel.* The colonel was told I'm coming; I'm coming in the office and salute; and says to the colonel: *Colonel, I got a personal problem. Mine friends did not have the guts to come to see you.* And I tell him: *Colonel, I am a survivor of the concentration camp. I was drafted in this United States Army, which is a nice country, and I love it, and I would die for it. What's the problem?* I says: *Colonel, here is your order.* I had a copy of it. *You see, I'm from the Jewish faith. You gave us permission to be excused from service … from the service company to go observe the Yom Kippur holiday which is a big holiday.* He says: *Oh yes, I know Yom Kippur. Sergeant Willingham, the following week, made me and my other two friends work in the warehouse cleaning windows for Sundays and Saturdays, two days, because of this. However, Colonel, my Jewish friends did wanna put nails under his tire and everything to get even with him. I said no; this got to be in the higher-up. That's all you have to do.* The colonel says to: *relax soldier and I'm gonna tell you a story,* he says to me. *You sitting like this now, all relaxed. There is big fish in the ocean … small fish. Sometimes the big fish eats up the small fish. There is apples, beautiful apples in a basket. One apple in the middle all of a sudden is rotten. And this rotten basket touches the other; the apple gets rotten. In this man's army,* he said, *there is good people, and there is bad people. Here we got a rotten apple.* And he tells me: *Soldier, I'll take care of that. Soldier,* he said to me, *from now on, whatever happen to you, don't go to the lower echelon; higher you go, action you get.* You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yeah, of course.

Irving Hass: He says don't … always go to the top. And he … he shook my hands, and he says: *I'll take care of it.* He says: *Thank God.* Then looks at my file; he says: S*oldier, you got an excellent record,* to me. *Basic trainings in the schooling, you know, and everything,* he says, *excellent.* I came back in the office. Morris is sitting there, and the other guy says: *Don't you ever pick up the phone when it's ringing now. You're gonna hear a ring pretty soon.* The phone rings; Sergeant Willingham answers it: *Yes sir, yes sir, yes sir.* He … the Korean War was on. He put him on a levy. Know what the colonel did? *Sergeant, you're gonna be transferred on a … on a ship, and you're going to Korea.* Willingham comes out, and he's in a transfer; sees me. And he know — the colonel told him. *See this little guy?* he said. *This little guy had the guts to come to see me,* the colonel told to the sergeant. *He went through hell in Europe; lost his father and mother and sisters. And he had the guts to come and see me; and what you guys did. And I … he did not — did he obey you?* He says: S*ure*. The sergeant says: *He obeyed your orders … my orders.* So we obeyed. I says: *One thing, we gonna wash the windows,* he told us — we gonna wash the windows.

And that colonel gave me power in my mind. And I was telling this to my daughter too. When she was going to college, she has a problem in college — you go to the dean. You don't talk to the little peon. If you have a problem, you go to the top; and he took care of it. And these two guys couldn't get over, he said: *Well I did.* I says: *Don't answer the phone, let him answer the phone.* And he got out of the … the … the thing. And that colonel, he says: *You know what I am?* He says: *I'm a Catholic* — the colonel. *And … and I know this should not happen in this mine … my man's army,* he said to me. And I says: *Colonel, I never refuse anything.* When I was alive [?], the … the sergeant picks out people from my whole kommando — you go on a KP. He comes to me: *Hey you're going on KP.* And all of a sudden, all the guys wanted to stand the back of the row; you know, the guards can't see — maybe he doesn't pick 'em. I did KP once, and I worked for about 14 hours; that was my last KP. The sergeant never picked me again. I ask him: *Sergeant why don't you pick me?* He says: *You know why? You were never squawked — to me. I pick a guy,* he says, *with bi … bi … bitching …* he says: *I did it,* you know, and so on. I never squawked; I listened to him, and I meant it. He never picked me on KP again. I could stand in front line — and everything. And I … and I said the same thing to … to obey. And that's one, my philosophy.

