

MAGIER, Nathan

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Interviewed on April 8, 1992

2 Audiocassettes

Abstract

Nathan Magier was living in Bedzin, Poland with his mother, father, and two brothers when the Germans invaded. He recalls several days of bombings. His brother was sent to a camp and Nathan never saw him again. Nathan was put to work on various labor projects before being sent to the ghetto. While in the ghetto, he was separated from his father and never saw him again. When the deportations to the camp started, he hid in a wall with his mother, but brought her out when soldiers searched the ghetto. “‘Til today, I eat my life out. I eat my life out because I took her out from the attic.” In 1943, he was sent first to Birkenau and then to Auschwitz. He worked as a tailor in Birkenau, and in Auschwitz he was put to work outside the camp. He escaped from Auschwitz and joined the underground resistance where he was wounded. He joined the Russian Army, but deserted and was arrested for deserting. He married in Italy, and went to Montreal, Canada in 1951. He came to the United States in 1955. At the time of the interview, he lived in Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey.

Tape I Side A

Anthony Di Iorio: I am here on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to interview Mr. Magier about his experiences during the Holocaust. Good evening, Mr. Magier. Would you tell us where you were born?

Nathan Magier: I was born in Poland, Bedzin, May 4, 1925, and I was there until Germany invaded Poland.

Anthony: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Nathan: I had two other brothers, one youngest was named Szmulek and the other brother's name, Romek.

Anthony: Any sisters?

Nathan: No sisters, only three brothers.

Anthony: What languages were spoken in your household?

Nathan: In my household everybody spoke in Polish.

Anthony: Were other languages used?

Nathan: German, Russian, once in awhile Yiddish, but mostly we spoke Polish. Where I was born the town was still was majority, only was Christian.

Anthony: So most of the people in Bedzin were Christian?

Nathan: No, there were about, if I am not mistaken, there were about 70,000 Jews in Bedzin.

Anthony: So most of the town was Jewish?

Nathan: No, the majority was Christian.

Anthony: Did you live in a Christian neighborhood or a Jewish neighborhood?

Nathan: The majority was a Christian neighborhood. There was some Jewish too. The majority was Christian. As a matter of fact, our neighbors used to work for my father. They were very nice. We weren't discriminated at all. Some, you know, but we were very happy where we were living.

Anthony: What kind of work did your father do?

Nathan: My father used to have a factory, furniture factory, household.

Anthony: He made furniture?

Nathan: Furniture, yes.

Anthony: Was it near the place where you lived?

Nathan: I would say about three blocks or four blocks. Streets, I would say – the streets are big over there.

Anthony: What kind of home did you live in?

Nathan: We had a one-family home.

Anthony: Was it a regular house?

Nathan: A regular house, yes.

Anthony: Did other members of family live with you?

Nathan: No, we lived--.

Anthony: So it was you and your mother--?

Nathan: Mother and three brothers, well, I mean we were the three brothers; another two brothers.

Anthony: You were the middle boy?

Nathan: I was the middleman, yes.

Anthony: And your mother, did she work outside of the home?

Nathan: No, she was a full-time mother. We had servants, too.

Anthony: How would you describe religious life in your home?

Nathan: Our home we observed Saturdays, Jewish holidays, but we were not brought up strictly religious.

Anthony: Religious?

Nathan: Yes. From my father's side, all the family were very strict. My mother was very modern.

Anthony: So your father's side was strict, they were orthodox?

Nathan: Very orthodox.

Anthony: Your mother was more modern?

Nathan: More modern, was more—so my father was very modern in our home. As a matter of fact, if I have to tell you the truth, my mother didn't get along with my father's side. I find out now here in the United States about my mother and my father. My grandfather's very happy to marry for my mother from my father's side. I mean the sisters already were against her. My grandmother, she was a very strict, very religious person. [Female voice: And your mother wasn't]. My mother wasn't.

Anthony: So they objected to your mother because she wasn't religious enough?

Nathan: But, I mean, they were happy. What's true is true, my mother wasn't very happy. She never went to them but they all came to my mother, though. My father has brothers and sisters, 13, a very big family.

Anthony: Your father had 13 brothers and sisters?

Nathan: Total thirteen. Three died, ten was alive until the war broke out.

Anthony: And they lived in Bedzin?

Nathan: All in Bedzin.

Anthony: So you had a lot of--?

Nathan: Well no, our family name in town was very well-known. All the people know us even in the United States and Canada. My grandmother comes from—she had a title on my father's side. A title like, you know. I forget in Yiddish how they call her. Like “caballero” in Italian, you know, something. She had a title in Yiddish. They were very respected people. They had very big business. My father come from a very wealthy family. We make lots of charities.

Anthony: Is this because of the furniture factory?

Nathan: No, no. That is from my father's side. They were very big wholesalers, but were very respected people. We help lots of people. Not to brag about it, you know, people in Poland used to be Jewish people, beggars. They used to come to my grandmother, she was like a soldier, she was bitchy, excuse my expression, but she is. Some of them, they used to come two, three times. Understand?

Anthony: Yes.

Nathan: But she got all laid down enough charity money for them, everybody. Even the Christians, they used to come. She was a very educated woman.

Anthony: Your grandmother?

Nathan: Yes, she spoke Russian, Polish, German, of course Yiddish and Hebrew, you know. In those days a woman in Poland in that time, very few were educated. She was a very educated woman. I don't know if you know Polish history. Poland has the greatest, biggest illiterate people in the world. That was Poland until Cuszevesky (?) (95) came into power. Then it was a law. I don't know today, but you see very few women know how to read and write. My mother know how to read and write.

Anthony: What kind of school did your mother go to?

Nathan: Well, I do not remember that where she went. This I really don't remember. I don't know even my father. I was just a kid, do you understand? My mother used to go to school, she was a teacher for poor people. She was very-- [Female voice: very active in school.] Very active. She was a very good-looking woman.

Anthony: I can see in the photo.

Nathan: I can remember like today, she used to have long hair, she was a good singer.

Anthony: Your mother was a singer?

Nathan: Yes, a very modern type. Completely different. My father's side, they were all very educated, but different type. They didn't talk much, but if somebody laughed, they were very serious people; you understand?

Anthony: Yes, yes.

Nathan: She met my uncle here months ago, but the same time, well I am very well-known. If you were to ask people in the United States who come from our town, we were very well-known. We used to have big orchards, miles and miles of orchards. My grandpa's--

Anthony: Your father's parents?

Nathan: Father's. They didn't know what to do with the money. Thank G-d I had everything in Poland. I had in Poland, America. Not America in the United States, Thank G-d we had everything. My mother, we had two maids, one was sleeping, one used to come. I don't want to talk about it.

Anthony: How did your mother and father meet?

Nathan: Well, this I don't know. I found out, you see, in the United States, They are talking about my mother. My father went to the army, he don't lose my mother.

Anthony: He was in the Polish Army?

Nathan: Polish Army and he didn't want to lose my mother. When he went to the Army, he got my mother, he didn't say nothing to his father, nothing because they didn't let him. They went and they got married.

Anthony: So they eloped?

Nathan: They were good after that but it looks like, you know--. My mother never forgive them, they always came to us, because we were living—see like I live here, I have lots of land, you see that?

Anthony: Yes.

Nathan: I always like to live in the suburbs, because that's how I was brought up. Next was a river. We have lots of tree, we have a terrific life.

Anthony: So your father had his own house and his own land?

Nathan: See this house really belonged to one who was a very big shot in the coal mines. He didn't want to sell it. We never owned it—he gave that to us—we paid him. Mostly private. Private, he won't sell it. He liked my mother, he liked my father. There were very few people in Poland who talked Polish. When they needed something, they came to my father's factory; my father used to help them, so we got the house and we lived there by ourselves. He didn't want to sell it. I was born in that house. At that time they didn't go to the hospital, they used to come to the house and deliver the women -- they were midwife. I was back in Poland after the war. This is on now, everything what I'm talking here?

Anthony: Sure.

Nathan: Oh my gosh. I didn't want to say that. I was thinking you were asking that. I didn't want to say the story about it, this about my father—story—and mother. This, I wouldn't like that, you understand? I'm talking that to you. If you can cancel that--.

Anthony: Sure, sure. Now your mother, what languages did she speak?

Nathan: Polish.

Anthony: Just Polish?

Nathan: And my father. Sometimes they talked Yiddish with my father, but we did not know a word in Yiddish.

Anthony: You didn't? As a child you didn't know Yiddish?

Nathan: No, very little. But my grandmother, my father was very touchy about it, my mother. My grandmother used to call us "goyim." You know what means that? Christian type. My mother was very touchy, because we didn't know how to talk Yiddish.

Anthony: Your mother was Jewish?

Nathan: Oh yes, a good Jew. She was a good Jew, but that had nothing to do with it. She was a very good Jew. Only she was modern because—now I'm scared to talk, because—

Anthony: Don't worry. How--?

Nathan: You see my mother used to have polished nails and lipstick. At that time from my grandmother, my father's side, she used to say only whores wear that because she was very modern, she was so educated.

Anthony: It was a generation gap between your grandmother and your mother?

Nathan: Yes, as a matter of fact, my father's sister lived in Breslov (now Braslaw), in Germany and all around. So she was the only one who would tell her off. She would say "Ma", in Yiddish, "Mama, you are not living in modern times." Saturdays she used to come from Germany, she used to come direct to me. She was—.

Anthony: It's even more modern.

Nathan: My aunt in Germany, she was, how you call that, very rich—[Say the name. *Editor's note: all bracketed comments from female voice?*] Presnek (187) in Brezlov. He was a multi-millionaire. After Germany come in, they looked out for him—remember they throw out the Jews from Germany, she was born in Poland. So they came back and took her; after Germany invaded, they knew exactly where she lived. They took them right away—Hitler. She has only one daughter. She was a beautiful woman, she was 6'6", my father was too 6'6".

Anthony: That is how tall he was?

