

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

BENJAMIN GOLDENBERG

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Nora Levin  
Date: February 19, 1988

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Melrose Park, PA 19027

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BG - Benjamin Goldenberg [interviewee]  
RG - Rose Goldenberg [wife of interviewee]  
NL - Nora Levin [interviewer]  
Date: February 19, 1988

*Tape one, side one:*

NL: This is Nora Levin interviewing Mr. Benjamin Goldenberg, February 19, 1988. Yes. If so you will be good enough to tell me where you were born, Mr. Goldenberg?

BG: I was born in Austria-Hungary.

NL: Austria Hungary, and what's the name of the city?

BG: Tekova.

NL: Tekova?

BG: Tekehaza. Tekova is the name in Czechoslovakian.

NL: T-E-K-O-V-A? Tekova.

BG: Yes. Tekova. Yes.

NL: And what year?

BG: Six – twenty-one [6-21], 6-21-1910.

NL: Nineteen-ten [1910]. This is, of course, before Czechoslovakia became a country?

BG: Yes. In 1919, April, it was occupied by Romania for one and a half year. Like now, Russia has it.

NL: I see. And before we go on, with the later period, can you tell us a little about your life in Tekova. Do you remember any childhood experiences?

BG: I had a nice childhood; as a matter of fact my father was in the United States.

NL: He was?

BG: First World War.

NL: What was he doing here?

BG: With other people. He was twice here.

NL: I see.

BG: They were here in from 1899 to 1904, my parents.

NL: I see.

BG: Young married.

NL: Young married.

BG: But my father didn't like it here. So they went back. Then in 1914, he had some accident with the authorities and he was "hot," you know, so he didn't want to go to trial, he took off, he left five kids in Tekova.

NL: Tekova. And your mother raised the children by herself?

BG: From 1920, June.  
NL: From 1920. And how did she manage?  
BG: Look, we had a little store.  
NL: You had a store.  
BG: And we had ground, so we had sharecroppers. We had cows, we had chickens, you know. She managed, we managed. It wasn't, wasn't very lively, but...  
NL: She managed.  
BG: She managed. My mother, she was a good dressmaker and everything. She made dresses, she made clothes for her children, you know, she managed. The days she used to bring eggs, I remember, the chickens, you know...  
NL: I see. Was it a village or a town?  
BG: It was a town.  
NL: A town.  
BG: It was, what can I say, 200 houses, that's all.  
NL: 2,000?  
BG: 200 houses.  
NL: 200 houses?  
BG: 200 families.  
NL: And how many Jewish families?  
BG: Jewish families, 12. Everybody was a Jewish family. I just asked my wife, what she comes from a different section. In our section everyone-- only one had his own house. The Jews were in stores.  
NL: Little businesses.  
BG: Yes, the shoemaker, he was the poorest one. The only one. I used to talk about it. She comes from a different section. There was a lot from different kinds, also from the Carpathian, but there was a lot of good, poor people, not too many Jews in the area. Our section was rich, one of the richest sections in the Carpathian. We had all kinds of fruits. All kind of wheat. I used to tell her, I used to have such a big watermelon, you know, 20- 24 kilos, 55-60 pounds, yes, smaller ones, too.  
NL: Were you the youngest in the family?  
BG: No, I was the fourth, the third boy. My sister was oldest.  
NL: Your sister was the oldest.  
BG: She was born here in the United States. She passed away in '86. She came back here.  
NL: And there was a shul, of course. And you went to...  
BG: Sure we had a shul. It was a shul and we went to Jewish School and we went to public school.  
NL: I see, Austrian schools?  
BG: No, Hungarian. This was Austria - Hungary.  
NL: Hungarian. And so most of your neighbors were Hungarians?

BG: There was Lithuanian and Hungarian. Our section was mixed. We had Lithuanian, Hungarian. In this city we had Lithuanian and Hungarian. Some cities they had Lithuanian, some cities have Romanian, you know.

NL: A mixture.

BG: This is a mixture. We were as a matter of fact, we wound up five kilometers into the Romanian border and 13 kilometers in the Hungarian border. This is in the corner.

NL: Right in the corner. Yes. And what language did you speak, did the family speak?

BG: In the home we speak this way: Yiddish, Hungarian and Lithuanian, like Ukrainian.

NL: Three languages.

BG: Besides that we are speaking German. We learned German in school. We have a regular Hebrew School, like here, the Beth Jacob. We have Hebrew. When I grew up, you know, when I was bigger, after, after 1920 we had moved into a bigger city and there was a regular junior high Hebrew. There was a business school. I went two years to a business school, and there were other school like here, electric technician schools.

NL: Vocational.

BG: We moved into the county seat, the county seat.

NL: And it was 1919 that you moved?

BG: No, we moved later. In 1919, the Romanian was there till 1920 October.

NL: I see and was your life changed under the Romanians?

BG: The Romanian, Romanian was different type like the Czechs and the Hungarians.

NL: Different in what way?

BG: They were very rude.

NL: Rude?

BG: Romanians, rude and dirty. But they were only one and a half year in our section. Well, after the Versailles Treaty, they moved back, I'm telling you miles, about five kilometers, three miles. Became Czechoslovakia.

NL: Yes. And then it came under Czechoslovakia. That was the new state?

BG: New state, and then we learned Czech in the schools.

NL: And what was the name of the city in Czechoslovakia?

BG: Sevlūs.

NL: How would you spell that?

BG: I would spell S-E-V-L-U-S. Sevlūs.

NL: Sevlūs, Czechoslovakia.

BG: Yes. Carpathian.

NL: And was it in the Eastern part?

BG: This is the Carpathian state. There is Czechoslovakia, it was ...  
NL: Carpathian.  
BG: Carpathian, Slovakian, Bohemia, Silesia and ...  
NL: Bohemia?  
BG: Bohemia, five states. This is ...  
NL: And most of your neighbors were Slovaks?  
BG: No, Hungarians.  
NL: Hungarians?  
BG: I'm telling you, mostly Hungarians. Most of it was a mixture.  
NL: Mixture.  
BG: Now in the city we had already a few German-speaking citizens.  
NL: And you went to school in Sevlüs?  
BG: Yes, sure, I went to school there.  
NL: And this was junior, junior high or high school?  
BG: I went, I went in junior high like in junior high, I went junior high. And then I was supposed to go in the high school. But we had no high school. I had to go to in Hebrew *gymnasium* to Munkács.  
NL: Munkács.  
BG: And I didn't want to go. I was supposed to be a lawyer.  
NL: I see.  
BG: We had four brothers. So I was, I was the chosen one. My oldest brother and me-- not for this I show up-- if I read something I remember, even today I have a good memory, but I was wild, like here the teenagers.  
NL: Sure, you were a young man.  
BG: I didn't want to go. So I find, I went in the store. I worked in a store. Grocery store. In Czechoslovakia, was obligatory, if you worked in a store you had to go two years in business administration school.  
NL: As an apprentice?  
BG: Yes. In school, regular school, business school, we went twice a week, a regular business administration school.  
NL: Good.  
BG: We had two years business administration school. After eighth grade we had two years business administration school.  
NL: And did Father come back then?  
BG: In 1920 he come back, he went back to Europe. He no like it here.  
NL: And he stayed with the family then?  
BG: Yes, he stayed. He come to Austria with the whole family.  
NL: But he went into the store, too? He operated a store?  
BG: No, he did not operate a store. He had ground, you know.  
NL: Land.

BG: Land.

NL: Did he farm, it?

BG: Yes.

NL: Sublease it?

BG: No, we farmed it, our own and we leased him more. My oldest brother was in the farm. He gave a helping hand always, you know, so he was. The other three was one brother who survived the camps; he went to Israel. He passed away in '79. And my youngest brother got lost in the Holocaust, and my oldest brother and their families.

NL: I'll get their names a little later. Yes, so did you face any antisemitism in this town?

BG: I can't say. Less, like here.

NL: Less.

BG: Less. We can't see it in our section. We grew up together. We had some, some arguments, you know, but the Czechoslovakians was perfect. Tell you why. In Czechoslovakia I can tell you they had Hungarians, the Czechs, Slavs, Germans and Jews. The Hungarians don't like the Czechs, the Lithuanians don't like the Hungarians, don't like the Czechs, so the Jewish people had it good while the Czechs trusted for the Jews better. In the Carpathian, 90% of lawyers, doctors, judges was Jewish.

NL: I see.

BG: But the Jews they trusted. [unclear]

NL: They didn't. I see. Yes.

BG: Well, it didn't last too long. In '38 Hitler finished them up.

NL: So you stayed in Sevlüs till the war?

BG: No, no.

NL: Tell me what happened?

BG: 'Til 1934.

NL: Until 1934, and you continued working in the store?

BG: I was in the store.

NL: And in '34 what happened?

BG: In '34, what happened-- we went a bunch of guys, we took bicycles, we went to Palestine.

