

TITLE- Jacob Birnbaum  
DATE- October 16, 1990  
SOURCE- One Generation After Boston  
RESTRICTIONS-  
SOUND QUALITY- Very inconsistent, sometimes very poor  
IMAGE QUALITY- Fair  
DURATION- 3 hours, 52 minutes  
LANGUAGES- English  
KEY SEGMENT-  
GEOGRAPHIC NAME-  
PERSONAL NAME-  
CORPORATE NAME-  
KEY WORDS-

NOTES- Summary from unauthenticated transcript. All information from interviewee, without correction.  
CONTENTS- Much of the detail, especially of his early life, is lost due to sound static. This is a very detailed account of Jacob Birnbaum's experiences, including one episode where he was accused and convicted of sabotaging and blowing up a textile factory (he was innocent). Due to German bureaucracy and in-fighting he escaped his death sentence.

PERSONAL NOTE: The first 12 minutes of the tape are very difficult to hear. There are at least 6 other times when the sound quality is poor. Unfortunately I cannot be completely certain that I was able to glean all the information correctly. Questionable sections will be marked \*\*.

MINUTES

00:00 Jacob Birnbaum was born on April 15, 1922 in Poland \*\* and attended religious day school where he studied religious and secular subjects.  
00:01 He attended this school until 1933 (when Hitler \*\* came to power), after which he was sent to a secular school.  
00:02 He lived with his parents and a sister who was 3 \*\* years younger [sound skips]. Some relatives lived in nearby towns, but most lived in the same town. His mother was a bookkeeper and his father was a businessman.  
00:03 He spent time with his grandparents while his \*\* parents worked. The family business involved getting produce from farms to the army and other institutions, etc.  
00:04 His father worked for a time manufacturing shoes.  
\*\* In 1936 an uncle came from a town near Katowice.  
00:05 He wanted to expand the business and asked Jacob's \*\* father to join him. 00:06 There were 50,000 people in his town, half of them \*\* Jewish.  
There was an active Jewish community. 00:07 His maternal grandparents lived near the Synagogue. 00:08 He enjoyed staying with them. His grandfather was \*\* well known in the town.

- 00:09 The grandfather made bridles for horses and worked \*\*  
with Gentiles. 00:10 He also dealt with carriages and  
saddles for nearby \*\* estates. The paternal  
grandfather dealt with produce. 00:11 When his paternal  
grandmother died, the grandfather \*\* moved. 00:12 One  
uncle, Morris, had 5 children and was well off. \*\* Jacob was  
friendly with these cousins. 00:13 He had another uncle, but  
they were not close. On Jacob's mother's side there were 2  
married sisters, a brother, and 3 unmarried sisters. 00:14  
Jacob was a favorite nephew. 00:15 He was asked to join a  
Zionist youth organization but he declined because he was Hasidic  
at that time. 00:16 As a student there were not so many  
anti-Semitic incidents because they lived in a segregated  
section. 00:17 When he went to the religious school he  
studied with Hasidic children. He was allowed there only because  
he was a very good student, even though his family was not  
Hasidic. Also, he was afraid he would be beaten while en route  
to the public school. 00:18 When he changed to the secular  
school most of the students there were also Jewish. 00:19 He  
remembers the Rabbis talked of the events in Germany, but he did  
not feel any anti-Semitism. 00:20 Later he did experience  
anti-Semitism. He dodged Christians and avoided Churches. He  
had a close friend who was Christian. He was the son of the  
superintendent. 00:21 Hitler's ascent to power in 1933 was  
probably the reason he was switched from religious to secular  
school.
- 00:22 He was an excellent student and his parents were very  
proud. He excelled in math, geography and Polish  
composition.
- 00:23 In 1936 the family moved away. He and his sister  
missed their friends. They moved to Dombrovna. 00:24  
This was an industrial town. They had to make new  
friends. His best friends were his cousins. The  
Gymnasium was very expensive so he had to learn by  
himself by doing homework with his cousins.
- 00:25 The cousins shared friends. He wanted to be a \*\*doctor  
but he knew that it was impossible.
- 00:26 As an alternative, he considered dentistry. He had an  
opportunity for this in an area near the German border.
- 00:27 He did not need college for dentistry, only an  
apprenticeship. In 1938 he started his dental training  
in Katowice with an excellent dentist.
- 00:28 He was there until just before the war broke out.

