Tape four, side one:

JF: You were describing to me the piles of shoes that were burning.

KK: Those shoes were burning because of the bombing. The bomb hit those hills with those shoes and they start to burn. The Nazis sent big freight trains from Poland, from the death camps to Buchenwald. The contents of those trains were shoes, clothing; men's clothing, women's clothing; hair, women's hair, hair from women, cut-up hair, eyeglasses. I think that's all that I remember. Then one day, we had to go to those trains and unload them. Take out the contents from those freight trains. We saw those black clothing from the Polish Jews, what the Jews would wear, in the Yiddish, [not clear] those black robes...We saw the dried blood on it...the dried blood on it was terrible. We had to sort them in ladies' clothing extra [separate] and men's clothing extra, but I don't know what they did with this. Looking for something in those suits...in those shoes, I know. We talked to those inmates who worked on those shoes in the barracks, [under] S.S. [supervision], they watched them what they were doing. They had to take the shoes apart with knives, take the soles apart to look for money, for diamonds, or something like this. And they really find something in those shoes.

JF: What did they do with what was left of the shoes after they searched them?

KK: Then they throw them away. They cut them apart and throw them away somewhere, but this was an immense hill, maybe 20 meters high the hill.

JF: Of these shoes?

KK: Of shoes.

JF: What happened, do you think, with the glasses and the hair you described?

KK: I don't know. I heard only that they take those women hair and they made felt out of it.

JF: Felt...cloth?

KK: Yes, felt, made shoes out of it...upper part for boots from those shoes. One day there came a big transport from Hungary...Hungary Jews. The Nazis went into Hungary, I don't know when, in mid-summer or spring of '44 and took all the Jews and sent them to Auschwitz or to other camps. Men who were a little bit younger sent to Buchenwald and this was before the bombing, what I tell you just now.

JF: Why were the younger men sent to Buchenwald?

KK: To work...that they should work. They sent them to camps...around Buchenwald there were many camps. Work, work camps. They were under the earth. They made them war material under the earth there, they had big factories in the earth, built in.

JF: The camps were under the ground?

KK: The camps not, but they work there, those prisoners, those inmates from the camps, worked in those mountains. I think this was the Hartz Mountains, in Germany.

JF: The Hartz Mountain.

KK: The mountain...a big hills [and] mountains. The Hartz Mountains.

JF: What kind of work were they doing?

KK: They worked on munitions, put in those [powder] munitions, you know in this powder...

JF: For the bullets?

KK: For the bullets, there is powder in there, but...

JF: The buildings that you worked on were not under the ground?

KK: No, they were outside, outside Buchenwald. Big, two for making war material.

JF: Was it after the bombing that they built these munitions factories under the ground, or had they always been there?

KK: They were there already. They built them in wartime. In those mountains and they treated them awful.

JF: They treated the Hungarians...

KK: Hungarian Jews, awful.

JF: What do you mean?

KK: They had to work hard in those mountains and were treated very bad. They gave them very little food and hit them all the time. They hit them at work they should work faster.

JF: Do you think they treated the Hungarian Jews worse than...

KK: No, not worse than the others...not worse. And every day came in dead people from those outside camps.

JF: And what would they do with the dead that were brought in from those camps?

KK: They brought them to the crematorium and burned them there. Every day we had to work in those...from the S.S....the smoke came out from the burning people. It was a terrible smell. Months and months we have to smell...we always have to breathe it in...the smell from the dead people that they burned there. Buchenwald burned 53,000 people. After the liberation we had them all those, black and white, the amount of people that they burned.

JF: Could you get any news from the new prisoners as to what was happening in the rest of Europe?

KK: We don't have to get news from those prisoners. We get the news that the S.S. give us on radio in every barrack. Till today I can't understand, they give us all the news what's going on on the fronts. On the war fronts.

JF: On the wireless?

KK: On those war fronts. Where the war was going on. We know exactly where the Americans and we heard from Africa.

JF: The S.S. were telling you? You mentioned radios.

KK: Yes, in every barrack was loud speakers and the news came over those loud speakers. But till today, I can't understand it.

JF: Were these German stations?

KK: Yes, German stations...German luggage. Sure. We knew when "D" Day was, when the Americans landed in Normandy, and we were happy. We know when in Africa they got the end, the Rommel. England and the Americans conquered them...they had to retreat, the Germans...We know everything. When they landed in Italy...every day we heard the news. I don't know why they did this.