NL: Oh for heaven's sake. By bicycle?

BG: Not so bad, like from here to Texas. It's not so bad when you are young. You see and hear on television guys taking bicycles.

NL: So you were in a Zionist group?

BG: I was a Zionist.

NL: What youth movement was it?

BG: Mine was Betar [a Revisionist Zionist youth movement]. It is the biggest party in our city, not only in our city, but in the Carpathians. 60% was. We had Mizrachi.

NL: Hashomer?

BG: We had Hashomer Hatzair. We had a few Agudas. But the biggest part was Betar, the biggest part. We had Mizrachi, but the biggest part was Betar.

NL: And how long did you stay in Palestine?

BG: We, we couldn't make it.

NL: Oh?

BG: We went all the way to Turkey, but we had no Turkish visa. We arrived in Belgrade, first we arrived in Belgrade. Two of our partners went back. One became sick and one was married, so he felt he go back, he left a wife. But we find the other guys. We find in Belgrade, we find about 30-40 guys. So six we went connected, we went on. So it was funny. We went through Sofia. We didn't need no visa but Czechoslovakia was the best passport in Europe. After American passport was Czechoslovakian passport. So we come into Sofia, we try to get a Turkish passport. No. Try to get a Syria passport. A visa? No. So went into Turkey. We had waited but like I see today we build a bridge already over the Dardanelles. This time was no bridge. We turned around in, around the fort, we want to find somebody to take us through, so the police met us. [unclear] So they took us in. We come into the police, I never going to forget it, I asked him "Look, who is speaking here Slavish? Turkish we didn't speak." So we find there some officer who speaks Slavish. I say, "Look we are two Czechoslovakians here, we would like to be in contact with consulate."

NL: Good.

BG: He said okay. He give us a telephone, we called him up. So we called up the consulate and I say, "Yes, we are here Czechoslovakian and we are in trouble." We told him the truth. Always the truth is the best.

NL: Yes.

BG: He says maybe he could do something. He says, "Stay quiet, somebody come down." Come down a guy, a secretary or somebody, he says "Who is the Czechoslovakian?" so we introduce ourselves. "We are two Czechoslovakians." He said, "What are you doing here?" I told him we want to go to Palestine. He said, "Why don't you have a visa?" I said, "Prague wouldn't give us a visa. Belgrade didn't give us a visa. Sofia didn't give us a visa, so we come in." He said, "Look, go in, I going to talk to the guards and will see what I can do." He went in and he talked, he said "Look, guys, there are two things. First of all, do you have 200 *kronar*?" I said, "Yes." "You gonna pay the visa." The second thing is, "If you give me your honor that you don't come back without a visa, you're free to go." Alright, so he says okay, he pays the hotel, he pays the supper. We went into we took the bikes. We two we left, the other four we left six. We went into Greece. This is a neighbor, it is like states here, Europe is like state here. We come to Salonica, there we come to Salonica [a Greek port city] and already there was big crowd, German immigrants. So we tried to get contact. So we had not enough money. For one we had money, we needed 6,000 for each. We had 6,000 both. No go.



NL: No go.

BG: We took the bikes, we went in back to Yugoslavia. The Dalmatia. What they advertise now, you know, this is a nice place. We went to Dalmatia, on the Adriatic Sea. And then we went into Italy. Then into Trieste. Trieste the same thing, not enough money. What we going to do now? So I wrote home a letter they should send me my regular clothes, it was end of October, November, and we wore short pants and everything they should send me to Bratislava. This is the second biggest city in Czechoslovakia and this is only 38 kilometers from Vienna. I had there a friend, I said. "Send me my topcoat, two suits..."

NL: Winter things.

BG: ... shoes, over there so we may come into Vienna." We went to Vienna. From Vienna we went into Bratislava and I find my clothes there. We sent home the bikes, no more bikes.

NL: You sent home the bikes.

BG: They want to give me 100 *kronen* and I said "I'll send it back for my brother." We sent them back. So we come back to Vienna. And this time was the International Exposition in Vienna, Milan, Italy.

NL: Before we do that, did you feel any Nazi sympathy in Vienna?

BG: No.

NL: In 1934? Any anti-Jewish...

BG: No, this was-- I don't know if you know history. This was when in Vienna they murdered Dollfuss.<sup>1</sup>

NL: Yes, '37.

BG: Thirty-four ['34], in '34.

NL: Thirty-four ['34].

BG: So we, find German immigrants, boys, we bummed around, all around in Vienna.

NL: You had a good time?

BG: No, we were young. [unclear] We were hanging around the Jewish section, division, in Vienna. Who we find? A landsman. He was a character, a *hazan* [cantor]. He *davened* [prayed] in Wien [German name for Vienna.] He invited us for Shabbos. So we took-- we had 60% discount if we go to the Exposition. But we didn't went to the Exposition special. We had a letter from Jabotinsky's<sup>2</sup> secretary in Vienna, Forgan Funweisel [phonetic].

NL: I see.

BG: At this time people didn't know. People believed that Jabotinsky was a Fascist. He had an understanding with Mussolini. They trained there Jewish Marines in Italy.

<sup>1</sup>Federal Chancellor was assassinated in failed coup by Nazi agents.

<sup>2</sup>Jabotinsky, Ze'ev – founder of the Zionist Betar movement in 1923.

NL: Naval cadets, I think also. Yes, I read about that. You...

BG: I was, I will tell you what happened. We come over there in November. So we arrived in there in Milano and we went to where we were supposed to go, [unclear] in Genoa and we had a letter in Milano to the main-- he said, "Look, guys, I would take you, we need men, but the trouble is it started in September, now if we take you guys, we need an Italian teacher separate, an English teacher," and my friend didn't know Hebrew either. I know Hebrew. He says, "We can't afford it." So what we do? We hang around--I gonna tell you, you're going to laugh, what's happened it Milano. So we come to Milano, there was a lucky strike. So where you go? They give us an address to sleep in the YMCA. Cheap too.

NL: Sure, sure.

BG: So, excuse me, it was so dirty, we couldn't sleep. So do you know what we did? The first night, we bribe the watchman and he give us an arc [flash light] we played cards the whole night. It was so dirty, bugs, everything so the other day, we have an address they give us, we had in Italia, in the top was a Fascist -- Hungarian, Romanian, Polish student was in college there, otherwise, you know, like here numbers we had so ...

NL: Quotas.

BG: Quotas. So they couldn't go in. Some of them go to Czechoslovakia but they couldn't get in everybody in Czechoslovakia so they went to Italy. So we find a student so they send us to the man and he say eat. So we told him, "Look, we need to sleep. We gonna be here for a few days." So they sent us privately. There was a Hungarian Jewish woman, so we slept at her place.

NL: What experiences.

BG: Yes. So from there we went down to-- we want to go to France. So we went down to Turin, same thing. Turin, we had already address. We have to go also, to a student who is a member. We were there a few days, so you're gonna laugh, we went into France. We come into France near the Swiss border [unclear]. We don't know nobody. Nothing. So we took a hotel, we slept, we eat. Another day I say to my friend, look, I go into the police. I going to look for Jewish people. So we went into the police, I show them my passport, we are from Czechoslovakia, we find there a guy who speaks German. You know in Alsatia they speak German and we said, "Look, we would like to get in contact with Jewish people today. We would like to get acquainted." He went out and came back and said there is no Jews here.

NL: No Jews.

BG: [unclear] Then we find out six years later what was. So what did we do? We took the bus and went into Switzerland, to Geneva. We were in Geneva a few days, we went to Bern. Bern it was a busy city, much busier, like Vienna, busy. Over there they are very antisemitic. Switzerland give the order for Germany. When they leave out the Jews, should put on the passport Jude. We were Czechoslovakian and we don't have it. So in the night time, one night they knock on the door in the hotel. I knew who it is. I

don't let him in. We don't let him in. And then they come with the janitor and they-- "Open the doors!" And he said, "Why don't you open the door?" I said "You have our records in the book." "What are you doing here?" I said, "We are Czechoslovakian tourists." I took him out my tourist card and my passport. "Do you have money?" I said, "Yes." "If you have no money, we take you [unclear]." So we went from Bern, we took a bus, we went-- it's like you cut in two halves Switzerland-- we went to Basel. Closer to Alsace [unclear]. Here, if we come back, we had no connections. So we went into Basel, we were there a few days, and then the guy says, "Why should you pay for the expenses? Go hitchhike." So we started hitchhiking. We went, we went in Mülhausen. [unclear] I can't say they were friendly always. He says, "Where do you want to go?" I said, "We want to go to Strasbourg." So he said "[unclear] look, these two guys want to go over there so they speak German, they want to go to Strasbourg, some truck or [unclear]." So they took us, we come into Strasbourg. Strasbourg we find already acquaintances. But at this time, in 1934 was very lousy in France. Laval<sup>3</sup> was in power. He threw out the Polish, the Romanians, the Hungarians, he threw out even *goyim*. Everybody he threw out, send them home. Us he couldn't throw out, in Czechoslovakia we didn't need a visa, but we couldn't get permission to work. You needed *Arbeitskarten* [work card]. You have to have money in your pocket.

