

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

MARIAN W. TURZANSKI

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Josey G. Fisher
Date: December 28, 1983

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MT - Marian W. Turzanski [interviewee]

JF - Josey G. Fisher [interviewer]

Date: December 28, 1983

Tape one, side one:

JF: Mr. Turzanski, can you tell us where and when you were born, and a little bit about your childhood?

MT: I was born in Poland, southeast part of Poland, now taken by Russia, on January 18, 1934.

JF: What was the name of the town?

MT: Zupanie, it was a village. Z-U-P-A-N-I-E. Zupanie. My parents were wealthy in Poland. They had quite a bit of land, forest, and the village consisted of about ten Polish families, I think they were all Catholic families, three Jewish families, and they were the business-oriented families in the community.

JF: The Jewish families were the business-oriented?

MT: Business. They were the ones that were running the store and lumber yard, as far as I can remember, stories I heard about them. And the rest of the community was a Polish minority, which were Ukrainians. They were individuals that fought for their rights for many years, for centuries. They settled in Poland and they worked for my parents. They were not slaves, but they were the servants.

JF: Your family, then, was one of the ten Polish Catholic families that held the primary holdings in the village?

MT: Correct.

JF: And was your father, then, the owner of this forest land that you are talking about?

MT: That is correct. He had two mountains of forest ready to be cut down. One was a pine forest and another one was oak.

JF: Had his forebears also lived on this land? Had they also been from this section?

MT: Yes, and his father, unfortunately, died in the First World War in the Leipzig Camp in Germany. I don't know whether they called them concentration camps. It was also a camp. My father survived, so he came back as a 12-year-old boy.

JF: He was in the camp also?

MT: Yes.

JF: Did he tell you of his experiences there?

MT: Not too much, because each time I wanted to discuss it with him, it would choke him up. He felt very guilty about the whole thing that, as a 12-year-old boy, he should have done more than he did, because when they came back from the camp, back to Poland, whatever his father started, the neighbors took it from him.

JF: The other large families in the town?

MT: The other, whoever were, whoever needed lumber, his father started to build a house or something, whatever building they started, he said that within a short time all of it was gone.

JF: Why, was the whole family in this camp in Leipzig?

MT: Yes.

JF: For what reason were they taken?

MT: Well, because, again, they were the evils of the territory. They were Poles. Poland went through this each time there was a misunderstanding between Russia and Germany, or Eastern Germany needed to expand, or needed a corridor to move through. Poland was the corridor of Europe. They just walked back and forth.

JF: Were other families like your grandfather's family also incarcerated, or were you...

MT: Yes, because they were actually a minority in their location. Not far from that village was another well-established community, Felicenthal [phonetic]. I think that they called it. It was a German colony. A lot of Germans had colonies in Poland in those days, and they were the-- not as much merchants as mechanics, etc. They were the people that would fix your equipment, farm equipment, and they would have the parts for it, and they would also supply the territory with certain shoes, and so forth. There were some wooden shoes used by some people, that the Germans were making and selling, so everybody was-- had a place, the way I see it, in that territory. They were well-organized; they had orchestras-- my father, when he got married, my parents, this was when they had the big blow-out, a German band and everything, etc.

JF: And the Jewish families that you were familiar with were primarily these merchant families?

MT: Yes.

JF: The business families?

MT: Families that were as well off as my parents were, Goldreich [phonetic] I heard quite a bit of when I was growing up, were the-- they had a lumber yard. They were right across the little creek from us, within eyesight. I remember seeing the place, and they were right next to the border patrol barracks. As a matter of fact, I asked my parents, my father and my mother--they are still alive, my father was just 80, he just celebrated his 80th birthday-- the story about Goldreich [phonetic] being hidden in our house. It was not during the German occupation, because we were out of it.

JF: When was this?

MT: It was when Poland was still free. He was involved in some kind of trade that was not quite legal and was not quite illegal, and my father, being a, not a mayor, only a recognized individual in the territory, he asked if he could stay there, and I think they gave him two weeks. For two weeks, if he's not caught or whatever, then he doesn't have to answer to the authorities for that.

JF: This was the Polish authorities?

MT: Yes, the border, something-- border. He did not have permission to trade across borders which he was doing, and was quite successful dealing with certain things: not selling arms or anything like that, it was some kind of a business deal-- sugar, horses, and things like that. Normal deals, but there was not a written contract, I think, for it, so the government could not get their tax.

JF: I see.

MT: He asked my father if he would do that, and he said, "You do realize that the border patrol is right across the street from us." He said, "Yes, but they do look up to you." He did.

JF: So he and his family came.

MT: No, just him, just him, and they asked him not to go back in those two weeks, because he can get caught going from my house by the border patrol that would look to your house at night. As a matter of fact, when he was staying at our house, the individuals were coming over for dinners and so forth, and the border patrols to our house also, so it was quite safe.

JF: This was the border to...

MT: Hungarian border. We were within about three and one half kilometers to Hungarian border which is what, like one and one half mile, not too far from the Hungarian border.

JF: What was the relationship like, generally, with the Jewish families? You're talking about 13 families, which were essentially the primary economic base for this village. What was the...

MT: I feel that they had very good organization and relationship, not co-existence, was actually more than that. They supplied the territory with necessary things, so they were recognized as such. Poles had land. They always treasure land, like my father, he had land because of his ancestors. Ukrainians were the forgotten people, I would call now. There was no welfare in those days. They were not starving, but they had to work for their food and, as a matter of fact, kids would be sent out early in their life, like the girl, the woman that was taking care of us, I think she came to my parents, given by her parents, at age of 14, if they would please give her a job, which is working for [unclear]. I think she had it very enjoyable. I don't think we were that rotten. I had three brothers. She was taking care of us; she was our governess. She was taking care of us, correcting our language and manners and keeping eye on us. My mother was a very brave young lady. She liked horses and she liked to ride an awful lot. It was against territorial wisdom, and when my father married her, that caused a lot of talk in the community.

JF: Why was that?

MT: Because he brought in a woman that's modern. All she wants to do is just ride horses, and she was quite a woman.

JF: She was from outside this territory?

MT: Yes, yes, but later on she proved to be quite a brave woman during the war. So, then it came to September 20, 1939.

JF: You were born in 1934? Do you have much recollection of the pre-war period? Of the atmosphere in your home village?

MT: The only thing I remember there was no church. The Polish people did not have a church. The Ukrainians had a church, so I remember going to the Ukrainian church once, and I believe that either at that church or in a German church that we were baptized, but I think that it was in the Ukrainian church, because they made some kind of deal that, as long as you didn't have your own, it's the same deal if you go to theirs; it's a Russian Orthodox church. As far as with Jewish families, I remember around Christmastime they would come to our house. We had a post office--when I say a post office there was always only one post office in a territory, and, of course, they have the big landowners, which one, I don't know, I don't think it was the Goldreich from the lumber yard. I think there was three families. I think there was one like a rabbi--he was not a rabbi--but he had the right to give weddings to Jewish individuals, and he had all those other rights that they needed in that territory as a religious group. He would come to visit us, but I think it was only to show us his concern for our holiday, the way I see it now. Because why would he stop into our house when there was preparation going on? I remember that he was dressed in dark--dark hat. He was always very intelligent, very nicely spoken. I used to listen to people speak. For some reason it would give me a good feeling if somebody spoke a beautiful language. I remember that individual was very intelligent, he spoke a nice language, and, of course, I remember that parents did their utmost to accommodate that individual. What his purpose was, I don't know. I did not have a chance when I went up for my father's birthday that I could talk about it. It was such a short time, and we just talked about what we went through and then we cried a little bit. To start talking about a war is bad. It's always bad, it just finishes everything. We never had a chance to touch base on that. But I remember they were saying that anytime a bishop or some individual would be coming to that territory, he would be representing a Jewish community. He would be there with the religious people way up front where the bishop is, not where the people are. He would be with them, so whatever they did, they did it, the way I see it, the way I would like to see it done; they did it right. They were co-operating with the territory.

JF: The Jewish families?

MT: The Jewish families, because why would they have to send a--why would he go there and sit at the pulpit whatever, with the Catholic representative, when Poland was free?

JF: This was in a church that this meeting...

MT: In a church.

JF: And he would go alone, or he would have other Jewish people with him?

MT: That I don't know, but I know that my parents said that he was the representative of the Jewish community, so he would also welcome the other head, of the religious head, into the community.

JF: What about the children? Was there contact between the Jewish and...

MT: From Poland. I don't remember. Like I said...

JF: You were quite young.

MT: Yes, I was in a kindergarten, but nobody ever said that somebody is Jewish, so I don't, actually from Poland I don't remember except that individual, that he spoke so well. He was something special. I only remember that he was something special. I thought he was a doctor, but then I was talking to a friend and they said he was like a rabbi, but not a rabbi. He was a special individual with a special philosophy of life, perhaps. But in Hungary, in Keszthely, Hungary--I was already eleven, I think...

JF: Before we get to that, perhaps we can speak of what happened in 1939 with the invasion, as you recall it.

MT: Well, as I recall, it was one beautiful morning around 10 o'clock. My aunt was with this girl who was taking care of us. My aunt was crippled. She was my father's sister, I don't know whether it happened in a camp, but something happened to her, and she was crippled, and my father's mother in the First World War, I'm going back to that, lost her marbles. She got mentally ill, I guess because the death of her husband or something. Depression. Yes, she had depression. She was not mentally ill, but--she was not old, she was not feeble.

JF: You said she was depressed.

MT: But she was depressed, and there could be some medical term for it. She did have some mental problem later on, so that's what actually hurt my father more than anything else, I guess. He lost his father, and his mother and his sister was messed up. Well, going back to this, in--we were before the war or when the war started?

JF: Just in '39.

MT: Just in '39. When it started, we were in the garden playing around--I remember my father had bees there and bee hives and he told me to stay away from them, and it was so nice to sit there, observing them land on the flowers and then go back into beehive, and all of a sudden, something is flying over our heads, something I never heard before. This sound that I never heard before, big birds, airplanes.

JF: You had never seen them before?

MT: No. Airplanes flew over our heads. Since we had a post office, we had a radio. Somebody yelled out, "Hitler started a war." Those were the German planes and then there was some explosions, or machine gun fires--I remember something. But there was nothing around us that happened, but I remember that my aunt was hiding us under trees. I think they were using machine guns, the fighter planes, probably, now I am thinking about how it is. This squadron is organized, bombers and fighter planes to make sure that nobody will start anything. Because later on I heard stories that they were machine gunning the

cabbage patches because it looked like organized army or something. They were in rows, and could have looked like army men. Then, I don't remember too much. That happened like, I guess, for two weeks. It was a lot of commotion, and we were like being neglected. There was always something going on. Everybody was always meeting and lot of talking, an awful lot of talking and not too much time to spend with us. Everybody was always busy. Now, all of a sudden my father is leaving, and I couldn't tolerate it. I started banging my head, my mom tells me, I didn't even remember it, against the ground, crying, "Why do you have to leave us?" He was going to the war. He was going to jump on one of the tanks that were driving by us, by our territory, to go to the war to fight the Hitler. But one of his officers that knew him from the military service, said, "Mr. Turzanski, your place is at home with your children. This is going to be a terrible war. I am a professional and I am telling you that." And, he, more or less, threw him off the tank, so my father came back.

JF: He had been in the army previously, then?

MT: Everybody had to be in Europe. You had to serve, and, I think, it's longer than in the United States. I think you had to serve four years or something like that.

JF: But, this is after the First World War.

MT: After the First World War. Yes, and he had a rank of officer. He did his duty. Then one morning I remember, I heard a dog bark. Now, I learned it was September 20, 1939. Early in the morning, the dog started to bark something terrible outside. We didn't have dogs inside the house, only outside. It was to protect the house from the wolves and the strangers, I guess. He was on a chain, and then I heard some kind of yelling, screaming, and the dog did not bark anymore. Then my mother screamed. She ran out. So, we ran out. They were trying to kill my father. Now at that time I did not know who "they" were, so-called "they." It was Ukrainians from different village that came to our village with the news that Poles are killing Ukrainians in their territory, so they came to revenge that act, and to stir up the rest of the Ukrainians to do the same. Well, they killed that dog and he wanted to--he lifted, one of the leaders lifted the cane to hit my father who was bald-headed--I don't know how it happened but they said it happened overnight. Something, maybe when the war started. He was going to smash him on the head with a cane. A cane was a weapon in those days. The cane had a sharp metal tip on the end, very sharp; this was to protect yourself from wolves, because you had to do an awful lot of walking through the woods, and, the wolves were the bad thing in those days. Dogs were no problem, but wolves were, and the people, in case you would have to protect yourself. It was just like in the old days, they had what? The sword. The cane was just like that.

JF: So this was cane that grew and was then supplemented by an iron or metal tip of some kind...

MT: Yes it was a regular walking cane, a walking cane with a special tool. Some of them had even long knives inside. When you turned the handle, you could pull it out, there was a sharp knife.

JF: Almost like a bayonet.

MT: Yes, they had those things in those days, for some reason, that's what they used to kill the dog with, that sharp point they pierced the dog with, and he went. He wanted to do that to my father. That's when my mother, I guess noticed, she screamed, she ran out, "You have to kill me first before you kill him." Well, then, there was an awful lot of excitement. The guy in charge of our post office, he was Ukrainian. They were all Ukrainians, people living in our facility, not the same house, the girl did with us, but the rest of them just had their facilities. He jumped in and he grabbed the cane and says, "I am in charge here." They wanted weapons; my father had a lot of weapons. "I am in charge here. I have the keys. I have the weapons. You talk to me."

JF: So, your own Ukrainian friend saved you?

MT: Yes, and then he whispered in my parents' ear, "Run, because all they are looking for is the taste of blood, and then nobody will be able to stop them." That was six in the morning. My youngest brother was two weeks old, so my mother was just after delivery, and in those days you delivered at home if everything was normal. My younger brother--there was four of us--my younger brother didn't even have his shoes on his feet yet. Nobody had a chance to put on--there was so much commotion. We grabbed something. Somebody put shoes on us, I guess. We ran towards the Hungarian border to run away from this. It was in the fall, so that means after the wheat was cut down. There was no corn, but there was wheat, and those jaggedy things were sticking up. My younger brother's feet started to bleed, so then I don't know who had to carry him. My mother was carrying the youngest. There was no shoes. But two Ukrainians ran after us, I remember they were shooting in the woods, but in the woods when you shoot, the bullets don't travel too far. They were after us to catch us, but finally they realized that we were running away, that we would get away, and I also remember when I looked back, the flag, the Polish flag on the barracks of the border patrol was being broken off.

JF: By those Ukrainians?

MT: They had horses. It was just like cowboys. They attached a rope to it, and they started pulling. They were beating the horse and they finally broke that.

JF: So these two Ukrainians who were following you, were following you on foot with guns?

MT: Yes. We got to the border, running. Hungarians stopped us at the border. My father could speak Hungarian, some Hungarian. They said that they cannot let us, in because they have only one machine gun, three guys on the border, and they would not be able to stop the revolution. And if they would let us in, that would just start their problems.

JF: They were afraid of the Ukrainians coming into Hungary.

MT: Exactly. To get us and, actually, to get even with them why do they let us in. My father was very angry then. And he snapped at the border patrol and he said, "I want to speak to an officer in charge of this," and there was a guy, right behind us. The guy was very scared. He said, "I am also an officer, I will give you everything I can; I will do everything I can for you as a military man, but you let my family in back of that into

Hungary, and I will stay with you to protect you.” Well, that was the beginning of our running experience. We ran through quite a few camps in Hungary. Every camp we were foreigners, every place we went to, we were foreigners. We did not go to school for quite a while.

JF: When you say camps, what do you mean?

MT: It means that the Polish Government-in-Exile was given some...

Tape one, side two:

JF: You were talking about the...

MT: Camps in Hungary were actually prepared, or maybe not even prepared... individual homes that we went to, but they were in close vicinity... all the people, immigrants would live in certain quarters.

JF: These were provided by the Polish Government-in-Exile?

MT: I think some of it was provided perhaps, but my parents had to work right away, so perhaps they had to work to pay for it. But there was some organization, maybe it was just churches, but we called them camps because we were all grouped in one territory.

JF: Was it collective housing, or did you have separate dwellings?

MT: There was no collective housing. I remember once we were in a military establishment. The first one we were in was a military establishment when we just crossed the border. The only thing that I remember from that was that there was an awful lot of uniforms, and then the latrine, I had never seen anything like it in my life. You had to go outside and there was a ditch, and there was like a board that you had to hang on to so you didn't fall into the ditch, and it was terrible. There was a shower. You had to cover things up yourself after you were done. Then we went into some kind of--like a hotel, I remember, for another two or three days we were interrogated and separated. They were looking-- Hungarians were not too friendly to us because they wanted to stay neutral, I think. I am not sure about that, but they also wanted to make sure that there is no political individuals there so they don't have to answer for.

JF: Did you ever find out whether or not the Ukrainians who were chasing you caused any trouble at the border?

MT: At the border, no, but I have some stories to tell about what happened later on in the same territory with Jewish families and with Polish families.

JF: These were stories that you heard afterwards?

MT: I heard stories from the son of Goldberg, Goldreich. I don't even know the spelling, it would be like a Polish spelling, but it's a German word. It means "Goldrich," right? Goldreich. But it would be spelled somehow the way Poles would spell it, I think. Going back to the camps. So finally we end up in Keszthely, Hungary, where they organized a Polish school. It was the first time I had a chance to go to school.

JF: The spelling of that?

MT: K-E-S-Z-T-H-E-L-Y. It's next to Balaton, which is their big lake, and they call it their sea, because they did not have access to the sea. Now, in Keszthely-- I am losing some of my thoughts-- if we could just stop this for a second.

JF: Sure.

MT: I am ready to come back.

JF: When you got to this village or town...

MT: Town. It was a very nice town in Hungary, very nice It was 1944 already, that means we traveled already that many years.

JF: You were on the road then for 5 years?

MT: Constantly.

JF: Constantly, stopping in these camps, as you described them?