JF: So the German radio stations...?

KK: They gave us every day new hope that the end is near...

JF: Carried the defeats that were occurring?

KK: What's this?

JF: The German radio stations carried news of their own defeats?

KK: Yes, their own defeats. Maybe not enthusiastically, you know, that the Russian army defeated the German army by Stalingrad. This was the point where the war changed to the other side. You know, the Germans has to retreat and retreat and retreat. In January '45 they had to evacuate all those dead camps in Poland. The dead camps were only in Poland, not in Germany. They didn't want to have the Germans know everything. You know, those people are living not far from those camps, but in Poland it was possible. Because the Polish people are very big anti-Semites. For a couple pounds of sugar they told the Nazis where the Jews were hidden.

JF: Were there any other experiences that you had with people who tried to escape from Buchenwald?

KK: I think I told you one case, right? Where they brought in one. We had to stay a whole night because of one of the inmates were missing. They looked over the whole camp. Wasn't there. He must be outside. Outside they send the S.S. with dogs, with bloodhounds, and they find him and they send the bloodhounds on him, and the bloodhounds teared him, like in little pieces, this man. Then they brought him in, on a stretcher, in the camp, and put him on the *Appell Platz*, a big place where all the camp comes together, all the inmates, and they were counted. Every day, in the morning they were counted, and in the evening. And then, when one or two were missing, the whole camp has to stay there. Can't go back to the barracks and the little bit water soup got cold and we couldn't eat it. Sometimes, like I told you, we had to stay the whole night until they find this prisoner.

JF: Could there be any contact with any partisan groups?

KK: Not in Germany.

JF: Not in Germany.

KK: Not in Germany. I was only in German camps. In Poland, maybe it was a little bit different situation. There were thousands and thousands more people in those camps and the S.S. maybe couldn't oversee all of the prisoners so exactly. They had anyhow [with themselves] with the war. Every day they took out one more S.S. people from these

camps and sent them to the war front to fight the Russians and they put in Ukrainian people. Ukrainish S.S. They were worse than the German S.S.

JF: What did they do?

KK: They shoot the people. If you didn't go the straight way, you went a little bit to the side by marching, they shoot them. Many people got shot from them. I think I told you this before. After the bombing from Buchenwald, many prisoners and myself had to go outside the camp and collect all those dead prisoners and bring them back to the camp, to the crematorium. And we find many, many prisoners with shoot wounds, you see those little holes in those bodies.

JF: So the prisoners had been shot?

KK: Shot, yes, before they were bombed, they were shot. Because they tried to hide themselves from those bombs. It was only natural, but they shot them. And we had about 600 dead prisoners this day. In twenty minutes...this was the time when the bombing was. Only twenty minutes. And we had about 600 prisoners. Many we never could find from us Jewish prisoners...they worked outside the camp.

JF: Did you remember what month that was in 1944?

KK: I think it was July or June. It was very hot. Hot and clear with sunshine... nice day. We were afraid that there was going to be a reprisal against us in the camp, because of this bombing, but they did nothing to the people. And then in January '45 came prisoners from other camps, from Poland, back to the Germany. They has to evacuate those camps, they don't want that the prisoners shouldn't go and come in the hands from the Russians. They don't want to have no witnesses, you know, live witnesses, so they tried to shoot them. They couldn't shoot everybody, but who couldn't walk anymore, walk, you know, fell. They couldn't stand up, they shoot them, on the way. And many came back to Buchenwald, and many of those prisoners were before in Buchenwald, when I told you in '43 when they sent all the Jews away and left only the bricklayers in the camp. Our old friends, so to say, came back from Auschwitz and told us what's going on there.

JF: Was this the first time that you had heard of the gas chambers or had you known about them?

KK: No, we heard rumors, but now we had real witnesses, you know. *Kommando Kanada*, very famous *Kommando Kanada* in Auschwitz, was a commando for [of] maybe 50 people. Small commando, not many people, not many prisoners. And they had to take out the warm bodies from the gas chambers, take them out, open up their mouth and look over to see if they have gold teeth, take them out with little instruments, with pliers. And then they cut their hair from many women, dead women, and then they have to bring those dead people to crematoriums to burn them. They get burned.

JF: This was all done by the *Kanada Komando*?

KK: *Kanada Kommando*...the "*Keinerda*" of Germany. It's "nobody there"...the *Kommando Kanada*.