NL: For rescue.

BG: Rescue? You had no money in your pocket, at least 100 francs [unclear]. So from there we went out, we went into Luxembourg we went into Brussels. Brussels I had already friend. So, we hang around Brussels for three weeks by a friend like this. It's not nice. He kept us. We slept there. You know you can, young fellow how can you sit on somebody's neck. He didn't send us away. They-- Moskovitz it was and after the war-- before the war I was very good friend in [unclear], he had a shoe store. We went to Antwerp. I'll tell you why. Antwerp was-- 52 Jews and there were Jewish stores. So this way, I here get a job. There was work. 1938 I went home for a visit.

NL: You stayed in Brussels till 1938?

BG: Yes, in Antwerp, till 1940, but I went home in 1938 to visit my parents.

NL: Now, what was the situation in Antwerp in the late 30's? Was it okay, was it comfortable?

BG: Yeah, it was good. It was good.

NL: Good.

BG: Wasn't bad. No. We had like a few incidents here but it wasn't bad. Very few.

NL: Few incidents but not serious.

BG: Very little, very little.

NL: And you went back in '38 for a visit.

<sup>3</sup>Pierre Laval served as Prime Minister of France from Jan. 27, 1931 to Feb. 20, 1932 and again from June 7, 1935 to Jan. 24, 1936. He was not Prime Minister in 1934.

BG: For a visit, I was home a month.

NL: A month. And how was the family?

BG: Family was all right.

NL: All the brothers were home.

BG: No, they were, two brothers were just in the army. In 1938, May, if you remember the situation, the Czechs mobilized against Hitler. In '38 in May so two brothers, when I come home, the two brothers still was in the army. They come home and my youngest brother he come with me to Belgium.

NL: I see. And what was the situation in your parents' life? They felt comfortable?

BG: Oh they felt comfortable. The brother, my brother was living with them.

NL: And everybody expected France and England and Russia to come to the defense of Czechoslovakia?

BG: No, they couldn't, couldn't expect it, while Poland didn't want to let through the Russians in 1938.

NL: Is that your interpretation?

BG: This was my interpretation but I know, we read it in the paper, we had the radio, Poland said they don't want to let through the Russian Army.

NL: And that was supposed to be the reason.

BG: The reason in 1938, October, Chamberlain, Mr. Chamberlain, come home. He cut in pieces. Even Poland grabbed 10 villages, even he grabbed the best. Only France, who didn't touch Czechoslovakia was an idiot.

NL: So the feeling in the country must have been very bitter?

BG: When I was home wasn't so bitter but later it was. I was home in the month of June. All the month of June I was home. I wasn't home I was traveling. I went to Romania and I went, friend told, me "You go home. Take a present for my parents, for my mother." So we are there near the border so I took the train and went in, I went to Romania.

RG<sup>4</sup>: Excuse me. In 1937, when Masaryk<sup>5</sup> died, passed away, then it started already.

BG: But Helen [phonetic], Helen<sup>6</sup> the Germans started.

NL: In Czechoslovakia?

BG: Yeah, yes. But it wasn't too bad.

RG: In, they were strict.

NL: There was a Nazi Party?

<sup>4</sup>Rose Goldenberg: Benjamin's wife.

<sup>5</sup>Tomas Masaryk served as first president of Czechoslovakia, 1927 – 1934, after it gained independence as a republic after World War I.

<sup>6</sup>BG may be referring to the Sudeten German Party led by Konrad Henlein. There were a number of fascist parties in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s.

BG: Yes.  
RG: Yes.  
BG: There was a Nazi Party, the Sudeten.  
NL: The Sudeten, yes.  
BG: But it wasn't so bad.  
RG: It was Sudeten and they followed them out.  
BG: To Sudeten.  
RG: It was already.  
BG: All Sudeten, they ruled. [unclear] it was already and it was bad. Rosenthal [All talked together, impossible to decipher]. It is Deutschen. This was the Sudeten.  
RG: I was scared, even Czechoslovakia was scared.  
BG: Right.  
RG: Then Masaryk passed away, the Jewish people were scared.  
NL: And were some leaving the country?  
BG: They start leaving, they start leaving. Not many of them.  
NL: Not many but some.  
BG: In '38, when Hitler caught up to [unclear] then they started it already.  
Who was smart.  
RG: People from our section, from the Carpathians.  
BG: Nobody moved.  
RG: Nobody in the Sudeten, they moved but up.  
NL: The western part?  
RG: Right. They was going. Since '37, they started.  
BG: They started but you know, human nature, maybe they are not going to come here, they are not going to come. The same people. Even Belgium in '41. In '41. We didn't go back. I want to tell you when we stopped, so the war broke out in 1940 May 10.  
NL: Well let's go back a little bit. You went back to Antwerp.  
BG: Yeah I went back to Antwerp.  
NL: And you stayed in Antwerp till 1940.  
BG: In '40, we married in 1939.  
NL: And why did you leave Antwerp in 1940?  
RG: We had to.  
BG: Listen. That's what I want to tell you.  
NL: Okay.  
BG: The 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1940, the war broke out, it was a Friday. Monday the Belgish government gave an order. Every man, foreigner or Belgian, from 16 to 35 should leave the country and go to France.  
NL: Is that so?  
BG: So we took the bike.

NL: You and your wife.

BG: Ya, not only me, a lot of people.

NL: But I mean...

BG: I want to tell where we saw the first real war. We come to Sea of Ghent. We were a whole gang with bikes. All of a sudden the Germans-- we pass a bridge. The Germans come at us. We were lucky. Our car was lucky, we had time to go down from the bridge under the houses. They start to bomb us and shoot into the people. The bridge....

NL: Collapsed.

BG: ...collapsed. Then we found out over 100 people died. It was cars, it was wagons, it was bikes, was walking. Later remember, we were in one bus; we find out over 100 people died the day. That was the end of that.

RG: Half of the people flew on trees and roofs.

NL: That was your first view.

BG: That was the experience of the war. So we went, it was Monday. From Brussels to Paris, is a little bit more like from here to New York, 150 kilometers. So we arrived in Paris Wednesday night. I lost my brother and my friend. We find out somewhere on the way, their girlfriends are on another way, they went away from us, while my brother was with me and my friend, we were a whole gang. So what we connected with other acquaintances. We arrived in Wednesday night in Paris. I never am going to forget it, in Hotel Montparnesse. We took hotel. We had two babies, the other crowd had two babies, on the back. We had two babies. The other guy.

NL: Not yours?

BG: No. We had two babies. We were eight people and it was two babies.

RG: I was pregnant at that time.

BG: You was pregnant but not-- so all of a sudden, we slept from Wednesday night to Friday morning. The hotel called the police Friday morning so they wake us up. We were so tired, look...

RG: We knew nothing.

NL: And shocked?

BG: Sure. So we wake up, where are we going to go. So we stopped and talking to a lady that stayed there and we went in, you know, I was traveling already so I know, so we went into Plaza Republique. Over there was Czechoslovakia and Polish Consulate. I come to the Czechoslovakian Consulate, we talking with people and they laughed at everybody. The Czechoslovakian had an army there.

NL: For heaven's sake.

BG: I said I am not going to go up, the Polish was the same thing. So we come back. We was staying there till Tuesday, all of a sudden we heard on the radio, the Germans break through the [unclear] Marne, 38 kilometers from Paris. So I say we run

from them. What we do? All of a sudden, our friend with whom he was, they had, one had a brother-in-law, a sister and a brother-in-law...

RG: Niort.

BG: ... in Niort where they make Cognac. So we sent there the bikes if they are not going to go but it starts to get sour, sour [unclear]. My brother has a two room apartment and eight people, so I said to my wife let's go. We took, we went to the station and we took two tickets to Bordeaux.

NL: Bordeaux.

BG: It was, my policy was I say was good. In a big city you could always get lost, in a small city, everybody knows you, they pick you up. But like I tell you we had always a little bit of luck. All of sudden we are on the train, we met a Belgish newspaper man. He said, "Kids where are you going?" I said we going, he told us, this was the second time, in 1914 he was running from the Germans. He was a Gentile not a Jew. He said don't worry. So we arrived to Bordeaux. We don't know nobody in Bordeaux. But I never get scared, one thing. So they took us to the rabbi. He introduced us, he went to the newspaperman, he introduced himself and he said, "These two kids here they are Jewish and they want to have some connections." So they took us to the rabbi. The rabbi said, "Wait, wait, wait." Remember, I didn't speak fluent French but I am trying to speak the Flemin [Flemish]. But the luck was with us, we come up from the rabbi, who I find there? A girl and a father from Antwerp we used to be good friends. I said, "What are you doing here?" He says, "We looking for the synagogue." He said, "Look, they took us to the synagogue there were hundreds of people, the Zionist organization, mattresses, they put a kitchen and a ..."