His parents sent the children away to Pietkov since it was further away from the German border. The children were sent to relatives.

00:29 When the war did break out, Dombrovna was not touched; the Germans just marched in. Pietkov was bombed and many died in the bombardment.

00:30 He and his relatives escaped into the forest. They had been strafed by Stutkas. They dodged the planes by running into unharvested fields.

00:31 Anti-Semitism was rampant. His uncle had a shoe store.  
\*\*

00:32 The shoe store was ultra modern and no bargaining was allowed. It was centrally located with attractive display windows. Business was good. 00:33 About 9 months before the war, anti-Semites began boycotting the store. There were spies reporting who went into the store. It was much like what was happening in Germany.

00:34 The anti-Semites tried to put the Jews out of business. The link between Poland and Christianity was promoted.

00:35 "If you are a Pole you are a Catholic" was the attitude. Otherwise, you are a foreigner.

00:36 The symbol of the David's (Jewish) Star was not used, but Jews were portrayed as foreigners.

00:37 They (the relatives) spent about 3 days in the forest. They needed food so the children went home. Poles were robbing Jewish stores. Jacob and his sister were still separated from their parents. 00:38 The grandparents had moved to Lodz. Jacobs parents sent for their kids and the family was reunited.

00:39 They tried to make a living under the German occupation but there were lots of restrictions. 00:40 Their area was incorporated into the Reich. This was a coal mining region.

00:41 There were restrictions right away. In the first few months the business became Aryanized.

00:42 At first they were still able to work in the store.  
\*\*  
Worse restrictions came in 1941.

00:43 The dentist he had worked with was Jewish. He was married to a woman from Dombrovna.

00:44 All the Jews had to leave Silesian territory so the dentist had to move to Dombrovna. Jacob worked with him again until April, 1942.

00:45 Restrictions against the Jews included special ("zonder") ID cards. He was suspicious of the use of the word "special" and soon realized that "special" ID cards were for the Jews and that Jews were being given "special" treatment. He knew German and had read German newspapers before the war. 00:46 There were three kinds of special cards. His was pink, which indicated that he worked with Jews. There were blue cards for those who worked with

Poles or Germans. Yellow cards were issued to those who worked for the Reich/war effort. 00:47 His father worked in a brick factory. It was very hard labor.

00:48 His father was born in 1894 so was 46 at that time. His mother was 3 years younger. The father worked so he would not be sent away. 00:49 The Judenrat was established by the Germans and was used to issue commands from the Nazis. The Judenrat enforced orders because of Nazi intimidation. 00:50 The Judenrat members were seen as traitors but later Jacob found out more about them. People feared going out to work because those that did never returned. 00:51 He never saw anyone come back. Dragnets were used to catch Jews. 00:52 Going to work was a challenge. He devised ways to avoid being caught. 00:53 Most of his friends were taken. Several times he was almost caught, but he bluffed his way out. 00:54 Sometimes he escaped to rooftops. The Judenrat said the people should comply. At the end of 1941/ beginning of 1942 the Judenrat called a general assembly and told people to go willingly to the camps because worse things were coming. 00:55 The people were told the Germans were already killing Jews in Russia. This assembly was after the Wannsee Conference. 00:56 The people were told they might yet save themselves at the camps. He was a teen and wanted to avoid the camps. 00:57 He had an escape rope. There was a mikvah in his house and once he escaped there. The Nazis came looking for him. 00:58 He got a summons on April 15th (his 20th birthday) and was ordered to report the next day. He was told that if he did not come voluntarily they would take his father. His father did not want him to go. 00:59 Jacob had a weak heart muscle and was considered weaker than his father. The father wanted to report instead of the son. While they were discussing this the Germans came to take him away. His mother had made a cake for their last evening together. 00:60 He was able to grab some photos and he kept them. 1 hour He was sent to a camp in Sosnonoviec (ph). If prisoners were sick they were sometimes released. 01:01 Jacob had a doctor's certificate saying he could not do physical work. The building he was in had 4 floors. Prisoners were sent to different floors as they were assigned. 01:02 He was arrested with his cousin. Both had the same