JF: Did they have any other jobs?

KK: No, this was their...those commando were isolated from the other camp... they were isolated from the other camp. They were living in an extra barrack after their work, but after maybe a month or two months, they took those prisoners from the *Kanada Kommando* and gassed them. Took new people, to do this job. So they had no witnesses, but we heard about it.

JF: Do you think any of the people from the *Kanada Kommando* survived?

KK: I don't know, I don't know. I heard only that they killed all those prisoners after a month or two months, they killed prisoners who were in the *Kommando*, and took other people, to do the work. They wouldn't have no witnesses, you know.

JF: What were your quarters like with the addition of these other prisoners from Auschwitz and other camps?

KK: They put those prisoners in another extra *Lager* what they build, next to our *Lager*. And this called] the *kleine Lager*. The little *Lager*. They put the prisoners in pritches [?]...like shelves, like a bookshelf in three or four levels. And they were laying there. Half dead, dead, for days till they could find the deads, dead people.

JF: They came from Auschwitz, primarily?

KK: They came from Auschwitz, and from other camps in Poland.

JF: You saw the insides of the barracks?

KK: I saw them, I went there once in a while, to look at this camp.

JF: And you were able to talk to these prisoners?

KK: We talk to them, yes.

JF: They weren't put in with you in your barracks? Your barracks were kept the same?

KK: No, our barracks were for our prisoners. Years and years we were living there.

JF: Was the treatment any different towards you and towards the new prisoners who came at that time?

KK: Their treatment was worse in the *kleine Lager*. They give them very little food and when they got sick they had no medical help. No help at all. They were laying there like animals to die. Nobody helped them. And the smell was terrible: you couldn't stay there very long. Only a couple of minutes in those barracks. And then came the end of the war. You hear it over the radio. The American army went into Cologne and they are there, and the English Army is there and we know the end is near. [And] the S.S. was a little bit different, too, a little bit. They know what's coming to them, you know, when the end is. And every night when the American flyers came over Germany, every night, there was always alarm, so the S.S. went to their bunkers, shelters, and the camp was [not clear] the prisoners...they couldn't go nowhere. Like I said, they only were flying over our camp. We heard the explosions from far away from the bombs and the whole earth was shaking...the whole barracks were shaking from those explosions. In the morning we saw

the burning cities from far way. Then, like I told you, Buchenwald lies on a hill and you could look far away in the valley from all sides.

JF: This was in what month that you saw the burning?

KK: This was in '45. Every night the flyers came. We couldn't sleep from those drone and the mortars. They were flying very high, [but it was] hundreds and hundreds of airplanes, those big, big bombers. B-9's, I forget what they were.

JF: The S.S., did their attitude of their treatment of you change as they realized that the war was coming to a close? In what way?

KK: Yes. In '45 they were a little bit milder to us, they didn't hit us so much. They were a little bit more human. This is my opinion. They were not so murderous actions, what they did to us. They looked away already a little, the other way, when they saw something what they really should do. They replaced those younger S.S. men, those murderers, with older S.S. men, in the 50's and 60's years old the S.S. In the watch towers, they took away all those young S.S. and put old men in there.

JF: And the younger men went to the front?

KK: Went to the front, to the front. They had not enough soldiers.

JF: That happened in 1945?

KK: Yes, in the beginning of 1945. Then we heard the noises from the cannons. Nearer and nearer, we heard that the Americans come nearer and nearer to the camp. And one day, was an order that all the Jewish prisoners, right way, has to come outside the barracks and to go into the big place where the counting always was. I went, too, and with me went maybe a handful of other old prisoners. We were the old prisoners, [that had been there] a lot of years there. And all those Jews from Hungary and so on went, too, off this place. All those new prisoners went, too. And we were staying there and we see nobody came, only a handful from us old prisoners were there and the other [were all] new prisoners that came from Hungary and all over, and from other camps. We were around and around, stand S.S. with heavy weapons, hand grenades on their belts and the rifles on their back with the bayonettes. I said, "My God, what's this? They gonna send us off [on] a march, a dead march or something." So when I talked to my friends and we said we're gonna try to get out of here. Back to the barracks. And we talked to one of those prisoners who had to watch us, and we talked to him and said, "We are old *lager Hasen*, old camp rabbits. We don't want to go, we're here six years in camp already, and now we should go on a march?" And he says, "You are right. I smuggle you back to your barracks." And he smuggled us [out] and watched [on all sides] and then he smuggled us back to the barracks.