MT: Yes, and just running. Exactly why we were doing that, I think, that whatever was running out, either jobs or something, that we had to keep on going.

JF: Did you attend school in any of these areas?

MT: No, we had private lessons through some educated individuals. Older people, they were giving us. No schooling. In Keszthely was the first time that I went to school.

JF: Not until 1944?

MT: No, that was before we left in '44. So I would say 1942. I think, in Keszthely. That's the place where we actually stayed until the end before the Germans took us.

JF: I see. This was also a camp?

MT: It was a city, but we were always kept an eye on. We were the foreigners. We were the unwanted ones.

JF: You were always kept with other Poles who were running the same way that you were?

MT: That's correct. We were just like those Cubans in Miami that came from Cuba by boat. Unwanted ones.

JF: Were you under guard?

MT: No, but we had to report. We had to report to police stations.

JF: How often?

MT: My parents had to report, but perhaps it was only my parents, because my father was organizing a underground movement in Hungary. Hungarians deadly were afraid of that, and he was traveling constantly to Budapest, which is the Hungarian capital, and wherever we were he was on the go, from beginning.

JF: He was organizing a Polish underground?

MT: Yes.

JF: Was this linked up with the Polish underground in Poland itself, or was this another?

MT: This was linked up, I believe, if I see it correctly now, with the military in Rumania and so forth we had. We had Polish Army outside Poland and it was linked up with them, so what we were doing was actually making artificial passports and smuggling young men through Hungary to Rumania and then they would go to wherever they had to go to fight the Germans.

JF: Smuggling the young Polish men, who had escaped from Poland to the Polish armies in these other countries?

MT: There were young Polish men and there were also young Jews. They were all young, I mean they were all Polish, all Polish citizens. Smuggling Polish citizens. They were willing to fight Hitler.

JF: So this group then included both Christians and Jews?

MT: That is correct.

JF: When your father and your family left Poland, initially it was to escape the Ukrainians who were after you?

MT: Yes.

JF: Was he involved in any kind of movement at that time? Was he a political person then, or was it not until he got to Hungary?

MT: No, he was not. That is the sad thing. He was not. They were, I think, double-crossed, by the government. They were not aware of what's going to happen. They were constantly told by government that are ready and able to stop any aggression from Hitler's side, 'cause Hitler was making a lot of noises, and the world knew it.

JF: But your father, then, felt deluded by the Polish government? And he was, therefore, not prepared for the invasion?

MT: Yes. Correct. As a matter of fact he often says that we should have had something. We were told we have it. They would take an airplane, they would take a new machine gun and drive it from place to place and show it to the people what we are doing, the government.

JF: The government would do this?

MT: And it would be the same airplane, new airplane and new weapon of some sort, that would travel from city to city, from village to village, just to keep the people confused that things are fine.

JF: But people as educated and knowledgeable as your father trusted that this indeed was what was going on?

MT: Yes.

JF: So that his feeling upon leaving must have been betrayal?

MT: Betrayal. When somebody made something out of it. It's a betrayal.

JF: And yet he was willing to get involved in an underground to restore Polish...

MT: That is correct, because actually our duty was from then on to fight Hitler with everything you have. Now, he had family. I don't know whether I could do that, to give up my kids and my wife and go ahead and spend all the time on the road, knowing if I would be caught, their lives are in danger.

JF: He was supposed to be working, according to this plan, of being in the camps?

MT: Yes, he had to report to the police station.

JF: How did he finesse that?

MT: So, my mother-- we also had other people there, and one of them was like a cousin to us. She grabbed him and she said, whatever his name was, Walter or something, "You are coming with me. You are Marian Turzanski." I am junior; my father is also Marian. So they went to the police station.

JF: Your mother took him?

MT: Yes. They went hand by hand and they signed that report. My mother is Ottelia and he was Marian. Later on my father came, and I think that is what actually made them move again. They discovered that my father-- "Who's he?" "Oh, he's my husband," Somebody else was signing, and that is what kicked us out of one place to another. I think that was the reason. I am not sure what made us move so much. Or, maybe it was to get away from Polish border, but no, we didn't want to do that so that we wanted to stay as close as we could...

JF: How much could your parents share with you during this time of what was going on? What was the role of children in that time? Were they included in any of this discussion?

MT: We were excluded from all serious talks, because I don't remember any serious meetings, and they had a whole lot of them. We had a lot of parties, and, of course, in Europe children are not part of the adult world. They have their own place. So even at the dinner table, if there is a big party, children do not participate in that because it is for adults. Family gatherings, yes, children have their own place. I remember all those big people coming, with big degrees. There was an awful lot of intelligentsia that left Poland. Actually, that's all that left Poland, educated individuals that could care less about their wealth. They just took off with their lives. They would always gather and it seemed like a party, but now I understand that those were political meetings.

JF: This was the time; that was the cover.

MT: And they even had to hide the radios, that's in Hungary. Hide the radios and listen to BBC, London.

JF: What you're saying is that the parties you are describing were also in Poland?

MT: No, that was in Hungary.

JF: This was all in Hungary?

MT: I am in Hungary now, It was all in Hungary. It was in Keszthely. I remember that's where a lot of things were happening. Now in Keszthely also, it was 1942, I believe, or maybe it was later, maybe it was '44 when Goldreich-- and his first name--I just talked to my parents on the phone yesterday--was Samuel. They went to our priest in Felicenthal [phonetic]. That was the next village, a German village, and asked him for our baptismal certificates.

JF: This was after you had already left?

MT: After we left. And I understand that my parents had made an agreement, or asked the priest when they took-- because they were in custody of the, the birth certificates,

for some reason. They took it to the priest, and if somebody needs it, give them our certificates.

JF: Goldreich would not have come directly to your parents to ask for this?

MT: No, we were not there. After we left he went, because he knew our relationship, I guess. The priest knew our relationship or something. He went and the priest gave him our birth certificate of our cousin because they were trying to match the ages. Our cousin's name was Walter Turzanski, and he traveled and met us in Keszthely, Hungary, with that birth certificate.

JF: Mr. Goldreich.

MT: I remember him, curly hair, tall, good-looking young individual. Young, he was in his 30's. Good-looking man. But he came. I thought my father stole him from the train going to Germany, but it was not so. When things got very rough in Poland, he took the birth certificate prior to the-- secured it, he left as a Turzanski.

JF: What about his family?

MT: His family was very sad. He told us that his wife-- they were constantly shepherd by Ukrainians. The community was not that big, of us Poles and Jewish, only three families. They were helped out by certain individuals, certain Ukrainians. Well, it happened prior to, I believe July 4, 1944. July 4, 1944, they picked, like a 4th of July celebration to kill off Jews, I think.

JF: The Germans or the Ukrainians.

MT: The Ukrainians. In that territory, cause my grandfather and Walter told us that. His wife for some reason went outside and they shot her. His wife, and we are not certain whether he witnessed that or just did not go out because he knew that he would be destroyed immediately. But his mother, Goldreich's mother, went out to help her daughter-in-law and she was also killed, right there.

JF: These were by the Ukrainians who lived in the territory?

MT: Territorial-- there was organized by Hitler a movement prior to the war. Somebody must have known about it, and they were given an authority to clean out the territory, and it's going to be theirs. They always wanted the Ukrainians. So the Poles and, of course, the Jews, had to go. So, I remember my parents were telling me, one Jewish girl took a refuge in a Ukrainian house. She took their name. She took their religion and she took their garments. She would go to the Orthodox Church with them. On July 4th, my parents just told me, they took her out of the church. There was some service and walked her so many kilometers to kill her with the rest of the group there.

JF: This was the family that had sheltered her, or other Ukrainians?

MT: No. The family-- my parents-- the family were not able to stop...

JF: The family that she was staying with could not stop the other Ukrainians from killing her.

MT: Yes. Correct. So actually they did not do it, but they could not stop this from happening.

JF: In other words, it was known that she was not Ukrainian among the...

MT: It must have been because she...

JF: Um...

MT: So, shortly after that, Poles had to go.

JF: The death of the Goldreich women that you talk about, were the Ukrainians that lived in your immediate area and worked for you and knew you, were they also involved in this? Do you know?

MT: I am afraid, yes, because my father wanted to go to Bayonne, New Jersey. There is quite a few that came over here.

JF: Quite a few...?

MT: Ukrainians. I work with some. They were in the same camp, and will describe that later on. The Ukrainians that were in charge of the deals, I work with them now. Many times I want to take a camera to work with me, but I am afraid that if I take a picture and show it to my parents, they will die. So I still don't know what I am going to do with that. Walter Turzanski--Samuel Goldreich-- needed shoes. My father took his attaché case that he was traveling to Budapest back and forth, to the nearest shoemaker, and I didn't know that at that time, but now my parents say it was illegal for a shoemaker to make shoes for somebody because everything was controlled, leather and everything. And, even, why you are making shoes for somebody. But my father paid him He was quite an individual, anyway, because he knew certain men. He knew who to go to. Perhaps this was a Jewish shoemaker that he went to.

JF: Your father?

MT: Yes, and they made them, and within three hours he had new shoes.

JF: He needed new shoes?

MT: He needed shoes.

JF: He had no shoes. He had escaped.

MT: No, he had shoes with an awful lot of holes He said that my brother doesn't have any. His other brother was Ossias, and they don't know what name he had.

JF: He escaped with his brother?

MT: Yes, and a sister.

JF: Uh huh.

MT: And his sister took my mother's birth certificate. She was slightly older than my mother, ten years older, I think. But she ended up as a Ottilia Turzanski, and somebody ran into Ottilia Turzanski in Mexico, in a Polish camp in Mexico, what year I don't know, but my mother was approached, "Why were you so snobby? Why didn't you want to talk to me in Mexico?"

JF: And it was this woman? The sister of...?

MT: She said, "I was not," and she said, "Yes, you were." This guy must have been bothering her in Mexico. "Come on, Ottilia, don't you remember me?" and she probably said, "No, leave me alone." My parents were a little bit hurt by that. They were

going to ask Red Cross to find these people, but then after they found out, I think it was in Williamsburg where we were, that Ottilia Turzanski was, but maybe there was another Turzanski. Turzanski name is a small family.

JF: When you say that your parents were hurt...

MT: That these people did not contact us.

JF: They never contacted you after the war?

MT: No, that. Nobody wants anything but there is always, "Thank you." That helps a little bit.

JF: Of course.

MT: But, having so many hurts, this is actually-- these people probably got hurt also tremendously. They are all at an age. I was going to check in Israel. If they are alive, they would be in Israel now, because where else could they go? They could not go back to Poland. They couldn't go any place. They would be there. Someday perhaps-- have to do it fast. I can do that for my parents.

JF: Were there any children involved? Were there any Goldreich children from that marriage?

MT: I haven't heard of Walter saying anything, or my parents saying that there was a child left behind. I think there was another family, Reinhart.

JF: This was another Jewish family?

MT: Yes, They left, but they left their son in Poland with somebody, and my parents feel that he is still in Poland, that he survived.

JF: They left their child with a Christian family?

MT: Yes. That is correct.

JF: And they don't know what happened to that family? They assume that they might have died.

MT: The Reinharts probably are not alive because whoever ran would be caught eventually. Jews had one problem in Europe, that they were circumcised. Nobody else was. When my boy was born, and I don't know why--first thing I wanted, I insisted on, but my wife was objecting to it, that he get circumcised, 'cause I don't want him to be different from the people that live here. He's a native.

JF: Because the American males are all circumcised?

MT: And I am also circumcised.

JF: You were circumcised after you came to the United States?

MT: Yes, three or four years ago, I don't know why. Gives me a tremendous, I don't know, something...

JF: I think you are answering why-- the feeling of that being a differentiating factor from the...

MT: I think it's the fear or something, but then you get so much pleasure when you become wanted, just like somebody accepts you, or something. They had that problem,

so I often-- nobody talks to you, because in Europe you don't talk to children about sex or anything. But I often wondered if he was clever enough, he could have got circumcised.

JF: Walter?

MT: Sure. I mean, he was circumcised, the opposite. That's what was bad. As a child I wasn't exposed to that. How easy it was to separate the Jewish male from the rest of the people in the territory.

JF: Your parents gave their papers, their baptismal certificates, at what point, to the church?

MT: When the war started, when my father was going to go to war, they both went. For some reason, like I said, there was an awful lot of talking and everything was uncertain, what's going to happen. I don't think they were planning to go to Hungary, but they were planning to run someplace from where we are because the territory was not proper to survive.

JF: Did this leave them without any papers of their own?

MT: We didn't need any. In your own country you don't need yourself, but Jews would need the papers.

JF: So, he assumed, then, that Jews would use these papers?

MT: That's the only reason priest would even have the name of a priest. Otherwise he would never release it to anybody. They even gave him the name of the priest, someplace...

JF: And the priest was cooperative, obviously?

MT: And the priest gave them-- matter of fact, Walter Turzanski started by saying, "I hope you forgive me, but I have taken my name because my parents call him Samuel Goldreich. No, I'm Walter Turzanski; please forgive me I took your name."

JF: And where was the cousin, the Walter?

MT: Walter Turzanski went to war. He was in military. Just like my father was going. I think that's what happened, they going to jump on the tanks. The military movement, they were going to join and go. I think that's when they decided to get rid of their whatever.

JF: So, the real Walter Turzanski went into the army?

MT: Went into the army and he is probably dead.

JF: They never heard from him?

MT: No, no, we never heard from him.

JF: So, when you talk about Walter now you are referring to Samuel Goldreich?

MT: Yes, but after the war again, but I don't know why, but Hannah Goldberg, Goldreich, still stayed as Ottilia Turzanski, my mother's name.

JF: Which is your mother's name.

MT: Yes, because I would first thing after the war go back, but maybe it was still so uncertain, still scared, perhaps because you never know what can happen, and once you get scared like that you don't trust anybody. Matter of fact, I don't like to open up to

anybody. I am a closed person. Even when I go to school, I went to Temple University to take some psychological counseling courses, and they would ask each student to say something about himself, open up his heart to the rest of the class so they know him, and I didn't want to. I said, "My life is my story and, if you don't mind, I would just like to get education here," and they didn't like that. That was in Hungary. Then shortly after that, when Walter left...

JF: Walter left for where?

MT: For, I'm not sure. He was given the shoes and he was given some money and a passport. Now, I don't know whether he went to Rumania, or whether he went to-- I think he went back to his brother, but they were traveling, they were free. They had some plan, I think. They had a name [unclear] I am not sure, actually I would have to check on that, and if I may, I mean if you need it, I can follow up on that. Then we heard that shortly after, it was July 4, 1944, when they finished off the territorial Jews...

JF: Did you hear about that at the time?

MT: No.

JF: You found out about it later?

MT: I heard it when Walter in Kesthely, in Hungary, when he cried when he talked about his wife and his mother killed.

JF: That's when you heard about it?

MT: By Ukrainians.

JF: The date of this massacre was July 4th.

MT: 1944.

JF: 1944, and it was shortly after that that Walter came-- was able to escape.

MT: No, it was prior to that, I believe. I think it was prior to that, but they killed his wife sooner, but this was a mass movement

JF: A mass movement?

MT: It was like they were removing them from the territory. Not telling us, they would never let you know what's happening. They were walking them from one territory to another and then at mid-point they would just kill them.

JF: And the Ukrainians were doing this in 1944? Was it a deportation, or was it more a roundup?

MT: It was like deportation, to remove them from the territory. They needed that territory, because otherwise the word would get out and they did not want the word to get out, that something is happening to you. Jews or Poles never knew that something will happen to them. They were just being moved from one place to another and then something happened, in the meantime, and they were removed from this earth.

JF: So, what had happened to his family then had happened on a more of an individual basis before these mass...

MT: Yes they either disregarded an order not to go out or something that they shot them...

Tape two, side one:

MT: Now, to give you comparison of evil forces working during the war, I talked about Jewish families being round up and killed, and Jews did have a special problem because they were picked out prior to the rest of the country. They were put on a list to be eliminated yet nobody knew about that, that this will happen. That was the sad part about it. The people that you trusted would actually be the ones that would carry the hidden knife. My father stayed behind. My grandfather stayed behind - he was like a mayor of that territory.

JF: You are talking now, then, about your mother's father?

MT: My father's, my father's father brother...

JF: Had died...

MT: Yeh. So, my father's father that died, his brother.

JF: So your father's uncle...

MT: My father's uncle, he stayed behind, because he did not believe when those Ukrainians said that if Poles are killing, then we are going to no and investigate, so he formed a commission. He formed a delegation from his village, and they all went to the next place, and they found out that it's not true. When than came back it was quite late, because things had started already to take place. Now that's after we left, and my grandfather did that, after we ran away to Hungary. At night, he was it must have been in the fall or winter, because he said the stove would not-- a belly-stove, I guess you call them pot-belly stove, it wouldn't burn too well and he had a hard time keeping that going. There was another man with him, not Ukrainian, though, because they were no lower allowed to be with Poles. So he stayed out late playing around with that fire and then he heard shots. He looked out the window and he saw horses driving around one of the Polish homes and shooting at the house, and then they set fire to the house people tried to escape the house and they were shot right there, and then they would go to the next house and again surround and start shooting anybody that tried to escape, shoot them and burn the house down. One of the guys that stayed with him, I believe-- oh, it's coming next, so my grandfather ran out and this guy, and they hid in the cemetery behind the tombstones. The cemetery was not too far from our home where I was born, and they observed all this terrible thing going on. One family had 5 daughters, 5 girls, and the parents, father and mother and 5 girls. They lined them up, father, mother, oldest daughter to the youngest, they took out a wooden, whatever you call it that you cut wood on...

JF: An ax?

MT: Well, an ax plus the wooden block. They would lay the kids on the block and chop their heads off. Everybody would scream, they faint, and they would bring them back to it, pour water on them, and then next execution. And they killed them all like that, the whole family, and then they burned their house.

JF: This was a Polish family?

MT: Polish family killed by Ukrainians. That's right. They were not political people, but they had rights to the territory. Jews were not political people, but they had rights to the territory. They were the owners.