name, but the cousin was 3 years younger. His uncle was  
influential and tried to get his son released. 01:03 There  
was no reason that the cousin should have been released. He had  
no certificate. Later Jacob got a letter saying that he had  
been betrayed so that his cousin could be released. 01:04 The  
cousin had a coffee spiced with aspirin to accelerate heart  
rate. 01:05 Jacob had some of this coffee before he went to see  
the doctor there. He was sent to the 4th floor to go to the camps  
and his cousin was released. 01:06 The next morning he saw  
his parents as he was being marched to the train station. His  
mother had the cake she had wanted to give him. 01:07 What  
she did was dangerous. His first camp was Anhag (ph) near  
Auschwitz. 01:08 Auschwitz was already known as a bad penal  
colony. The gas chambers were being built then. This camp was  
about 30 miles from his home town. 01:09 He was put to work  
as a lumberjack and the lumber was used in the coal mines. He  
had to learn to cut down trees. 01:10 Whoever did not work  
was beaten. He tried to find some contact with his parents. He  
learned there were some Polish workers nearby. One was willing  
to go to speak to his parents. 01:11 The Pole brought him  
food from his parents. After a few weeks he got a letter  
telling him what they were sending. The Pole was stealing some of the  
things. 01:12 Jacob told his parents to quit sending things  
because the Pole was stealing too much. 01:13 His next job  
was to carry bricks for the construction of the machine house.  
He had to carry them over a steep plank. There was a guard with  
a whip there. 01:14 By that time he had boils on his back so  
he walked a little off-center. He dumped a whole load of bricks  
and some fell on the guard's boot. He knew the guard wanted to  
kill him. 01:15 He apologized to the guard and offered to go  
to his \*\* parents to get him new shoes. The guard  
whipped him. Other prisoners resented the bribe since the whole  
group might face reprisals. 01:16 A few days later the guard  
came to him and ordered \*\* him to carry water to his hut.  
The guard reprimanded him for making the bribe in front of  
others. 01:17 The guard went to Jacob's parents and got  
shoes. \*\* After that the guard treated him better. 01:18  
This guard was an incredible contact. Jacob came \*\* to  
the camp April 17, 1942. This was now June, 1942.

01:19 It was not a big camp, maybe a thousand people. The  
commandant of the camp told them during Appel (roll call) that  
if  
they work they would live another day. 01:20 They had to  
work  
to survive. He told the prisoners never to worry about the war  
because the Germans' last bullets would be for the Jews.  
01:21 If you did not work you were beaten to death or sent  
away. This terrorized everyone. Those that attempted  
to escape were caught and people were beaten to death  
or lynched. 01:22 The food was very bad. The bread  
was made with "who knows what" and the soup was water.  
01:23 This camp gave them an idea of what to  
expect. The Juden Elster would report to the deputy of  
the commandant. The Kapos controlled groups and  
reported the numbers to the Juden Elster. 01:24 It  
took an hour to get to and from work. 01:25 Until  
August he had contact with his parents. The letter  
said that all the Jews in the town were ordered to  
assemble. He feared all the Jews would be killed.  
01:26 His father asked him to survive and remember  
what had happened. Later he swallowed the letter to  
avoid being killed for having it in his possession.  
01:27 His family was taken to Auschwitz. He was  
6-7 miles away. 01:28 Jacob knew already about the  
gas chamber. The guard told Jacob that he had seen his  
mother with her head shaved. 01:29 The guard  
promised to help as long as they were in Anzag. About  
3 weeks later the Polish Jews were sent to another  
camp. 01:30 SHOWS PHOTOS 01:31 Jacob had been  
sent to Markstat (ph). He felt his parents had been  
killed. 01:32 He did not know if the guard had told  
him the truth. He knew his sister was not with his  
parents, that she had escaped. 01:33 On August 12,  
(Jews) people in the areas of Sosnowiec, Benzin, and  
Dombrovno had to assemble and go through registration.  
01:34 In 1946 a few survivors wrote down the  
details of what happened. 01:35 In that booklet it  
said the date of the "resettlement" was August 12. In  
1949 Jacob sent to the Forward (newspaper) the  
information he had received so he could get  
confirmation for Yahrzeit (memorial) purposes. 01:36  
Jacob had a letter that said his father had been \*\*  
betrayed by his own brother (Jacob's uncle). Jacob's  
father had had a yellow ID card. 01:37 Even now  
Jacob does not know all the details. 01:38 This  
uncle was one of the only survivors from the