JF: Who was this person?

KK: A prisoner.

JF: A Jewish prisoner?

KK: No, no, from the, like a trusty. The S.S. always had trusties.

JF: A non-Jewish political prisoner?

KK: Political prisoners, yes, yes. Buchenwald was a camp with more political prisoners. Like I told you before, Sachsenhausen, the Christian prisoners were most of them criminals. In Buchenwald it was different. They were political prisoners had the overhand in the camp. The S.S. has to deal with them if they want something from them. They were different than the murderers. They brought us back to the barracks and in the barracks we tried to hide ourselves somewhere. We...all different kinds of things we did. Two or three men from us took out through a manhole cover in the camp where the canalization is, the manhole cover and we went inside of those iron pieces where you can walk inside.

JF: There was a canal underneath? The sewers?

KK: The sewers, yes. We opened up the covers on top and went inside and then we took the cover and closed it again. We were standing inside and the S.S. went around and were looking for more Jewish prisoners, couldn't find us. We were standing all day. Then came the night and again the *Flieger* [air raid] alarm...

JF: The air raid?

KK: The air raids came with those sirens and the S.S. right away went out of the camp and went to their bunkers, to their shelters. Until the air was clean, so in the night we went out and we went to the barracks, looking for something to eat. The Christian prisoners helped us, give us piece of bread of what they had.

JF: How man...?

Tape four, side two:

JF: About how many of you...you described as handful of Jewish prisoners...about how many of you were there?

KK: In my part, where I was, there were four men.

JF: There were four of you who were hidden...

KK: Hidden in the sewer, those shafts, you know, on the bottom were water, but we weren't standing in the water. We were there, the person who was the deepest on the bottom and we stand one over the other and [there was] an iron built in those walls in the sewer where you could go up or down.

JF: Like a ladder?

KK: A ladder, yes.

JF: So the rest of the men in your barrack were still in the barrack?

KK: Yes. Many were still there.

JF: So you snuck out at night?

KK: At night we went out. The air was clear, it was the raid, the air raid every night. We know no S.S. can do us nothing to us, so we went in the barracks and they gave us a piece of bread and a little bit something to eat and in the morning we went, when the day started to come, we....how do you say it...?

JF: The sun rose?

KK: The sun rose, we went down again in those sewers.

JF: And you say it was Christian prisoners who gave you food?

KK: Yes, what they had.

JF: These were Germans?

KK: Germans, yes, most of the time were Germans.

JF: How long were you hidden like this?

KK: A couple of days, around four or five days. And one day we couldn't stand it anymore, to stay there. The whole day to stay and hang there in the sewer. It was terrible. We were weak already, so we tried to go in the *kleine Lager*, the little *Lager* and to hide there in the daytime. The S.S. never came to the *kleine Lager*. They couldn't stand the smell there from those half-dead people there. But we couldn't stand the smell either. We tried to be there the whole day...but we had to survive, so we had to stay there in those barracks.

JF: Had the forced march occurred? Had they indeed taken these people that were counted that night and made them leave the camp?

KK: Yes, sure. They went on a march. I don't know where. Only to shoot them, I think. We never heard about them anymore. I can't tell you, but we know that they shoot them. Maybe some tried to escape on the way. Sure, maybe some of those prisoners escaped; the end was already near. One day, they said—it came an order over the loudspeaker— the S.S. should come out of the *Lager*. All S.S. personnel out of the camp. There was different kind of barracks where the S.S. was there, watched the prisoners, what

they do, they went them all out. Then they said to us, "Every prisoner has to stay in their barrack. Nobody has to come out." If we go out of the barracks, we got shot, they told us over the loudspeakers. When we hear explosions, we shouldn't run out of the barracks, then we get shot again. So we understand that they gonna bomb the whole camp, with their own airplanes, you know, bomb the camps so that we shouldn't fall into the hands of the American Army. Then we looked outside of the windows and we saw the S.S. running outside of the camp, in the woods, tearing up their stars, those swastikas, bands here on the arms, tear them down. Some took off the whole jacket, the whole uniform jacket and throw them up to on the floor. On horses, bicycles, in cars, they were running. And we know now it's come. Soon the hour when we are free. When the S.S. runs away and tears off everything what they have, all those stars, you know...The thunder noises from the war came nearer and nearer. You hear the cannons, and one day it was so near that we all had to lay down flat on our bellies in the barracks so that the [bullets] didn't hit us. This was so strong, that we heard always the noises from the guns...