And then when I start coming a life to go to work, and I sat in the civilian life when I was working here. I came out of the army. I'm not gonna go back to the

textile because I saw I have no future. I went to school to learn to read drawings, you know, blueprints. There was an answer in the … in an ad from a company in Bunsen [sp, ph?] Road in New York. That was the company; they were making a system for the Boeing [?] Company. They were architects and making dams and making shelters for weapons. The guy interviews me and says okay — I get the job. I go into work, and I get the … work with a guy — Supervisor … Zosen [sp, ph?] was his name. He likes me, and all of a sudden gives me responsibility. We become a subcontractor to AMF which used to be American Machine and Foundry Company, and they were in Brooklyn and Connecticut. And they assigned me to work with AMF project, and I speak to the AMF guys and so on. And the AMF guy says how would you like to work for the AMF? I says I don't mind, if … if so long it's in Brooklyn. They send me from Bunsen Road to a Canadian company and a job — to get some information for the Boeing Company. I'm in Canada, and I call up home — my wife; and my wife says to me: *You got a telegram.* I says: *From where is it? From AMF*; *they offered you a job.* I says: *How much?* She tells me. I says: *You write up a telegram, and say we will accept.* I come … I … I call in Canada, call my boss from Canada and give him notice. I called the guy in Canada … from Canada to Bunsen and says: *I'm leaving in two weeks; I got another job.* He says: *Where?* I says*: With AMF. I'm gonna work on the same project with you guys — and I'm gonna be [?] from the other side now.* So I stay in Brooklyn and work about four weeks; they transfer the project to … to Greenwich, Connecticut. Here I come here, and I have a car, and it's very far from Brooklyn to go to Greenwich, Connecticut. I go into personnel, and I says: *Listen, I can't do it.* They says we get you a car pool. Personnel goes through, and now I got Sheepshead Bay, a guy; I got one in Canarsie, I got that. We got a car pool; I didn't quit my job. Work in Connecticut, and then AMF got a big contract with the Air Force, and I make really good points. I like the job, and they like me — was reading drawings, picking up special things from the drawings — tools, and so on — which I had a ball.

And I liked the company 'til somebody, a relative, comes from Cleveland and offers me a job in a furniture — to be a salesman for him. And he offers me nice things and so on. And I live in a little apartment in Brooklyn, and I said, okay, I'm gonna accept the job in Cleveland. I come back and get to the girl; *I'm going to dictate you a memo.* And I … I remember it from memory, the memo like this in my memory. And I says: *I hereby tender my resignation from such a progressive company; not for the reason I do not like my job. I got a … a special offer in a different field, and I thank the … the company for the opportunity they gave me* and so on. And I copy to personnel and a copy to the vice-president. And the vice-president the next day calls me up. He says: *You know, your memo — the … the*

resignation; I never saw it with resignation like this. You know, I gave … I gave the truth. I liked the company; I told the truth. He says: *You know, you're not gonna quit.* The vice-president tells me, says: *You know, I'm not gonna let you go. I'm gonna make you a supervisor — stay.* I come home and tell my wife. I says: *Ann, he made me a supervisor, and he gave me a raise; and I stay.* And I was going to AMF and working; I became really noticeable. And I don't have a college education, everything on my own; and here was technical. Okay, the supervisor had forty people working already. All of a sudden, I … I'm buying a house in Fairfield, Connecticut — by the college.

AMF got more and more jobs. And all of a sudden they got a job on the Titan Weapon System, and they pick me to go to Santa Barbara — relocating. I gave a deposit, they building this house. I run right back, I says, stop. He says I could give you the deposit back — yes; the company said if … you lose the deposit, we'll … we'll pay for it. They transfer me to Santa Barbara, and we did not want to move. So I'm commuting from Brooklyn to Stamford, Connecticut; from Gren … from Greenwich they moved me to Stamford — it's another eight miles. Work and so on; and everything, you know, and AMF was involved — my God — bowling, you name it. You know, here were … here were all kind of … you know — very big company. I got transferred from Brooklyn … from Stamford to York. And here is the transfer. One day the government has a plant, a Navy facility in York, Pennsylvania. You probably passed it on [Note Route] 30, okay; it was not 30 then. And I got a package home — so thick. The vice-president says a letter, this is confidential; certain people were selected. You were selected to go to York, Pennsylvania to prepare a bid. You're gonna check into this ho … hotel, and you're gonna meet some other people. You are sell [?] … you section is to estimate logistics. You know what a word — logistics?