JF: The family was Polish Christian or Polish Jews?

MT: Polish Christian.

JF: But the feeling of the Ukrainians against the Poles who had rights to land that they felt should have been theirs...

MT: I believe that they had struck a deal with Hitler. If they cleaned that territory out, it's theirs. Of course it was false belief on their side. Later on, Hitler got even with them in Lemberg, in Lvov. They got a little too independent, and they wanted to form their own government, and Hitler surrounded them with the SS troops and cut them down. I think 2000 of them and killed them. Because he also didn't want organization, he wanted people to work for him, but don't organize on your own. In the morning, that young man, that was Matkowsky-- he's in Chicago now-- he ran over to his house where his father was and knocked off ashes off his-- his chest was still there, the rest was all burned.

JF: Matkowsky was...

MT: He was with my grandfather hiding in the cemetery and in the morning when the smoke went down and everything, he snuck up to his house and his father's body was there in ashes. Only his chest was still intact.

JF: He had been burned?

MT: He was killed and burned.

JF: He was killed also, and burned.

MT: So our house is still there; it was not burned because nobody was killed in it. Any house that somebody was killed in it, they burned it to the ground.

JF: Matkowsky was Christian, or was he Jewish?

MT: Was a Christian.

JF: Christian also. How did you find out these stories?

MT: Matkowsky, we met in Germany later on, and grandfather-- we got in Germany after the liberation and after '45, May '45, my grandfather was someplace not too far from Bremen. I forgot the name already because I cannot think too clear now. He told us awful lot of was happening. He was on the list once.

JF: Your grandfather?

MT: Yes, to be sent to the old people's camp, and what they would do then, a lot of them were sent to the old people's camp, because they are unable to work, and it will be easier for you. They were sent to a special place and they will be given bedding, or at least they were shown a room, a bed and blanket, and given a piece of paper and a pencil to write to their family how wonderful they are being treated. And right after that they will be poisoned.

JF: This is in Poland?

MT: In Germany.

JF: In Germany. He was on a list.

MT: And right after that they would be poisoned.

JF: How did he escape from that?

MT: He worked-- he pretended that he is younger than he is. Nobody escaped but they worked. There was a plan to use us to the last minute, and then you go. The plan was not to kill everybody. They could have done it, I think, but they starve you. Day to day you got weaker.

JF: Why was your grandfather - actually it was your father's uncle - why was he taken? Why did they want to kill him?

MT: Well, Poles, in general, were lower than the dirt. We were the enemies of the state. Jews were not enemies. We were the enemies of the German nation. With Jews they started in Germany. They had a special reason for it because they start with them in Germany. Most Jews in Poland had German names, like the ones that I am familiar with: Goldreich, Reinhart, and so forth. They had German names, but I think that they had a little more freedom in Poland than in Germany, or maybe more opportunity to expand. It's a new territory. They went to Poland.

JF: But not all Poles were arrested in such a way.

MT: No.

JF: What was it that determined that your great-uncle was taken, or your grandfather, as you call him.

MT: Maybe it was because of the Ukrainian deal, perhaps.

JF: Because of that territory.

MT: That territory had to be cleared, and the people had to be removed from that territory, probably. The others wanted it and since he was not killed, he had to go.

JF: I see. So he was captured?

MT: He went to-- his wife was very ill. She was paralyzed. My grandfather's wife was paralyzed, so they had never children. It's prior to that. I am confusing. He took her to Stry [Strey: phonetic] which is a big town, nearest town, a big town, to a cousin or to hospital, took his wife, when the whole thing started, when we ran away. And he found out that the Poles are not killing the Ukrainians. He realized he will not be able to take care of his wife himself, because we had people taking care of her. He drove her to Stry. Then he came back, and then all those things started happening. But Jews went first, and then the Poles, in a very brutal way. The Jews actually did not have to witness, except in Goldreich's case, the mother witnessed her daughter-in-law being killed in the yard, shot, and then she was shot. But the tragedy of these others I never heard of before, and it makes you really wonder why people would do that and how could they? How could you take a, any kind of person and cut their head off and then make sure the other one is watching, and get the big enjoyment out of it?

JF: The amount of...

MT: There wasn't even hatred. These people hadn't done anything. I was always questioning myself, why am I evil? Why am I hated?

JF: You questioned this when? When it was happening during the war, or later?

MT: During the war, in Hungary. Why am I foreigner? It was a very dirty word, but they did not use the word foreigner it was like American work Pollack,

JF: Derogatory?

MT: Derogatory. But also with a meaning that we will get you.

JF: The Hungarians talked this way?

MT: Yes, and when Hitler went through Hungary to go to Russia to fight in Stalingrad, he formed, like *Hitlerjugend* in Germany, people for Hitler, national guard, young people. Not too young, not like children, but in their teens and higher. They would have a special sign on their arms. It was not like swastika, it was like arrows, on each end of the cross, arrow heads. They called themselves (Hungarian word) - that means Arrowhead [actually Arrow Cross]. Ever since Hitler went through Hungary, we experienced nothing but fear.

JF: On the part of the Hungarians?

MT: Fear, it was in the air; you could feel it. We went to school early in the morning and we found out that the German soldiers had invaded the town of Keszthely, maybe two o'clock maybe three in the morning. Nobody knew. We went in there and the Germans yelled at us and grabbed. My older brother has blue eyes, so they looked at him and said, "You must be German," or something and they sent him for wine. He went to get them a bottle of wine, for the soldiers, and then they let us go.

JF: This was in the school?

MT: Yes, from school. We were in school uniforms, you wore a uniform, and we had special bags, duffel bags.

JF: A knapsack.

MT: Yes, to carry your books

JF: Were you in school with Hungarian children? Or was this a special school for the Polish community.

MT: Yes, yes, it was all Polish. We even had a Polish high school.

JF: This was the school that you attended, then. It was not until 1942.

MT: Something like that, that's correct.

JF: And, you were about eight?

MT: I was around eight.

JF: When you started?

MT: I started I think second grade. First I had to skip. It was naturally known that I know something, the alphabet, or something like this. I went to second, third, and started my fourth grade. I didn't finish my fourth grade, when armed Germans were coming back from Russian front and then things started to happen When Germans started coming

back, this is when they started persecuting Jews and Poles and that must have been in early '44¹ or something like that.

JF: Up until then, you were living in a Hungarian town?

MT: A Hungarian town.

JF: Within a Polish community?

MT: Within a Polish, well, in Keszthely we were not grouped too close. We were spread out all over the city, but it was like in the cheaper sections. Cheaper homes.

JF: And Jews as well as Christians?

MT: Jews were part of the territory. Jews were not affected by anything.

JF: You are talking about Polish Jews now? Or are you talking about Hungarian Jews?

MT: No Polish Jews, there were none.

JF: There were no Polish Jews there?

MT: No, but Hungarian Jews were again the merchants. They were the people that we had to go and ask for food. We didn't have too much money, but we were also unwanted in a territory and when we were waiting in line, to buy a bread, for instance, to buy a bread, it was a Jewish bakery, I forgot the name, but my mother had a good relationship with that woman, but that woman said that I can't treat you better than Hungarians or I am out. And in a line you would be kicked around because they also wanted, needed to eat.

JF: By the Hungarians?

MT: By the Hungarians.

JF: Before you had said that some of the people who came, some of the Poles. who came into Hungary were Jews and were in these camps with you as you moved around.

MT: No, no, I believe what I meant is when my father was smuggling the young men, there were also the renegades from Poland that needed a home, and the only home that Polish organization knew at that time was army to defeat Hitler.

JF: So, these were only, then, young men who were going into the Polish army in exile, as opposed to families?

MT: Yes. No, families. I don't recall any, because they had their own-- Jews traveled differently than we did. Of course, we unfortunately ran out at 6 o'clock in the morning and we ran out without money. When they decided to go they went prepared, usually. They went out and they bought their way through the border or whatever, and they knew how far they would go, the ones that did travel. The ones that wanted to stay behind, the more stubborn ones, older people, they didn't want to go.

JF: Those were the ones who were deported?

MT: No, those were the ones that really went through terrible things later on. Some were deported, some were killed.

JF: Okay.

¹The Germans began their occupation of Hungary in March 1944.

MT: In a lot of cases, like in the case where I was born, it was by their own people.

JF: What do you mean? By their own people?

MT: People that lived in that territory.

JF: The Ukrainians

MT: Sure. There were some outsiders that were in charge of this movement, I am sure, Ukrainians that were infiltrated, individuals put in there. They were giving the orders, but still it's the local people that did that.

MT: So that when you were living in this town, the Jews that you were in contact with were Hungarian?

JF: Were Hungarian Jews. As a matter of fact, across a little yard, big yard, a big empty yard, there was a Jewish family. There were younger girls, two girls, younger than I was, and I was around seven, but they were my younger brother's age because they played together. So it was not something that you stayed away, and I guess it was a blessing to us that we were allowed to play with them, because we were actually nobodies in a new territory. Hungarian boys we had trouble with, because we had to fight all the time.

MT: That's where the hostility was, with the Hungarians?

JF: We had to fight. They didn't want us around. We were not stealing their women because we were just kids, but we were not part of the deal. Going back to waiting in line to get food, we would have to form some kind of a set-up where early in the evening we would go and stay in line. At night it would be my parents, but since my father had to work, he didn't spend that much time in line, because he had to have his sleep, and his strength to work next day. Now, my mother also worked, but she was a tough cookie, I guess, and younger, by ten years of my father, so it was I and my older brother, and we would stand there for three to four hours in the evening, until we were replaced by the next one. So I would be the first one since I was the younger one. My two younger brothers did not participate in it, then my older brother would stay until probably about eleven o'clock at night, and then my mother, no, then my father would go and stay for so many hours, and then my mother would stay until she gets into the store. That's how long the lines were formed outside the stores to buy food.

JF: And everything was rationed, I would assume.

MT: No, it was not rationed, but they would not sell you too much.

JF: Just shortages?

MT: Yes, they would not, they were not allowed to sell you too much. That Jewish woman that had the bakery, she would always prepare something for my mother to take out later on through the back door, but for some reason that never worked out because I guess they ran out of it.

JF: You mean for a time?

MT: After you get in you could only buy, let's say 10 rolls, but she had four kids and herself and her husband. She would say she would put something away for her, a couple

more rolls, but then for some reason, it never actually happened. Because I imagine they were breaking down the door and there was nothing. Everybody cried and everybody had a child-- things were bad but they were not to the point where you could realize what is happening. But then, all of a sudden, I noticed yellow stars which now I am familiar with, the Star of David, being worn by some people but not all. And I would study the star. It was two right angle triangles. Cardboard covered with cloth, yellow cloth turned separately and pinned together. That's how they made those things. Two separate triangles placed on top of each other, turned so that it becomes a star, and they had to carry on their lapel. I don't remember women wearing it, but I remember men had to wear it, in the city of Keszthely, Hungary. So, all of a sudden the places we go to buy food, we notice that they have a star on themselves, but still they did not know what is in store for them, because as soon as you would do that to me, I would try to sneak out, if I would know. But only it shows that nobody knew what the plan was.

JF: You are thinking that now, or at the time...

MT: I am thinking that now. At that time I just questioned why? So my parents explained it to me. That that is the Star of David. These are Jewish people and they are being singled out, like we are. They are being put on a list, and nobody knows what is going to happen, but it is not good. So from that moment everybody was so afraid. We were afraid to go out on the street, and afraid to say something, and you always looked back who was walking behind you from then on.

JF: About from what point was this that you recall seeing the stars and having this more intense feeling?

MT: That was when Hitler's army was coming back all chewed up. I know we had...

JF: Coming back from Russia?

MT: From Russian front badly chewed up, and there was such a good feeling in us youngsters, politically brought up in hating Hitler, that they are coming back destroyed. That's when they started destroying us.

JF: It didn't last long, that feeling?

MT: So they gathered Jews later on into ghetto. Ghetto was part of the city that they boarded off.

JF: Was there a ghetto in your town?

MT: Yes, every city, I imagine. I was not in every city. They boarded off with boards. It was not just a ghetto that was part of the city. It's a closed off the city, guarded by armed guards. Evacuated from their homes into the ghetto with their belongings, as much as they could take, I guess. What would they take? The best they had, probably, and that's what probably the territory wanted.

JF: That is when the Germans occupied...

MT: That is correct.

JF: Until that time was there any Russian involvement, where you were in Hungary?

MT: No. No, we feared Russians, that was why we ran. We feared Russians deadly. We thought that Germans are more humane, but they turn out not to be in the Second World War. Matter of fact, we would go to church. I was alter boy. The Hungarians didn't like us, but the priests did. For some reason we were more kind, probably, and we were not as arrogant as some of those other boys. We were always shy and kind because you had to be kind to survive. You had to be extremely kind to everyone.

JF: Why do you say that?

MT: Knowing that everybody hates you, you become extremely kind. If somebody does not kick you or something. Extremely shy. At least we were brought up that way, to be kind.

JF: It might be a correction, not to show aggressiveness in some way?

MT: Angry or anything, yes. German soldiers, not too many, but I remember twice or three times, a single soldier walked in the church and he would make the sign of the cross in the German way, using his thumb and making crosses on his forehead, his chest and arms, his shoulders, with his thumb, and having that uniform on him. I lifted my head to God and said, "God, why can't he be nicer to us when he leaves this house?" We feared him in the church when he walked in, because that was a deadly force that walked in. A force that had all the rights to life and death. It was all up to him. Nobody else. No courts. He could decide right on the spot, yet he walked in, because perhaps he had a family in Germany that he thought greatly of. But, yet, we didn't mean anything. I never had received one candy from any German soldier or one kind word when I was in Hungary. Because once we were in Germany, it was something else.

After two weeks, like I said, they were put into the ghettos. Shortly after - I didn't think they kept Jews in ghetto more than two weeks - they were transported to Germany. Now, from that moment when they were wearing their Star of David, the word went around that we are in trouble. The Poles are in trouble, big trouble, because if in Hungary the Hungarian citizens are being singled out, we are in terrible danger, terrible danger. I talked to my mother recently-- she said that she wanted the girls that my younger brother was playing with, she wanted to take those two girls before they put them-- when they start putting them in the ghetto, if her parents would allow us to take with us. But, then, she said that she spread the word that she would like to take those kids, the uproar was such that we knew what would happen to us if we take them.

JF: The uproar from home?

MT: The Polish community. "Do you know what you are doing to us? Not to yourself. Do you think about us?" And also, "How do you know whether this will be better for you?" I mean, would that be better for them with us or with their own parents? Nobody knew actually that they are going to be destroyed.

JF: There was no...

Tape two, side two:

JF: You're saying then that the Poles were unaware that the deportations of the Jews meant death?

MT: Death. And Jews are unaware of it. That's the sad part, because I remember these people walking and nobody cried. They were just-- it was sad that they had to leave their homes. I imagine that it was very sad. But there was nothing like that, "Oh my God, they are being killed." Nothing like that.

JF: None of your farther contacts with the underground government gave him any clues as to what was happening in concentration camps?

MT: For some reason, when we were taken on the train, we still believed, at least my parents believed, or maybe they just tried to pretend to us, that we are going to be alright.

JF: Do you think that your father knew?

MT: I don't know, but I think he would have told me by now that he knew. The gypsies went first in Hungary, I forgot about them, but there were gypsies...

JF: Did you know any gypsies in the area where you lived?

MT: Yes, I knew one, I don't remember his name anymore, but he was a very famous gypsy in the town, and he would always walk around. They had axes that they always carried on their shoulder because they used axes to make different dishes out of wood. That they were selling, and it was legal for them to carry an ax as a gypsy, and gypsies would constantly stop in at our homes, at everybody's home, when they were eating at dinnertime in the evening. A whole bunch of gypsies was very dangerous. You opened the door, and you had to watch everything in your house, because one will talk to you and play on a violin, and the rest of the gang goes around the house and grabs everything that they can.

JF: I see.

MT: So gypsies were known to rob you blind. They lived in the mountains and caves they did not live in the city, and we would go to the mountain to pick pine cones to heat the home. That was a big thing for the Poles. We could not afford to buy anything else, so we would go and we would take sacks and sacks, and fill them with cones and bring them home, on Sundays, on weekends, when we had no school, we [unclear] home to heat the homes with pine cones, so we would hit the gypsy territory, and we would see that their lifestyle was a little bit different, they were a different type of people. Anyway, they took them. It was all in summertime and their king-- they had a king that looked like a Buddha, a very fat man, had always something wrapping around his waist. He was all naked, very fat and he had, like, four women around him, fanning him, I guess. They were his harem or something, and they took whole bunch of them, maybe around a hundred gypsies, maybe less - but they didn't have much, they just had some horses and whatever.

They took them on wagons, horse-buggy thing. Shortly after, it's the Jews that went. It was still in the time summer.

JF: This is the summer, then, of 1944?

MT: 1944. In the fall of '44 the Poles were rounded up and thrown into the ghetto. Not the same ghetto as Jews were because we were a small group. We had like a study hall or something they were renting for Poles where they played chess and so forth. That's where they gathered us, it was one big mansion, I think, at one time.

JF: They gathered you in this mansion in the fall of 1944?

MT: In this mansion they put us all Poles in there. Now, as a youngster my experience was that they came from one house to another and they arrested everybody in the house, took them out on the street and walked us under guard to the next house where the Poles lived, so you could not give signals or anything.

JF: Who was doing this?

MT: Those were the German soldiers. And Hungarians. Both. The Hungarians, I guess, knew where we lived, and the Germans made sure that it was done. Then they put us into that place, though, it was only German soldiers that guarded us. They did not trust, maybe, Hungarians. Perhaps they felt that some Hungarians were too friendly with us prior to this, prior to the arrests, and there might be something.

JF: They might have some feeling for you.