NL: A center for refugees?

BG: Yeah and they had another house too. Remember, they rented the house for the refugees. All of a sudden, the leader, so I am telling you, we had a little bit of luck always, the leader stands up he says, "People are going to tell you something. Young man don't turn around on the streets too much. You're going to make antisemitism. The French guys are in the army, you're hanging around here."

NL: Good advice.

BG: It was and he was speaking nicely, he was a *landsman* [Yiddish: a fellow countryman], he comes from our section so I went to him, I introduced myself. We start to talk, so I know his cousin from Antwerp, so he says, "Do you have where to stay?" I said, "We just arrived today." He said, "Wait a bit, a little bit, I going to give you where to go to sleep."

NL: Mmm hmm.

BG: You don't have to sleep here on the mattress and he come back and give us a key, and give us an old couple, an elderly couple, their son was a captain in the army, a doctor, Jewish, he says, well they are afraid they did the same thing with the Germans, with the Americans and with the Japs. They interviewed all the Germans.

They was a German-Jewish family they give us their apartment, we had with dishes, with everything. So we had where to sleep.

NL: Mmm hmm. In Bordeaux.

BG: Yes, in Bordeaux.

NL: Did you hear anything from your family in Czechoslovakia?

BG: Yeah, I heard this time from them.

NL: They were still in...

BG: No, this time I heard from them [unclear].

NL: They were in Sevlüs?

BG: Sevlüs, yes but this time it was Hungary already.

NL: Hungary. That happened in 1940.

BG: Forty ['40]. They were Hungary already. I wrote them from, from Paris and I wrote them from Bordeaux. And when I moved from Bordeaux, I left my address for Marseilles, not for Marseilles, but for Agde, where the Czechoslovakian army.

NL: Agde? How do you spell that.

BG: A-G-D-E. Agde. It was near the Mediterranean. This was said, Agde, Montpellier.

NL: Oh, the Montpellier...

RG: Near Montpellier.

NL: Oh okay.

BG: So what I want to bring you up, so we come there, it was a nice apartment and everything so I used to go down every day to the center to see what's going on. All of a sudden one guy comes who was with us, he is looking for his wife. [unclear] All right, he says, he and his wife was supposed to come here with the two daughters, and the two daughters. All right. He says, "You know where to sleep?" You know what, I said, "You come with us, we take down the mattress, you going to sleep on the mattress, we going to sleep on the spring." The next day we find [unclear] another friend also, he is looking for his wife too, he is here in America, still living, I didn't, I was with him in contact in '68, in '68 I was in New York, at the time he was a diamond cutter. So he says, "Goldberg, I have nowhere to sleep." He don't say Goldenberg, Goldberg, they called me Goldberg. I say, "You are going to come with me." So we sleep together.

NL: You had your own refugee center too?

BG: Yeah well look, you have to, when you are in trouble you have to help out. So what was happened, so we start to go looking for work and we went to work on the docks, the docks. We unload peanuts.

NL: This is Bordeaux?

BG: Bordeaux.

NL: In Bordeaux. Peanuts.



BG: In Bordeaux. All of a sudden, two weeks later, we were there two weeks, they give an order the French, [unclear] everybody had to register. You have to be-- so what happened, we are Czechoslovakian, they took us to the army.

NL: The Czech Army?

BG: They took us first to the French Army.

NL: To the French Army.

BG: But the French Army said you Czechs you go to Agde.

NL: I see, ahah.

BG: And you know there I find out there are good people always. So we were eight. Two soldiers who took us, two French Czech *goy*, four Jews. She was the fifth. She had no permission. But the soldiers who took us, the sergeant who took us he took us with her. I seen how was it, they come and check the papers, they don't see his partners with him and says we are eight. They don't ask his partner, you know. We were lucky. We were next. So we traveled 36 hours till we arrived in Agde. We went from here, from the Atlantic, we went to the Mediterranean all the way down there. You know in-- it was war time, we stopped in one place, I think it was town, about four hours stopped, we didn't go nowhere.

NL: Did you see many refugees?

BG: Oh all around, all around. Every place, we arrived there, we were there. I took her out to the country, I find there already a lot of acquaintances, again. All of a sudden the French Army broke down.

NL: But it was a Czech unit?

BG: Czech unit, it was regular army, they was [unclear] people.

NL: It was a regular army.

BG: They come through Romania in 1938. They went to Israel, they finished out-- Palestine, they come to ...

NL: And they expected to fight?

BG: We were fighting too.

NL: But when the French Army collapsed, everything collapsed.

RG: Everything collapsed.

BG: Everything collapsed. But you know what was happening, all of a sudden they put together trucks and they took them, we were some 20, 20 - 28 kilometers to Sète to the boat to take them to England. So till I went after her, I come back, the truck went, so we stayed there. But we didn't stay too long. The French Army-- the French Government gave an order for the Czech Army, for the Polish Army, don't discharge the guys, or you have no, it was trouble in the apartments, with the apartments and the working papers. If you have no apartment where are you going to go? But for many...

NL: So you lived in the barracks?

BG: Not long. Two weeks. So there we had a friend, Goodman, the doctor. I said, "[unclear] you're a captain go talk to the commander." He was a Czech *goy*, so we

made with him a deal. For \$2500 he discharged us, everybody. You know, he's a person.

NL: He discharged you? The whole group.

RG: Francs, for 2500 francs. He was a friend from the train.

BG: If you have ...

NL: So then what did you do about housing?

BG: So we went, wait, so we come to the center, they send us to the Spanish border. Pau. It is a beautiful town. Pau.

NL: P-A -U. Yes, I've heard of that.

BG: Pau, yes Pau. In the Pyrenees.

NL: In the Pyrenees.

BG: So we come there, thousands of people, they stopped the [unclear]. You are in the army or you had family in the army, you go separate. So I took my wife, we went to the army. They send them out to a village, here a house, there a house, to the villages they send us. We come Sunday to school, to the schoolyard. The refugees, from the 32 refugees, 25 were Jewish.

NL: Imagine.

BG: They kept us good.

NL: And under whose authority was this, the French?

BG: The French. The French authority.

RG: The French.

NL: But it was not a camp, a center?

BG: No, they send us to private, to private people.

NL: The French. Private people.

BG: So we walk around, the family were there, two sons and they would go away, he was a flier, they had a saloon and they had cows so I went out with the cows to feed them. It was, it wasn't bad.

NL: Okay.

BG: We figured what are we going to do here. When they give an order from the mayor, they want the refugees. They are going to pick us up. It happened later. So what I want to tell you, after six weeks, we cleaned out from there. So where are you going to go now. I say, "Rose..."

NL: What did you do while you were there?

BG: Nothing. Hanging around. Playing cards.

NL: You couldn't work? There was no...

RG: He wasn't allowed to work.

BG: No. No. We weren't allowed.

NL: You weren't allowed to work?

BG: We were hanging out. We were eating and sleeping and ...

NL: Surviving.

BG: Yeah, surviving.

RG: Helped. Helped him out around the farm.

BG: The farm. Not big deal, I went after the cows in the pasture you know. She was in the house and another one, somebody else, you know. So where we go and my policy was always big cities. In big cities you get lost. All of a sudden we come to the-- wait, once a week we had the bus to go to Pau. It was so easy, so Wednesday we went into Pau. We come to Pau to the station and we find there are guys saying where you want to go to Marseilles. Marseilles, you see here is \$3.00, a kilo of tomatoes and Marseilles it cost \$6.00 and they take the people and send them to Africa on Devil's Island [penal colony in French Guiana]. People talking, she started crying, I said, "Look, Rose, I am, my nature is different, I don't listen to what people talks." I was already in my life all around. So, first we going to go look for Jews. So we find a little chapel, Jewish chapel.

NL: In Pau?

BG: In Pau. Who I find there, what you think. I come there, I find our, our cantor's two sons.

NL: Oh my goodness. From Czechoslovakia? Good heavens.

BG: Yeah. From our city, from our city, the Rosenbergs. What are you doing here? They were living in Paris and they were refugees.

NL: They were running too?

BG: They were living in Paris. Everybody was running away. This, they called it *zone libre* but it wasn't *libre* [free]. Germans were giving the command.

NL: The Vichy, the Vichy [unclear].

BG: Yes. So we find them there and I say they don't know where they are going to go and I say, "Look, Rose, we gonna go, I go to Marseilles." All of a sudden we find out her three sisters, she has three sisters in Belgium. They are in a city in the, another section of the Spanish border. So, she says, "First we are going to look for my sisters." All right, we go down to Lescun. Lescun the city, also a summer cool place.

NL: How is that spelled?

BG: L-E-S-C-O-N. Lescun [correct spelling].

NL: Lescun.