Interviewer: Sure.

Irving Hass: Okay, you said estimate logistics; and do not tell a soul. "Ooh" … and Stamford they say AMF is moving … nobody …; leaks got out. The … the company says we're not moving. I come, and I did look on the map; I never been in York. I check into the hotel, and I go through that facility; I never believe it. Oh my God — big; firing range, 360 acres! The plant is now Harley-Davidson. I make up the package; AMF is the lowest bidder … I mean the highest bidder. Chrysler, General Motors, all of them bid for that. We were the highest bidder with 1.4 million. The contract was to get the plant plus 55 million continuation contract. We had to take over about 350 personnel, transferred with the seniority and so on. My job is to read up because they had a logistics department there. We were preparing logistic documentation, you know, for service of our logistics …

prepare ser … service equipment. And I come back; the company announce we're moving. So they asking me what people would you like from your department to move. The company … the vice-president asked me; I says I picked cer … certain people. In a matter of a month, two months, I was already transferred. For about eight weeks, I was commuting from York, Pennsylvania, that's why I remember that highway to New York — the Turnpike and so on. The company paid all the car expenses — gas, mileage.

Stay in York, Pennsylvania — we build a house. A house for $21,000, which sells for $150,000 now; sold that time in '64. We … they … they moved three divisions, AMF did; Thomas Division, the Engineering Division, and the Buffalo Division. We moved on … we moved on 550 families. You don't know what this town became. So much business came in from this move. And I was there — 'til all of a sudden they transferred me to a different project. One the government phased out … how you gonna be in [?] the LPG project; which is liquid petroleum tanks for rural area homes. You know, they're making this … the gas … enough for gas. And then from York, they transferred me to Des Moines, Iowa. That's what I says I wind up in Des Moines. Then I was … in Des Moines I was made assistant to the president, and the guy put me in to write procedures of everything under the sun, you know. And that guy was a … he … he developed the Head Ski; and he became from Head Ski. AMF bought Head Ski, and he became vice-president. And then he became … and he says: *Irving I went through your folder, I want you to work for me.* And you talk about people. He says: *I like you. You call a spade a spade; and that's what I'm doing.* And my office was outside the executive office, but you could bust a wall and … and close up the door, you wind up in the executive office. Bill Songs [sp, ph?], was his name, calls me in and says, Irving, we're gonna bust a wall, and we're gonna share the secretary. He issues a memo to the vice-president of operation; two weeks go by — nobody's carpenters, no come, no nothing. He calls me in, and he says: *Irving,* [Note there is a loud slap] *that door is gonna be busted tonight, and I guarantee you.* The guys didn't want … want me because, you know, there's jealousy in the company goes around.

He move me there next to him, and he assign me to the lawn and garden division which Sears makes mowers. We make them for a private label. You know the … the smallest would cut grass — you could see in my garage, I got all this private label. And I go through the logistics in Sears. And Sears … they buy a mower — something is breaking; they send to the factory to get a washer. The washer costs 50 cents, and Sears sp … spends $3 … to … the paperwork and $4 to ship; they losing money. And I go into this job, and I say: *Oh my gosh; look it — how many*

orders are you getting from Sears? The guy says to me: *Oh my God, we got 3,000 this month. And how much is the total? The 3,000 total about $12,000.* I says: *You crazy.* I go out to Chicago, and I speak to the buyer, and I says: *Listen, I'm gonna make an analysis and see what's going on.* In the meantime, I had a good fellow working for me, and I says: *Eph [sp, ph?] Jones … Eph … you're gonna come with me to Chicago, and we're gonna take all the data down.* I told Sears that you guys are losing money; they … they pull their hair out. I prove it to them on charts. So here we get away with shipping no more from the factory. Sears had to ship it to a Philadelphia warehouse, and the warehouse is dealing with the … with the store. We were dealing with stores, you know, with … with the customer; and I made a change on that.