whole family, but due to this letter Jacob could never really  
reconcile with his uncle. 01:39 In the letter the father  
told him not to have anything to do with this uncle. 01:40 During  
the war, Jacob heard that his uncle, aunt and cousin were in a  
camp called Klettendorf (ph) and were doing well. Jacob was  
already a skeleton. 01:41 There were networks of landsmen  
that (people from the same town/area) and Jacob learned from them  
his relatives were doing well. 01:42 One landsman suggested  
Jacob contact his uncle and try to get himself moved to the  
other camp. 01:43 Contacts were sent through many conduits. He  
did try to contact his uncle but never got an answer.  
01:44 After the war, after Jacob had been liberated from his  
6th camp, someone came to tell him his uncle was alive  
and looking for him. 01:45 Jacob's cousin Jacob was  
ill and wanted to see his cousin before he died. This  
cousin had TB. The cousin asked Jacob for his  
forgiveness. Jacob kissed him on his forehead. 01:46  
The cousin had had privileges in the camp but he had  
either developed pneumonia on the march or had been  
beaten by a commandant. 01:47 The aunt and uncle  
asked Jacob to live with them since they were among the  
only surviving relatives. 01:48 One cousin lived in  
Drancy, France and later became an ambassador to  
Poland. Another cousin lives in Australia. 01:49  
Jacob still does not know what happened to his sister.  
He wanted to ask his cousin about his sister's fate.  
01:50 His sister had been pretty but the female  
cousins were not. There was some animosity between the  
girls. His sister might have lived with the uncle and  
been treated like a maid. 01:51 He had contact with  
her even after their parents had been taken. 01:52  
The book (referenced above) explained what the parents  
endured during the roundup. 01:53 The book  
describes some of the betrayals. Pink ID cards were  
worthless. Blue and yellow cards were good. There was  
another card for those who worked for the Judenrat.  
01:54 At the "punkt" (resettlement) the rules were  
changed and the yellow cards were not received. One  
yellow card in the family was enough to save the whole  
family. 01:55 There were bribes so that rich people  
could escape even without cards. The rich were issued  
special cards and others were expendable. 01:56 His  
2nd camp was Marchad (ph) near Breslau. Jacob tried to  
console himself by believing his mother was still  
alive. This camp was much larger.

01:57 The head of the camp was a tyrant. The Juden Elster  
was dressed in boots, etc, just like a camp guard. 01:58  
This  
camp was in Germany. He was betrayed here. There were some  
friends of his from Gymnasium here. 01:59 One of his friends  
from Sosnoviec was caught with Jacob. Jacob shared his packages  
with his friend. 02:00 When they got to the 2nd camp, this  
man found a friend who was a Kapo. He got himself assigned to  
this Kapo.  
02:01 The man then moved to a different barrack. Jacob was  
assigned to one of the toughest jobs. He was assigned  
to the night shift to build a Krupp factory during the  
winter. 02:02 The first task was to move earth.  
Two people were assigned to a lorry and were made to  
fill the lorry with dirt. 02:03 The Kapos and  
Germans had whips and they sometimes killed slow  
workers. He worked hard to survive. 02:04 The  
lorries had to be loaded within a time schedule. At  
first he worked the day shift but then he was changed  
to the night shift. 02:05 One night he was taken to  
clean the latrines using a pail. As time progressed he  
got sicker. He had boils on his legs. 02:06 Jacob  
had shoes that were given to him by the friendly guard  
in the previous camp. At this camp a Kapo wanted those  
shoes and gave Jacob wood shoes instead. 02:07  
Walking to work for an hour in those shoes was  
horrible. On one appell (roll call) he saw someone  
faint and was dragged away. 02:08 He dropped down  
and was dragged to the sick room. He no longer cared  
what happened to him. Soon after, the others marched  
out. 02:09 Jacob spoke to a friend who was a Kapo  
with another group. This Kapo told him to get up and  
go to work because there was a transport being  
assembled to go to Auschwitz. This Kapo saved him.