BG: We come there, we find hundreds of refugees. From Antwerp, from Brussels, from Paris. They send out for her sisters, not only her sisters, a lot of young girls they should go help for the peasants from the country but they don't know where. We went to City Hall, they don't know where they send them. She start to cry.

RG: They put them to camp [unclear].

BG: No, this was later, this was later. First they went to work. Remember we couldn't find them and so I said let's go. We go, we go to Marseilles. We wanted Marseilles, we arrived Toulouse. From Lescun, we went to Toulouse. Toulouse, my wife said she is not going to go on a train, ticket, I have no ticket. I have the tickets to

Lescun, I had. We find there a Jewish guy, a soldier, don't be kidding, go, she gave him money. He take her money and come back and says he couldn't get no tickets. He was a fine man and he give us back the money so we arrived to Marseilles. We arrived in the morning to Marseilles. Luckily, they asked me papers in the train, she was sleeping, she didn't hear, she would be scared, I said *c'est ma femme* [French: this is my wife] in English, in French and they not say nothing. We're the military people, we didn't shush people. We come to Marseilles, it was thousands and thousands of people in the station there. Kids were crying and you can't go out.

RG: All Jewish people.

BG: It was Gentiles too.

RG: The most Jewish people.

BG: You can't get out. I tried to go there, I tried to go there, they have big hotels on the station but they had an order everything was closed in the station you had to go into the state. All right. We hanging around, I'm going around, I am smelling, you know how they say. They come to ask me papers I show them my passport. Nothing. All of a sudden I heard it says, "Military here, civilians here." So we grabbed our rucksacks, we had only rucksacks.

NL: No uniforms?

BG: No uniforms. Rucksacks on our shoulder, both and our underwear, that's all we had. Alright, we didn't took much but I go to the military station, so I say *ma femme*, I show them the papers, we went out. Marseilles, I liked Marseilles very much, I don't know why. Their station is 82 steps we could see the whole city, the Mediterranean I liked it. You know, everybody...

NL: It's picturesque.

BG: Yeah. So we go down Marseilles from the steps, slowly all of sudden there is pushcarts 80 cents a kilo tomatoes, 80 cents a kilo.

NL: Not \$6.00.

BG: Rose, you see? Where are you going to go if you want to find out an address? Who are you going to ask? You going [unclear].

NL: I guess merchants.

BG: No, the mailman.

NL: The mailman. Aha.

BG: Well, I traveled like that, I tell you, with the bicycle.

NL: You know the ropes.

BG: I know the ropes. I find a mailman I say, give me, they told me in Pau is a big synagogue.

NL: Aha.

BG: So he give me, he says, "Rue de Breteuil," marked me down, go second street right, now you are going to find it.

NL: The synagogue.

BG: The street.

NL: The street.

BG: In Europe you have such long streets.

NL: They turn and twist.

BG: No they are smooth, like this, the block next block is another, another. So we come to the cross and Rue de Breteuil is long, long street. We go to Rue de Breteuil and all of a sudden saw two guys walking in the street, they speak Hungarian. So I said, "Where are you going?" I said, "We going to synagogue." He says, "Where you are going here? Here is nobody only in the night time and the morning. This is a big synagogue. You want to see people come on with us." Two blocks from the station the Zionist organization took a house and they made a kitchen, they made a synagogue there and we come there. We come back there we find already a lot of people. Where are you staying. People sleeping here, they also took there also-- remember Hotel Arome [phonetic]? They took a hotel for the refugees. Besides this house, they were sleeping few, quite a few people-- downstairs was a synagogue-- in kitchen. And upstairs they were sleeping on the two stories, and they took another hotel. So we gonna sleep, all of a sudden-- I'm telling you we always had a little luck-- here her cousin comes. She, she's here already, in the center.

NL: In the center.

BG: [unclear] where you come new? He says, "Look, I have a little apartment. Till you find something, we take down the mattress."

NL: Again somebody sleeps on the springs.

BG: Ya, ya. So he said, "You going to register with the Czechoslovakian consul." Next day I went to register. I had military [unclear]. They give me for a haircut, they give me for food, they give me some clothes. The Czechoslovakian consul.

NL: Is that so? Is that so?

BG: All they treat us.

NL: Was this party of the work of the government in exile?

BG: Yeah, the government in exile.

NL: The government in exile.

BG: There was a government in exile. Benes<sup>7</sup> was there. Benes left just before I come to Agde. He was there but the French Army break down so they took him to England, President Benes. So I didn't see him while he was, he went away with the trucks. So we were there-- I am going to tell you something, we had a good time. This time we had a good time. All of a sudden we find her sisters and they come in September they come to Marseilles.

[Tape one, side one ended.]

<sup>7</sup>Edvard Benes, sometimes anglicized to Edward Benesh, was president of Czechoslovakia from 1935 to 1938 and again from 1945 to 1948.

*Tape one, side two:*

NL: This is side two, tape one, continuing our interview with Mr. Goldenberg.

BG: So we find her sisters, they come into other points, everybody what's happened. *Simchas Torah*, she went to the sisters. All of a sudden the French police come and cleaned up the whole synagogue. They took us to the prefecture, the *sureté* [French: police station], it is like here, the big house.

NL: So, October 1940.

BG: You know what's happening. They don't want us here. Marseilles was over three million people, and it's a million and a half today, so overcrowded. So you know what they did? Luckily she wasn't there, they went to Czechoslovakian Consul so all the Czechs, the Czechoslovakian Consul they got again. After two days, they took out, they freed us. The Polish, the other one, the Polish they sent to the Polish army and the other one they sent back to where they come from, from the villages where that they come.

NL: And where did you have to go then?

BG: We didn't go nowhere. From the Czechoslovakian Consul.

NL: I see, you were given special status?

BG: Status and we get our, our papers there.

NL: And you get papers.

BG: And yeah we [unclear].

NL: I see, and all because of the government in exile.

BG: In exile, they help us. Now it started, it was, I am telling you, we are, what we did, my house was always loaded. Why? He has no wife, he has no brother, he has no sister, they come there, we go to Beyla. We played cards in my house.

NL: So you had your own place by then?

BG: We had the same hotel, somebody went away, I become very friendly with the land lawyer, she had a café there, I had, you know how big it was, it wasn't so both together, we had, you know the efficiency kitchen. We had efficiency kitchen in a room but it was loaded always.

NL: And you were working Mr. Goldenberg?

BG: No. No work.

NL: No, no, but you had.

RG: Couldn't work.

NL: Again you couldn't work.

BG: I could work, I had the working papers, I didn't want to work. Remember, so I met...

NL: But you had what, food coupons from ...

BG: From the Czechoslovakian consul's money we stopped and ate. But this is off the record. I don't want this on the record. Black market. I don't want this in the record.

NL: No.

BG: So I met a big lady's manufacturer two partners, one was a university Jew and the other was a Hungarian count. Met the count. With him I was talking Hungarian and with him I was talking German. He took me like his kid you know, he took me very fine.

NL: Yes.

BG: He took me very fine so I say, "Look, I need working papers." Well if you had working papers, if you want to work you worked. So he took the secretary, he says for the secretary, go with Beyla to the prefecture and I didn't know how good French, so fill out the papers, maybe they will ask him something and you gonna answer. So he went with me and filled out the papers. Three days later I go pick up papers, the inspector says you need something papers, follow me, the inspector. So I become a big shot. You know why? Somebody needed, in this time it wasn't so dangerous, you want to go from one city to another, a foreigner needed a permission. So you have to go to prefecture. So they come to Beyla they give me so much money and I went to them and they give me and we made a deal, so I become a real big shot. In 1941, it started to be again the French bothered with-- Marseilles was overloaded, overloaded. They start to make marriages, the sister married, another girl married, they start to get married.

NL: To marry French people?

BG: No Jewish girls, Jewish girls started to marry.

RG: Jewish girls, Jewish boys.

BG: We start to marry up the refugees.

RG: They were still the Orthodox, still.

BG: We start to marry up they shouldn't be alone.

NL: They shouldn't be alone. I see. Okay.

BG: Okay in 1941, I go out to the street with the papers to make the kosher<sup>8</sup>, in shorts and a shirt, it's summer, they grab me.

NL: The French police?

BG: The French police grabbed me and I was loaded with not kosher things in my pocket. So I figured now it's no trouble, I wasn't alone. We packed up [unclear], used to call the *schwartz* [Yiddish: black] woman, the black black. You see even on television. They have the black [unclear]. They took me to the prefecture. It was a few hundred people, not only me. They start to put separate nations. Separate Hungarian, separate Polish, separate German, separate, the Czechs was the best. Only the French was higher from the Czechs. So we were three Czech guys. Two Jews and a *goy*. So I

<sup>8</sup>kosher = legalize the papers

say to the policeman, "Look, can I make a call?" He says, "No." "Why not?" So I give him a few cigarettes-- cigarettes was two packets a week, it was the ration-- and I give him a few cigarettes, he sell me a token and I call up my boss. I call up the *Graf*,<sup>9</sup> I say look, in Hungarian on the telephone, "I am in trouble, they pick me up." I say, "I don't know what to do." He said, "Try not to go in, in the police." Now if you go in, and they have to empty, all around the whole world, you have to empty your pockets. It didn't took 10 minutes he come down with a car and he went in and he took me out.