MT: Yes. I don't remember, for some reason I have so many blanks in my mind, I've often tried to figure out why I am scared to ask my parents. Because each time that I do that it is opening a wound, and then I feel so terrible for such a long time because I know that they feel terrible and I hate to go and visit them to give them a load, to cheer them up; here comes your son and then leave them in such agony. But I remember my friend Lotsie [phonetic], Louie, Hungarian. We lived in the same building. They were occupying the first floor and we were occupying the second floor in that building that my parents were renting. He was also renting that place. And his father was sailmaker, for sailboats. He was very good friend of ours. As a matter of fact, we spent more time in his place than ours. When my parents needed us, they always went down and got us. When they took us into that what I call a prison, one morning I saw Lotsie at the fence. It was all fenced in, iron fence, real big fence. The property was all fenced in. And I went up to him. "Lotsie," and he went away from the fence before I got there. I'm sure he cried. When he went away, that he was not allowed to have any deals with us. At that time I didn't understand but it hurt so much; it hurt so much that my best friend, my best friend in the whole world would not speak to me anymore. He ran away. From then on I never saw him anymore. But we did not stay there that long. (pause) So then, a few days later, they started to prepare us to evacuate from that building to the railroad station.

JF: Where did you think you were going to go?

MT: We were going to Germany to the camps. That's what I was told, to work. For work.

JF: What do you think your parents thought? Do you think they believed that?

MT: At that time, looking at it now, they must have believed it, because we already heard the Russian guns at a distance and they chose Germany instead of being caught by the Russians. So that actually what they did is choose the better from two evils. I believe they trusted the Germans more than they trusted the Russians. I believe they felt the Germans were more intelligent individuals, civilized than the eastern Russian hordes. There were terrible stories about Russians from the First World War, how they were raping young women and doing whatever they wished to with everybody. We were not girls, but parents still didn't want to face that enemy.

JF: At this time you were 11 years old.

MT: I was 11 and then...

JF: You had an older brother who was 12. And your younger two brothers were...?

MT: I think it's about a one year difference. So then my younger one was 10 and my youngest one was-- He was born in '39. So he was five. My oldest brother was born in '32 and I was born in '34, but he was born in November '32 and I was born in January '34, so that gives us only two years apart. Right? And my younger brother was born in '36 and then '39 the youngest. Now prior to that, they were taking, arresting, after they sent the Jews out to Germany in the summertime, they started to arrest the Polish male, including young boys from age of 12 and over, to walk to Germany. My father, at that time, and my brother were hiding. We were hiding them in the basement behind a pile of wood to be used in the furnace. We formed like a little hideout for them and they stayed there until the men were removed from our territory.

JF: Your father and your brother?

MT: My father and my brother were hiding. My mother didn't want to let them go. "No way," she said, "whatever happens we will go together." So, shortly after, they went through all the homes and they arrested everybody, like I was mentioning before. They took us all out into the ghetto. So now we were ready to go to the railroad station. A lot of men are gone already. Younger and younger boys. A lot of women are left behind. A lot of old women and children.

JF: They were just left? They were just not picked up?

MT: The first group of males had to walk to Germany because they were able to. It was tough, the way we picture, walking all the way to Germany. Half of them will die on the way. So they took us. So now comes this moment of leaving the ghetto, home, for the railroad station. The last hurrah. We are trying to take everything dearest to us with us. The dearest thing that I had was a stamp collection. A lot of those stamps were the latest stamps of Hitler, the latest issues of Hitler, but, yet, as a stamp collector, to me, it meant a treasure because I had a full set of each issue and they were beautiful. Hitler stamps were large and colorful. The other stamps were not as pretty. These were extremely large for that time. They were like an inch and a half by two inches. Stamps. So, I had all kinds of

stamps; Hungarian stamps and French stamps and English stamps, and I was exchanging with Hungarian boys who collected stamps. It was a big hobby. There was no drugs that we played around with. We were much too young to think about women, so we collected stamps. It was a big hobby, and it was something that we got deeply involved in. So, I had these two or three books of stamps, and I was carrying them under my arms, and this German soldier kicked me, and the stamps fell out of the books from under my arm. So I started grabbing them, and he put his foot on it. I was not allowed to. So I grabbed one from under his foot. Big foot, big boots. Very big boots. Wintertime. And I started tearing up the stamp collection, crying and tearing it up. Well, one good kick in my butt made me fly and that was all left behind. For some reason, that was the most important thing to me at that moment. My parents probably thought about what's going to happen to us. I was thinking about my stamp collection. I had spent two years probably collecting it, or a year and a half, or a year...

JF: In tearing it up, what were you feeling?

MT: I didn't want him, them, to have my treasure. I wanted to destroy. If I can't have it, I will not allow you to enjoy my pleasure, and I felt good about the few pages that I ripped up. That ended right there. We were allowed to take one, like a box of goodies, goodies of our clothes and so forth, for the whole family. It was like a basket type. What would you call it? A basket type?

JF: Like a wicker basket?

MT: Yes, wicker, it was quite large, like a desk size.

JF: Like a hamper? A wicker hamper?

MT: Like a hamper. It was rectangular. I would say it was not quite a yard in width and maybe 2 yards in length, and maybe another yard in height. And we put our things in it. Now, prior to that, my mother was preparing, knowing that we were going to be leaving - she was taking - there was no-- it was hard to make up her mind, I guess, what to take with us, but food was important. Now, what can you take in food? Nothing. There was nothing instant like we have now. Dried food, none around. She would take yeast, a block of yeast and mix it with flour and dry it out that way, and then she packed it into bottles and we took some yeast with us. I don't know what for, and one bag of flour, which they didn't allow her to take with us. Then my mother started to rip the sack apart, so finally one of them - she went actually wild. She couldn't take it anymore. A nervous breakdown, I guess, and she started to scream, yelling and crying and they said, "Ah, let her have that sack. Big deal." In other words, "I wouldn't use it anyway." So we took it. It was December 31, 1944. There was a lot of snow all around. Cold. But for some reason, this excitement, this everything, I don't remember being cold. But it was tremendously windy and a whole lot of snow. They took us maybe three and a half kilometers, so that's what about one and a half mile to the railroad station.

JF: You walked?

MT: We walked, sure, and we had to drag that stuff. But it wasn't too bad on the snow. It was sliding. There was no sleds, we just had to carry and drag whatever we had. We got to the railroad station and there was a lot of soldiers there. All helmets, uniforms, boots, and a lot of guns. It was a very uncomfortable set up. There was no more civilian life at all. Just us; a small herd of people. Empty railroad cars, animal cars, with open doors, and us. Well, we started I guess, they were cold or something, they started counting us out and throwing us into the animal wagons. If I remember, there were 79 people in our wagon, packed like sardines. They slammed the door shut - It was a sliding-type door, and they put the kind of lock you put on that if somebody breaks it you know they've broken into it. With lead, wire and lead, so nobody was allowed to open the wagons. There were big cracks in the wagon, just like we see animal wagons. You can see animals through the wagon. This was December 31, and it was probably like 2:30 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. They did not feed us that day at all, we probably did not eat anything. They locked us in that train and we stayed there till midnight. I remember the whistles, the sirens welcoming New Year's Eve. New Year's and we were all in a cage already.

JF: Just waiting at the station?

MT: Just waiting. All those hours cold, windy, but then it got worse because the wind started to whistle. And the people started to sing. They started to do different things to occupy their minds. And I remember that the men were yelling out every so often to change place. change place. At that time I didn't realize what they were doing, but they were changing places on the outside against the wall. Whoever was, had to change. First he was facing the outside, then he would turn around back towards the outside and then they would move in and next group would take the outside line, because they realized that they would all freeze. Constantly, they had to move their feet and everything with a boom, boom, boom, boom. Everybody was marching someplace, and yet you couldn't lift your feet high or anything because you were hitting next person. It was very, very crowded.

JF: The group that you were with were all Polish refugees like yourself?

MT: All Polish refugees, and this group was mostly old women and, of course, women with children, wives that had been left behind from the husbands that had already left, and older, intelligent people. People that had positions. They all had big titles and in Europe it was very fashionable to use a title. If you spoke to the wife of a doctor, you would have to say, "Mrs. Doctor and so and so," and if it was the wife of an engineer you would have to say, "Mrs. Engineer," and if it was the wife of a judge, "Mrs. Judge." Titles were very important in those days. All those people I remember had very big titles. So, finally, around after midnight, after two o'clock in the morning I think, they started moving us out from the railroad station and we started to go and then things got worse. When the train picked up a speed then the wind was really cutting right through the whole thing. I didn't realize it. When we were standing still, we were still warm, but when we started to move, then it was cold, even for us.

JF: How many cars were there? You said there were about seventy-nine people in your car.

MT: Seventy-nine people to the car. I imagine when they let us out, I would say there was around six cars. Not too many. There was an awful lot of horse manure on the floor of that wagon. Later on I heard the adults say that that's what saved our lives. Horse manure has the heating capacity or something. Whatever they meant by that, I don't know, but it was the insulation from the floor.

JF: How long were you on the train?

MT: We were on the train probably three days until we got to Austria, the first camp.

JF: Were you able to get out of the train at any time? Or receive any food at any time, or were you totally locked up?

MT: No. We were totally locked up. They were not allowed to unlock that door. That door was not padlocked, only was sealed. A wire and lead type lock and if you would break it, they would know. Somebody would have to answer for it, why it was opened. The first stop that they made, that they were allowed to open it, was at some field. It was probably very early in the morning. It was not in the evening. It must have been in the morning, because I can remember the sun coming out, shining over the snow valleys. They allowed us to make a circle and take care of our needs as human beings; to urinate, etc. It was very cold. I know we were huddling around my mother and not knowing what to do. We never did anything like that in the presence of other people, surrounded by people with guns around. Circle was small. They made so many circles, I guess, each wagon, I guess, was not allowed to mingle with the other. They were separate. Each circle. And I remember just one old lady, she was saying to my mother, "How can I?" She also had a very big title, whatever it was. "How can I do it?" I think a judge's wife. "How can I do this?" No. My mother said, "How can I do this in front of all this?" And the old lady says, "Just lift your skirt, and don't worry about it. We are in a cage now. We are no longer humans. Don't worry about that." So they kept us there for quite a while. I don't know why. Whether they couldn't make up their minds what to do...

JF: You mean they kept you outside?

MT: Outside in the snow. Finally they told us to get back. I don't know if they were searching the wagons. Perhaps somebody was hiding something, some kind of a radio, I don't know, but finally they let us back into the wagons. It felt funny. When I went back to the wagon, the first time I felt like I am secure again, like I am in a house, in a home, because I was brought in from that terrible snow and wind and everything. Back at home. Terrible. Then they locked us up again and started moving slow, choo, choo, choo - picked up speed and then there was this very ungodly sound, because it was whistling [makes whistling sound] right through the whole darn thing.

JF: The wind was whistling?

MT: The wind, yes.

JF: Did you know exactly your destination? Or you were just told it would be a camp?

MT: Was told Germany. No. Exactly where nobody knew. Then they stopped at some railroad station, still in Hungary, later on in the day and we were yelling, "Brothers," in Hungarian, "Brothers, water, water, brothers, water," because they were watering the tanks. They were not diesels at that time. They were coal. Trains run by coal and they needed water. So they were watering the engine but they would not give us any water. We could hear the water going and we needed water. We wanted water, but I guess they were not allowed to give us any. The next stop was Prague, Czechoslovakia. That was in the daytime, maybe two o'clock, maybe a little bit earlier. They let us out. They opened the trains and Czechs spoke similar language as we did. Similarity is probably like English to South Carolina or something. British to South Carolina. You could tell-- you could figure out; it was enough you could be able to figure out what they were saying.

JF: Was this in the city of Prague, that they stopped the train?

MT: Yes.

JF: In the main railroad station?

MT: Not in the main station. They never stopped in the main. They pulled over to some side a little further, never where you had a roof over your head. Someplace to the side, some kind of spare parking place, probably. There we were allowed - I guess Czechs made that deal with somebody - we were allowed to go to the nearest restaurant. I know we had some hot dumplings, made over steam. And it was so good. They were hot.

JF: You went under guard to the restaurant?

MT: That I don't remember, whether we all went in a group. I know we were in a restaurant and I know they had something red, like red beer, something that people were drinking. I think they even gave it to us; they didn't have milk, I think they gave it to us kids. Something red to drink.

JF: Did you pay for this food?

MT: We had money at that time. We had a lot of money. Hungarian money. Yes. We had actually quite a bit of money, even in the camps, but we couldn't use it. I'll tell you later on what we did with the money.

Tape three, side one:

JF: You said that the Czechs made an arrangement?

MT: Yes, we are in Prague right now, in a restaurant. Again, I don't know whether I seen other people or whether it was just us children that they allowed out, or whether we snuck away from the train to get something to eat, because we became like hunted animals later on. On instinct we would run and do things, which I will tell you later on what we did in Vienna.

JF: This was after you were in Prague, now?

MT: After we were in Prague. I know that we were some small restaurant, not too far from the railroad station; not a restaurant, something like quick-foods something where you could get something to eat.

JF: This was the stop after Prague?

MT: Yes, in Prague. And we had some food but we didn't bring any food with us so I guess we ate some there and drank some red liquid. I think it was probably beer or wine; it was probably wine because we drank in Hungary; it was like in France, in Hungary everybody drank wine. Not in our house, but we went to Hungarians, to Lotsie's house, and they would give us wine to drink. My parents would get tremendously upset. We would come back, "What did you drink?" We were happy. We would say, "Well, they gave us wine." "What!" Well, in Prague, I think they give us beer, but it was red or at least dark, maybe bock. So the Czechs made some kind of deal At that time I didn't know. They offered my father, they told him to run, to escape from the train and they'll help us.

JF: Why did they single out your father?

MT: He had Czech-- his mother was born in Czechoslovakia.

JF: How did they know that?

MT: I guess he mentioned it to them, probably. He probably mentioned something about the place where his mother was born. How far is it from here? or something. He probably asked.

JF: Was it in this little restaurant where you were, or were these Czech guards?

MT: That's something I just found our recently. I mean afterwards. I do not remember, given this opportunity to hear that we were offered something. And, of course, I didn't know what was happening anyway. To me it was a great thing that I was eating something.

JF: As he told you about it, where had he met these people?

MT: That was in a railroad station. I don't know exactly where, but Czechs whispered to him that you may run and we will help you, but then my mother said, "You must be kidding. Look at my children." And then, of course, we had my father's mother with us and a crippled sister. She said, "You must be kidding. They will shoot us on the first -- They will get us before we have a chance to run." So, we stayed. I guess they thanked them for the offer. Somebody must have approached them and said, "You know

what? We can help you." But there was no chance because, yes, you can run alone, but you can't run with a family. Nobody can run with four kids, six, eight people just. Then they locked us up again and we were on our way to Germany. There wasn't much we could see through there-- cracks on the train. But we were observing. The territory was changing. Once it was mountains, one was trees and then city, and then again just open fields. Finally we were in Austria. We were driving by a big concentration camp, big towers on the corners, and tremendous fencing around like I never saw in my life. That's the kind of setup-- and they were saying, "That that is where Horthy, Miklos is-- was taken to." Now Horthy, Miklos was President [Regent] of Hungary at the time I was there. That's a name I remember because they had a lot of songs written about him, Horthy, Miklos. He was arrested and taken there by Germans and thrown into the camp.

JF: What camp was this?

MT: It was in Austria. I don't know. I really don't know, and I still don't know because I never did inquire. I remember seeing-- I still see the picture and they said, "That's where he is," and we wonder what kind of camp we will be in. Shortly after that we landed in Vienna, Vienna shortly, I don't know how shortly, but my next memory is Vienna, Austria. A big ferris wheel. In Poland, they call it "Vienna wheel", a big one, not too far from the railroad station that I can see. A real huge one. Looking at it the way I see it now it's probably like 200 feet in diameter, probably. A real huge ferris wheel; the railroad station not too far from it. Awful lot of destruction in the area from bombs. A lot of small fragments of bombs and a lot of small, like metal, more bigger than beebies that they put into bombs-- shrapnel type things, laying all around and we were asking, "What is that?" "That's from the bombs. That kills better-- All of that metal flying around." Then we were let out of the trains because we have reached our destination. They were going to do something with us in Vienna, now. We had to wait and wait. No food.

JF: You had been on the train three days?

MT: Three days. Three days, I think, at least. Maybe it was four by the time we got to Vienna. I think it took about three days to get to Prague and then another day probably from Prague to Vienna, American planes, or, was it some other instance when we were traveling? Perhaps it was later. It was not that early because I don't think American planes were in that area. But one time we were chased by American planes, and they parked the train in a tunnel for quite a while and then they started again, but I think it was later on when they took us from one camp to another. In Vienna, here we are in Vienna. We are all out of the train now, waiting under guns. Now we, as boys, I and my older brother, we were the messengers in Hungary for my father. Whatever messages he wanted to send, political messages, signals from him to his subordinates, he would use us and we would deliver the messages, not knowing what is in them but deliver the envelope, deliver the piece of paper.

JF: You were aware of what kind of work he was doing?

MT: Yes, and we were very strongly taught that we are Poles and our-- we owe our country our lives, so whatever we did to destroy the enemy, you must remember that

you are a Pole. So, in Vienna we saw the express trains for the first time in our lives. They were electrical trains, full of German brass, soldiers. In the windows, we could see them. Somehow we got away, me and my brother, far enough that we found a piece of railroad track, a good sized metal, maybe about 4 feet, 31/2 feet in length, and we went and we put it across the railroad track on one side, propped it up with rocks, and ran back to our group, to our parents, and we said, "Do you know what we did? Just watch this. The next train that comes through here is going to go off. We put a piece of steel across the tracks." And my mother said, "Do you know what you did? We are all dead, as soon as the train goes off, we are all dead, these soldiers with these guns will shoot us immediately." We had to sneak back, crawl back, almost, pull and jerk this thing out, we had a hard time pulling it out. I don't know how we pulled it out, it was a heavy thing, and within seconds, half a minute or so, the train comes through. (makes sound). Electrical. And that was the end. Now we are very happy that we did something wonderful, but it was actually something very stupid.

JF: You felt good when you did it?