Nathan: Yeah. All my family—they all tall from my family. My grandmother was so little, and my grandfather was very tall and she had 13 kids. She was like a soldier. [She had to be with 13 kids.] Oh yes, she was a terrific woman, very--

Anthony: How many brothers and sisters did your mother have?

Nathan: She has three brothers, two brothers they were in Germany and one, where I found out after the war, because I was thinking he was in Russia. He was a-- His name was Romek. (181) They didn't hear from him for many years, because something happened in the family. He took himself over. I remember the picture—he was a Cossack.

Anthony: Your older brother was named after him?

Nathan: No, my oldest brother, my _____ (183) [The oldest brother was named--]

Anthony: Named after him?

Nathan: I think so. I don't know because his name was the same name, but I didn't hear from him, years and years. He picked himself up and he left the house after a dispute when he came back from the war or Russia, I don't remember exactly, but I found out after the war. He left money in the house, so her sister lived in France, my mother's sister, and what my grandmother did, she give all the money to her sister as dowry and they gave his money away. When he found out, he got mad, and he left the house and they never heard from him. I found out when I was in 1980, I was in Israel? Or '81 or '80, I don't remember. I went to see my uncle, my mother's brother and I ask about him. He told me no, he was in Hamburg, Germany, married a German Christian. So I may have some cousins there too. Germans, we don't know what's what. But my mother's family was a different type, especially at that time, you know. So that's how I found out – he told me, he lived in Hamburg, Germany and that his wife was a Christian German.

Anthony: What kind of schools did you attend?

Nathan: I attended Polish elementary school. I went to St. _____ (199) school. Do you know St. _____ school?

Anthony: So you went to public school?

Nathan: Public school.

Anthony: Were you also sent to Hebrew school?

Nathan: Well, no, I went to Hebrew school, but I had a problem. My father told me. You see, when I was a kid, I am a very nervous person since a kid, so we didn't went to Hebrew. I was already acquired as a Jewish thing, you have to know how to make with the Kaddish, prayers, and like with T'fillin. You know what T'fillin is?

Anthony: Yeah, yeah. When you say the prayers.

Nathan: So my father told him, to the teacher, he say, look, he's a good kid, but remember, he doesn't know how to talk in Yiddish. You have to have patience with him. My brother had more patience, I was a hot temper -- [You still are].

Anthony: Still is?

Nathan: Yes, and how, very hot. So when he started he went to Hebrew School, he talked to me, I didn't understand him, so he used to beat me. You know, they have a stick, and he didn't teach me. Not only that, I couldn't stand his smell, from the stinking from bad odor in the mouth. So one day, I told him I couldn't take it. I ran out and took a _____ (218). He came up and he went to my father and said "What happened?" My father said, "Listen, I know him, if he done that, you must have done something. He wouldn't do that, for nothing. And that's it. I didn't went any more. I finished. _____ (228) That's all. Then during the war came a private in the house, because I was supposed to have a Bar Mitzvah, I know. So he teached me. I had a problem with him, too. But I know how to read in Yiddish, I mean Hebrew. I learned. That was the problem. We weren't that religious, but we had holidays, Passover, all the holidays. As a matter of fact, every holiday came Passover everybody had new suits, everything. It wasn't so easy in Poland. But I got to my father, we were thick. My mother wasn't religious, but she kept up the tradition.

Anthony: Now, you were a big boy?

Nathan: I was a big boy, tall.

Anthony: Were you interested in sports?

Nathan: Yes, I was a good soccer player. The biggest thing was soccer.

Anthony: Still is.

Nathan: Still is.

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

Nathan: I want to be a soccer player.

Anthony: You wanted to be a soccer player? You already were a soccer player. You were going to be a professional soccer player?

Nathan: Yes, I wanted to be one. It was very dangerous in Poland with the anti-Semites. We had a team, _____ (236) was the top team in our city, but when it used to come in to the national – when they watched the game, they used to come in with knives, the Poles. When they used to come to our stadium, they were a little bit scared. But when they used to come in to the national soccer, from our town, the team, I remember, number _____ (243), the best players used to come in. As a matter of fact one brother lives in Ireland. His brother was the best score keeper in the world. All the Jews went for the--

Anthony: So this was a Jewish team?

Nathan: Yes, the Ha_____ (247), Maccabees, Gazda, in our town. We have very big sport in our town. _____ (256), where all the Jewish, Zionist organizations. We had lots of organizations. We had lots of things in our town. _____ (259). I was a hot soccer player. Very good.

Anthony: Was anyone in your family interested in Zionism? You mentioned it.

Nathan: Well, I was, my brother was, we were already in it. My father was a liberal. Everybody called him, but he wouldn't put in his nose. He stayed away. Everybody invite him. If somebody comes for charity, he gave it. But everybody wants him to be a party member, but he was a straight man, he doesn't--. [He didn't want to belong to anything.] No.

Anthony: No political parties?

Nathan: No, no, he wasn't that type. He was a very respected man in our town, in our neighborhood. He was a very powerful guy. He can knock out six, seven guys like that.

Anthony: He was a big guy?

Nathan: Not only him, but the whole family. You see, once in a while, they used to get mad, because where we used to live there used to be a castle across, _____ (263) castle and I know my father, when he used to get mad because I know what he can do, but he wouldn't do it. Because when he gets angry, he could hurt somebody, he's such a powerful guy. So I remember once finally he jumped – he went to the anti-Semite and he busted about six or seven guys. _____ (271). _____ Powerful. We were, _____.

Anthony How old were you when your father did this?

Nathan: I was about, I would say eight years old.

Anthony So it was in the 1930s?

Nathan: He was a very powerful guy. I will show you a picture.

Anthony He was like a basketball player?

Nathan: Taller than that. All the brothers and sisters – all tall people.

Anthony You mentioned anti-Semitism when you were playing soccer. How was it in school? Did you have anti-Semitic....?

Nathan: No, we went to school it was a private school, run by the Jewish community. _____ (279). You have to pay for it. There were some families, they could go, but if they could not afford to pay, the community took care of them. That was—there were some Christians going, but mostly people who could afford to pay, private school. It was a public school – [semi-private], semi-private, yeah. You understand?

Anthony: So it was a Jewish school, partially supported by public money?

Nathan: Yes. There was other schools what really from the city town, but this school you have to pay.

Anthony: And that's the only school you attended before the Germans came?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: Do you remember anybody in your family talking about Hitler and the Nazis? Did anyone pay attention?

Nathan: Well, they were talking. It started already in 1939, when our town, the Polish became the Nationalist Party. They used to call them INDEKI (?) (296), the International Polish Party, anti-Jewish movement. But here were lots of Poles, Christian, whatever, against it. I meant but that's how it started. It started when Hitler started to go into power in Germany. Then by us we know everything – we knew about it.

Anthony: Being close to the border with Germany, you must have seen refugees coming from Germany?

Nathan: Well, I tell you, I was too young about it. I didn't know too much about it. I know when my aunt came – when they chased her out of Breslov, today it's called Braslaw, (317). I remember that because they used to talk, they used to tell him to sell the--. He has lots of houses. She was a _____(309) in Germany. Very rich person. That's how I find out.

Anthony: Did you ever hear your mother talking about what was going on in Germany?

Nathan: When they used to talk, my father, mother.

Anthony: One of your mother's siblings was from Germany, too, right?

Nathan: Who?

Anthony: One of your mother's siblings came from Germany? The one in Braslaw?

Nathan: [No that was his aunt. *Editor's note – female voice instead of Nathan?*]

Anthony: On the father's side?

Nathan: That was my father's side. See that was her sister, Blima.

Anthony: Was one of your mother's?

Nathan: No, no.

Anthony: No one lived in Germany?

Nathan: No. We didn't know that maybe she knew about her brother, but I don't think so, she knew it about. I told you his name was Romek, like my brother. I find out now in 1980, when I was in Israel, I asked about him, if they know something about the brother. But they never talk about him. So that's how I find out, when I was in Israel.

Anthony: Did anti-Semitism affect your father's business?

Nathan: No. As a matter of fact, there were working Christians by my father. My father was a very likeable person. He was a very generous person. Everybody wants to work for him. My father was the type; it doesn't matter you can be Jewish, you can be Christian, as long as you were a good man, a good worker, it didn't make a preference. That was my father. Still, the Jewishness was there. But we were brought up different.

Anthony: Were there any Germans living in Bedzin before the war?

Nathan: You see, when the Germans came in, most of them they came Post Deutsch (?), because that was _____(337), you know?

Anthony: Yeah, it used to be part of Germany.

Nathan: Part of Germany. But they weren't so bad. There were some, you know. They used to say wait, when Hitler comes, they will fish you out of the water. They used to say that. They were expecting, they want the Germans to come in because this way they could take everything away from the Jews. You understand?

Anthony: Geremania Indenta (?) (356). This was German Indenta, as far as the Nazis were concerned. Now, what were you doing when the war began?

Nathan: When the war began?

Anthony: What were you doing on that day? Do you remember that day?

Nathan: Yes, I remember. You see, you have moscatoni (?) _____ (348).

Anthony: You? You were afraid of growing too tall?

Nathan: No, I started smoking very early.

Anthony: And you still grew to be tall?

Nathan: Yeah. My father noticed that I was pale. I had just started smoking, I was young. We used to get our pay, everyday.

Anthony: So you worked?

Nathan: [Allowance]. No, I didn't work, allowance.

Anthony: You got an allowance?

Nathan: Allowance. I took the allowance and I bought cigarettes.

Anthony: Secretly?

Nathan: Secretly. See they built a house, a new house—in the front they didn't finish it yet. When the war broke out, when they start to bomb, we were in the basement. There was a neighbor there and everybody was smoking. My neighbor says to my father, why don't you give him a cigarette? He gave me a cigarette. He gave me cigarettes, but still I couldn't smoke in front of him. So we moved in the big basement because that building wasn't finished, you know. Through, there was a hole and I went to the other basement and I smoked the cigarette. I never forget that.