NL: How do you account for his interest in you? Because you spoke Hungarian?

BG: No, but I made with him business.

NL: Oh I see.

BG: I feed him.

NL: Okay.

BG: Even when I went away, he owed me money.

NL: Okay, I understand.

BG: So all of a sudden it started to getting hot in Marseilles. So we went down to Nice, Monte Carlo for a week's vacation.

NL: To Tunis?

BG: Nice, Monte Carlo.

NL: Nice, Nice?

BG: Nice, Nice, Monte Carlo.

NL: Nice on the Riviera?

BG: On the Riviera. Money we had. We went down to the Riviervas. We were there a few weeks, we come back. It start again, again hot. You couldn't go out to the street. The French...

NL: So they were picking up so many people?

BG: People oh yes.

RG: Oh yes, picking up so many. As much as they can.

BG: They picked them up and send them out from the city. This time they don't, they didn't send them to Germany. They send them out of the city. I am telling you, it was over two million people and it, it was impossible. We were lucky we had the apartment. You know, for the three weeks we had the apartment.

RG: And there were a lot of people they lived in the Jewish part.

BG: In the house.

RG: They didn't want that, they wanted everybody should have a home.

BG: Yeah but they couldn't do it.

RG: But they couldn't do it.

<sup>9</sup>Graf = Count



BG: So in 1942, January, I had a friend, they picked him up but his brother, his sister and his brother stayed, we were very good friends, Polish people. He says, "Beyla, you want to come with me to Lyon?"

NL: Lyon?

BG: Lyon is third largest city. I said, "Rose, can I go?" and she between ...

NL: Was the baby born already?

BG: No.

RG: Yeah.

NL: You had the baby already.

RG: Yeah, we lost the baby. But the one that I was pregnant.

BG: You lost, you lost.

RG: I lost. It was a dead baby.

BG: Yeah you lost, you lost. So I said, "Rose," between, I going from one to the other, between her sister was working in a kitchen in Lyon, and she had a little apartment already in Lyon. She had to leave, what happened with that why she had to leave Marseilles? Something happened. Her sister had to leave Marseilles and she went to Lyon and there was also a baron and a priest, the priest was Jewish but he, he, a Polish Jew but he...

NL: Converted.

BG: Converted to become a priest but they had to leave.

RG: But he was good.

BG: He was good. He helped refugees, there was about 40 refugees and her sister find there a job she worked in the kitchen and she had somebody give her the apartment. We met the guy in Marseilles and he give us the keys, he says, "I have there an apartment, two bedrooms and a kitchen and you go in there, don't ask questions, it is paid for one year and you go there." So when I went down to Lyon, I went. Rose said, "If you want to go, go." I went down to Lyon. And Lyon was a heaven. I mean a heaven.

NL: Not so crowded?

BG: The Joint<sup>10</sup> had a kitchen, people were living in the Joint. The cafes was Jewish people. Everybody was happy there.

NL: And not so many people being sent away.

BG: Nobody. They don't touch nobody.

NL: They don't.

RG: They send away at the end.

BG: Later, not this time. Not in January '42.

RG: No but of course...

NL: Later.

<sup>10</sup>Joint Distribution Committee

BG: Later. You going to hear [unclear]. All of a sudden, I said, "Chaim, tell Rose she should pack the suitcases and, and come, come to Lyon, let her come to Lyon." Her sister, you are between her sister Helen was already in Lager [phonetic]. Something happened with the sisters, one sister run away she went to Lyon, the other one they took in the camp, Camp Neujene [phonetic], in France.

NL: What was the name of the camp?

RG: Gurs.<sup>11</sup>

BG: Not Gurs. Riversaltes.<sup>12</sup>

NL: Riversaltes.

BG: She was in Riversaltes. Camp Riversaltes. So.

NL: You didn't hear from her.

BG: No, she was away.

NL: You did for a while.

RG: She came out of the air, she was captured again and she was again she was in Auschwitz.

BG: Auschwitz but she come back from Auschwitz. Lucky she is in Lyon. So what I want to tell you. I said you have there nobody. But the younger sister went to Switzerland with her husband. He is in Israel. So I come there, so I have where to live. I went up to my sister-in-law, she gave me the key and Rose come. All of a sudden, I find out I could send the kilo packages home.

NL: To Czechoslovakia?

BG: Hungary it was Hungary.

NL: Hungary then.

BG: So I send one, one kilo to her parents and one kilo to my parents.

NL: Your parents were in Czechoslovakia too.

BG: Yes. So it cost me \$25 only to send from Lyon a package. And the rule was you can send no new stuff.

NL: Only used.

BG: And I put in a scarf, stockings, I put in a package of saccharine, a package of tea. What can you put in two and a half pounds. This is one kilo is two and half pounds. All of a sudden, I say look I going to send a pair of shoes for my mother. I can send you a pair of shoes, in two packages, one and one. So I went and made it dirty, one went away.

NL: One went away.

BG: The other one we come home from the beach. I have a letter from Customs. I know what it is, I know right away. What the letter is. So I come up to the Custom House with the letter I see my package on the table open.

<sup>11</sup>Gurs – an internment camp and refugee camp built in 1939 near Pau, France.

<sup>12</sup>Riversaltes – also known as Camp Joffre, an internment camp located in the Pyrenees in the South of France.

NL: They are checking?

BG: Yes. He said, "You Mr. Goldenberg?" this time I was kosher, still kosher. "Are you Mr. Goldenberg?" I said, "Yes." He says, "You know you are not supposed to send new stuff." I said, "This is not new." He says, "Who you who you fooling?" he said. We started talking to each other. He says, "Take it down." And he put a stamp. He says, "Next time you, you send a package come up I going to put a stamp." He was a fine man. He don't want nothing for the stamp, I used to bring him a pint of coffee. I used to bring him packs of cigars, you know. But he was a fine man. Two years time he used to send packages. Every...

NL: Two years.

BG: Every week, some days, some days what can you put in a kilo, but for the mother, for the father. It was some.

NL: Alright, but communications. Did you hear from them?

BG: I used to hear from them always.

NL: You did.

BG: I used to get posted a stamped letter. The girls used to know me already. They said, "Go out, too many Germans." So I had girls, they used me to bring coffee. If I had a letter they bring me another letter. All right I give them a package of cigarettes, but cigarettes was this way, you get two packages a week, what was it?

NL: Like gold.

BG: Like gold. So I give them a package of cigarettes so they know if I have a letter and I come in and I left, they-- I know the place where they come out, they come after five o'clock when they closed the post and they bring out the letter. So you have to, you have to see.

NL: You have to know how to do things.

BG: You have to have guts, you know, guts, and this I had. You know how you say Jewish, "*noyt bricht eisen*"<sup>13</sup>." You understand what this means?

NL: Yes.

BG: This was, you had no choice.

NL: And did you work at all?

BG: No I didn't.

NL: No. No.

BG: No I tell you something, I had two friends, Davidle and Bela Labowich [phonetic]. They went to work, they picked them up and took them away.

NL: Is that so?

BG: Coincidentally they worked Davidle, he come back he was in the Warsaw uprising in the ghetto. He was there.

RG: It was dangerous to work.

<sup>13</sup>Necessity breaks iron (necessity is the mother of invention in English).

BG: No, a Jew couldn't go to work.

RG: It was a Jew could not go to work.

BG: Could not go to work. With a Jewish name.

RG: The minute, the minute you find that a Jew is working, next day.

BG: They picked you up. They picked you up.

NL: Never heard that before.

BG: No, we know. Now started the trouble. So it was good, we were very nice, we were living nice. She had another, a little girl. She had a little girl. We had no opportunities, to hold her there in the apartment, you never can tell, it's always dangerous so we find one of the best place where they were not only Jewish, rich kids there. Rich babies there. So we put them in. You know like you say here it cost \$100, over there it cost \$500 a week. All of a sudden she was there three or fourth week, we have a letter, we should come right away. The nurses did not watch. They poisoned the-- the nurses, not deliberately.

RG: Condensed milk.

BG: Condensed milk, not only ours. Gentile, all. She passed away. All right. Four week old baby. So we lost the baby. How are you doing? All of a sudden.

RG: That's already second one.

NL: The second one.

BG: Now started the troubles. August 24, I never going to forget it.

NL: August 24, 19...

BG: August 24, 1942, we come out in streets, they cleaned out 6,000 Jews, every motel, every hotel, every rooming house, private house. They cleaned out. They don't come to us. So we had a few pointers and through our good friends.

NL: Where did you think they were going, Mr. Goldenberg?

BG: To Auschwitz.

RG: Auschwitz.