END OF TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF TAPE TWO

Note; there is discontinuity here. The taping resumes but Jacob  
is unaware that the discussion is being taped. Therefore, the  
comments here do not follow a logical progression.

02:10 (tape resumes in the middle of a conversation that does  
not relate to the previous topic) 02:11 The winter  
of 1941-42 was the toughest for him. Doctors are still  
surprised when they see his

scars. He was freezing and malnourished. 02:12 After the fainting episode, things went from bad to worse. He was alone and becoming a musselman (zombie).

02:13 He was determined not to give up. Some work places were better than others. Some prisoners had enough food that they could sell their soup to other, less fortunate prisoners. 02:14 Hungry people waited for the luckier prisoners so they could buy soup. 02:15 He approached one worker and it turned out to be his friend from the previous camp. In the other camp Jacob had shared his family's food parcels with this man. Now this friend took margarine (in exchange for soup?). 02:16 Jacob saw this man, Zalek, after the war and Zalek fainted when he saw Jacob. He did not think Jacob would survive. 02:17 One Kapo on the night shift saw Jacob could not work anymore. He took Jacob to another job to work railroad switches.

02:18 All Jacob had to do was watch the lights and switch the rails. It was snowing and he was cold and tired. He did the job for a day or two. He anticipated his death.

02:19 He passed out and 2 trains collided. He was dragged to the camp. Usually there were public hangings for sabotage. 02:20 As they were taking him away, the Juden Elster ordered Jacob be put on a transport. He ordered Jacob to wash up (he was bloody) and collect his things. 02:21 About 500 people were collected for this transport. Then they segregated some from the many and Jacob was sent with the smaller group to another camp. 02:22 On Feb. 19, 1943, he went to Ludwigsdorf (ph). There was no physical work. All he could see was people dying and being buried. There weren't any soldiers. 02:23 He wanted to survive. The man sleeping above him died and people came to take the body away. 02:24 Jacob asked the sanitation crew (who collected the dead) to allow him to leave the room and take a shower. He offered his dental instruments in exchange for the priviledges. 02:25 A German Jewish member of the sanitation crew came back and took him to the shower. Jacob refused to return to the barrack. 02:26 He had managed to keep his dental instruments because he was supposed to be a dentist in the first camp. At that time prisoners were still allowed small packages. 02:27 He was in the grass in front of the barracks. He was hungry and walked to the kitchen.

02:28 The guard saw him and sent him to work in an underground factory where prisoners worked with toxic chemicals to make grenades. 02:29 The prisoners had to measure gun powder exactly. This was work he could do. The guards wore gas masks but the Jews worked without protection. 02:30 The life expectancy was 6 weeks. The Jews were covered with the toxic powder. Although there was food, the Jews could not eat. Prisoners worked in 8 hour shifts around the clock. 02:31 On April 20 he had been on the night shift. 02:32 When he came back there was a selection the next morning and he volunteered and was sent to the Graditz (ph) camp. 02:33 There he was assigned to work in the regulation of rivers. They were given only half rations. 02:34 He worked moving logs to the river for a short time. 02:35 There was a textile factory nearby. The owner, Blechner, was closely connected with Himmler. 02:36 At this factory the owner wanted to give his workers better

care.