Anthony: So this is what you were doing when the Germans attacked?

Nathan: Yeah, when the neighbor told him. We were there. My father knew I smoked before that. He caught me once.

Anthony: Before the war he caught you?

Nathan: He caught me. I was sitting on the steps and I smoked. I have a mark even today. [He gave you such a smack]. Smack, he busted me. He was a good-natured guy.

Anthony: And he was bigger than you? So you were more afraid of your father catching you smoking than the German invasions.

Nathan: Yes. So that's what happened. The Germans were there three, four days they bombed. And I remember his name was, I forgot the name, I know the son, Vishop (?). It was about five, six houses away; he was so happy. He went around and said now the German _____ (384). My father didn't say nothing he was a very _____ (386). I never forget that. And the Polish Army

used to be in our house, on the windows they put sand. They were looking for the Germans coming and where we live across was the castle. And around the castle were big walls. That guy, that anti-Semite, he was happy because the Germans were coming in. He went to the river, running around, he was drunk too, he was shot by the same people, by the Polaks. And he crossed and went up from the "bouta", no shelters, they used to call that. They shot him in the legs. That time they used to have bullets, boom-boom bullets, you know the--?

Anthony: Yeah. Why did they shot him?

Nathan: Because it used to be a curfew. They knew he was there, they know maybe he was a German. Our backyard was there, next to the river. They took him and shot him. His leg, busted like that. So one of my father's neighbors said that his son whose name was Schlomo, his oldest son. You see, you have that, what you said before. I never forget that. After a few hours, he died.

Anthony: From that bullet wound?

Nathan: I remember like today. After that in a few days the soldiers they took our house, the Polish soldiers _____ (432). After that in a few days, the soldiers already took our house, they were Polish soldiers. They were _____. They came in like nothing.

Anthony: No resistance?

Nathan: There started some resistance, they were happy, the Germans came in, you know. There was some. _____ (434). There were very little mobilized, motorized.

Anthony: Very few tanks.

Nathan: Everything was on horses. I remember that like after they came in. My father was drafted.

Anthony: Drafted in the Polish army?

Nathan: Army. When he was in uniform, I went to see him. When the Germans came in, they let him out. Only two brothers they took in the war. They went to the war. They came back after _____ (447) the war. My father didn't have time to give the uniform.

Anthony: Were you on the streets when the Germans came into Bedzin?

Nathan: Yes. We were talking German.

Anthony: And what was your impression when you saw these German soldiers?

Nathan: Well, we were very scared. I remember that. There was police, one I forgot the— Schmitznik was his name. He used to shoot people like nothing, dogs. We had a dog we gave it away to somebody who used to deliver to us coal, you know. Not to be shot the dog, it was heartbreaking, so we gave it to someone in another town. We give it to these people who deliver us years and years, we know them. They used to deliver to us coal. I used to go once in a while with my friends to see it, go to _____ (462) that's about six kilometers. We walked, we didn't take the streetcars. We went, and I went to see him, and he kept him in the stable, he even had little puppies. I used to go two or three times sometimes a month. His name was Azza. He was a beautiful animal, we love him. My mother didn't give that dog even to wash the maid, she wash it. In the winter time she used to put him in the, how you call it, way back _____ (473) not to get a cold. She kept him near the furnace till he dries out.

Anthony: Your mother treated the dog like a baby?

Nathan: Why, he used to sleep with me.

Anthony: The dog slept with you?

Nathan: In my bed, I took him to bed. He was clean like a whistle. We loved animals.

Anthony: What about your younger brother, Szmulek?

Nathan: He was a young kid. Let me explain you something of my brother. When the war broke out after that, you see, the bridge near Chivel (483) was one wooden bridge, the second one of _____ (484). Near us was a wooden bridge that was knocked off. So they took me and my father to rebuild the bridge, especially my father, was a powerful man, you knew that, no. During the war, the war started end of August or September, something like that.

Anthony: September 1st.

Nathan: Something like that I remember it was already on the cool side. I worked very hard, you know, to build the bridge, and my father and all the Jews.

Anthony: The Germans made you do this?

Nathan: The Germans, yes, that's who. My brother was very tall, he was a big guy.

Anthony: Szmulek?

Nathan: Yes. Four times they lost important _____ (502) from the German side that left everything open. I never forget that. We had a storm, about 12 feet of snow. Poland snow snows every day. And they took us, we didn't have no more food, to clean the snow, and my brother went with me to get a little soup to bring in home.

Anthony: This is your brother Szmulek?

Nathan: Yes. He went to "Bointon" (?) (511). Bointon is bitter in Poland. It was so cold that poor kid lost a piece of ear and a piece of nose and came back. Never go anymore because he was--. I was young too, but he was two years younger than me. I used to go the second shift, again three o'clock, used to come home with the trucks open, very cold. The truck, the Germans didn't have gasoline, they used to burn it by coal and wood, the truck used to go. And I used to go from 4:00 to midnight to bring home another soup. My father had ulcers, very sick so they used to come, we used to know somebody, he used to be in the Jewish community, they started off Judenmaster that means in English--.

Anthony: The "elder".

Nathan: No. Jewish leader. He was engineer; he was related to us and he used to exchange and I used to go for my father because I was big. So, I made two shifts to bring other soup home. My father never went because he had stomach problems, he had ulcers, he was very sick.

Anthony: Your brother, you wanted to be a soccer player?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: What did your brother, your younger brother want to be?

Nathan: Well, I don't know. He was a big sport. We used to tease him; he was a boxer because he had a nose with no bone.

Anthony: No bone in his nose?

Nathan: No. We used to call him a boxer because he had a flat nose.

Anthony: But he wasn't a boxer?

Nathan: No. He was young, we was just kidding around. You see the picture there, you see his nose looks normal. I used to kid him. I used to be proud of him to show all my friends. I took his nose to flatten it right to the face. So we used to call him boxer, he was a very strong kid though. Yes, a very good kid.

Anthony: And he attended the same school that you did?

Nathan: Yes.

Anthony: Two grades behind you?

Nathan: Yes. Well, that's a different story too, with my brother. You see, I was a guy—there was no strong man for me, I wasn't scared of nobody, even when I was a young kid. Tough guy. You see, when the war break out they moved in a Jew from the next city to our place, and he used to be a traitor to the Jews. I used to go and treated it like the kid never had it so good. So he was a young kid and he used to go with him. Where he go, the German know too but we couldn't do nothing about it. [Your brother] The younger brother. All the police know him. Because of that guy, that Jewish "Moisha Wexelman" (?) (503). As a matter of fact his brother in Germany, one brother survived from that "Moisha Wexelman" (?). In Germany, they were arrested because they were cooperated with the Germans. They used to go with the Jews that didn't _____, you understand? [What was that name?] Was a traitor. His girlfriend was a Christian. Nice girl from _____. In Yiddish. Very good-looking guy. They were from a gang, a Jewish gang before the war. In our town there were lots of gangs, some Jewish gangs. If a Christian did something a Jew would see, we fix them up. Our town was known for that. The Germans, when they come in, they were scared of us. When you move, they shoot you.

Tape I, Side B

Anthony: Of the gangs?

Nathan: When he moved in, so he took my brother with him all over. He met the German police, everybody knew him. [I thought your brother was a little kid]. My brother was a little kid. Imagine that was 1940, was born 1927--.

Anthony: Thirteen.

Nathan: Yes, something like that.

Anthony: What about this traitor? He's _____

Nathan: So when they took him away, I was scared. They would take him away too because he was-- Take my brother. When I used to work for SS _____ (17) with my father, I used to-- I took him, I says, you better come with me. He used to scare me many times but I wasn't scared of him. Not my brother, that guy.

Anthony: The guy, yeah.

Nathan: My father was scared because I wasn't scared of him. I was a hot temper. Many times I wish to beat up my little brother.

Anthony: Szmulek?

Nathan: Yeah, because he was going with him. People that know that are people that are thinking you are the same. You understand? He didn't know nothing about it. Now they come in with their horse, the horse how you call it, a taxi, used to go and he liked that. I shouldn't talk about it, I hope _____ (27) but I have to go in continuation.

Anthony: Sure, sure.

Nathan: So he went with me and I hide him. Then I took to _____ (28) to that Christian family, what he was to be their, how you call it, a chauffeur for that guy, a Christian guy, a Polak. He was tired, and the shop was not allowed to be there, but I was, acted like a policeman, _____. He was tired and I had a feeling they would take him. [I don't know if you understood what my husband said. He took his little brother because he didn't want him to follow this man.]

Anthony: Right, right.

Nathan: [And he hid him.]

Anthony: With this Christian family in the countryside.

Nathan: No, no, so far he was with me. I took him to the shop. [He took him to the shop and he says stay here. Stay there and don't move because he had the feeling the Germans will take him.] No, the Germans,-- [The Jewish police.]

Anthony: The Jewish police would go after the traitor?

Nathan: Yeah, the one that took him.

Anthony: And they would take your brother if he was close to him?

Nathan: They was scared because-- [Maybe he knew too much. So he took him in his shop, in the shop and he says---] No, the policeman because my uncle, my father's brother, he was a doorman there as a policeman too. And he got the keys. So only he know and I know-- [that your little brother is there, safe] Yeah. But he was closed up.

Anthony: Now your little brother, he didn't know this guy was a traitor?

Nathan: No, he didn't know that.

Anthony: He just thought he was interesting?

Nathan: He was very good to him; he gave him everything. You understand he got--? My father, he got-- was scared of him too, especially now. We didn't like it and we went to us because before the war, they couldn't afford it, to move into us. You understand my point? So after he got tired, I took to his chauffeur that guy, I know him, and he was by him two weeks. Now it was night shift at that time.

Anthony: What, were you working?