JF: You were laying down so the bullets wouldn't hit you.

KK: Shouldn't hit us. Then came the American *Panzers* [tanks] and tore down the electric fences around the camps and we were free now. We didn't realize, but we were crying and laughing. It was a wonderful thing. We felt that we were born again. It was a wonderful thing, that we were born again, that we are human again and we went out and saw those American *Panzers* [tanks] tearing down those electric fences around the camp. They give us cigarettes, the soldiers, throw cigarettes out to us. But they wouldn't talk to us. The war was still going on. They had to go further, but they left a contingent of American soldiers, they left in the camp.

JF: That was what month?

KK: This was April 11, 1945. I can't forget this date, because it is my second birthday.

JF: Beautiful. Were they able to leave food for you as well?

KK: No, no, not those soldiers. This was the front soldiers. They had only to...the war was going on. They left, those *Panzers* left. We saw that it was the Third Army, Number 3 was on those tank. This was General Patton's army liberated us. And the next day, Roosevelt died. We all had to stay there and bend our heads and the American flag went to half mast. We were standing there, we were crying too. And then they sent a big, from the Red Cross, the American Red Cross, big ambulances to the camp. Maybe 50 or 60 trucks, ambulance-trucks and took out those prisoners from the camp, from the *kleine Lager*. Those half-dead, were only skeletons alive. They couldn't stay up anymore. Some of them were going on their hands and knees and they took them away. They were very happy. Then they brought in food from the American Army, food, but they didn't know what to do with us. They wanted to help us, but they give us food what we couldn't eat. It was fat, too much fat. It was all pieces of bacon, so you got a piece of bacon in your hand and you start to eat it. And the people with the big eyes, you know, the desire to eat, you

know, was bigger than the insides. You know, when they eat the fat food, those fat bacon—and they got sick. Their shrunken stomach couldn't take this food and they got sick. Many from our Jewish prisoners who got liberated from the American Army died, after the liberation, in the camp. We couldn't go nowhere. The war was still on. We had to live in the camp.

JF: What did you do? How much did you eat?

KK: I eat maybe one bite and I feel the fat was so...I couldn't eat it. I felt like you have to vomit from it. I couldn't eat it. I eat maybe one bite, and I tried another bite, but I couldn't eat it. My nature didn't take this, you know. I feel no good. I didn't eat it.

JF: Bacon was the main thing you were given?

KK: Yes, fat, fat meat they gave us. Really fat. They were thinking, the Americans were thinking they help us, they give a good thing to us. They give us food like this. But it wasn't good. Many died, many of my good friends were dead, was all those years together with them.

JF: How long were you in the camp like this during these last days?

KK: After the liberation, the war was still going on and we knew from the other side came the Russians. But the Russians stopped on the Elbe River in Germany. And the Americans went to this river and that was the end of it. We couldn't go away...around in June, in May was the capitulation from the German Army, in May, May 8, I think it was, the German Army capitulated, but we couldn't go no further because they said to us, "You can't go to the east, you can go to the west, to Cologne or to, in direction to France, but you can't go east. There are the Russians, they wouldn't let you through." So in between the liberation and going away from the camp, I worked for the American Red Cross in Weimar. Weimar is the next town, next big town to the camp Buchenwald. I worked there. Every day we were picked up by the American Army in trucks, and who want to, this was, you don't have to; if you don't want to, but I said I want to work. I am a tailor and I want to work. And they took us down to Weimar. There was a factory, a clothes factory, with civilian workers, and we worked there. We were sewing little boys' suits. They find a big *Lager* with material, the Americans, and they took this material out and we had to sew little boys' suits, for children. Suits, for children they found in those camps. There were many children there.

JF: Now you had...

KK: Till the end of the war they couldn't do nothing with those children...they had no time anymore to do something.

JF: There were children in Buchenwald throughout the war?

KK: Yes, only by the end, by the end. The last couple weeks only. Before the liberation.

JF: Only the last couple of weeks were there children?

KK: Yes, they brought them, they brought them to us.

JF: Where were those children from? Do you have any idea?

KK: They were from all over. From Hungary, from Poland, they had no fathers or mothers anymore.

JF: Before that time there had not been children in the camp, before that time?

KK: No, no, not by us.