MT: We felt good, but it was a stupid act. Maybe a hundred or soldiers or whatever would have got messed up but, then, all of us would have been dead, because they never did hesitate to do that, I guess. From there they took us to the nearest camp, Strasshof. Strasshof from Vienna is probably 3 1/2 kilometers, something like that, not too far. It is a small community, probably, but it was a camp, with snow all over. They had...

JF: This was in Austria?

MT: Austria. The first camp we went to, Strasshof. As soon as we went in, who meets us at the gate, in beautiful German uniforms, shiny, scary, but the language is Ukrainian. "Welcome to the camp," in their language. I didn't realize what that meant, but my parents must have. Not everybody was from the same territory that we were in that group. Some people came from Warsaw, some came from completely different parts of Poland, and they just ended up in Hungary. Now, we were from the territory that they were after us. We ran away from them. They recognized one man, two men. One was a police chief in one city, another was his assistant to the police chief.

JF: Who recognized them?

MT: The Ukrainians.

JF: The Ukrainian guards recognized them.

MT: They weren't even guards. They were hired. They had almost SS uniforms, almost Gestapo-type uniforms; they were the Gestapo-type something. They had those dark uniforms, not the regular grey. They had the beautiful officer's thing. I remember in a barrack, they walked up to him and took out the big gloves. They had the big gloves behind their belts, just like knights, and hit him across the face and said, "*Meine liebe Plata,*" my dear Plata. His name was Plata, and he looked at the guy and he got white all over. I didn't know what that meant, and that was the only incident, and they called him out. They went out, a couple goonies came in, Ukrainians in regular uniforms, gray uniforms, took him...

JF: Took Plata?

MT: Took Plata, and I forgot the other guy's name, older guy. The other guy was like 60 or 70 years old...

JF: This was the police chief?

MT: Police chief. Plata was-- I went to school with his children, his sons. He was a little bit younger than my father was, I think, the assistant police chief. It turned out later on, that they took them out, both of them, and maybe 6 hours later, at night, it was late at night, when the old man came back.

JF: The old man was the assistant or the chief?

MT: The chief.

JF: The chief and Plata was the assistant.

MT: The old man came back to the barrack, like that.

JF: Holding his head?

MT: Holding his head with no teeth-- I don't know, like a regular train ran through his head and everything. And they were talking to him. I guess he couldn't hear, just very-- probably beat up. The other guy never came back.

JF: Plata never came back?

MT: No. Plata, I found out, because we were all so curious what happened, we talked to the sons, what happened. He arrested a guy for stealing a pig.

JF: The Ukrainian guard?

MT: The Ukrainian was in jail. Plata arrested him and put him in jail. Now I did not mention it. When Germans came to Poland, the first thing they did is they released the prisons. All the prisoners got a rank of some sort and they said, "You know whom to get, go and get them." So there was the one thing, to control the territory like that when you just take over, you release the prisoners and those people know who the people were in charge, who the people they hated. "Go and get them." So he was one of them. He had already a beautiful position in German hierarchy, in German organization. Well, things were very sad. Awful lot of Ukis. They were very happy. They were cheerful at night, they were singing in their quarters. They had a beautiful sculpture, a still remember a beautiful sculpture of a naked woman in front of their quarters. One of them must have been an artist. Made from snow.

JF: Made from snow?

MT: Snow. Because there was so much snow. It was a huge sculpture. Huge. So they had a ball, they had fun.

JF: You were totally in a barrack?

MT: Totally in a barrack. Yes.

JF: Just kept in a barrack, with your family?

MT: Yes.

JF: Not separated in any way?

MT: No, with everybody. In barrack I guess you can put in 100 people, I don't know.

JF: With any kind of bedding or...?

MT: That I don't remember whether we had any bedding. I know there was a wooden *Pritsche* that was a German word, *Pritsche* they call it, a wooden type, like a table. That's your bed. I don't remember whether they had straw, sacks on top that you could lay on the straw or not, I don't know. I don't remember. I remember straw from one place, someplace, I don't know which camp, maybe it was Strasshof. On straw maybe. From there on when we went to the next camps it was just wooden planks and nothing else, and a wooden pillow that tapered off at the end of the bed. That was for your head.

JF: What kind of food were you given?

MT: The food in Strasshof I don't even remember, because I guess it was too much of a shock. First camp, the first complete captivity, one hundred percent control of our time and everything, but they took us from Strasshof later on to Neumark. Neumark is Bavaria, I think. No, we went from Strasshof to Berlin. We went through Berlin. Yeh, we went through Berlin, I remember that experience.

JF: What is this that you have written?

MT: Austria, close to Vienna, is Strasshof.

JF: Oh, okay.

MT: From then...

JF: How long were you in Strasshof?

MT: Not too long. This was like a processing camp where they did what they had to do. They segregated, they divided, they squeezed out all the juices. The next one-- we went outside Berlin-- but I remember-- okay, we went into Berlin. We were in Berlin maybe three days.

JF: You were taken off the train?

MT: No, from Strasshof, they put us on a train and they were taking us towards Berlin, to a camp.

JF: A camp in Berlin?

MT: In Berlin. Now, we spoke Hungarian well, and there were Hungarians also in Berlin area that were traveling to Berlin. We got mixed up with Hungarians and we spoke very well. We mingled with the Hungarians and in the evening - they always had air raids in Berlin. It was the first time I saw a big city, huge city. Beautiful buildings. And I remember air raid shelters had maybe about two feet of rubber cover on the top of the bunker, and it was explained later on that when the bomb hits that it will kick the bomb off, or the bomb will not go off directly on the shelter. We were taken as Hungarians, so we were taken into an air raid shelter during air raid. After the air raid, they took us into the Red Cross facility, like a hotel, in Berlin to feed us, but before we finished eating, something happened. They discovered that we are Poles.

JF: Were you under German guard at that point?

MT: Air raid got-- something got messed up during the air raid. We were chased-- we joined the wrong group when we were running.

JF: I see.

MT: We joined the wrong group, and we went without guns, and these people were taken with guns. So, we ran with the Hungarians because we knew what they were saying. "They are bombing, let's go, let's go, let's go." So we yelled same way the kids, "Let's go." But they start feeding us, somebody discovered that we were talking in Polish or something-- oh, my God. It was just like the world came to an end. Everything was grabbed from in front of us and we were pushed, pulled, turned, and finally we were back under guns again. They wouldn't even allow us to finish whatever we had on our plate. So, there we were back, and my parents were saying, "Well, we knew it would happen, but we wanted you to eat." I don't know, I think it was my younger brother, the youngest, that made a sound that sold us out. Polish sound. From there they took us to Wilhelmshaven, about 13 kilometers from Berlin, east from Berlin.

JF: And what was that?

MT: That was a camp, again controlled by Ukrainians. Every camp I was in, Ukrainians fully controlled each camp.

JF: Now, in Berlin, were you actually in a camp?

MT: No, in Berlin, we went just through Berlin.

JF: You just went through Berlin?

MT: A couple of days we spent there, because of air raids they could not move us, and we got messed up with Hungarians for about 6 hours or so, and then went back. But we stayed in Berlin in captivity there, and another-- it was a facility of some sort, but it was not a nice facility. Where Hungarians were, it was a nice facility that we got chased out of. Wilhelmshaven was another camp. Now this camp, again, is wires, towers, and all this nonsense and everything else. There I remember very good food, for a change. I don't know why, but I remember a piece of bread in the morning, piece of margarine and a little bit of some kind of jelly. Jello.

JF: Jelly? or jello?

MT: Sweet. Made from...

JF: To put on the bread?

MT: Yes.

JF: Jelly.

MT: Jelly. Made from fruit of some sort. They had that. I don't know whether they had milk for us in the morning, but I was surprised, the way I remember, the food was best of everything we had so far, that was in that camp.

JF: What kind of camp was this?

MT: It was a typical camp again for the Poles, I think.

JF: Primarily Poles?

MT: It was not a political-- it was for the Poles, I think. It was for working.

JF: It was a work camp?

MT: A work camp, I think, because it was not one of those major ones that they had, strictly political where they threw Jews and Poles in. Political Poles. It was not whatever you call them.

JF: Concentration camps?

MT: Yeh. Well, no, the names I was going to go through [unclear]. The only one I can think of is Auschwitz.

JF: Not an extermination camp?

MT: No. It was not one of them. We did not have to wear a striped uniform, but we had to wear a "P" on our heart.

JF: "P" for...

MT: Pole, but it was a "P" in the color of the Ukrainian flag. It was a yellow "P" on a blue background. Ukrainians have yellow and blue as their national flag. Now ours is white and red, so we had to use their color and you had to wear it on your heart and it was in the shape of a diamond. My mother has one and I was going to bring it and I forgot to. We still have one. Then we had to have it sewn on our clothes.

JF: This was in Wilhelmshaven?

MT: No, that started from Strasshof. From then on we always had to have "P".

JF: This was on your own clothes, not on any uniform?

MT: Yes. Perhaps maybe in Strasshof we didn't have it because they would have recognized us. Maybe it started with Wilhelmshaven, because I know that we were marked later on. Maybe it was because of a mishap or whatever. But this was organized camp. This they knew what they were doing and we had to wear this and then we were started to feel, like I mentioned-- The food, I thought, was excellent, but here they started to dig around about people's background in Wilhelmshaven. Every individual had to go and be interviewed or interrogated to find out what his background was, what he was doing, what he was doing in pre-Poland, what kind of job he had...

JF: Who was doing the interrogation? The Germans or the Ukrainians.

MT: The Ukrainians, because we could not speak German. My parents could speak German and Ukrainian because that was the territory that had German colony and so forth.

JF: Were the Germans in control of the camp and the Ukrainians were the workers who were...?

MT: The workers. Well, Germans were more or less on the outside. I could not touch the Germans, but they were the last closing gate, but closer to us were the Ukrainians. The ones that would kick you and talk to you and so forth were the Ukrainians.

JF: You were then interrogated, also?

MT: No, I was not.

JF: Just your father and your mother?

MT: My father and mother and all the elders.

JF: What did they find out?

MT: That's when, a lot of-- I just remembered that my father said something to my mother one night, that he will not talk. "He will not talk. I can trust him. He will not talk." He was-- they must have been talking about underground activities they had in Hungary, the individual that they were suspecting, and they were interrogating more and more and more. And my father said, "He will not talk, I am sure. He will not talk." And so, they were trying to remove all the organization from the group, the way I see it now. They didn't want anything to let go, to pass by their fingers. If somebody was doing something against the system, or if he was doing something for the system, prior to the war, for the other system, then he is evil and not worth anything. But they had pillows and they had sheets in that camp. I still can't figure it out, 'cause it's the only camp they had. Perhaps it's because it was close to Berlin, to tell somebody that this is how we run the camps. I don't know.

JF: So it might have been shown as a model camp?

MT: Perhaps. Perhaps some Germans, perhaps wanted to see what the camps looked like. I don't think the Red Cross had anything to do with it, but I think perhaps some individuals in their hierarchy wanted to know, "What do you mean you are making camps? What do they look like? And, sure, it was closest to, let's drive up to, we will show you." So they had that. So perhaps that is why they also had food, but they were very, very nasty, because everybody was tight-lipped, more and more. Pretty soon, nobody wanted to talk. Nothing. Everybody just-- so things were happening there.

JF: You were still with your family?

MT: Yes, I was still with the family.

JF: In a mass kind of sleeping arrangement?

MT: Yes, the open barracks, open barracks and latrines, whatever you call them, bathrooms, were outside. Never inside a building, you had to go outside. It was a wooden type, with a hole in the ground, but you could more or less sit down on it, but in that camp I don't remember if it was too dirty, but in the others...

Tape three, side two:

MT: So, we stopped at Wilhelmshaven, the camp. It was the first camp that I saw sheets on the bed. It was very nice and that was the camp that I finally realized what my mother saved, the yeast, dry yeast. It was not in existence at that time. The cooks, the people in charge of cooking, people in charge of everything, were Ukrainians. Now, we, living with the Ukrainians, it was no big deal speaking their language for my parents. They still felt probably comfortable to talk to them. My mother made a deal with the cook, one of the cooks, and I remember him speaking a beautiful Polish language. They were all Polish citizens who went to schools. Of course, they were just like anybody else, except they were fighting for something that they never had, their country. She told him that she has yeast. He said, "What?" I said, "Yeast." And he says, "Yes, but it's probably spoiled." And she says, "No, it's dry." "Never heard of it." She says, "I have it here. If I can, if you allow me to use your oven to bake something" -- we had still some flour from Hungary and yeast-- "I will give you some." He said, "All right." So she had to give him a certain amount of yeast and he allowed her to use the oven to put her mixture into it and, then, also as a token of appreciation, he gave her a bottle of butter, melted butter. That's how how he kept it, in a bottle, so we would have to put it on something. So I remember she baked, not too much. I guess she didn't have too much flour or he wouldn't give us too much, but she baked cakes, similar to [unclear]. They had no nuts on them or raisins or anything but about that size, maybe about 30 of them, just...

JF: Small rolls.

MT: Small rolls. I don't know if they had eggs, whether he gave her eggs or not, I don't know.

JF: This was Ukrainian.

MT: Ukrainian, because he was, that was his kitchen. They were in charge of everything, but they allowed her to do that. So, she brought to the barrack, and put it under the pillow and I remember each time I went there under the pillow to take one out, I felt so guilty, because I knew that my parents didn't eat any of them, and I was also, I felt terribly guilty that my younger brother probably wants it, that this will run out.

JF: Had they designated how many rolls each of you was to have, or did they just put them there-- knowing that you would get them?

MT: They just put them there.

JF: And you knew that they weren't eating any?

MT: We knew, and we also knew that each other, of each one was not getting their share and I, as an older brother, the other two-- I felt bad about reaching for it.

JF: For your younger two brothers?

MT: Yes.

JF: You didn't think that they were getting...

MT: I felt that I shouldn't-- I should leave it so they have more, because I knew that this was only something that just happened now and we wouldn't have it anymore. And that was true. We never had that anymore because I guess she didn't have anymore because I guess she didn't have anymore yeast. She must have probably used part of it and gave the rest of it away and that was the end of it. But then, again, that's not quite right because I don't whether you need yeast, no, you don't need yeast for piroges. They had bunkers, not bunkers, underground holes, and in those holes they also had little cooking facilities like barbecue things.

JF: Where was this, in Wilhelmshaven?

MT: Because constantly the Americans were bombing Berlin, constantly.

JF: Oh, so they built the bunkers as part of the camp?

MT: Built the bunkers underground. Yes, oh yes, because you were the necessary commodity. You had to hide. You could not-- in the first place, you could give Americans a signal. You had to hide. In the second place, they needed you to clear up the territory after the bombing. My mother made some pirogis, I remember. That's something like-- uh Jewish have something like, a dumpling.

JF: *Kreplach*, a dumpling.

MT: But something happened. They yelled because there was some smoke getting out so that was like a signal to the Americans.

JF: Was she also involved with the Ukrainian cook when she made the perogies, or...?

MT: No, that was-- I think she still had water-- I mean flour and I think that's all it is flour and water-- and they had heat like a barbecue thing that you put a few sticks together and you did something.

JF: So, she made it in the bunker?

MT: I remember she made like 6 of them, I think, and again there was that pain of who's going to eat. And, then, shortly after that, one day came the big bombing of Berlin. What a sight and what a sound! We were tremendously scared but so eagerly happy about the event.

JF: You were hidden in the bunker?

MT: We were-- yes, but we were only thirteen kilometers from Berlin and that bombing lasted like 4 or 4 ½ hours. Wave after wave of American's planes were just coming in and dumping all of their load on Berlin. For 3 days or more after the bombing, Berlin was on fire and money was coming down even into our camp, German *Marks*, but they were all burned. Of course, what was the difference? You couldn't buy anything anyway.

JF: Where was the money coming from?

MT: Banks were hit, I think, and the heat took them up in the air and the wind threw them around. Tremendous heat. It was, like I said, Berlin was burning for a long time.

JF: And pieces of money were actually floating down?

MT: Yes. We had pieces was burned. But things started getting nastier and nastier. The Russians were coming. Father had to work to fortify the roads. They were building-- blockading like roads, forcing the traffic through the middle of the roads. They were building site-- something.

JF: Was this the first time that you had been in a work situation in a camp? This was the first one you were in long enough to be in this situation.

MT: This was the first time we were actually put into work.

JF: Were you also working?

MT: Not in that camp, yet. In that camp, I did not know what work was, and I don't believe my older brother-- He was 12 already and was still not working either.

JF: He was twelve.

MT: He was not working either.

JF: How long were you in this camp?

MT: This camp, we were probably 2 months, 3 months. My parents, somehow, for some reason my father didn't like that set-up there near Berlin. Maybe the Ukrainians were too strong in control or something. He was afraid of something. They found out, I still don't know how, that somebody needs workers, and they made some arrangements with somebody. "Why don't you send us Poles, x number of people to the working site there?" I don't know what happened, but finally they did take a whole bunch of us. They sent us from Wilhelmshaven to Bayreuth, and there again we didn't stay too long, but Neumark was the last one.

JF: B-A-Y-R-E-U-T-H. Which was the camp that you were at after Wilhelmshaven?

MT: Wilhelmshaven. But that one I hardly remember. There was a short camp and I told my father, "Isn't that something? I remember Strasshof. I remember Berlin and Wilhelmshaven."

JF: Did he volunteer to go?

MT: No, they either heard through this Ukrainian that they are thinking about shipping some people, or something. But he asked if we could do some work in that area. If you need people? And now, later on, actually I found out that that was a very good move that they did, because Russians were coming. I gather the reason they did this, they were, again afraid of Russians. Russians were coming very rapidly towards Berlin. War was coming to the end. My father was working on those preparations to welcome Russians. German defense system. To stop them, to destroy them. We were moved through Bayreuth. I don't remember how long we were there, to Newmark.

JF: Now Bayreuth was also a camp for Poles?

MT: They were all camps.

JF: But was it for Poles in particular though or...

MT: The only place, where there were non-Poles in the camp was Neumark. There were some Russians and there were some French, but all the others-- I never talked to anybody. But I still don't remember talking to anybody anyway except your immediate barrack surrounding. I don't know if we weren't allowed to go another barrack. I never was in another barracks, just my own, ever.