Nathan: Yeah, but I was night shift but I was sleeping the home. My brother came up, next to the neighbor and they took him. They got him and I look out on the street, when I woke up, I hear the noise. [Your brother, your little brother got tired of being cooped up and came home.] He came home and the Jewish policeman took him. But they couldn't take him. I heard and I jumped up from the bed and took the, how you call that? [An axe] Axe, I took an axe and I was in the corner and I says, if any of you pass by will touch it, your head will be chopped off. I was a powerful guy because I was—I know I was a big guy. My father was scared of me. I knew my father was a powerful guy. I knew how he come because he was screaming, I'm crazy. I took the axe. He says I know how hot when he got by the hands and I took my brother since _____ (63).

Anthony: Your brother?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: So who took him away?

Nathan: The Jewish--.

Anthony: The Jewish police?

Nathan: Jewish police.

Anthony: Do you remember when this was?

Nathan: Well, I do not remember it as--

Anthony: Was it after your bar mitzvah?

Nathan: No. I was-- had nobody. That was before, a few months before, after Henri and I had the thing in the house. We didn't make things, just to study, you know. Private, you know.

Anthony: Do you remember whether it was in the winter or the summer?

Nathan: Was in the fall time.

Anthony: Fall?

Nathan: Yes.

Anthony: A year after the Germans?

Nathan: A year or two years, I do not remember exactly. I think it was a year or two.

Anthony: Was there a ghetto?

Nathan: No, it wasn't yet in a ghetto yet. We went after to the ghetto.

Anthony: So, this was before--?

Nathan: This was in our house.

Anthony: In your house, before the ghetto?

Nathan: In the corner, they took him.

Anthony: So maybe a year after the occupation?

Nathan: Maybe a year or two, I don't know. No longer than a year or two. A year maybe or two or something like that. I do not--.

Anthony: So the Jewish police took him away and you never saw him again? You never found out what happened?

Nathan: So, I went with my mother and we brought him soup. He was on the third floor. We took a big pot of soup and my mother was a very tough woman. She could walk all over and nobody recognize her. She used to go all the German stores and buy. We never were--. So I, with my mother, went--that was in _____ (82). I remember that was a house that they built a big building for the Jewish, that the Jewish community built for orphans, Jewish orphans. _____ (84) they used to call that in Polish. He was on the fourth floor.

Anthony: Your brother?

Nathan: Yeah. I know and we gave it to somebody-- My mother could manage, she says give it to my son, this soup with a big pot. She put a rope so he could slide it out. But he didn't. We were sure that somebody would take him out, you know. After a few days, they send him out and that's it.

Anthony: Who sent him out?

Nathan: The Jews. The Jews , the Jews were supposed to get so many Jews to go to concentration camp or thing or--

Anthony: So he was sent to a camp?

Nathan: For somebody else. That's what they used to do. [In place of somebody else, they gave them him.] You understand?

Anthony: Yes, yes.

Nathan: That was the excuse, you understand?

Anthony: You don't know which camp?

Nathan: Was-- never survived. We don't know nothing about it. Nobody knows where they send out the Jews, where they go, Auschwitz or Birkenau, or Dachau, nobody knows. Mostly we know -- nobody knew that there's existing an Auschwitz. They used to -- in the beginning they used to open up concentration camps in Poland like _____ (99), a private camp. Used to go for a year, two; they used to come home. So we were thinking with him it would be time -- be with us. But nothing.

Anthony: Whatever happened to the traitor? The one who you were afraid of, your father was afraid of?

Nathan: What happened-- Well, they killed him, the Germans killed him.

Anthony: The Germans killed the traitor?

Nathan: Yeah, because they were scared of him too. The German was scared of him. They took him -- that's why -- you know mostly the Jewish policemen was working with some German police, you understand. That's what happened.

Anthony: The Jewish gangs didn't go after him?

Nathan: They couldn't, they couldn't. He was too powerful. He was so rich, he has everything. Rich family, Jewish family, get used to demand somebody to make business with, was a traitor.

Anthony: What happened to your school after the Germans came in to Bedzin?

Nathan: We didn't have no schools no more, nothing.

Anthony: No more schools. Closed down?

Nathan: Everything was finished. There was no schools. We had nothing to eat, we didn't have money, couldn't buy nothing at the beginning.

Anthony: What other changes occurred when the Germans came in? School was closed, right? What else happened?

Nathan: Nothing. The Jews didn't work. You survived with whatever you had. They said to the Polaks, you got things, diamond. [They didn't send you out from the house there?] Well, they used to take us for work and go outside, you know.

Anthony: To work?

Nathan: To work and we used to get-- Then after five, six months, we used to get ration bread, starving, you know. We had nothing, had to serve for food.

Anthony: You continued to live in your house?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: What kind of work did you do?

Nathan: I used to work with my father. In an SS sonder _____ (122). I mean all the Jews, mostly tradesmen used to work there for the SS sonderval _____, they used to call that.

Anthony: You mentioned earlier, you had to repair a bridge?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: What other kind of work did they have you do?

Nathan: Well, after that, till--I mean the Germans settle, there was not much to do. My father used to work with somebody _____(12) Pharmacy, far away in the country road, we used to go with _____ (130). They used to sell under the table; they used to dig potatoes for food. He was doing it for somebody. He had guts; my father didn't want to do it but he used to work for my father. He used to be a worker; he worked for that guy. He got the guts because this was far away in the country. Nobody knew him and he went there to work so they used to share him with the potatoes and the flowers and that's how they how died, they had nothing. Then there's the story with the cattles. My mother and all the brothers and sisters, they come up in our house.

Anthony: Your mother's brothers and sisters?

Nathan: No, no. On my father's side. They had money, plenty of money. We bought a horse. My mother went up to -- my little brother, she went into the country. They killed her cattle, everything, used to bring it into the house in the beginning so I remember right now. They took away the horse after months; they took away the horse and don't mention that to the Germans because we need a permit already. We had a permit but they took it away. I remember like today, they took my brother; they went to the railroad. That was in S _____ (120), I think and they came by railroad. My mother — they took my little brother and the Germans beat the hell out of

him. He was all busted up. [That was before they took him away.] Yeah, before they took him away. I'm jumping from one to--.

Anthony: But this time, it was the Germans that beat him up?

Nathan: Beat him up on the train.

Anthony: When he was with your mother?

Nathan: With my mother.

Anthony: But they didn't touch your mother?

Nathan: I do not remember. But he was a big guy too at that time. He was a little--but he was a big guy. They beat him up so badly; he was all yellow his head, his face. They took away everything. They took away the horse and the wagon. Then they stopped. I have to work with this, I don't remember exactly things. That's why I'm jumping from before to behind.

Anthony: That's okay. As you remember, just --.

Nathan: Yeah. That's what I still remember. But anyway-- Then I used to work, that who worked in the SS sonder--- (164), they took him away. Every month they used to take away Jews because we were saved because we worked for that German government, manufacturing. But then, after that, they open up a ghetto.

Anthony: In Bedzin?

Nathan: Bedzin. Near to us, "Komyunki" (?) (170), make a ghetto, Komyunki. That was -- they took away all the houses from the Polish coal miners. They used to have all the same houses from brick, nice homes. They took all the remaining Jewish, what remained, and we worked for -
- put in the ghetto.

Anthony: So you had to move out of your house and into one of these coal miners' houses?

Nathan: Yeah. Well we used to live in a-- they just split it one room, two, three families. Imagine that. I was still from there, used to go work for my father, to the-- was by far. They send us-- that's how they did us till the last moment.

Anthony: Do you remember when they opened the ghetto?

Nathan: I think it was somewhere in August.

Anthony: August?

Nathan: Summertime, yes. Because I remember my father, from the factory, he hid one machine by the Christians and one _____ (187). It was summertime between June or July or August or something like that.

Anthony: Do you remember how old you were?

Nathan: I was then what? Ten to 14, I don't know.

Anthony: Is this before or after your brother was taken away?

Nathan: After my brother was taken away.

Anthony: It was after your brother was taken away?

Nathan: I was only alone. But after that, when they opened up the ghetto, we hide our mother. They make-- they call all the Jews to go out and they selected. We were worried about my mother and we build in the attic, double wall. So we hide my mother and I went with my father. We didn't worry because we got the papers and I was--.

Anthony: Your mother didn't have a pass?

Nathan: Women didn't have a pass, no. So we hide my mother and I went with my father. They took away my father from me and they let me out.

Anthony: What happened to your father?

Nathan: They took him away.

Anthony: This was right after the ghetto was opened?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: Was it a short while after?

Nathan: Yeah, a short while after -- maybe four months, five months.

Anthony: The Germans?

Nathan: Yes, we doing the work because we know if we work it they wouldn't take us away. Many times they took it when they took a _____, when you showed where you work, they let you go home.

Anthony: Well, you were there when they took your father?

Nathan: I was with him.

Anthony: You were with him.

Nathan: I went there. They closed us up.

Anthony: This is while you were walking home?

Nathan: Yeah, they let you out. They check what you're doing. They ask you-- they interrogate you. They put my father one side; they put me on other side.

Anthony: The Germans did this?

Nathan: Yes, and I lost my father.

Anthony: You don't know whether he was put on a transport?

Nathan: On a transport, sure. They took him away, that's all.

Anthony: So now, it's just you and your mother?

Nathan: Me and my mother.

Anthony: During these months, were you forced to wear armbands?

Nathan: Yeah, we were all the time, Jewish.

Anthony: Jewish, the star.

Nathan: Yeah. I had a police hat only when I was to go there.

Anthony: "Astellajela" (?) (216)?

Nathan: Yuda, yes. We used to always wear that. My mother was a very gutsy woman. She used to get out from the ghetto. Dress up and everything.

Anthony: She would leave the ghetto?

Nathan: Yes. She would _____ the stores to shop and everything. I was awfully scared. I used to scream at her. I didn't want to lose her early. She used to go there was no ____ (224). I remember once she brought in a rabbit, brought it up and everything. We didn't have rabbit before but you know--.