Another change come in. The … the boss got promoted; He takes over a … a bicycle division in Little Rock, Arkansas and a division in California. And comes in; he says: *Irving, you're going to Arkansas. To Arkansas? Not me!* And I tell you, that's where I wind up with my life in there. In all the time in my life, when my daughter used to see this, and I used to tell her: *Go to the top, learn — important things.* And that's why I always with the supervisors — never. And I … I …. People know where you stay. We had in New York, a lieutenant general was … which is … was the Chairman of the Board's buddy; he gave him a job. He wants to fish out who is a supervisor, who's not a supervisor. Fishing out, you know — wants to know if he have the brains to be a supervisor. In one brain, he did, he came in nine o'clock with a package. He says to me: *Your work are needed immediately.* Nine-thirty he cames with another package. *I need this in 30 minutes.* Ten-thirty he cames in with another package; and here I got two packages I couldn't say. I look at one package, he says with credit — no. I look for another package — is it a question some manual data — no. The third package has to do, if I furnish this information, we will furnish you an order, you know, of so and so. I took the order package first — he gave me the last — to do the job. I finished it, he calls me in. He says: *You seem, Hass, to me the general* [?]. *I gave this package, was to nine people. Everybody still working on package one. You got package three, which one I needed. Why … why did I get package three?* I says: *It's more important because there … there's gonna be an order from it. Package … the first is on credit, you know the guy's waited so long for credit; he wait another ten days, it's not gonna hurt.* And that's why the guy wanted to fish out; if you have authority. Then I used to go to seminars. At seminars, the guy was teaching the same thing. A-B-C he says, assert yourself management seminars. He says assert yourself everything, A-B-C.

Interviewer: So this is the kind of thinking …

[Interviewer and Irving Hass talking over each other]

Irving Hass: This is the kind of thinking, and that's why I sur …

Interviewer: … that helped you survive?

Irving Hass: … survived in Auschwitz — because of this. Right away, I don't know what got in to me or something from my father. I could not stand. I was right away in that …; I … I thought to myself it's gonna be better, whatever happens.

Interviewer: What was on your father's mind, as far as you can tell?

Irving Hass: My father's mind, he knew right away he's gonna … he … this is gonna be of … of … of last. He said it in the railroad car.

Interviewer: When you got in the car?

Irving Hass: In the car, he says to his friend there, talking. He says: *Binyamin* [sp, ph?] …

Interviewer: He fears the worst.

Irving Hass: *Binyamin,* he said, *what's gonna happen?* He called him and said: *You know what's gonna happen. I don't trust the Germans.* And he knows that from the First War were the same thing — they took us to Russia; and all of a sudden — tell you — some of them survived, some of them — they were killed in the First War. And who my fath … father to wind up in Tashkent from … from Ruscova — sent Tashkent; which is 4,000 miles or something. And … and he knew right away.

Interviewer: So he thought you would all be killed?

Irving Hass: He thought …

Interviewer: … everybody would be killed.

[Interviewer is talking over Irving.]

Irving Hass: He thought we're all gonna be killed, and he says to me bef …— in the railroad car — one word I could never forget. *Whatever happen to me,* he says, *don't lose your religion* — to me — *whatever happen in the … in the camp.* I said to myself: *There's no God.* I'm not gonna believe in God.

Interviewer: This is when you were in the cattle car?

Irving Hass: In the … in the cattle …. In the … yeah.

[Interviewer and Irving talking over each other.]

Interviewer: When you questioned God's existence?

Irving Hass: Yeah, in the … in the concentration camp; not in the cattle car.

Interviewer: The cattle car you …

Irving Hass: Was still …

Interviewer: You still believed in God?