One barrack was already built. The Germans needed someone to install barbed wire around the barrack. 02:37 The commandant of the camp did not like the factory owner so he sent 10 of his worst workers. 02:38 The factory owner tried to care for his workers, but he also complied with regulations. 02:39 Jacob was sent there to work because he was in such bad shape. These workers did not know what they were doing. The carpenter in charge saw Jacob's legs (and what bad shape they were in ).

02:40

The carpenter told Jacob to stop working and took Jacob to another barrack and told him to wait there for bandages and

food.

02:41 Jacob thought desperately of some way to take

advantage

of the situation. 02:42 The carpenter returned as promised and Jacob thanked him. He asked the carpenter to get him into the factory and away from the camp. 02:43 All the factory workers had specific jobs and Jacob had no job/skills. They tried to think of a plan. 02:44 Jacob returned to work and was marched back to camp. Back at the camp, he told a friend of the idea and the friend thought Jacob was crazy. 02:45 Several weeks later Jacob's number was called to stay in the camp. After 2 days in the camp, he was taken to the factory. 02:46 Since he did not know factory work, he was sent to the transport section to unload materials. 02:47 Once he fell with a bale of cotton on top of him. His wrist was broken in 3 places. 02:48 There was a doctor named Kornreich there. He made a splint for Jacob and helped him.

02:49 Jacob got pneumonia and pleurisy. He was close to death and the doctor had already reported that Jacob had died. The doctor said Jacob's survival was miraculous. 02:50 Somehow Jacob's heart had moved to the right. The doctor was beaten for his error. 02:51 The commandant went to see Jacob for himself. He made a mark on Jacob's chest to show where Jacob's heart was that day. The commandant wanted to see a change in the position of the heart. 02:52 The commandant ordered the medications the doctor needed for Jacob. 02:53

He

was later sent to work in the boiler room. There was an elderly German man there who trained him. Later the old man was taken

to

the home army and Jacob ran the boiler room.

02:54 In 1944 the SS built a big camp and some of the smaller camps were liquidated. 02:55 Though he was transferred to the big camp he retained his job in the boiler room. He had his own SS guard watching him. 02:56 In the summer, Jacob's boiler room was not necessary. One of the guards could not stand it that a Jew should have such an easy job. 02:57 In the summer Jacob was sent to another job in the factory. he was assigned to clean the steel combs that combed the cotton. 02:58 This work was necessary to reduce fire risk. After his shift he removed some cotton pieces that had burned and had been quenched with water. The elevator operator was not there. 02:59 It was not Jacob's job to take the burned material away in the elevator, so he left the material in front of the elevator. There was cotton all around. 03:00 He went to lunch, and then (that part of) the factory exploded! Jacob was accused of sabotage. The criminal police investigated. 03:01 He recently heard from a survivor from the factory, that the elevator operator fell asleep. He was later mistakenly considered a hero. 03:02 Regular procedure required an investigation by the fire marshall. They ascertained how the fire started. 03:03 Jacob gave official testimony. He was put into solitary confinement and condemned to death. 03:04 It was Christmas, 1944. The blockfuhrer was a sadistic Nazi. He and others came for Jacob and wanted to hang him as a Christmas ornament. 03:05 The head of the SS asked Jacob to be seated and read him his testimony and requested verification. Jacob signed the statement. 03:06 Through his friend, the doctor, Jacob heard about the things that had happened around him. He had