Anthony: She bought a rabbit in the market?

Nathan: I remember like it was-- my mother was a modern woman. She worked on fish, everything, vegetables. She want to sneak out and I didn't know. My father, he was scared but she didn't say nothing. She just _____ and to go. We didn't have to worry. We thought we worked for German. We wouldn't have to worry, comes a Jewish word like that. Yiddish. As a matter of fact, people, my mother, when the Germans come in see my father was a big, powerful guy. My father was a big chicken. He don't know what _____ (237) you understand what I mean? I think he was such a good chicken was because my mother, as soon as German come in, used to, after shul--

Anthony: The Germans would come to the--?

Nathan: No, no they said to come in the district identification. Christians or Jews. We went, the office was there in the castle that was not far from us and my mother says for us to change the names. Because our names were German, change completely to Polish name and go another town. My father didn't want to because his sisters and brothers and mother you know. My mother want to go.

Anthony: So your mother wanted you to get false ID's and get Christian names and go somewhere else?

Nathan: Yeah, because we didn't have to worry, comes out a Yiddish word, because we didn't know how to talk in Yiddish. Even the Christians and the Jews said that. Says why don't you do that? My father was a chicken. We didn't have to worry because you know most Jewish in our town, were mostly, all talked Yiddish to everybody. Understand what I mean? That's why my mother used to get mad at my father when he used to come visit my grandma, she used to throw us the fish in a counter.

Anthony: About your mother?

Nathan: It was really-- No, for the kids. My father was touched, this is _____(260). Because we didn't know how to talk in Yiddish. First of all, we would have majority, all friends are Christians. We were brought up different. You understand where I'm jumping from one into another with our stories. [So your father was afraid to have false papers?] He didn't want to do that because we would--especially—

Anthony: So your mother was the gutsy one in the family?

Nathan: Yeah, well, she-- Let me explain you something. Even now, I'm Jewish but nobody takes me for Jewish, even in this country. Taken for Italian or British or French. Weren't any type Jewish, the way we were brought up, understand? [You could mingle with the rest of the Christians.] Yes, so that's why everybody says, why don't you do that? My father didn't want. I bet you, we would survive. My mother was a very gutsy woman, very intelligent, very open-minded. So was my father-- [And you had good friends.] We had good friends too.

Anthony: You mentioned you had Christian friends? Did they help in any way?

Nathan: Well, some of them did. Some, they were scared too. This is not so easy.

Anthony: I know but I mean you would have been able to get false ID's from a friend?

Nathan: Yes because we didn't have no papers there. They just ask you and you give them the name. Nothing, you don't have to show nothing. They give you the ID's, the Germans. So there was no problems because we find out before. My mother went to do it-- she find out do you need papers? Certificate?--nothing. You go there, you just give your name and they give you identification card. [Like the British did in _____ (286)]. You understand me?

Anthony: Now after you moved into the ghetto, would this have been possible? Because once you're in the ghetto, you're Jewish.

Nathan: We were Jewish, sure. I mean even before the ghetto, we were Jewish.

Anthony: I know, but I mean once you're in the ghetto, the Germans know that you're Jewish.

Nathan: Yeah, want to go out, you have to--; only the Jews were there, there were no Christians because they took all the community was the coal miners' community. Was one-family homes and they had a card that issue from the coal miners. Brick houses, nice, beautiful section for the coal miners what Goldman (295) give it to them. They were over there with the ghetto. But then I still hate myself, 'til today, because maybe my mother would survive and I didn't let it. [When they took you out from the ghetto, at the end.] From the ghetto, when they start to c_____ (301) everybody, they used to be Judenrein. Judenrein were the killers of the Jews, finishing the last Jews. We were the last Jews; they used to work most of them. Some, what they call, jobs. So my mother end up in the attic. I and my father make a double wall with somebody else. Was hot, always was hot, very hot summer. We had a neighbor had a factory, who was in our house. The neighbor called that-- took the family in those one-family homes, in the ghetto. But that him, he had a factory from chocolate. The German took it over, and he was as a foreman there. He was always two, three deep sort of baskets with large basket with chocolate. He wasn't allowed but he was smuggled out. Even was his factory but the Germans, you know, took over. So him and me and my mother were there, we brought the chocolate up. No water, nothing. I was hiding with my mother. The other one, they couldn't make it, they went out. My mother didn't. Was so narrow, alone. [The others surrendered.] The others surrendered; I couldn't see my mother. We ate chocolate-- (328). I was sitting in my mother's lap and I couldn't see anymore. I couldn't see my mother get shot to death. So I start to scream. Took her out--

Anthony: You took your mother out?

Nathan: Yeah. She didn't want to go. That's how it clears up that they took us.

Anthony: So they caught you in the street when you went out?

Nathan: Yeah, they didn't shoot us but they took us, the German, and sent us out. I was sitting on my mother's lap, on her feet for two weeks.

Anthony: When you were hiding?

Nathan: It was so hot. [_____ (339) because at the end they raised everybody.] I am still guilty. When they took us on the train--.

Anthony: So they put you and your mother--?

Nathan: My mother was a good-looking woman.

Anthony: I can see.

Nathan: She took the German on the train something. He asked do you know how to take people and at night was the cattle bars, you know. Was so much open. My mother says to me, she says come we go first. I want to _____ (347). I didn't let her, from the train.

Anthony: So you were in a cattle car?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: And you and your mother were in the same wagon?

Nathan: Yeah. We were all covered up and he told her, mother, where we go. [The German] Yes, the SS man. My mother had three kids but she look like a young girl. My mother says to me, we would all be better off. (356) I didn't believe that. I didn't know too much about it, nobody knows where we go. I didn't let her jump.

Anthony: You didn't let her jump?

Nathan: No.

Anthony: From the moving train?

Nathan: The moving train because it sits so fast and slow down. She was ready. I was so-- the Germans, they stay on the-- [Railroad]. You know between the trains.

Anthony: She would have done this at night?

Nathan: At night, yeah. It were at night, she was ready. I said I couldn't see how to jump. 'Til today, I eat my life out. I eat my life out because I took her out from the attic. I didn't let her jump. She was a very powerful woman, and I never forgive myself. When it came to Auschwitz selection, took my mother one side, took me from other side. They ask me, what's your profession? So I says, I'm carpenter. How old you are? Twenty-four. I wasn't 24.

Anthony: How old were you then?

Nathan: Fourteen, 13, something like that. It was 1943, they took us away.

Anthony: 1943 when you went to--

Nathan: Auschwitz.

Anthony: Do you remember what time of the year?

Nathan: Well, it was summer, between June, July, August, something. It was very hot. I remember because the corn was high. I never forget I look on the little brick house. I never forget that till today. They took a priest, was near there in the corn. They told him to kneel and they shot him with a bullet. A priest, a Polish priest.

Anthony: In the transport?

Nathan: No, when I was still in the--

Anthony: In the attic, hiding. You could see this--?

Nathan: Yeah. My mother used to go _____(387). The corn was high so was the end of the summer, must have been August. Because I remember the corn was already nice and tall, so that must be August. July or August, was very hot. My mother want to run away too; go during the

night, and I didn't let her. She said, let's go and I didn't let her. I saw next that he was dying. A young guy, about 20, 22. They didn't tie him up, they just pull the trigger. I didn't want to see that -- my mother -- they pull the trigger, you understand? They took away my brother from my hand and my father -- my father was scared of me. He said--. [Scared for you.]

Anthony: Scared **for** you, not **of** you.

Nathan: Took away my father from my hands, took my mother out from my hands. Divided out from _____ (405).

Anthony: And thousands of other people too. In Bedzin?

Nathan: Bedzin. Was very few left over. Our concentration camp, when I came in, I found my father's brother in Block 11.

Anthony: In Auschwitz?

Nathan: In Birkenau. I went after to Auschwitz. That was in Birkenau. I thought my father was _____ (414). My father's sister's husband. He was a _____. [Uncle] Uncle, my father's youngest brother. I saw that and I was young. I didn't know about but I was very gutsy. There was no water to drink because they was new barracks. I remember there was pebbles on the ground. They gave us _____ (424). They were the barrels, going around. We were building water there, there was no water to drink. When I saw my uncle, two uncles there already. One of them informed me he had a rupture here. They have to wear that leather thing; they use at that time, like a pouch in the rupture in the belly. I know about that. He was already-- I was gutsy. We didn't have no blankets. When we went in, they used to be in cabinet. The _____ (431), the blockfuhrer, that's me, they traveled from the blocks, there were Germans and Jews. They were sleeping there.

Anthony: So you were with other Jews?

Nathan: Yeah, we were only Jews in Birkenau. We were sleeping about 15 or 20 on wood, nothing. At night, when they sleep, I jump in and I stole a blanket.

Anthony: From who?

Nathan: From those, from the SS--.

Anthony: From the SS?

Nathan: Yeah, the Jewish kapo. The headman, they had their own office, everything by themselves. They were living like kings. I rip it and I give it to my uncle, my father's brother. I find him a needle even with thread inside it, and I steal it. Nobody could do that. He done it for him, that belt.

Anthony: He made a truss, support?

Nathan: Yes. So he told me that and it was clean. To me, he will kill you. I says don't worry about it. I was a kid. There was no water. I finally came, I went inside in the night. I couldn't do that today. I was bringing in water in a can. They used to scream at it, like wine. I was fire and water, was such a gutsy bird, was a devil, was always been.

Anthony: You were a devil but you were in hell?

Nathan: Yes, when I came in, I didn't eat for four, five days, what they give you that potato skin until everybody was-- I would never believe it. That I could do that, I couldn't see that. I didn't eat for almost six, seven days, that stuff. After they told me, you will eat after that, they were right. But I didn't eat. With me was sleeping a guy, the head, till now I remember the name. Now I forget that. They had manufacturers; a paper manufacturers, books, notes, you know. Forget the name, but very famous in our city, very rich people. I used to jump at night. I steal bread from them. He used to call me father. I was a kid. I used to carry everything back and give it to him to eat it. He looks at me and says kid, go and eat. So I eat. I was a devil, okay. But after that, they used to make an inspection in concentration with selecting people. One morning I know I never find anymore my uncles. They took them away.