Irving Hass: Was still believed in God. But when I was in the camp, I said there's no God. I … I don't believe it. God cannot see people suffering no matter who you are, what religion; I says no. And then I saw, when after I got separated, I came to New York. I says listen, maybe God gave this [?] because he punished us. And I'm back, and that's what I tried to teach my children.

Interviewer: So you did listen to your father in the end?

Irving Hass: So I did listen; that's what I'm saying. Did listen to my father, and my father said: *No matter what you do, this is gonna bring you back to life.* And I know I … I had bad days, and … and sometime I could've got killed — with a car. We … we were almost, you know, terrible — and I saw my father in front of me.

Interviewer: So your father thought the Germans would kill everybody?

Irving Hass He … he … I would say he knew this. He knew this in his heart. Because the First World War told him what … what happens — it's a war. Because he knew America was involved; and it's not gonna be easy to hold America, France, and England and so on.

Interviewer: What about your mother? What did … [unintelligible]?

Irving Hass: My mother was not … not more like this. Like I said, my mother was a gentle lady, knows how to take care of the family, you know, and everything; but never knew politics or … or business type.

Interviewer: But on this deportation in the train … to Auschwitz, what …

[Interviewer and Irving talking over each other.]

Irving Hass: In the deportation she was only crying. My mother was crying and everything. I says: *I wish we were going to see it and everything*, you know. And hugged me in the railroad car; oh my God, she must have hugged me hundreds of times.

Interviewer: She must have hugged all the kids.

Irving Hass: Really I can't ever forget. That's why I … I … when I see a movie, and I … told my wife, it's about a concentration camp — *don't watch it.* I says: *No, I'm gonna watch it, because that is in my heart.* I got to — nobody should forget. And the Holocaust Memorial is the greatest thing we ever did.

Interviewer: Could you get …? You never had a chance to say goodbye to your sisters?

Irving Hass: No. I just pulled away the guy, and that's it. And I don't … I'm saying from … my family, one would survive — nobody … from my family. … [unintelligible]. And when I met my wife, she's a … was an orphan; her mother died. And she was in high school. And it's a … also a miracle I went up … to camp. In the camp, I … I got to there, two weeks they got free vacation for me — from the organization. Lehman … the Governor Lehman donated a camp for orphans and so on, children — non-sectarian, Jewish and non-Jewish. OK there's really … I met some nice people out there. And I … I … I checked in, and I saw this girl. The minute I saw her …. I didn't have a steady … I mean a good-paying job — didn't have a thing. And I said to uncle and aunt, I says: *I can't marry, what am I going to do?* He says: *Don't worry, marriage brings luck, whatever.* And … so I dropped her. Three weeks later, she called up and asked what happened. He didn't … I didn't call her. I says: *You know, I … I cannot.* And then I called her from then on. I just … I had a ring which I brought from Germany — a little ring — and I … gave it to her; I says: *We're engaged.* And then my uncle and aunt, with the family, planned a wedding. And … I got married in … in Henington Hall in the East Side.

And … and … and that's why … that's why now which I read in the paper and I see in television, people don't say there is no … Holocaust. How can a person say which people come in today's world; which I would only able to talk to him and show him a picture that I went through this? And I have seen this, and you tell me there is so in California pictures, there never was a Holocaust. Where is my town of 300 people? Maybe the entire town, maybe 12 or 14 survived. I don't think we have twelve … from the entire town of 300 families. And this is an outrageous. And this Holocaust Memorial should be really built that should be stand for hundreds of years. I know the … the data what they … what you accumulate should be there for hundreds of years. Generations should come; generation, generation to follow.

Interviewer: Let's hope so.

Irving Hass: So I really … I really; it's really bad.

Interviewer: Do you have anything else to say?

Irving Hass: The only thing I can say, I really appreciate you giving me this opportunity.

Interviewer: Thank you, I appreciate it, and I thank you.

Irving Hass: And I … I really thank the organization. Whatever happens, I'm really happy.

Interviewer: I thank you on behalf of the Holocaust Museum.

Irving Hass: Thank you.