been sentenced by the criminal police as an arsonist/saboteur.  
03:07 Jacob had been asked what he might have done differently, had the elevator operator been there, etc. The court stenographer helped him by stepping on his foot when he misspoke. She was a German. 03:08 He had a death sentence from the criminal police and the SS was to hand him over for execution. 03:09 The SS did not want to hand over "their property" without approval from their headquarters at Gross-Rosen. 03:10 Gross-Rosen had already been taken by the Russians so there could be no answer for the SS. Jacob felt bad about the factory because working there had kept people alive. Only the warehouse area was damaged. 03:11 Jacob felt bad that he did not take the smoldering debris down, but he was not an elevator operator. 03:12 Later Blechner, the factory owner, needed someone to vouch for him. 03:13 The old German who had taught Jacob how to operate the boiler room, asked Jacob to help save his daughters after the war. Jacob could find no way to help them. 03:14 He had no way to even find the people he wanted to help. He could not have survived without the help of others. 03:15 He was sent back to work until just before the Russians came. The Russians were bombing so the factory workers were ordered to dig anti-tank ditches. 03:16 It was rumored that the camp was to be dynamited. There were rumors of a death march. Then they heard there would be no more marches. 03:17 The people in the camp began to organize. They had heard news from the outside. They set up watchmen for protection and disobeyed the curfew. 03:18 They communicated with the Germans that if dynamite was sent, the prisoners would try to escape and kill some of the guards. The head of the SS was not the worst of the SS. 03:19 He engineered a compromise; he and his men would disguise themselves as civilians and leave. This was May 8th or 9th. 03:20 The women in the nearby camps came and cut off the electrified wire to release the prisoners. 03:21 This was the first time in years he walked without guards. He had a good friend, a Dutch man. They became friends though they could not speak together. 03:22 They walked out and walked to the town. There was a baker who did not flee in the town. Jacob got 3 loaves of bread, some to save for another day. Then he realized he was free, so he gave 2 loaves

away. 03:23 He was interviewed for television and was asked to tell about how he met his wife. There were women in a nearby camp, the camps being separated by double wires. The women were being punished and were made to kneel in the snow. 03:24 The men could see that. This was a year, maybe 18 months, before liberation. Two days later some women came outside and sang Yiddish songs. 03:25 On Sundays they did not have constant surveillance. His wife and her sister came out and started dancing. He saw her dance and told his friend that if he lived, he would marry her. 03:26 After liberation the Russians did not do anything for them (unlike the Americans). People were hungry. He sought work as a guard in a gas factory. 03:27

He

was given an armband and a rifle. He went to the mess hall for food and saw his future wife there. He approached her and asked for a date. They married 3 months later. This was August 19. 03:28 For about a year they lived in Poland because they had no place else to go. His uncle and cousins were nearby. Poland had always been his home and he wanted to start over in Poland. 03:29 He tried to help resettle Germans back to Germany and bring Poles back to Poland. 03:30 There were few Polish survivors. He began his dental practice. A year after liberation, they were expecting a baby. 03:31 There was a pogrom in Poland and he decided to leave. He did not want his child born in Poland. 03:32 He thought he might have trouble because a year had passed and he was already established. 03:33 They decided to just leave without telling anyone, so they fled with just a few belongings. They could not go with a group, so they made their way to Czechoslovakia and Austria and then the Jewish organizations took over. 03:34 They came then to Munich and he volunteered to work for ORT. They sent him to Stuttgart (ph). 03:35 It was hard to get an apartment there. He organized a school for dental technicians. He had more students than he could handle in one shift, so he did 2 shifts. 03:36 He commuted from Munich. He gave ORT an ultimatum

that

he would have to have a room in town, or else he would leave. 03:37 He was there until 1949. Through ORT he met an American woman who was a liason with the Joint. He had a great-uncle in the US who filled out a certificate for him, but Jacob had to wait for the quota. 03:38 This woman met

Jacob's

wife and baby. She told

them there was a bill pending that would allow 200,000 displaced persons in. 03:39 She told him to prepare all his documents. He needed stamps/documentation from the camps. Nazi collaborators came to the US with ease, but it was hard for the Jews. He arrived in Boston on June 16, 1949. 03:40 He has some letters he wrote during the war. 03:41 03:42 He shows that he wrote his letters on whatever kind of paper he could find.

03:43 He has a photo of a woman who had a crush on him. She became ill. 03:44 He has a photo and a note from July 14, 1944. This woman had a twin. 03:45 He has some photos from before the war. Some of these he was able to keep through the camps. Some photos were given to him by others. 03:46 Photos.... 03:47

03:48

03:49

03:50

03:51

03:52

END