Anthony: They disappeared?

Nathan: Disappeared, not far away was a crematorium. They build this crematorium in Birkenau. You see the smoke and fire, terrible. You get used to it, don't even cry. Making just, just to say nothing, the guard forget the next day. You have to look for life.

Anthony: Did you have to work?

Nathan: Well, I used to-- before I come to that. When they make to selection, they came to our bunk, they select me. You see I was always a skinny kid, I was always skinny. I was skinny until a few years ago; I was very skinny. So they used to call the skinny men, musclemen. But I saw they need tailors. So they ask who is tailor. So they take me to work and transfer someone else. Was very fast in those days. I remember something but I go back after that. So I say, I finish and then I come to other thing, I remember something.

Anthony: Okay.

Nathan: With tailors, I see they select guys no scars, nothing. You had little bit, they wouldn't take you. Big guys, I was big but not big like they are. Of course, I was skinny but-- We stay there naked and near the clothes, we still had private clothes. Only mark it down with red, red mark, political prisoner, understand? We put the suits on the side and we stay naked. So they selected somebody likes. So I saw from 50 or 60, they pull out one and go one side. Big guys, healthy guys. So when I saw one who goes this side and the other guys, I saw, better-looking guys on the other side. I says to myself, I _____ (560). I see somebody went to the red side, I grab my pockets, and I have nothing. I went to the other guys. I didn't pass--

Anthony: You joined them?

Nathan: Joined them. Maybe I was lucky to join them. But I didn't know how to hold a needle in my life. But anyway, when I joined them, they put us in a barrack and I suffered, three days, four days. They bring water and a piece of bread. As soon as the bread comes out, was like a piece of glue. But one day, two days, three days, four days, they notice us. Each day I says what the heck I got here? I was ready to jump the block and go on back. I wait finally, eight days or nine days, or something like that, they let us out. They give us fresh clothes, not to wear it and we marching to shave and wash and put us to showers. I was still in Birkenau because not far away was the crematorium. Nothing, they shave us, shower and still those clothes what they gave to us, they throw it away. It was smelling from disinfection; they give us fresh clothes. After that, we stay there, we stay almost two days there, in the barrack there. But I never forget that. Everybody was sleeping tired. I was the youngest one. I woke up when they steam the water, they boil it, and I was looking for good luck. What I find, leaves of tobacco and I was smoking already.

Anthony: Smoking again?

Nathan: Sure. I took paper and find it when I pass out. I give it. I didn't know how to hide it for that they would give anything for it, diamonds, anything you wanted. But we were there, we had nothing. So I find it and I hold it. Know something? When they transferred us to Auschwitz after that; I got that tobacco to Auschwitz. If they catch me, they kill me. Big bones of tobacco, that high. I put it a stripper, I put it around. I came to Auschwitz with tobacco.

Tape 2, Side A

Anthony: So you're in Auschwitz working outside of the camp?

Nathan: I was working, I remember the commander, the _____ (11), I forget what was the name anyway. It was like home improvement. We used to go working to the officers, fixing, painting and all. We were about three or four guys, sometimes three, sometimes four, depending what kind of job, five guys. At least we were out of the concentration camp. Through the towns and everything. I remember once, we were working outside and it was cold. The SS man says, let's go in the field and get some potatoes. It was the end of the summer, and maybe they put it out the potato. We see if we can find something in the ground. I never forget that, and I tell you why. We took potatoes, and we took a live lime, you know lime? We were mixing them and throwing the potatoes in the lime and they were boiling and they were cooked. I never forget that. They shot a wild wolf, the German takes the rifle and he shoots. Pick up the wolf.

Anthony: He shot the wolf?

Nathan: Yeah. They started to eat, but I didn't eat it. I couldn't say that. I would never believe that in my life. I ate the potatoes and everything but I was a mess. The SS men, they were starving too. They had too much to _____. Mostly the SS men, they were not Germans. They were Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks, Slovaks mostly, Serbian, Croats, were mostly SS men. The next day we used to go on other jobs, something like that, but on the end they had so much confidence in us that I remember once I was working not far from the lake. I don't remember what the name of the town. The SS man says you want to go for a swim? Put everything. When we start to study how to run away already. There were two Jews from Krakow who worked in a-- there were three Catholics and we were three Jewish and --

Anthony: So you ran away?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: How did you do it? Just ran away from near this lake? Outside the camp?

Nathan: Yeah, outside, across, everything. We went past _____ (43). Tried the uniforms. We put a P as a Polish worker, you understand? There was a guy working with us, two of them, and they came in and prepare us bicycles.

Anthony: The guard?

Nathan: No, no. Private people. They used to, used to give them plenty.

Anthony: What would you give them?

Nathan: Give them diamonds, give them money.

Anthony: These are the diamonds that you had found?

Nathan: Yes, we give them plenty and they prepare us. Because we told them, if we get caught, you get caught. Because we weren't sure, they were Polaks. You understand what I mean? So we give them plenty. They told us exactly where there was a haystack one place, they would prepare everything. There were three bicycles. It would _____. The suits, they had prepared everything with the P they sew it on, you know. I got one from other side and prepared everything. I don't know how it happened in there. They were from other side of lake, was big. Went from other side and we sneak out. Was not far from lake. Haystack they called it the haystack.

Anthony: Haystack, silo.

Nathan: Yeah. We had a suit, put it on. That's why I thought we run away; we had a very hard time. Oh yes, I remember. One of them made a fire with sticks somewhere. Took the iron make it hot, had to number it and burn it himself and that's so much problem.

Anthony: To burn away the tattoo numbers?

Nathan: The tattoo _____ (60), doesn't matter what. _____ (65) He had plenty of problems.

Anthony: Where did you go?

Nathan: P_____ (971).

Anthony: Where?

Nathan: Contact with the underground army.

Anthony: The underground army.

Nathan: That would be Czechoslovakia. [The Carpathian Mountains].

Anthony: The sub-Carpathian resistance in Ruthenia?

Nathan: Between Romania, Poland, Slovakia, no Slovakia, Romania--.

Anthony: Ukrainian?

Nathan: No, no Ukrainian. Between Poland, Czechoslovakia and Slovakia and Romania.

Anthony: Ruthenia?

Nathan: Yeah. As a matter of fact, they told us the town was Slovakian. I remember it. That's mean it was a salt-mine.

Anthony: So you bicycled all the way to--?

Nathan: Bicycled, then we didn't bicycle.

Anthony: Do you remember when this was?

Nathan: Was close after the--, must have been summertime. We was struggling from town to town.

Anthony: How long had you been at the camp?

Nathan: What camp?

Anthony: Birkenau and Auschwitz. How long had you been there?

Nathan: I was in Auschwitz till 1944, almost at the end.

Anthony: So this was the summer of '44?

Nathan: Yeah. That's right, '44. There they won't take us.

Anthony: The Czechoslovakian resistance?

Nathan: No, no. There were lots of resistance there. They would take to England.

Anthony: Nobody wanted you?

Nathan: They didn't trust us. We had a very hard time. [We have to make sure that they were really ready.]

Anthony: Who they were?

Nathan: We suffered plenty. Once you tasted out. Then they had to go in and get you. But after they took us out, but we had a very hard duty. They sent us out to the farmers, to the cows and the _____ (98) and everything.

Anthony: The Resistance sent you?

Nathan: Yes.

Anthony: This was the Czechoslovakian Resistance?

Nathan: No, there was all races. There was Czechoslovakia, Slovak, there were even some Englishmen.

Anthony: Who sent you to do this work?

Nathan: The underground.

Anthony: But which underground?

Nathan: From P_____ (101).

Anthony: So the Ukrainian? These were Ukrainians?

Nathan: There were every kind of races. We couldn't talk too much because you say one word, I'm tired, that's it. They say nothing. They take you aside that night, they get you a bullet and that's it. It's a tough situation. That's why I'm worried about the United States, too. [No, they wouldn't, not now.]

Anthony: So basically, you're doing the same kind of work you did before? They're putting you to work?

Nathan: Who do?

Anthony: The Resistance.

Nathan: Yeah and finally and slowly we used to be there and you know something; German knew about it, they couldn't get in there because we were on the trees and all over. We go slow and we had contact with the Allies and sometimes they used to drop food, you know. Like that, we meet with the Russians and then we went with the Russians.

Anthony: When did you meet with the Russians?

Nathan: I never heard yet there was a father and son. We crossed a ditch in the underground, murdered. We left that boy there without a canteen. Wasn't so easy a life but then we slowly were-- meet with the Russians. I join with the Russians then after that.

Anthony: When did the Russians come?

Nathan: Forty-four, or '45.

Anthony: Winter?

Nathan: Was on the cold side still.

Anthony: There was snow?

Nathan: Snow, as a matter of fact, I remember first I went with them after I was just crossing the Vistula River was the shooting-out, you know. We didn't expect that. From there, I join with them. I used to fight with them. From there, there were two parties from Krakow. I didn't just-- in the army and we went away from them, went to Krakow. It was snowing like hell.

Anthony: You went to Krakow?

Nathan: Yeah, to Krakow, I went, yeah.

Anthony: But not right away? This was after the Germans--?

Nathan: No, wait a minute. I was in Krakow, that's right.

Anthony: This was after the Germans were driven back?

Nathan: Yeah, I was in Krakow.

Anthony: So this was in 1945?

Nathan: No, wait a minute. From then on, I didn't-- from the underground when I joined it, I went back to Auschwitz.

Anthony: You went back to Auschwitz?

Nathan: That's the only thing I forget. Remember the kids? Yeah, I was getting too far away. [That's when you ran away from the concentration camp.] Yeah and I went back to Birkenau and I brought the two young kids. I risked my life for them. It was too far out.