JF: So you were living still in your barracks in Buchenwald. You were still wearing your stripes?

KK: Yes, sure we had our stripes.

JF: And you would work during the day in Weimar.

KK: I worked in Weimar. We were picked up by the American Army in trucks and went to Weimar. We worked the whole day there and in the evening, after eight hours, they brought us back to the cam.

JF: How did that feel, that month or so you were working?

KK: I felt wonderful...I felt like a human being again. And after the week was over, I got my wages paid out in German marks...

JF: From the American Army?

KK: No, no, from those bosses there. They were Germans. The factory belonged to Germans, but the oversight was from the American Army.

JF: So the Germans themselves were then paying you for this work?

KK: Yes.

JF: What were they like? What kind of treatment did you receive in those factories?

KK: They didn't talk to us...they didn't talk to us. We didn't care about them. We did our job, that's all. I worked on a machine and was sewing, that's all. In the evening, around five, they put us on trucks and we went back to the camp. The bookkeeping were all German people. And one day, that I forgot to tell you, the American Army forced every household in Weimar, two people from every household, has to go up in the camp, by feet. Not in trucks or so, they had to walk. They had to walk up the hill to the camp to see what was going on there all those years. To see the mountains of dead people in the crematorium laying outsides because they had not time to burn them. There was no coal enough for those ovens, anyhow. Thousands of people came up in the camp. Civil people from Weimar.

JF: Were you in the camp when these visits occurred?

KK: Yes, we were in the camp.

JF: What kinds of reactions did you see?

KK: We were hollering, but the American Army didn't let us go to them. We were standing all, thousands and thousands of prisoners and [in front of us stood] the American soldiers with the rifles and we saw those civil people coming in long march lines. Women, men, old men...

JF: Could you observe any of their reactions?

KK: They were afraid. They were crying. Crying, and begging that shouldn't do nothing to them. We were hollering and screaming on them. "We didn't know, we didn't

know"...they was always hollering. "We didn't know what was going on here...we didn't know...we were thinking is all criminals, all murders up there." Then the American soldiers forced them to go inside, all over and to see those dead people.

JF: Inside...?

KK: In those barracks where there were [still] mountains of dead people laying. This was all in the beginning, after the liberation, maybe ten days, fourteen days afterwards. And the war was stillgoing on. Some people wouldn't go in there. They forced them. They took them by the neck, threw them into those barracks to see what's going on there. Then they shout, "We all know about it, but we never saw it." Those lampshades what the Ilse Koch...She was the widow from the Commandant from Buchenwald. From the former Commandant from Buchenwald. She saw prisoners with big tattoos over their chest, over the back, big tattoos...sailors, most of them sailors. And she liked those pictures on them and she told her husband, "It would be nice when I get this skin from those prisoners, and we make nice lampshades out of those skins." And he followed her and took out those prisoners, sent them down to the hospital, to the prisoner hospital, and there were prisoners who killed them and took off their skin.

JF: Prisoners killed other prisoners?

KK: Prisoners killed them, with needles. I don't know what they put in those needles, but they killed them. And took the skin off and prepared the skin and made like a parchment out of the skin and fabricated lampshades. And this day, we saw the first time those two lampshades. Two lampshades they showed us, the American soldiers. That they find by her in her house.

JF: How many prisoners do you think were killed for the lampshades? Do you have any idea?

KK: I have no idea. They showed us only two lamps with those lampshades with those beautiful pictures on them...the tattoos.

JF: Had you heard about this before?

KK: Yes, we heard about it...prisoner talk...one to the other by mouth. But, we never saw it. She had switches on the wall, switches from human toes, big toes.

JF: How?

KK: Those switches, with toes sticking out. Turn toes.

JF: You mean the bone of the toe?

KK: No, the toes, the whole toes.

JF: The toe itself was preserved in the...

KK: The whole toe, and they made switches out of them...to turn on and off the light.

JF: And you saw all of this?

KK: She was a perverse woman. I saw her many times.

JF: You saw these in the home, you went into the home.

KK: No, I don't saw this. I saw only what the American soldiers showed us.

JF: But you did see her many times.

KK: I saw her many times walking between the prisoners.

JF: She would walk among the prisoners?