JF: The people who were in the camps that you are describing were primarily refugees? They were not political?

MT: No, they were all political but they were trying not to be labeled as political.

JF: Okay. The Jews were not in these camps, or Gypsies.

MT: I don't recall. No. No-- where they were-- Gypsies because I would recognize them. Jews, I would not recognize them as such, but I would hear...

JF: They would be labeled?

MT: In camps, perhaps not. I don't know.

JF: You were wearing "P."

MT: We were wearing "P". That is correct. That is true, I don't remember a Star of David in the camps, none of the camps. I would probably hear Ukrainians use the word, derogatory word "Jew," like "Pole," because that I would recognize and I don't remember anything like that.

JF: The Russians and the French that you are describing do you have any idea how they ended up in Germany?

MT: I believe that they were deserters, or something, some kind of...

JF: But, not prisoners of war? That would have been a separate, totally separate.

MT: No, they were like civilians, but some civilians that were not to be trusted, I guess. They were captured civilians, just like us Poles, that they could not trust them on their own.

JF: They were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

MT: Yes, they didn't want to leave them free, so they had to lock them up, to keep an eye on them.

JF: So, the fifth camp, the fifth location that you were in-- you pronounce it N E U M A R K?

MT: Yes.

JF: Which was where, approximately?

MT: In Bavaria, I think.

JF: This was in Bavaria?

MT: I think. Neumark. I am not sure, but in that camp I was a woman. That I labeled myself. I think I heard my parents talk about that. I had to go to work with my mother until before the war ended. Then I went with my older brother and father to work. Men were men and any male below 12 was a woman, went to work with the women.

JF: This is your label?

MT: That is my label because I was not allowed to go with men to work, and there were no children, so we went with women.

JF: How did you feel? With that separation?

MT: There I felt very bad, because I loved my father. I loved my brother and I loved my mother, but I felt that I am, even within our own group, that I am something not right. I can't go with my brother, and I can't stick to my father. I am forced to be with my mother and I don't know-- just felt that I just don't fit into this world's puzzle. Like there is something wrong with me, something terribly wrong. I didn't realize that I was actually lucky that I wasn't able to be used fully yet.

JF: You understood the technical cutoff of the age of 12?

MT: Yes.

JF: But the feeling of working with the women and not being identified with the male side...

MT: It wasn't that much. It was my own feeling of what is wrong with me. What is actually wrong with me? I understand that I am not quite 12 but I am capable, I am the same size as my brother; I am capable of doing the same thing. It was actually false man's ego, I think; I wanted to do more. Isn't that something?

JF: So you felt that you should have been picked anyway, that the age was an irrelevant issue, that somehow they had not chosen you to go with the men?

MT: Yes, that I am with women.

JF: What kind of work were you doing with your mother?

MT: It was mostly gathering wood for kitchen. They would not allow us to work in the kitchens because then we would grab some food.

JF: Did you feel that the work was beneath your abilities, you know, beneath your strength?

MT: No, there was-- actually work was hard.

JF: The work was still hard?

MT: It was very hard and I remember one incident that is deeply buried in my mind. It was very snowy. For some reason it was always snowing. Always cold. We went out into woods, again Ukrainian guards, no guns, just with big sticks, night sticks. Each guard had two people, or something like that, to watch. We went into woods, to pick woods, to gather them up, make big bundle, put in on your shoulders and bring it back. They tell you when the bundle is big enough. Prior to that, airplanes went by and there were some leaflets dropped. God help you if you touched a leaflet! Somehow, somebody managed to bring one back to camp, and the word went around about what was happening in the world. I had no socks. I had some kind of shoes. Snow was up to my knee, cutting, going up the mountain. I told my mother that my feet are freezing. She said, "Take off your shoes and start rubbing them with the snow, your feet." First she went up to help me and he yelled terribly, so we had to separate, but then she said, "Don't forget. Rub your feet with snow." I did that and my feet started to freeze up to my ankles, hot ankles, up to my knees. They

started losing the feel of it, and I remember my mother started again rubbing it. She ripped off part of her dress and wrapped it around my feet and told me to stick my feet with that stuff into the shoes. She took my load of wood on her back and the jerk ran up and knocked her down and told me to carry mine and she is to carry her own. "What do you think this is?"

JF: This was the Ukrainian guard?

MT: Yes. Then we get to the gate, close to the camp, then the siren blows. Air raid. Who cares? An air raid would probably liberate us from the whole thing. You are not allowed to go back into barrack. You have to crawl into the very ugly hole they have in the ground. It was probably about 8 feet, six, seven feet deep and about 4 or 5 feet wide, just like a ditch, with some lumber on top, some cut wood on top and some dirt thrown on it, full of water, mud. When you get in it you are in mud up to your knees again. Terrible. They chase us in there. [unclear] My mother says, "When I give you the signal, you run for the barrack." I said, "But what about you?" "I'll take care of myself." So she started arguing with the Ukrainian. "He says, "I guess my cane didn't hit you in the back yet," and she says, "It's not going to," So then he started swinging at her, and she says, "Run!" and I started to run. Then he realized what we were doing. He wasn't allowed to run in the yard, either, because there was an air raid. So he takes the stick and he throws it like they used to get rabbits in Europe.

JF: The stick would move in a circular motion?

MT: Yes, so you can get somebody like that. Well, I ducked, and it went over me. He was a good thrower, you know. He had strength. And I dove into the barrack and I crawled into a corner under my *pritcha*, under my bed, and I just stayed there.

JF: Shaking?

MT: There was no heat in the barracks either, or whatever. Well, after a while, my mother came in, everybody came back. He was looking for me and my mother told me not to get out from under the bed. He was looking, I guess for me, to do something to me also. From then on I always experience problems with my feet, when it gets cold. In wintertime, summertime, it's okay, but in the wintertime I start getting this problem.

JF: What kind of problem? Pain?

MT: No, my, it like itches, my skin starts cracking and I have some kind of skin problem I guess.

JF: A skin problem, primarily, with your feet?

MT: In summertime it's okay, but in the wintertime when it starts getting cold, and then it gets pain, like I get cold, like at work, I can be sitting and everybody is warm, and I start feeling this cold all the way up to my knees. This cold, real cold. At home when I sleep in the wintertime I have to put socks on. In the summertime I am okay. Maybe it's psychological, or something. But it is giving me some pain.

JF: Were you ever punished for escaping from the line like that, at that time?

MT: No, not really that I remember. The worse thing that I would get was a good kick. And then you would fly. But that was no punishment. For some reason I never cried. Never experienced any-- or showed anything that would make my parents' day worse. I never asked for food, or asked for anything.

JF: You never showed anything that made your parent's day worse? Were you feeling it, or did you have to push down those feelings at that time?

MT: I guess you always feel it. [Long pause] You try not to. Knowing that actually by doing so you would hurt more your parents.

JF: You were trying to protect them from more hurt?

MT: You were trying to be a super adult and it's unreal. It's hard to become an adult at such and early age.

JF: You didn't have much opportunity to be a kid?

MT: No, but I actually don't miss it too much except when my kids are going through something now at school. Parties or something, dances, I want them so badly to participate in it. I want to have so much fun in everything they do. I want them to experience their time in life. I'm telling-- often I tell them, "Don't watch that TV. That has nothing to do with you." That soaps or something, like my daughter would be watching. "That's way over your head. Over your age. Why don't you live your own age, because before you know it, it is gone and you will miss that. Don't get involved in that. Live your own time, your own age." So actually, I am very conscious of somebody being young and enjoying it, but I don't really know what it is. To be honest, I don't miss that. I don't think I miss it. I want somebody else to have it.

JF: When you were in this camp, was there any opportunity, with your brothers or with any other boys of your own age, to do anything you would have done outside the camp? To have talked, to have joked, to have shared any kind of child-like experience? Was there any escape among you?

MT: No, there was no such thing. That's the whole thing. There was no such thing. Not even making a ball out of a rag or something. There was no such thing as playing. I don't know why there wasn't. I know why, because it wasn't to be. But nobody even tried, because I think that everybody sensed and felt and knew the terrible thing we were in. And you tried to pitch in and not make it any worse. People were hungry, and you don't want to cry because some did. Some kids would cry that, "Mother, you ate more than we did," when she would get something. And that, to me at that time, it was terrible. How could they say that? She was a woman and she needs to eat. I couldn't say that and I didn't ever want to say it. I told myself that I would never say it. So, you tried not to. The food that they gave us was terrible.

JF: Were you living there still with your father and brother, even though you were in separate work details?

MT: Yes, yes, we were all living-- but that's true, just at night we would see each other. We didn't see each other all day. There was nothing to eat. That's the sad part of it. It was terrible. That was the worst that I remember.

JF: Food was the worst?

MT: The worst camp period the attitude, everything was just terrible. Adults would ask for food and they said, "You need food?" and they would call us stinking Polacks, the Ukrainians.

JF: Was there any effort that you know of to try to form some resistance in the camp, or escape?

MT: There was actually, probably it was even actually played down. There was no escape once you were deep into the enemy's territory. It would have actually have been the worst thing.

JF: It would have been very dangerous.

MT: No, because later on I became, I guess 12, and was capable, or allowed to go with my brother to clean out, after bombing, the men would be sent to town to clean up the place and take unexploded bombs-- some things did not explode and the Germans would hide far away and the Ukies, and tell you where to dig a hole, where to carry the bomb, where to put it in, drop it in-- the men would try to put it in carefully, slowly, and then mark it, mark the place. But it was all walking-- was not somebody takes you. You walk to town, you walk back. You carried those bombs around and you don't bury them in the center of the city. You took them far outside the city and bury them.

JF: This is when you were working with the men?

MT: So what I am saying is that escape was not even thought of, because there were the *Hitlerjugend*. They were young children. They would chase us because my father would try to tell us a few words in German, *Knochen*. We would buy *Knochen*, bones, *Blutwurst*.

JF: You could buy bones?

MT: We had money.

JF: And you were allowed to spend it?

MT: My father would say, "Go try the butcher shop and maybe he will sell you some bones."

JF: And you were allowed to do that?

MT: No, you would have to break away from that-- but as a kid it was no big deal, because kids are sneaks and they can always-- they, I guess, don't pay attention too much to the adults they watch. So we would break away. But here we had this so we would try to hide that.

JF: Try to hide the [unclear].

MT: And of course we looked like scrounges, like bums from the worst. I mean we never washed our clothes or anything. Whatever we had was with us.

JF: You were wearing your own clothes during all this time?

MT: Yes, whatever it was that we had, yes. I would go-- my brother was older, I would hold the door to the butcher shop, first we would look to see if there were any people there. If there was too many people, don't try to get in because you are in trouble. But if there's only one person or maybe nobody, just the butcher, I open the door and hold it there. He walks in. *Knochen*, and if the guy doesn't yell, then I come in also. If he yells and the door is open then he runs out like a dog. If he says something, whatever he says, probably "Just a minute," he would take out, would not even put it in a bag just throw a couple of bones to us. I guess he had to be careful. So we would hide the bones under the shirt. It was *Knochen*. Then I go in. Of course when I opened the door I was hiding. He comes out, "Yes, I got some." Then I go in. *Knochen*. He gives me a bone. Then my brother messes up his hair. Goes in *Knochen*.

Tape four, side one:

JF: So your brother and you would alternate going in and asking for bones and if there were more than two boys.

MT: Yes, and then we tried-- and he knew that. Because he would recognize, anybody would recognize, but you were so hungry and so anxious, and here's a person who was willing to give you something, so you keep on going, and so we just keep on switching, and going in and changing our-- take off the jacket and put the jacket on, mess up your hair-- there was no makeup. Finally he yells, "Enough." I imagine. "*Heraus*." [Get out]. That word we knew. So we get out and we go to the next, look around the next butcher shop. Then we need *Blutwurst*. That's only two things we could buy; *Knochen* and *Blutwurst*. *Wurst* made out of blood. Delicious if you could get it. So they would give us a piece of *Blutwurst*, the kind ones, usually the older ones, not the younger ones, older butchers.

JF: Did they know you were Polish?

MT: Oh, yes, yes. It was hard to get that. That's the whole thing. Sometimes we got some, sometimes we didn't.

JF: Were you ever caught by the Ukrainian guards for sneaking in?

MT: No, no, but...

JF: How long were you working with your mother and the women?

MT: I would say about, almost the whole time except maybe the last two months of captivity, I was allowed to go with my brother. I think we were in a camp about a year and a half.

JF: You were in this last camp? Or the whole of it?

MT: No, the whole thing. I think the last two or three months I was working with my brother.

JF: Once you were 12?

MT: Yes.

JF: How did it feel to switch over to the men's battalion...

MT: There was no feeling anymore. I think all of the feeling was removed. There was no transition. No big deal. Except I knew that my responsibility now was to get something for the family. To bring something in. To cheat as much as I can, to sneak away from the work force and to buy something. We had money, but we used that money instead of toilet paper, just to get even.

JF: The Polish-- the money you had was Hungarian money?

MT: But it was changed into German *Marks*.

JF: But you used it anyway.

MT: But we used it because we didn't want them to get it. It was on purpose. It gave us tremendous feeling to use the German *Marks* for toilet paper. There was no toilet paper anyway. But to use that and just destroy it. There was nothing we could buy.

JF: You've mentioned several things, so-called small things, but things that gave you a good feeling that somehow you were getting back or outsmarting the system. Were there any other instances like that that gave you a little boost, sort of an opportunity to give vent to some of your anger and frustration?

MT: Not really. Because when things later on started to happen, when we were being liberated-- I might as well start from the beginning. Actually one more incident.

JF: Yes.

MT: We had one at that camp, Neumark. I remember when we first arrived, the farmers from the territory came in to the camp to examine the new catch, new people that we were. This was the first time again in my life-- I wasn't that old-- I didn't live that long-- to see people checking human muscles, to see a farmer walk up to a man and check out his muscles, tell him to take off his jacket or whatever he had, a shirt or whatever, and check his muscles or check his teeth. I knew from that time that's how you were checking horses, I knew that, that you have to check horses by their teeth. The teeth would tell you their age and their health. And that's how we were examined, and then the farmer says, "Yes, I will take this and I will take that." But never a family. He just takes what he wants. The rest of the people stay in the camp. He took them to farm to work for them. And that was like being liberated because there should be some food there, there should be something. But one of the younger men were chosen like that that we knew, that the parents knew, to go to the farm. My father, knowing some German, because with Ukies you couldn't make any arrangement in that camp, none whatsoever, because they were very nasty to us, very nasty.

JF: What do you mean, the Ukrainians would not let you work in a German farm?

MT: No, you could not make any agreements with them. Talk to them or anything. They were very nasty to us, very nasty.

JF: And, if the German farmers came to get people from that camp, the Ukrainians...?

MT: That was all right.

JF: That was all right.

MT: Oh, yes. But then later on, in camp you couldn't talk to them. Like "Could I cook something or this or that?" No. Nothing. They were in full control, they were in nasty control. I was just a youngster but I knew like, they had lice problem or whatever, some kind of problems in camps like that, because there was no cleaning facilities. We never took showers, we never did anything, so every so often, I think twice that I remember, they would chase us into the shower room. So, again, when I remember, I went with women, but it was all together, anyway. One side was women and the other side was men. but what they did: there were two tables, small tables, the women were sitting at one table, men had to walk by her table, but his organ on the table and she examined him. Not a doctor, a worker, a camp worker -- a woman.

JF: What was she examining?

MT: Just him as a male. Just for kicks. The women went by guys, and they were just regular workers, they worked for us, and they were just exchanging, sitting there, you know. She sat there for a certain length of time until she got tired of it and then another woman took over and so forth. They were just...

JF: They were not there to be looking for some kind of...

MT: No. Not. They were just to dehumanize you. To remove another part of your natural instinct to be...

JF: Modest?

MT: Yes, and to be yourself, not-- and women the same thing. Men were just sitting there just making a big deal out of it. "There's a woman." The woman would stand in front of his desk and he would do his thing, whatever he wanted to do.

JF: What would they do?

MT: They would just examine them. They were touching them and they were joking to each other and so forth, whatever. Big kicks.

JF: What happened to you?

MT: They would not do anything to me, so I guess they did not have gay individuals there or something, and I was not interesting enough for older women, for mature women. I was never molested or made a fool of that way, but I had to undress and run around naked. I would hide around my mother. Then would come the time that they turned the water on. I don't remember soap or anything, but they put the water on. They would turn the water on. It was so cold you could die. So everybody's shivering. There I was hiding under my mother to protect me from the cold water, and pretty soon the water stops. Thank God. Aha! Another shower, hot, as hot as you can make it. You can't stand it. You start screaming and the kids were screaming, hiding. Just playing around, those people. That was showers...

JF: Toying with you?

MT: Terribly.

JF: And again, these were Ukrainian guards all the time.

MT: Ukrainian. Yes, and I am working with one right now. I don't remember him. I know my mother would and I still don't have enough guts to take a picture of him.

JF: He-- the Ukrainian man that you are working with, do you think this is someone that your parents knew or...?

MT: They would recognize him because we go, once a week, to a dinner, certain groups, individuals that work there, we go outside to dinner. It's more or less like a restaurant - beer place, so we have hot meal and a beer or a cognac, whatever, with it. Well, this guy had a few brandies and he started talking about Germany and what camps he was in. He was Ukrainian. So I said, "Which camp were you in?" and he says, "Neumark." Well, I should have kept my mouth shut but I say, "I was in Neumark," and that killed the whole thing. I said, "How comes you were in Neumark?" You are in Ukrainian," and he

says, "Yes, but they kept me as a prisoner." "Prisoner of what?" Neumark was divided into two camps. One side of the wall was the animals, us, and the other side were the privileged people, that that took care of us. So he was one of them.

JF: The guards.

MT: Yes, the guards, the workers.

JF: Workers?