Anthony: You escaped from Auschwitz and then you went back into the camp?

Nathan: Was already a thing because there was not any Germans.

Anthony: After the Germans left, so this was when?

Nathan: Then the Germans, meet again with the Germans. I got two boys. [I remember the story he told me. He went back to Auschwitz to look for something. Then --].

Anthony: That's the money that you had hid in the ground?

Nathan: Yeah but-- [But he couldn't find it. Then you left it and as you're coming along, you find two little kids alone.] The German come out watching. [The German came and you were afraid but they let you go. They didn't --.] They didn't know because they thought I was _____(146). They said why I do that? I said that's how they teach us in concentration camp. They didn't know that, they were the Wehrmacht. [They were regular soldiers, they were not SS.] Regular soldiers, yeah. [Nothing happened and you left.] Nothing happened, nothing left.

Anthony: So you found these two children and what did you do?

Nathan: We took them out. We left them, I think, in Auschwitz, in the city or with the Um_____ (152), I don't remember. Anyway, we left them somewhere safely after the concentration camp, because the war was still-- I remember one thing. Some of them used to be mad because they left and I came with them. He was a little bit older fellow, was a tough guy and he came with me. He says I'm going with you and take the kids. They couldn't walk. We took a piece of wood, I don't remember from where we got the rope or something, and we pulled them. They were sitting up, _____(159); nine years old or something like eight, you know. They were youngsters. We left them out of them-- [Some of them, they didn't want to be responsible for those two kids but how can you leave two kids like that? That's where you left them, was some--] Somewhere around Auschwitz there, I don't remember where around it. At the town, we have to leave it because when we saw the Germans around there with the horses, we didn't know what the heck was going on. Well, I'm jumping from one end to the other one; it's a very tough situation. I don't remember exactly. Then I remember there were two brothers from Krakow. We went in a farm; we took two horses and a horse wagon. After we meet with the Russians, I went back to Auschwitz. I never forget that. Went back to Auschwitz, I went to the magazine and I took two bases of socks, German army socks and put it in.

Anthony: The Russians let you do this?

Nathan: What would the Russian _____ (177). [Especially with the partisans on the Russian side.]

Anthony: So they didn't need the socks for themselves?

Nathan: Look at that.

Anthony: So they considered you a partisan?

Nathan: Yeah, but afterward, we were dismantled. Some went home, some joined them.

Anthony: Were you a partisan-- Were you with the Polish resistance or the Czechoslovakian?

Nathan: Was lots of nationalities.

Anthony: So there was no one unit?

Nathan: No, no, there was lots of nationalities. There wasn't one nationality. You can't ask too much in a situation like that. You must be kidding; they're scared to death. You can open up your mind; you know you're coming home. I was wishing when I was there, I was wishing that I would go back to concentration camp. You believe that?

Anthony: Sure.

Nathan: You believe that, hey?

Anthony: That you wouldn't want to go back to concentration camp?

Nathan: Well, what we went through with the underground army, we can talk. Be very careful what you say. I never forget that. When somebody says, I'm tired; they don't say nothing. They ask you out, they put you in _____ (191) your head, that's it.

Anthony: The underground?

Nathan: That's right, because they didn't trust you.

Anthony: So you were more afraid with the underground than you were with the Germans?

Nathan: That's right. [To obey blindly.] Can't say nothing.

Anthony: So you deserted them?

Nathan: No, we didn't. Went together to the last moment, 'til we met together with the Russian army. Then we went out with the Russian army for a while over there. Then finally, I went to the Russian, we went to the country with the Russian and we took the stocking what the two brought us-- [socks] and went to Cracow. Socks, I want to say, right. [Men's socks.] I was there about six, seven days, was already free from the Nazi. I took the bale and I was already market. [Something to sell.] Yeah, I had plenty of money. Then I went with the Russians. I was going with them back to them. From them I used to go onto my city, Bedzin. You know how I went, for because everything was discouraged. Once in a while, I used to go on with the engine, railroad engine, turn the engine because I had with the gun and everything. They let me. I arrived in our town through Um _____ (213). I had plenty money with me. [But you were dismissal already by the Russian army, no?] Yeah, they let us go and I never forget I arrive in my town, midnight, after midnight. I couldn't recognize our city. Not in the ghetto, but where we used to live. They destroy whole the town, everything and one family home for the Germans. I say, am I in my town? Then I remember there was a _____, you know those things that take water?

Anthony: A water pump.

Nathan: A water pump.

Anthony: A well.

Nathan: A well. I go in there and I says I'm home. I go to the well. As I pump by the well, who I meet, was still there, how you call that? [Curfew?] Curfew, I go to the pump, I met the son, my mother's, she was the, electrician, midwife attic. _____ (228) And I thought who I am and I ask him where is the other electrician, the neighbors, my friends. One I know, _____ (228) I says yes, that's it. It's further up. They didn't touch it. _____ by the river, they make all one-family homes with place for the Germans. Because everything destroyed. They build it there.

Then after I met, I went to my friend. I had a friend, really a friend. We were better than brothers. Christian. He say I was to work here for the United States, classified work for after. I couldn't write to Poland, it wasn't allowed. Then it was counted in the beginning. [So you lost contact with him.] So I lost contact with him. After I left it and-- So I wrote to Poland, to my friends. I said to my wife, if he doesn't answer it, he's dead. His brother answer it and he was dead. He died in '55. My age, a good friend. Then in our town, I met-- was four Jews. I met that guy what was here in United States when I was living a few days by my friend's. That was funny. His mother says I never forgot that. I came at night and she was with the candle. They didn't have lights. She saw me and she says, she didn't meant it, she says, you're still living? [She didn't mean it. She was--] Didn't mean it, we grew up together. My friend was there and he was already the police in our town. I stayed with them and I got bread from the Russians. I brought it home; they were starving; they had nothing. So I stayed four or five days. After that when I'm-- I meant my Jewish enemy now about six, seven Jews were on the radio. They says starting it, all this, Poland start with drafts right away. But starting still angels (267) with concentration camp. I was wounded too. At that time too, I was wounded.

Anthony: While you were in the resistance?

Nathan: Yeah. I was wounded. I said it wasn't him that we were-- Starting with all the Jews were in concentration camp, they shouldn't draft them into the army. I, like a stupid boy, was alone. I says, they're not going to take me into the army. So I went and I registered myself. I wasn't even seven days in Poland. Seven days, 10 days, something like that; don't you think, they draft me? With my wound, I never forget the priest that took us. I was at school. I don't know whether you know that there was the richest Jews in our town, Fishenberg. The biggest steel companies in the world. He had in England, all over the world. There was a, how you call that, like a square he build up. He built a Jewish college at that time, they used to call it gymnasium. They bring that officially for the Jewish thing and the priest comes to me and says you come home. I got _____ (289) with medals. I was surprised that they done it. Before they draft me, I went to the police where my friend worked. I never forget that. Was my father's cousin, looked exactly like my father. He looks at the list, you know where there are few Jews coming. I almost jumped, I was sure it was my father because it was the same name as my father's. First, I looked at that. I didn't look, I was scared to get up. I hid behind the walls, _____ (299) and everything.

Of course, I was happy to see him too. [But he wasn't your father.] Wasn't my father. A little bit smaller but he's very tall too. Anyway, after that I told him the story. After he wished we were marching from ____ (305) with the band to the army. He came with me. We had the boat and crying all the way. So finally we came here and take you off. I stayed there two, three days there and _____ (311) they send me to Warsaw. I came to Warsaw; you know I was underground so I was just-- I understood anti-Semitic, came to Warsaw, we were in Belvedere (315) because everything in Warsaw was destroyed everything. You know what Belvedere is.

Anthony: The Presidential Palace?

Nathan: Presidential Palace. We were sleeping on the floor, not to---, no water because everything was destroyed. [You bought some?]

Anthony: Well water?

Nathan: Well-water, what were we to drink. There were Germans destroyed it right before us. They used to take water coming from out-of-town. There was rationing and everything. The final part was this. They didn't have people much anyway. If you have three or four grades and you would know how to read and to write, they took you in a special program, officers' school. They took me and they send me. Who I meet there? The same guy, he was officer before the war, in Belvedere (332). They give me-- [Was the guy that was the son of the midwife.] Yeah, Tardich (334). They put me in the division, he was the officer. I couldn't get over with it so he used to tell me, look, don't tell me you're here. He didn't know they're taking me, I'm in trouble. Because he know they preference. I used to come, I couldn't tell him, yes sir because I know him since a baby. Anyway, from that I was there and I never forget that. There was Russian officers, _____ (346). They had already 7, 000 deserters, Poles. I don't know, I was older, they took me right away in sympathy, the Russians. I met the Jewish girl, Russian soldier, in a couple days. They tell me the whole situation, they said, from there, after that I don't want to go into the whole story. They told me the situation, what's wrong. They used to hate the Polaks, the Russians. They didn't trust them. From there they send me to Prague, Polish Prague, that's up the _____.

Anthony: Near Warsaw, yes.

Nathan: Oh, yeah, I was with my friends. It was now that same guy what was-- Zenik (361). We were drafted together. He came, I met him too. I can talk on that one. We went to Germany, _____. They send us to Prague and I was at the officers' school but not for a long time, a short time. I had problem now with the _____ (369) because they were anti-Semitic and especially a Jew and everything. I took it but he couldn't take it. He says, well, maybe something I'll go and expecting the war _____ (374). They still dream— 'til maybe my mother, my father, somebody show up. They were young, you understand? But anyway there were two guards in Prague there. We were still there without uniforms. We got the rifles, everything training and everything. Then we got the uniforms, everything. My friend used to get mad. He didn't give a damn to go on the-- They arrested, they put him to sleep in jail after. Then I got met with my supervisor too. He used to knock on me. I told him off, I says, listen, I was wounded. I fought to liberate the country, my country. Anyway, they put me in the jail second with him. After they left us, we were supposed to be transferred, both of us. We deserted. Anyway we deserted. I went from Warsaw to Krakow.