KK: Among the prisoners. We were working outside, digging ditches, or I don't know what it was for work, hard work, and she went. She was a little woman, fat woman with red hair, short, short hair. But we prisoners shouldn't look at her. If she saw a prisoner looking at her, she went to the S.S. and said, "These prisoners [insulted] me with his eyes." He insulted her with his eyes, and the S.S. man wrote down the number and they became [got] twenty-five lashes on the back.

JF: Why was she walking among the prisoners?

KK: She was a sadist, you know. She feel something about it when she could walk between the prisoners and they couldn't touch her. She was a sadist, that's why she made lampshades. And the American Army showed those German civil people from Weimar those lampshades and we saw them, too. And they showed us—she had made of some prisoners, heads, shrinking heads, they were like this, so big, black...with the eyes, with the teeth, but black.

JF: She shrunk heads.

KK: Not she did it, she give them order, and they did it for her.

JF: And what did she do with those heads?

KK: I don't know what she did with them, but they showed them to us. It's sometimes you see in cars, people will have this in front hanging this little head, shrunken, black. They showed them the crematorium with those hundreds of thousands of dead bodies, one piled on the other, high up like this from the floor, and we saw this, too, the first time. We never went there in the crematorium. Only dead people came there.

JF: This was the first time then that you had seen it?

KK: That I saw those mountains of dead prisoners [piled]...like wood, one over the other.

JF: It must have been incredibly difficult for you to have gone there.

KK: Yes, it was. It was. But we were without feeling anymore. You have no real feeling anymore when you're years and years and every day you see the dead [before] your eyes. You had really no feeling anymore. The only thing you had was a little bit food every night and we were thinking of to rest, to lay down, for a couple of hours...to sleep.

JF: It was like you withdrew a lot of your energy from feeling and from other worries.

KK: I had nothing to think, too, anymore. I knew my father was there, an old man, he died, I know. They took him away...I know this. It was on my mind. That's it. I was alone and not to care for anybody...I had no wife, no children.

JF: Do you think that helped?

KK: It helped me, sure, it helped me a lot from going crazy, to thinking every day what happened to your wife, what happened to your children?...I saw this every day,

for people who came into the camp and start to cry, thinking on their wives and hollering and crying and they tried to make them quiet and they wouldn't be quiet. They were screaming. It got real crazy like. Then in the morning we saw them hanging in the wires, in the electric wires...they went out of the barracks and ran straight to the electric [not clear] with [strong] electricity.

JF: The electric fence?

KK: Yes, and they had their hands on it, and right away they were stuck to it. The high voltage went through your body and they were hanging there. In the morning when we came out of the barracks we saw hanging three, four, five prisoners on those wires. They have to take off the power and we could take them down. Terrible.

JF: So this visit then occurred, of the people from Weimar, occurred about ten days or two weeks after the liberation?

KK: Two weeks after the liberation. The war was still on, but Weimar was free already, was [under] American military...occupation.

JF: And you worked in Weimar until May or...?

KK: I worked there until the beginning of June and then I tried to go back to Berlin where I came from. One day the Americans brought us near the border where the Russians were and we had to smuggle through the woods on the other side of the Russian occupation, Germany. We came to Dresden. Was a beautiful town before, but it was all bombed and laying in ruins.

JF: You were going on foot then?

KK: Yes, on foot. In Dresden we went on a train...the train was full, but we were sitting on top on the train. We were eight days until we came to Berlin.

JF: What do you mean on top?

KK: On top of the train...on the outside. On the roof of the trains we were sit t ing...Hundreds of prisoners. And the train was rolling and rolling...take eight days. Really it makes only ten hours, less than ten hours, took eight days to come to Berlin.

JF: Were the Americans able to provide you with some food?

KK: Not on the way...on the way not. Then we were in Russian occupation already. This part from Germany was under Russian occupation. Then I came back to Berlin and I came to a big place...everything...the houses were falling apart...everything was down. You don't know what way to go, to east or to west, no street signs anymore. It was like a desert. Once in a while there was a house still standing. And I came to the house where my sister was living...This was the only house in the whole street still standing. Isn't that something? Then I knocked on the door, I was heavy set, you know. I had good food from the American Army.

JF: You had gained weight already?

KK: Got better food, not those water-soups anymore and my head was like this big...And I knocked on the door and my brother-in-law opened and said, "What do you want?" And I said, "I'm your brother-in-law." He didn't recognize me. Then he called sister

and she recognized me. But it was like a wall between us, because I had other feelings and they had other feelings. I didn't feel like I come back to my sister because her husband was anyhow a *goy*.