BG: Auschwitz, they send them to Auschwitz.

NL: No, no, then you didn't know about Auschwitz.

BG: We know about Auschwitz.

NL: In '42?

BG: We know, we know in '41 about Majdanek. England she was down, everything on the radio.

NL: You heard something.

BG: On the radio. We heard on the radio. We knew everything that was going on.

NL: Were they sent from Lyon to Drancy?

BG: Not everybody. Some of them they sent to Drancy,<sup>14</sup> some of them sent straight to Auschwitz. Drancy was near Paris.

NL: Yes I know. I know.

BG: It was near Paris.

NL: August 24?

BG: This was the biggest one.

NL: And it was the French police?

BG: No, the German police, not the French. This time the German police.

RG: The Germans.

BG: The Gestapo. So you know, we had, we were in a private street, so, a few nights about 10, 12 people was in my house and all of a sudden a light got through something and said people you have to look for yourself something. Me I don't trust from the janitor maybe some day they going to come up, I don't know, and I should have it on my conscience, on the train they picked you up. Two nights later, they knocked on the door. Her sister – Shaya was older.

RG: Yes, Boma and Gel Taylor [phonetic].

BG: They was but not when they come.

RG: Yes when they come.

BG: They knocking on the door, listen to this.

RG: And they scream, "Ala, Ala, open the door."

BG: I thought they said Beyla. Everybody call me Beyla.

RG: He said to me Rose, Boma is there. He said Beyla.

BG: No, she says Ala.

RG: I said, "No they don't say Beyla, they say Ala, Ala."

BG: All right, listen to this what happened, what's coming yet. So we hiding in the [unclear] there in the *schmutz* [dirt, filth], in the morning we go out from the *chaser*, [pigsty] from the *schmutz*, we left everything, and we...

RG: In the chimney.

BG: In the chimney. They get the key for...

NL: What do you mean the chimney?

BG: In the chimney, we hide in the chimney.

RG: You know Mrs. Levin it's a chimney, in the chimney.

NL: Yes.

RG: Before the chimney is built, there is empty space.

NL: A hearth.

RG: Yes. You know that the chimney goes upward, upward towards the chimney.

NL: You were hiding.

<sup>14</sup>Drancy – internment camp near Paris.

RG: On the sides. We were hiding.

BG: So we go out the next morning, we left everything, we give away the key for the janitor and we go out where we find somebody. We come out and my friend-- I don't know if he is still living but he is about 89-- [unclear] he says, "People what are you doing?" So we tell him what happened.

NL: He wasn't aware?

BG: No he didn't know, he was hiding too. It was a good friend, an old friend from Belgium. He says look, you have to have some clothing. You come with us. He had some connection already in the department store. He took out 50,000 francs like you say \$5000.00 and we could, her sister, my friend, she, we bought shirts, pants, and you know, raincoat, now we were sleeping six nights in cemetery, 60 people, we were hanging around, we couldn't get nowheres.

NL: In Lyon?

BG: In Lyon. So what's happening. And the...

NL: This is.

RG: And the man didn't let us.

BG: And the man he was hollering. All he said they going to pick up I say what do you want? You are 70, we are here young children, most of them, so they pick us up, you lived already but they didn't live so we were...

NL: Quarreling.

BG: Not quarreling.

NL: Arguing.

BG: So we quieted down.

NL: So you quieted him down.

BG: Quieted him down. So we come.

NL: Strange. Six days!

BG: He wasn't sleeping, so we come in. We have connections, eat, we are in hotel, a restaurant, you know, we went in the washroom. We washed ourselves in there, how we can, went a barber and we shaved, you know. Now what can you do? So where you go. Only you go [unclear]. So we come in this hotel where my friend, a lot of friends was picked up there and I used to come there talking and I know the owner and she was a big smoker, I used to give her always a couple of cigarettes, I become her best friend. [unclear] Do you remember? She says, this way, "Look you can't sleep here. You know very well." All of a sudden we see a police inspector is coming. We getting scared. She said, "Don't get scared, he is my man." He comes in and she says, "Look John, them kids didn't sleep a few nights," she didn't tell him, she said a few nights, we have to put them somewhere. He is thinking and he is thinking and he is thinking and he say, "Okay. But two nights." It cost you 200 francs a night, you know what cost a room at this time? 15, 20 francs a night, but I don't care you know.

NL: Of course not.

BG: He took us with a car and brings us to a beautiful house, they give us pajamas, and we took a bath. They give us some coffee.

NL: A gentile house?

BG: A gentile house. Then we find out it was. Next night, I don't know what happened, we overtook ourself where we had connections with a grocery, in a groceries, she was, her husband was a prisoner of war, we're talking, all of a sudden I give a look at my watch, five minutes after nine and it was curfew. We couldn't go out. It was our luck. Listen to this. So she says, "You know Rose and me, you are going to sleep with me and..."

RG: Albert.

BG: Albert going to sleep on the couch. She called me Albert. All right, next day. We come out there was nice, we washed, there was coffee and everything. We go to the hotel and the woman jumps on me and says, "Where you fall down?" This was a place where they took partisans. And a Belgian general landed and the Germans went after them and they picked up eight people from there. We would sleep there, it wasn't luck.

NL: They shot them?

BG: Listen, now we had nowhere to sleep.

RG: Again.

BG: Again. Listen to this, so she says, "You know what? Tonight you sleep here, my friend Dina, Dina comes in and her husband is a prisoner of war too, she lives in, she has a beautiful apartment here, she told me the address on Rue Bichat, she says, maybe she is going to rent it for you. I will going to guarantee you are clean people. She gonna rent it for you." She comes in the next day, it was furnished, a nice apartment, 2000 francs a month. The hell with it, I paid it. 2000. We going up and I see we want to move in. Next window, a broken of the door. I asked the janitor what this is, she said, you don't know what's happened, the postmaster from downstairs was opposed, he was working with the partisan and they took him away to, to Auschwitz and there two Gestapo live. Now go and live in there.

NL: Aye yi, yi, yi.

BG: So.

NL: On the run again.

BG: Our, our baker remember we slept one month, next door to our baker was living.

RG: Madame Gremamier [phonetic].

BG: An old lady in her sixties she was working in the silk factory. So she had I don't know how you call it an alcove.

RG: An alcove.

BG: An alcove. No window, nothing. Only with a drape like this here, a window with a drape from her dining room. There she has a bed there. So she says, "For one month you can stay here."

NL: Not-- also Gentile.

BG: Gentile, sure Gentile, no Jew. Where can you go? You have to go.

NL: It's important to know this because the stories that we hear about the French are very different.

BG: You have all kind. I tell you. You have good. I tell you.

NL: That's it. That's why this is important.

BG: There's the first soldier he took his chances that they would ask him and they would arrest him he says how can he take her without the permission. Look all of a sudden we find we had friends. We find there in this street Rue [unclear], a small street there is a woman she rents for everybody. We come there everything is rented, I know.

RG: And all Jewish people.

BG: All Jewish people, I know them. You know what we rented from her. Where they keep the garbage cans, like this corner where the lamp is here. I says better like nothing. We says [unclear].

NL: This is after sleeping in the alcove?

BG: Yeah, yeah, after this we have to have something. So we find this, we took our suitcase and we bought a mattress, with two sheets, with a pillow, you couldn't straighten it out even, we was sleeping there, excuse me, we were urinating, excuse me, in a milk bottle, no light, no water. In the morning, she run out in the yard nobody should see and empty the urine.

NL: The bottle.

BG: Now you going to ask me how we washed. On the corner was an Italian saloon, taproom and he had a big billiard room in a small taproom like here. In the billiard room they don't go in the daytime. So I become good friends with him, we come in there, he made us-- we kept on the one table we kept our suitcase with towel, with toothpaste and he make us coffee, and all right for money but nobody was there and we washed up there and everything and we had coffee and we go around. All right, all of a sudden I used to send-- I made two packages to send, a package to her sister and her girlfriend in the camp. It was a rule, 12 kilo. Even how good I was I couldn't figure out exact. I come to the post office, it was 12 ½. I am not going to open the package in the post, people are going to see everything is rationed, the guy, macaroni, marmalade, coffee, salami, everything. It cost me money but the black market was everything.

NL: Sure.

BG: And this was my luck, I tell you why. When I come back. To the *goy* in the billiard room and took, took down a pound from the package and go back to the post office and send away the package for the girls, he come back, I had a date, there we had a billiard room in a side street, nobody comes there. There we used to find each other, you



know, business people. I come there the waitress call me up, she was a Algerian Jewish girl, she once see the ring on my hand and she told me she is Jewish too. The waitress says, "Gruber come in and they picked up 28 Jews there, the Gestapo, a Jewish guy."

NL: A Jewish guy picked them up.

BG: A Jewish guy came in with the Gestapo.

RG: A Jewish guy came in with the Gestapo.