MT: The real guards were Germans. They walked with German shepherds. There were towers. It was not a concentration camp where they had uniforms and they were determined to kill you right away, but it was a camp that they were eliminating somebody everyday. Just beating them to death until they didn't move. You didn't know if they died, they just removed them from the premises and you never saw them again. You just-- constantly-- we went to one funeral like that. You never went to a funeral, but something happened and my mother insisted that she wants to have a funeral for that woman, I think it was.

JF: This was in the camp?

MT: In the camp. So they allowed us. Couple, I know that I went there. I was always altar boy. So there we were. There were no priests; they were also removed from our premises. They were in separate places, camps. Funeral, there was no funeral. Somebody said some kind of prayer. Guards. The body was in a paper sack. It was just thrown into a ditch and you're not allowed to even cover it. On the side there were other bodies laying, like ash. They must have been burning them. There was one young girl that still made some movement. She was laying on that pile of the bodies...

JF: She was still alive?

MT: She was partially alive, and you couldn't do anything.

JF: Were there any kind of public executions, or was it more impromptu beatings?

MT: No, there was no-- in those camps I was in, there was nothing like that. Other camps they had some. No. This was just constant, constant cut-down on food and...

JF: Illnesses and starvation?

MT: If you would ever get ill, that's it.

JF: Was there any medical facility at all? Any medicine?

MT: No, there was no doctor. No way. When the Americans liberated-- that's, that comes later, we went to that farmer, a young man, that was picked by a farmer. Somehow my father made arrangements, like I said, you couldn't make arrangements with Ukrainians, so he made arrangements with a *Lagerführer*, or was it a *Oberlagerführer* - his assistant lager, camp director, assistant camp director, to allow two of his sons to walk over to that farmer, to go there to visit this guy and came back. No way...

JF: You and your brother?

MT: Ya. "No way." How could-- somehow they made out that we can go. Only us two.

JF: What were you supposedly going to do?

MT: We were supposed to-- they knew that they would not allow us to bring any food in, but eat as much as you can, whatever you can.

JF: And the *Lagerführer*...?

MT: No, we were just allowed to go to visit this guy.

JF: That was the premise?

MT: The premise, yes, to go to visit him, because we knew him, and after all, these are young kids and everything, and they were together for x number of years. Why can't they go there and perhaps later on they will be working for this farmer, whatever, blah, blah, blah. So they allowed us to go.

JF: Did he bribe the guard, or the *Oberführer*, *Lagerführer*?

MT: I don't think you could bribe them. No! They would not be interested in any money; there was nothing like that, because everything that they had-- it was all theirs. Just like a canary you have in a cage. They can bribe you. "If you let me, I'll give you my egg - oh, you don't have to let me..." [unclear] So my father explained, you can't take a piece of paper to show a map or anything-- explained how to go there. We went there. We found the place, I don't know how. You can't ask anybody, you just have to go through the wilderness, never through populated area, and we got to the place. We recognized it from a distance. We couldn't even run. We were very weak. We got there. Right away he started making signs...

JF: Who? The young man...?

MT: The young man because of the farmer, because he is around and keeping eye on me. We said, "Is there any food around?" and he says, "No." I said, "Come on, we are very hungry." Then we heard chickens in a chicken coop. There must be eggs in it. We got to the chicken coop and grabbed some eggs and the chickens started making an awful lot of noise and the farmer came out. [unclear]. No, no, no, no! We didn't have a chance to say "hello" to this guy or anything. I grabbed a whole egg and pushed it in my mouth and just swallowed it pretending that I don't have anything and I guess my brother even did do it or-- and we had to just run and go before they turned the dogs on us. It was actually more wasted energy than it was worth because-- on the way back...

JF: There was no danger of you being picked up in a situation like that?

MT: I don't think that anybody cares, except my father told us to stay away from populated areas. Don't go through populated areas. We went through just open fields and woods.

JF: Did it cross your mind to keep on going?

MT: No. No. No language. We couldn't.

JF: You didn't have the language?

MT: No. Never. You had something very dear left behind; and the only thing you could do is think how to free them. There was no way you-- It was a tough situation that you were in. Say you could run away. So, where could you go? I don't know. On the way

back, there was a German convoy going not too far from the camp, and Americans caught up with them. Three planes, one coming down, going up, constantly just working right through the whole convoy, [made noise] dropping small bombs, napalm, I think, and they just destroyed that convoy beautifully. We knew-- It looked to us that they were bombing the camp. We cried, we kissed, we hugged. That was the end of our parents, the end of everything. As closer we got to the camp, the more we realized, it's not the camp, it's German soldiers, the convoy was caught. They were destroyed right on the road that goes by the camp. Horses-- they still had horses, killed, just upside down, [unclear] trucks, vehicles burning, everything. Well, we got to the camp and told them the news-- Nothing, Germans killed all over. For the next three weeks, I think, all we had to eat, and that is not right away. It was-- it must have been summertime, because those horses blew up real big and after they had exploded already they drug them, and we had to-- the man had to drug the horse in one at a time; one day, one horse, and they would cut the horse's head off and put it at the door of the kitchen, where you walk by to pick up your food. Flies all over it, prop it up so you can see the teeth they even put one-- you can put the stick into the mouth of the horse so it's open and you can really see the teeth, and all the smell and everything. They would give us food made from that meat. But you know? That didn't make any difference. That didn't make any difference.

JF: You were too hungry-- or too desensitized?

MT: I don't know. It didn't change the taste. It didn't do anything. It's unreal, you know. I think about it now. It didn't make any difference. The food didn't taste different. The food was not different.

JF: You said the food in this camp was particularly bad?

MT: It was very bad. The Ukrainians would cook for themselves, let's say, potatoes, in those big kitchen-- whatever they call them, real huge floor-type pots, like what, 150-gallon jobs.

JF: The vats?

MT: The vats, whatever you call them, I don't know what you call them, that steam heats those things. They would cook their food in that, then they would throw some soap in or something, I don't know what, something that made it bluish-- they would throw a lot of water, they would throw a lot of potato peelings, unwashed, and whatever leftovers they had, I imagine they would throw into those containers. Put water, and I think they were putting some soap in probably to get even with us. But soap was hard to get. I don't know what made it bluish. All bluish water. Ugly. And then they would feed it to us, not hot, not cold, like lukewarm.

JF: And that's what you would have, when, at noon-time?

MT: Only once a day, once a day they would give it to us. It was-- when I was with women-- I guess it was around noon-time. Now, in the evening, men, I guess. So maybe it was twice a day.

JF: But that's the only food you got? There was no bread?

MT: No, and when we would get us this liquid, and it would go right through you. It was unreal. And if somebody would find a piece of meat, or something, they would share it, give it to the kid. Share it. By mistake there is meat in this mixture.

JF: You describe the horse and the horse meat that must have been used at some point. Was that-- that was an exception, then?

MT: That was an exception because they were killed a couple of days prior to this. But that was all not sanitary, and everything was cooked to be sanitary. I remember looking around the trash, finding some potatoes and grabbing that. That was more delicious than apples. If you found a potato some place, that was very good. You got completely dehumanized. You had no more feelings about anything. After a couple showers like that, and all that food, and all that nonsense. In the morning, "Good morning" was Ukrainians would open the door and yell, "*Alles Männer heraus. Verfluchte Donnerwetter, alles Männer heraus!*" "Damn it to hell whatever. All men, get out." That was good morning. Let's work. Then you had to work, but you always had *Verfluchte Donnerwetter!* "Damn it to hell," or "God damn it to hell! All the men out!" Then you went.

JF: Was there any kind of religious observance in the camp?

MT: There was once that I remember. I'm glad that you asked that. And I think that's why I can't-- I feel very blue around holidays: Easter, Christmas, I feel terribly depressed. We had, I think it was Easter or something, in one of their garages or something. I remember a big Hitler's portrait, very high, a very big one and underneath they had some kind of a table, altar, Ukrainian Orthodox. Monks were all around it, they dressed differently, and they were singing to Hitler, praying to Hitler, but mentioning God in there, for God to help Hitler, and [unclear] the whole German nation. Ya, that was the religious ceremony we went to.

JF: This was in the last camp?

MT: The last camp, yes.

JF: Who was leading them?

MT: There? There it was their side that they felt probably we need religion. They were Ukrainians. They were allowed to have their religion but they probably felt that this was a sacred time. We should probably allow the rest of the animals to also enjoy this. But I still remember praying, not us, but them praying to Hitler in their language. I never took Ukrainian, but I could understand, because the words are similar. They were Slavish.

JF: It was the one time that that would happen?

MT: That was the only time that I remember. No other thing. Never any school, there was never any medical, nothing.

JF: There was no schooling?

MT: Never. Nothing.

JF: Were you able to maintain any kind of time, either individually or with your family, for any kind of prayer? Did that help at all?

MT: It never happened. On the trains I remember that they were singing religious songs, never political, just religious, to keep them alive because it was cold. Just to get everybody involved, I guess, psychologically to get them involved. Not to give up. Later on, as soon as we hit the camps, they removed all that. Nobody ever talked. Period. About anything.

JF: Did you find that you used or relied on religion at all as an individual?

MT: Yes. Yes. Deeply. For some reason that is the only thing I think that helped us to survive: hoping that there is a miracle around the corner. That something will happen. This cannot be allowed to go any further. May I stop at this point? [tape off and on] Religion actually was the only thing that even us as kids helped us to survive from day to day. For some reason we could communicate by just looking at each other into the eyes, and we all thought about the same thing, that perhaps tomorrow will change. Things will change, but we did not say it out loud because, I guess, you were not allowed to say it aloud.

JF: This was you and your brothers?

MT: Us. Me and my brothers and the parents. Every so often would try to catch their eye, which was very sad. Once you are in that type of situation, it is so sad that just the glimpse of somebody's eye tells you the whole story. You don't want to say why. Like my children. I get so upset. You tell them something and right away comes, "Why? Why?" And I say, "Well, can't you figure out something by yourself?"

JF: There was, in other words, much more non-verbal kind of communication...?

MT: Yes, it was like feeling. It wasn't body language, because there wasn't much of a body. But I think it was just like a...

JF: There was certainly an intimacy about your experiences, shared knowledge of how you were feeling and what you were going through, really seemed to bring your family very close together.

MT: I think that every family at that time was a very closely knit family. All the families in Europe, Jewish, Polish, all of them, and it must have been a terrible tragedy in each case, for each one of them, because what I am saying what I went through, which I didn't go through anything the feeling-- What kind of feeling did a parent have when he saw his child killed in front of him? We all were starved in front of our parents. Something else, something we could not allow right now to happen. If you have a child, to see somebody systematically cut down on food and eliminate their health and their well-being, systematically.

JF: Did you have close contacts with other families or with other children in the camp, or was the family unit the key emotional nucleus for you?

MT: It was actually a family unit, I would say, even though we were in the one barrack, but we were just a group of family.

JF: The six of you, the eight of you?

MT: Yes, I mean as far as the real intimate feeling of sharing this heat, of love that was not allowed to be expressed, I guess, through emotionally, just-- but kindness and sharing there was-- I remember it was throughout the whole system. If somebody was unable to walk, everybody would try to help him because soon as he fell, that was the end of it.

JF: There was mutual support?

MT: It was mutual because, I guess, they all knew they were in the same boat. There is no way out.

JF: You talked before about the one boy who was working for the farmer and you and your brother had known him. Was there any talking, any dreaming, or remembering of times when you were not in this situation, or fantasies about what would be if you were not in this situation as far as what you would be doing? What kind of life you would be leading?

MT: You see, I went through that same question. I asked myself many times. I did not have that. I believe what happens, once you are reduced to that level, you don't have any dreams. You don't recall anything. You just are where you are, but all that is not there. I don't have any recollection of wonderful-- in my case it was Christmas. It was always such a thing where you get presents. Nothing. Never. Never about anything. Or my friends, or playing ball, or something? Never. Yet I was so active before. Bicycles, everything.

JF: You didn't think about these things?

MT: No, never.

JF: Do you think that the dehumanization process that you talked about before...?

Tape four, side two:

JF: We were talking about whether or not such memories would have been part of the dehumanization process, or whether it was too painful to dream outside the present.

MT: Well, I think it was perhaps two, both, but I think the dehumanization did play the major part in it. They removed this beautiful human dream, of becoming, of growing up to become somebody and to live up to your parents' dreams or perhaps to-- whatever. It was all removed. Then it was also painful to go back and, I believe, to play around with something you had before. Something that gave you pleasure. But, also, I think there was a third factor involved: that we were not given the opportunity, the chance, to actually think. That was taken. Each time you were yelled at, and you were pushed and you were moved, so whatever they did, somebody either thought of that, that that's the way to handle people or, if not, they did do a good job and they constantly kept you disturbed and ducking or whatever...

JF: Your energies went toward that instead?

MT: Yes, you never had actually a minute chance. I don't even remember dreaming. I just don't know how I slept, but I never had dreams. I often thought that perhaps when somebody is in jail he dreams about his family, dreams of that. That's not true. I don't believe you have those dreams. They are removed, or maybe it's the defensive mechanism in our subconscious mind that locks everything away. To keep you from losing whatever you have. You had a little mind. It is so easy for a child to lose his mind altogether, if you would realize and compare it to...

JF: How was it when you were liberated, as far as this kind of thinking was concerned? Were you able to resume the fantasies and the thoughts of normal adolescence and that of an average adolescent at a later point, or do you feel that this time affected what happened to you later?

MT: No, it did do something. It was a shock of a tremendous importance in my life. When we were liberated, first the Germans at night chased us out of the camp. The Americans did not bomb camps. Many times Germans would mark the camp with red cross on the roofs just to protect themselves. They could hide wherever they wanted in the camps, I guess. They were not destroyed. At night they switched places with us. The army went into the camp and they chased us into the woods. In the morning we were caught in the middle of war front. Americans are coming. We were in the woods, I think for three days. Again, no food. But we-- my father parked us and we made a little bed of leaves. It must have been-- it was May-- when we were liberated.

JF: This was the liberation. You were kicked out into the woods so that the Army could...

MT: Yes. Could take our place so that they would not be touched by the planes.

JF: That was liberation?

MT: That was liberation. So then we were caught between the fire, from Germans to the Americans. We were right in the middle. All the artillery and the machine guns and everything flying back and forth. We were very close to a stream, so we had water. Right next to the stream bed, we made our beds, just leaves and dried grass and we were laying on it, sleeping on that, just huddling together. I don't remember much sleeping. Anyway, there was constantly boom, boom and explosions everywhere. Every morning when my mother woke up she said, "I smell Darlings." Darlings were English cigarettes that she smoked in Hungary. They had a specific aroma. They were the good cigarettes which she forgot what a cigarette smells like, I guess. "I smell Darlings," and my father said, "No, there is no British forces here. It's wrong." And she said, "I smell it." Shortly after two soldiers came out with grenades hanging on their chest, different helmets that I ever saw.

JF: British?

MT: With guns. Americans.

JF: Um'm.

MT: My father had found an old ax, because we went through some caves that were a castle not far away, they chased us out. Not too far from the camp was a big castle. He found an ancient ax, with a part of the handle on it. It was to protect us from what, I don't know. He reached for the ax and they screamed, and yelled at him and jumped on his hand. He said, "Polisher" in German: "We are Polish." They called-- the guy didn't couldn't speak any language, I guess. The American, he called an interpreter. It was a Polish guy from around upstate Pennsylvania, I think. He spoke some Polish. My father prepared bunkers around the castle, protective bunkers from-- if invasion forces will be coming. So he sketched out the plan of the bunker. He said, "You are bombing the castle. It is not the castle that the Germans are in," and he showed them what-- He said, "I was working there and I know, and it is so far from the camp, and in the camp there are no civilians anymore, they are army." Well, everything went on alert and they sent us back, but they would not give us any kind of protection. They just told us to go back. My mother ripped whatever she had. We put it on a stick and we were carrying it like a flag. It wasn't too white, because we didn't have anything white. It must have been very grayish, but that was the only cloth that she had. Airplanes would be diving right, almost hitting us, and recognizing that we were just a bunch of nothing, that we were not soldiers-- an awful lot of shooting. Everybody was shooting. Everything was going on and we were just walking. Artillery shells were exploding all around, but we thought after we told them that they would give us some protection, and take us on a jeep or something. Of course, we didn't know what a jeep was. Now we worked our way back towards the American back lines. They told us not to touch any food. Americans are big eaters; they had an awful lot of cans, cans of food, and it was laying all around, and they told us not to touch it because a lot of it was booby trapped by Germans and it could explode. Well, that didn't mean anything. Nobody heard that. We were grabbing everything we could. And Americans didn't finish

their food. They just start something open, they didn't like it, I guess and we were-- no utensils or anything. Just eating all that-- butter. They had cans of butter. Butter was like-- I wouldn't touch it now. Well, we went back and one of the soldiers asked my mother or my father what time it is. My mother still had her watch, it was a Wittnauer, not Wittnauer, but Longines. As soon as she went like that, he removed it from her hand. Oh, my God. This was when my father went berserk. On Hungarian border, he said he wants to see an officer. They gave her back her watch. It was a mistake. I guess they didn't realize we're Polish, or something. Just straight out of-- nonsense camp. That's the brutality of the war, that actually even the good people will get sucked into it, do things that were not necessary. But he thought he will get whatever he can from, because this was his first probably encounter with-- anyway. But then, they gave me a bar of chocolate, a soldier, and I went out like a light. I ate maybe a Hershey bar. I remember. I ate maybe one fourth of it and I was out, unconscious for two weeks. It was not poison, but my body was not able to handle that rich food, and I was in terrible fever and everything. They told me later on I had whatever some kind of poison and they put everybody on a strict diet.

JF: Where were you during the time that you were so ill?

MT: It was in camp. After that they took us back in camp; I don't know how we got back to camp. I got back to camp. I remember it was night and then everything, the lights went out.

JF: This was in Neumark.

MT: Neumark. All day we were running around. They're fighting and they captured without killing one soldier, without losing their soldiers or killing anybody. They captured all those Germans. Actually, as a matter of fact, my father should get some kind of prize for that. There was nothing: no loss of life, capturing all those Germans. On either side. They were just surrounded and then they gave up.