Open train. I had to throw out all the uniform, not all the uniform, only the jacket. I find the jacket is-- I can put the jacket lining everything. You couldn't buy it. Everything was checked on the railroad. We used to jump from one railroad to the other railroad when they start to control. I wind up in Krakow. I came to Krakow. I changed my name, and I told them I upset the number. I didn't have hair, that was dangerous too. Because in Polak, they take you all the hair out. [In the army.] The army. I was sick like a dog. One day I took an identification card and I changed to my name to Szmulek Katrofsky (409). I took my brother's name so I can remember it. I changed the rest of the— took the money with me. I went on the market. I worked on aspirin. I didn't know too much in a bottle of vodka. I went to the hotel, I sweat like a dog, I sweat it out. I was scared. I never heard it. I met a Polish fellow from out-of-town, was a very good friend. My uncle, he talked Swedish perfect. By Baltic, I had to have _____. _____, I was scared. (421) This was about. I was so scared as a deserter. [Why was he in "Bethersa"?] He was in the German police.

Anthony: Before he has been in the German police?

Nathan: Yes, during the war, he became German police. He used to sell tickets when there was the open markets when they put the stand before the German coming. When the German coming, I never forget, that German uniform. He got away from our city. Isn't that something? I jump into him? I couldn't do nothing. He was a good friend of my uncle too. That— from there, I start to run. I run to Germany. [But always with Zenik, no, always with your friend, Zenik.] Always with Zenik, always with my friend, Zenik. From Germany, I went to Austria-- [The war was finished, right?] Also I went to Hungary again. The war was still on.

Anthony: The war was still on during all of this time?

Nathan: Yes, sir. I came to Czechoslovakia the May of 8 when I was deserter. I was ready to go back when I met two other Jews who ran away from the army. They went back and this I was in the cold. There was no empty train. In the top was Polaks still with cold, I never forget that. I come to Slovakia, Humanay (Humenné?) (453) the town. We were starving to death. The war finished and I didn't know what to do. To go back, but I changed my mind, I didn't want to go back. I went to Slovakia, yeah, from Slovakia, I went to Hungary. I came to Hungary; I never forget my own came back. I haven't been back so much because there is a piece still inside there. I was scared to go. My problems was I have said thanks to-- I had the _____ (469) there. I never forget, I went on the market to buy myself soup. I was in Budapest, in the market. Don't you think some Russians come in, they arrest me. They says you, they took me as a traitor.

Anthony: Who arrested you, Hungarians or Russians?

Nathan: Russians. They lifted some of my brother's things. They wanted the watch, you see. I bought soup, I was selling the watch and everything. You see anytime I was working, I was— jumping from that. When I was working anytime I had somebody to see, the Polish army, the Russian, they had nails under their shoes, 52 nails in the Polish army. Anytime somebody used to work, that's why it hard for me. [The Russians were looking for the traitors that run away even after the war.] I say to myself, they got me again. I was dealing with terror. I was in Warsaw after the concentration camp when I run away from the army. After that I met three sisters, Jewish girls, very nice to me. My room come up into the barracks. All of _____ (500) when I had fever, it didn't show too much. Fever and sick, sick, so I was scared. I met those three Jewish girls, one of them had a friend, that after, he was scared of the Russians too. I don't know why, but everything was still of terror. They took the guy home. He died on my hands. You know something, he says, of course, find a piece of shrapnel.

Anthony: Shrapnel?

Nathan: Shrapnel. Then I stay there until I feel better and I left for Romania. I hear they start the organization to go to Palestine. I went to the minya (518); I went to _____ (520). I stay there and it was already organization with the Jews to go to Palestine. I was with them. Anyway, I got tired of them, so I said pick ourselves up and _____ (528) but I wouldn't go to that. From there we went to Vienna. From train to train, walking you know. Were in Vienna. I had money-- couldn't buy nothing-- We were starving to death, nothing. I remember how hard when we went to find something, find bread somewhere something. I don't remember how I lived. From Vienna, I went to Graz. I stayed in Graz, they had organization over there too. I start to work with them. I didn't like what they were doing, you understand that? Some of them became really rich, but _____ (548). From Graz, we went back and we start to walk. We walked with the train on it, and wind up to Italy. To this day I was, I don't know how to say that. [a Refugee company in Cremona.] (557) From Cremona then I worked with the-- [Underground?] With the Jewish. [You don't have to be afraid now. It's not in Italy.] No, it's certain things. All right, I had a girlfriend, one of the guy and girlfriend. [So what?] No, that's not the reason. I tell you why. I went to "Hashara" ?, a kibbutz in Magenta, that's in Cremona (568). In Cremona, from Magenta that's, I think its 45 or 30 kilometers from Milan. There was a kibbutz with a Jewish army, with the English army. They had over there everything that they run. Buses (579). Well, anyway they-- oh yes, before that, going to Cremona, I used to be part of a-- before I went to Cremona, I'm jumping from one step to another. I had other problems. Of course, there were other but we had - - services. They tied me up asking what time you take. There were no medicines, you know. [Where, the nuns?] No. [They were nurses.] Nurses, okay I wasn't part of that before going to Cremona. That was after Cremona and from Cremona I went to _____ (595) and from Cremona I went to kibbutz. One _____ (595). I start to learn language, Italian and everything and I have

connection. I know my brother from Pasha, from Russia to Pasha, went to Israel. So now I was in, yes, in Magenta. There was my good friend, he was a year, Swiggler (610). He was in Poland, chief of police of the Jewish people. He was a good man. But some of them from our town they used to hate him because that-- He was an innocent person. What he has to do that way, he was a very good man. Anyway, he was in Parva (618) then and I know how he got my address. I was in Magenta. I get a cable. He got--.

Tape II, Side B

Nathan: My brother was finished here. There was a letter from him in Parva. I went to Parva and my girlfriend, kibbutz told me. Wanted to give me a room and live with her. I said, Morris, I don't do that, I didn't live with her, only separate. Says I find out that if I went to Israel with that girl, I going to get married. You understand why I didn't want-- I didn't touch that girl, believe me. Somebody else touch her. There was a guy in kibbutz. I have lots of money and jewelry and everything. I went to Parva. Later I come back, I come back three in the morning to my jitterbug and I go see her. Where do I find her? ____ (19) around with that guy. They didn't expect me, you

understand?

Anthony: Yeah.

Nathan: Screwed me out of a good friend, nice girl. I caught them right on the door with her friend. He was a tailor. I got money to make a suit for her where she wants right away and she tell to him what she want. I was very disappointed. First off, I didn't touch that girl. For a few days, I didn't say nothing. I find out through the other one, she was sick. They call me, she got in the ____ (28) with him, she got the sickness. So they took me to hospital, that's why I hate (28) her. Have to take a test on me--she has venereal disease that girl. Then I find out the whole situation, why I bother with her, how we met and even _____ (30). Ever towards then, I left it, not come home. I contact my brother, that's how-- She was nothing to him. I came there, I have to go there and join the British army. That's how I met my wife. I wasn't very happy in Africa. It's a nice country but-- I married my wife; I never like to stay there. Her brother there-- I had nobody there. I have somebody here so we left, there are other lots of things what I can talk about, politic, you understand.

Anthony: That's okay. We're almost done.

Nathan: There are lots that I can talk. There are plenty of things I can talk to. It's very risky.

Anthony: You married your wife and then from Italy you come to Canada?

Nathan: No, we went from Africa, we went to-- I stay in "Generwa" ? (45) where her sister _____. In Generwa, I brought my brother-in-law, that's her brother, back. Remember the ship where he got killed the thing in Egypt, the ship. How we call that, the--?

Anthony: In Egypt?

Nathan: Remember they coming from New York on the water, they kill him there. He was paralyzed.

Anthony: Oh, the Achille Lauro?

Nathan: The Achille Lauro. My brother-in-law was a partner to Achille Lauro. Had three partners, Achille Lauro, _____, _____ (54); there were three. Achille Lauro was the bigger shareholder. My brother-in-law was like 40, he was 60. . My brother-in-law was that ship. I had him the pictures of the ship here what they gave me. They took us on the ship when we came. (Classified) You have on that?

Anthony: It's still on tape.

Nathan: I don't like that.

Anthony: We don't need to cover this.

Nathan: Yeah, okay.

Anthony: All we need is--we got to get you to America. You came to Canada in 1951?

Nathan: Yeah.

Anthony: And then you didn't like Montreal and you came--?

Nathan: I liked Montreal, Canada.

Anthony: You did like Montreal.

Nathan: I didn't like the weather. The weather was too much especially I suffer with the arthritis, everything come up, what I went through, my life.

Anthony: So when did you come to the United States?

Nathan: Fifty-five.

Anthony: Fifty-five and you've lived here ever since?

Nathan: Ever since. There are lots of other things I can talk, even my brother is a _____ (65). My brother goes to Israel, he's home. I don't know if you know the story of the-- remember the 60 Jews that were supposed to be hung and never killed. Remember the British?

Anthony: The British. This was the retaliation for--?

Nathan: No, because when they were arrested, they were all with the Haganah. The thing was 60 Jews were supposed to be shot there. They had everything prepared, the bus, everything prepared, was Italian. He had the bus company fully prepared to make right away a round-trip. That's how most of it was partitioned but it's too much -- can't talk too much.

Anthony: We've covered the Holocaust, we've finished Auschwitz.

Nathan: Then from Cremona, you see, I, from Cremona, I used to work and design this. I used to smuggle Jews back to Italy. (Remainder of statement hard to follow.) (79-81)

Anthony: That's enough. We've finished Auschwitz, Bedzin, the war is over. Your family -- you only saw one brother after the war?

Nathan: That's right.

Anthony: That's the Holocaust. On behalf of the Holocaust Museum I thank you for sharing with us, your story.