JF: You say your father should have gotten...

MT: A medal for that. Some recognition for telling them where they are and they were able to take them without a fight. They just surrounded them and told them, "You are surrounded and it is up to you." Somebody was smart and they gave up. Well, I was out for two weeks and later on I developed a brain-cell inflammation. It is meninges, or something.

JF: Meningitis?

MT: Of the brain, meningitis? The brain-- it was. It got inflamed on me. So, again I was out. There was no medical facility. The first American troops that went through, they did not have medical staff for us. They were just a fighting force, and when the second wave came through, the mop-up patrol, they came through with medics. But before they got to me, I was already again unconscious, a terrible temperature and nothing to fight it. My father had to dig a hole in the ground and have two bottles, like wine bottles, fill them up with water, let them down as deep as he can. Cool it, then they would apply compresses to my head to cool me. There was nothing, no ice, no aspirin even, no nothing.

JF: Who was in charge of the camp?

MT: At that time nobody. Nobody. It was sad. There was nobody but, of course, it was better than those other animals. If I would have developed any of that sooner, I would have died. They would have just thrown me to the side. So, that was it. But before-- I jumped over one thing. When they did liberate, before I got this brain-cell inflammation, Americans gave the camps, camp people, three days to settle their differences with people that were in charge of them, people in town, whatever. Well, for some reason, my parents knew what it meant. I guess every adult knew what it meant: settle your differences, because after these three days there would be courts and everything. There would be no more free hand, get-even. They removed us from that scene, so I haven't seen anything, but later on I heard of terrible things that were happening. They removed us to a village nearby. Veen, they called it, and I remember I had some kind of sour soup that the German farmer prepared, and they had to take us in. Farmers didn't have a choice. They had to take us in as guests, into the farmhouse, because that was already occupied by American forces. So we went in there and they had rooms and they had to take us in.

JF: What was their attitude towards you?

MT: Not bad. I don't remember anything nasty from them. The food was tremendous. We never saw that much food in our lives. They were not nasty, but at night it was very scary, and they were scared and I guess they told my parents that we are making it worse. They had those shutters, window shutters, that they had to close at night, because that was the type of territory they lived in. At that time there was a lot of German soldiers that were still hiding in the forest. They did not want to surrender. There was still like guerrillas fighting, quiet tactics, and they would come around to those homes, I remember, at night. They would be hitting on the window and telling them in German, "Open up. We are your brothers. We need food and we need this," and they would not open it for them. They were afraid.

JF: You were recovered by this time from the illnesses that you had?

MT: No, it was only the chocolate I had recovered from-- Not from Veen, sorry. When we went to Veen it was right after we went through the front. We went through the terrible front and everything, and we swung around to the camp and Americans declared three days of cleaning up. They finally captured the Germans and they have re-liberated the camp. At that time I was given a chocolate bar and I went unconscious.

JF: And you were in the camp during that time?

MT: I was in the camp. Huh. That's good. I was in the camp. But when did they give us? So that means the first group, the first group of soldiers that went through, they did not give us permission to kill or anything, but it was the second group of soldiers that came through, I guess...

JF: It was a group of Americans that gave you permission.

MT: Oh, yes. They were all Americans. The first group is the fighters. They just go through like a bulldozer and fight for the territory. The second group comes in and

cleans up whatever wasn't done by the first group. Then the third group was the medical and the full established companies.

JF: So it was the second group that gave you permission to pillage or kill, or whatever?

MT: Not to pillage. Just to kill whoever was terrible to you, because they said, after this, they will have to be brought to court.

JF: Was that common?

MT: I think it was, but I think it's very-- not stupid. It's very uncivilized. It's something you don't want to do to a person what's hurt badly. You don't want to give him the privilege.

JF: To unleash all that aggression.

MT: To get even, because then he will never live through this again. I think it was very, very bad.

JF: But it was the American army that did this?

MT: Oh, yes. I think they did it with the thought that after they saw what was happening to people, that this must be revenged some way. But some people, they were still capable of doing it. I heard they did capture some Ukrainians. They would try, with whatever they had, shovels or anything, to finish them off, and they said that they never knew that a person was so hard to kill, because always an arm or something was still moving. Now, I never saw this, because I was in the village. When we came to the village-- so that must have been-- it was still the second group that came through then. I ate the chocolate and then I went out, but we still did not have medics. Then the medical group came through and they put the whole camp on a strict diet of water, warm cereals, oatmeal, I think, water, and then after so many days there was a little milk in it, and oatmeal, and then finally, it was milk and oatmeal; you could drink milk separately, and so forth.

JF: So, that when you talk about this brain-cell infection that you had, that was during the time that the medics were there?

MT: Nope. That was before the medics got there, yet.

JF: How was that diagnosed? How did they know what was going on with you?

MT: There were some individuals in camps from Hungary-- and I don't know how it was diagnosed. It was diagnosed that I had a-- that's a good one! There was nothing that they were giving me. I think, just cold compresses on my head. But I know that my parents were saying-- I always have to remember that because some day I might need to know that if some problems would develop, that I had that. I never questioned that. It's a good point. I don't know how they diagnosed it, whether somebody knew enough, or whether my parents later on investigated it, and had somebody determine what, I don't know. And then things, you said, did things start coming to normal? Then, yes. There was no schools, but us as young boys-- I don't remember girls. We were not interested in girls at all for some reason. And I was at an age when I should have been looking already at girls.

JF: It was an age, you said, when you should have been looking, but you weren't interested.

MT: No, not at all. After I got well and so forth, a certain time, I don't even remember, my brother got well, we started to form like boy scouts. My older brother was always the leader. He would be the group pack leader and we would go and try to imitate what we did in Hungary, when we were boy scouts there, younger, and going with parents, with father into the woods with the rest of the boys, organized. We started doing the same things. Walking around and trying to pick the berries, because there was nothing else. You couldn't make hamburgers or hot dogs. But we would pick the berries and so forth, and we would play, not army, but play like we were Knights of the Round Table, or something. That was the only getting back to normal. There was nothing, no toys, no nothing.

JF: You were at that time about 12?

MT: Twelve. Must have been 12 in '45. I was '34. [born in '34]

JF: Twelve and a half, perhaps. You were still living in the camp?

MT: Oh, yes, but that was a sad set-up. We lived in camps until we left Germany.

JF: How long was that?

MT: Until '49. I arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, on August 27, 1949.

JF: Were you still living in the same camp?

MT: No.

JF: These were different DP camps, then?

MT: Yes. Neumark was the first one. Then we went to Hochenfels.

JF: Neumark was the camp from which you were liberated, but you stayed there for about how long?

MT: I don't know, probably months, two months, three months. At least 3 months. Six months.

JF: And then the next one is H-O-C-H-E-N-F-E-L-S.

MT: Hochenfels, correct; Ansbauch.

JF: A-N-N-S-B-A-C-H... [correct spelling is Ansbauch]

MT: W-I-L-D-F-L-E-C-K-E-N-- and then there was-- see, what happened, we ended up, Neumark was the camp we were in, but from then on we were in German military camps.

JF: These were German military?

MT: Without Germans in them. They were old and some of them were new. Military barracks.

JF: H-E-I-L-B-R-O-N-N.

MT: Yes, Heilbronn, that's near Stuttgart. That's Wittenberg.

JF: And the last L-U-D-V-I-G-S-B-U-R-G. [Ludwigsburg].

MT: Ludwigburg, and then Brementhafen.

JF: B-R-E-M-E-N-H-A-F-E-N [Bremerhaven]

MT: Yes, but now these last two, Ludwigsburg and Bremerhaven [Bremerhaven], they were-- where we were being watched-- we were leaving Germany, so they were pre-- preparatory camps for coming to the United States. So in Ludwigsburg, they screened us, they did everything, they checked our health, to make sure that we are capable of doing things for ourselves. In Bremerhafen, [Bremerhaven] we just waited for the ship. That is the port, from which we left for New York City, but we never made it to New York because of the storm. We ended up in Boston, Massachusetts. We had to go around it.

JF: When we spoke before, you told me that after you were liberated and, whether it was in Europe or whether it was upon coming to the United States, that you had dreams that were quite pronounced. Could you describe those to me?

MT: Yes. I always would wake up not just dream about it, would wake up in the middle of the night. The Germans were after me.

JF: Was this still in Europe, or was this once you came here to America?

MT: It wasn't too much in Europe. It was when I came here, when I finally, I believe, I experienced a total relaxation and freedom. My dream of my life was to own a gun. A gun meant life to me.

JF: When you say dream, you're not talking about an actual dream, you are talking about a wish.

MT: Yes. My wish. My desire was to put my hand on a gun, to have a gun, because gun meant so much when I was in captivity. A gun meant everything. Money didn't mean anything, but a gun meant power. A gun meant freedom. A gun meant everything. So as soon as I had a chance, I bought a weapon to go hunting. Ten dollars it cost me to buy a shotgun, a cheap shotgun. I treasured it. I cleaned it and everything, and then I went into the military, and I bought a 45 pistol soon as I came out.

JF: You were in the American military?

MT: Yes, the 82nd Airborne, and I bought a 45 pistol, as soon as I came out of the military. Of course, I had it registered and I had to send to the FBI or whatever, and I still have it. I'm still the owner of a 45, and I used to play with it something terrible. On the weekends I would clean it in the yard so everybody could see it. Like a child with a new toy and I had to take it apart, and I had to oil it and pretend that I am looking at the barrel and, finally it left me. I am free. I don't have to have a weapon.

JF: How long did that feeling last?

MT: That feeling was for quite a while, because as soon as I had the weapons, then it rekindled the old memories, I think. So when I would go to bed, then the dreams would change that Germans are not just chasing me, but if I could only get to my gun, to my pistol, that was even after I got out of the military, if I just could get to my pistol, things will change.

JF: So the initial dream was that the Germans were chasing you?

MT: They were chasing me and I was running away and it is so hard when you are asleep to run. It's like they are getting closer and your legs are so tired. You can't run because of blankets or whatever you have over you. You can't move. And they are getting closer and closer, and finally you wake up and they are not here. Phew. They are not here.

JF: When you got your rifle, or when you got your 45?

MT: When I got the 45. The rifle did not turn me on because they did not carry rifles, but the pistol.

JF: It was the pistol that was significant?

MT: Yes.

JF: And then you were trying to get the pistol in your dream?

MT: To get the pistol and get even with them.

JF: Did you reach the pistol in the dream?

MT: I never reached the pistol.

JF: It was trying to get it?

MT: Yes. Never. I was always trying so hard. So terribly hard to get it, and I never got to it. I never had a chance or did kill anybody in my dream.

JF: Was there anything in particular that happened around the time that these dreams stopped, as you recall, or did they just end?

MT: Perhaps. No. I think I loosened up a little bit, mentally, I think. I started having more fun and found out more about women. And I think it partially moved everything out of my old mind and replaced it with new.

Tape five, side one:

JF: You said that you loosened up, you were able then to become involved with women.

MT: Then I started to become a human again. I started having human feelings. I wasn't afraid to-- I was shy prior to that. Tremendously shy. I never had a chance to play my role as a growing up boy. For some reason, perhaps, because I thought I was a woman, I didn't feel right in any kind of situation, so if a girl would talk to me I would blush immediately and I would get so red in the face; I wished I would die right there.

JF: You are talking about when you were here already you still had some of those feelings that you did when you were working in the woman's side of the camp?

MT: I think that that perhaps had an effect on me. I was just trying to see why I was that way, because I was tremendously shy. My brother wasn't like that. I was tremendously shy. I could not talk to a girl without completely falling apart. Completely. I didn't want even to get a job where girls were working because I couldn't handle it. It was very-- I took shorthand in high school in Williamsport, and I had to drop it because all the girls were in the class.

JF: You were in high school?

MT: In high school. When I came here I was 16.

JF: So you were in Williamsport, Pennsylvania?

MT: Yes, that's where my parents are.

JF: And that's when you were put really for the first time in a typical adolescent atmosphere?

MT: Exactly. I never went to our high school prom; I didn't want to ask a girl and the girls would ask me and I just couldn't do it.

JF: It was not until you were out of the service, after high school?

MT: Yes, after the service then I started learning something about myself. It was, I think, the service probably that did open up my mind. I had exposure to the weapons and everything and started even hating that part of the life, perhaps, weapons, in the service because I had so much of it in the service.

JF: I'm sorry, instead of hating?

MT: Then I perhaps started to hate some of it, I mean, the weapons itself, but, nevertheless, when I did come home I did reach that point where I bought myself a pistol to fulfill my need, and it did. It fulfilled my need very quickly.

JF: Did you enlist in the service after high school? Was that something you wanted to do?

MT: I joke around that there were 20 volunteers that left my neighborhood that morning. There was I and 20 MP's. No, I did enlist. And, I had a weird experience in the military. There was one German fellow straight from Germany. Couldn't speak English too well yet. He was in my company, and on the maneuvers, he happened to be in back of

me and I ordered him in front of me and I said, "You will never again be in back of me with a weapon." And I felt very bad about that. He never asked for an explanation, but I did reflect on that many times later on and said to myself, "Why did you do that?" Because, I guess, I couldn't control it. I couldn't stand a German right in back of me with a weapon. Yet here I was in the American army.

JF: But you still were fighting old battles?

MT: I also told them later on that I was sorry for that but don't ever send me to Germany. Send me any place in the world as a soldier. Don't send me to Germany, because I will not be able to control myself. You don't want to do that and I don't want to do that. Later on I got sick and tired of stateside duties, being in the States. Everybody was going all over the world and here I am. I asked to be sent to Germany, but they would not do it. So finally I pressed for it, pressed for it. They took out my papers. They read a little statement. "Turzanski, this is what you said," so I was never sent out, and I'm glad I wasn't because I would have probably done something that I shouldn't have. Try to as an adult to undo something that I shouldn't try to undo, because people that I would do to would be the people who actually had nothing to do with it.

JF: Is there anything else that you want to add?

MT: The only thing that I would like to add is that hatred is the worst thing in our lives. Hatred should never be put into children's minds because it will destroy, even when it comes to the enemy. They should be taught about the enemy, but not actually how to hate them, only what he is. I feel quite comfortable with my parents and I still give them credit, more and more credit each time I read something about psychology of the human behavior and so forth; how well they handled that. They removed that hatred from us. I know what Ukrainians did to us. I know what Germans did to us. But it happened at that time. It does not mean that all of them did that to me, that all of them wanted to do it, etc. We made a pledge, all four of us, when we were liberated in Neumark, that we will take 120 Ukrainian lives before we are dead, because we lost all our family.

JF: All the rest of your family?

MT: Yes, during the war. All the cousins-- all wiped out. We don't have anybody.

JF: These were people who stayed in Poland?

MT: Yes, yes. And they were executed: one, because he was suspected to be an underground soldier, young man, my cousin's brother. She still cries about it. And they were also talking about that she married a Jewish guy to save his life. She was Catholic and there was a lot of it going on just like anyplace else when things were happening fast. I don't believe the women were taking advantage of the situation, but I think also that they felt that they could do something.

JF: You knew of other cases like that, where Polish girls would marry Jewish men to save them?

MT: Yes, to save them. Now, also...

JF: Did they stay married?

MT: Yes, this is very strong. It is unreal, what happens. When you make a bind like that, when you sign a contract like that, a mental contract, I don't think that there is much that can break after that.

JF: Did they stay living in Poland?

MT: Oh no. They are in New York, in a Jewish community, where they feel comfortable.

JF: They live in a Jewish community?

MT: Yes.

JF: Did she stay Catholic or did she convert?

MT: She didn't stay much one way or the other because she probably didn't care, but her husband, a Jewish fellow she married, wanted to make sure that their daughter will be a Catholic child. So, it is actually, that's a big sacrifice for him.

JF: They have one child?

MT: Only one child. But it was, I think, because of the old man, Mr. [unclear].

JF: Her father?

MT: His father. He wanted to make sure that he never leaves this woman, no matter what, even if she loses her mind or whatever, because what she had done for us, for them, and make sure that her child will be protected if he dies later on. Tremendous individual.

JF: His father told him to raise his child as a Catholic?

MT: Yes. And his father...

JF: As a way of thanking her for her sacrifices?

MT: It is sad, you know, when you really think about it, from a human point of view. Those are tremendous sacrifices that one does to pay-- you don't pay-- to thank, and I don't even know if thank is the word. 'Cause she wanted a man and she had a man, but I think it's that other side, his side, that he feels that he should do something, which is another part of being human. Now, what really hurts individual like I-- I went through rough things in my life and enjoyed some good times here-- is what I read about Polish behavior in Second World War, where we are worse than Hitler is, in the eyes of the Jewish community, at least I was told that, and there must be reasons for it. But then I also did the same thing as you do. I also want to reach in and look for answers, because I don't want to build on old tradition. I want to build on something I have here. And I had a map that I thought I could find and bring it in here of Poland during the Second World War. It's like a map of Pennsylvania. If you would take a pepper shaker and shake it over the map, some places the more pepper would fall than others. The whole Poland was one concentration country for Germany, and under each black spot on that map they tell you how many people were murdered, murdered, murdered. And then they show bigger spots, and the chimneys where they formed the camps, and how many died there. The whole country was totally taken over, terrorized, dehumanized and everything. Minorities were given big roles, and

also the criminal element was given big roles. But I am not a historian, but I just know what I went through and it's tough. But, of course, it's always tough if it's sad about you. That, again, is human.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to talk to you. By doing this, I think I'll be a better person. I hope I can sleep better, and this is selfish of me and I hope I'll free myself to become one of you, to freely think and act as one should in the proper manner in a given situation. Sometimes I feel I am lacking a whole lot to reach the level of the free society. Thank God for a free society and let's hope, pray and hope this will never, never occur again, because if it happens in midst of your own, people that you know, people you had contact with, people you touched, you talked to, it's very hard to remove from your memory, from your mind, but, yet, as a human, intelligent human, you don't want to spread a disease of hatred. That makes it much tougher to control that feeling. I thank you.

JF: I cannot thank you enough, Mr. Turzanski.