BG: With the Gestapo, with three Gestapo and showed this is a Jew and picked them up. And I had to be there too if I wouldn't miss the coffee. Now we had a problem. There was a little guy, a six year old little boy, they picked up his father. He had a *shiksa* [Yiddish: a non-Jewish woman] for a while in Strasbourg she didn't want to emigrate.

RG: She didn't want the kid. She didn't even want to hear about it.

BG: She don't want to, she says, "You want the kid, take him with you, I don't want to go with you. Emigrate. You know from Strasbourg to Lyon." So what are we going to do? So we went to the landlady.

NL: They left the boy?

BG: The boy wasn't with the father in the billiard room.

RG: Yeah, but the boy left with other people there.

BG: The boy was alone. So what, so the landlady wrote for the mistress and she come after him. Still, still, she feels a little bit mother.

NL: She feels guilty.

BG: Now what are we doing to do now. We still live in this house. We walk around here, we walk around there. All of a sudden, I like sports. I went to a soccer game.

NL: You weren't afraid to go out?

BG: No, okay, '42, '43 wasn't, '44 was.

NL: But after all this.

BG: You have to go out. You can't sit in the hole.

NL: Of course.

BG: So I went to the soccer game and I met there two professional soccer players, one Jew and one, one a *goy*, from Transylvania they speak Hungarian. So we talked and we speaking and he says, "You know what, you want to eat good, we have a good place we eat, come there, they going to serve you, we bring you they going to serve you." So you know how far we have to go to get there? Between here at least in center city, we have to travel through the trolley car the whole street but it was in the outskirts. But we went.

NL: By trolley.

BG: By trolley, we went there, we had the trolley car, he let us down like here so we walked in a block you know.

RG: How about some coffee?

NL: No, no let me ask you something. Excuse me for interrupting but there was a time when all Jews were supposed to wear a Jewish star.

BG: We don't wear, I don't wear it.  
RG: We didn't wear it.  
NL: Did you hear, did you hear the order?  
RG: Yes.  
BG: I knew the order.  
RG: Yes.  
NL: But you refused to wear it.  
RG: We ignored it.  
NL: You ignored it.  
BG: We ignored it, you see.  
RG: We had gentile papers.  
BG: Papers but the-- here are the gentile paper and here is my Jewish paper in my pocket.  
NL: How did you get the gentile papers?  
BG: For money.  
NL: Aha. From a French person?  
BG: From the government. No. From a...  
RG: A Czech?  
BG: A Jewish guy, a Jewish guy. Sells me.  
NL: Oh, I know there were people who were-- who were making them.  
BG: He was in naturalization. Naturalization, you know, for money you could have it.  
NL: So would you say that many Jews refused to wear the Jewish star?  
RG: Yeah. There in Lyon, not many.  
BG: Yeah. There you have to have in the papers, Jewish, afterwards you have to wear the Jewish star. In Lyon, nobody wears them.  
NL: I see, okay.  
BG: So.  
RG: If you wore the Jewish star...  
NL: I know.  
RG: ... they picked you up right away.  
NL: But in Germany and in other countries, even in Poland, you know, they did it.  
BG: They did it. Well they know you. This is why I say in a big city, they don't know who I am and they don't know who you are.  
NL: It made a difference. And you were away from your home base.  
RG: Sure.  
BG: That's right. So we went there.  
NL: So what did you do?

BG: We went there eating for a whole winter but we had there a close friend, the Gekorski in Finger was living there about. We were visiting them, you know. I don't know if you heard in Vienna was a big singer, Yoseph Schmidt.<sup>15</sup> Yosseleh Schmidt.

RG: Yoseph Schmidt we met him there.

BG: He was a big singer and he went into *Suisse*<sup>16</sup>, he died in the Suisse, he catch pneumonia, he was already a short fellow with very good, famous European, he was singer.

RG: What a beautiful singer.

BG: We met him there and other guys. So all of a sudden, I don't know what's happened, we had such bad weather we don't feel to go.

NL: This is the winter of?

BG: Forty – two ['42] – '43.

NL: Forty – two ['42] – '43.

BG: You don't feel to go. Three days later we go there and the woman says police – go, don't ask yourself. Two Gestapo come in and says here comes our man in a blue coat and the lady in a grey fur coat. They are Jewish, there was twice they were there after us. Two days after that. So we didn't go no more. We don't go no more there. You know we used to eat in restaurant and the Gestapo were used to talk in our backs. We were shaken up and we eat slowly, we didn't talk and the waiter come, how many time the waiter come and says, "Go, go back, come later. Too many Germans here." Too many *Boches*<sup>17</sup>.

NL: French waiters?

BG: French waiters. So what I want to bring you up we stayed there till February, we lay there, in this pigpen. They not finished. In February all of a sudden, all of a sudden, they put down the German Red Cross near us and the soldier was walking there. We was sleeping here and he was walking here on the pavement there.

RG: I don't know how we did that.

BG: We were lucky. I am telling you.

RG: [unclear].

BG: I'm telling you. All right, I tell you. So what can we do?

RG: Ah, well.

BG: So we can't stay too long here, we can't. So in March we start to look around. The fleas on our neck, you know from the fleas in the box. We can't wear always a scarf. So we start to looking around, where to, where to turn. So we had there friends, different, I am telling you the Polish people, she said look, here is Dropsky [phonetic] who had the Joint kitchen, they picked him up, in this time anyway.

NL: There was still a Joint kitchen.

<sup>15</sup>Yoseph Schmidt – Austro-Hungarian and Romanian Jewish tenor, 1904 – 1942. He stood five feet.

<sup>16</sup>*Suisse* is French for Switzerland.

<sup>17</sup>*Boches* is a derogatory term for Germans.

BG: No there wasn't no more. They picked them up in 24<sup>th</sup> of August. He had an apartment fixed up, they picked him up, his son, you know, a lot of people, but the wife, with the daughter with the son-in-law, with the daughter-in-law are hiding. You could have this apartment. But you know where it was? For the devil in the teeth, near City Hall. How many times we went out we were shaking and German Gestapo, French militia men, French police, German gendarmie, turn around, never, across the street from City Hall. But we have no choice. We took the apartment. We took the apartment.

RG: For Pesach.

BG: For Pesach, we have to go out. We were living there to Shavuot. Shavuot morning we come out and the janitor told us, they picked up 60 families with the court apartment, only we left.

RG: [unclear]

BG: [unclear], we were living downstairs and another young couple were living like you said, with, [unclear] with boxes, she said they leave nobody. I said we can't stay no more here. Once she hid us she said you pick up from here the people, they had Dropsky and they leave nobody. So they don't touch us. Now we have another, another thing to do, to look for an apartment. We staying there, I am telling you, how many times we went out, I was shaking. You know, men, so what can we do. So Art Gunter [phonetic] the [unclear] says, "Here is two rooms in a side street, really in a side, small street, but no electric, no gas, no water." We can't live there. So, I went and took a woman there, an acquaintance, a Hungarian woman, in the country she used to bring us in cigarettes, she used to bring us cheese. I say, "Look, Reggi, you take the apartment, your name on it if I am going to take it, Goldenberg they know right away." She says, "I have three apartments in my name, I can't. But I have a girlfriend her husband is also a prisoner of war, I bring in Mrs. Foder, she going to take it." So I went to the real estate and took the two rooms. I paid, I paid them for six months 900 francs and for her I pay 200 francs a month. There I paid 150 [unclear].

NL: It's a fortunate thing you still had money.

BG: That's all I can say, I made a lot of money. I made money.

NL: But you had it, you had it.

BG: I had it, so I spent it, I don't know-- wait...

RG: When we left Antwerp we had already \$2000 here and we left for Antwerp in the pocket \$4000.

BG: Listen to this.

RG: Four thousand dollars was a lot of money.

BG: Listen to this, wait a minute now, I forgot to tell you what kind of luck we have. A week later we went to the apartment to see what is going on.

NL: The old one?

BG: The old one.

NL: Yes.

BG: We go in there, after we slept there, we slept, we are clean and what going on. So the janitor says everything is gone. We come up, not one spoon left.

NL: Raided. It was raided.

BG: It was cleaned up. Listen to this-- and I gave a look.

NL: Careful.

BG: I gave a look. In the corner I had a suitcase, I didn't bring with me, a little suitcase. There I have two and a half thousand dollars, I have a few pounds, a few gold pieces, the photos with the passport. They didn't look at. There is a picture.

RG: If they find pictures they went after.

BG: They went looking. Something happened. The janitor emptied it out I, I know. Everything, he took everything, the clothes, the furniture, food, everything. They left something lucky. So I started to jump and he says what do you jump and I said look. I prepared to run, I take the suitcase and I was, we were so scared, we left the suitcase but I find it and so I come up and find it and come out and look for my friend, [unclear], I have him back the \$50,000, the 50,000 francs and he says, "Bela, where from you have the money?" I tell him, he says, "Look, you are going to live forever." Why does everything change. So we were walking with the suitcase all around, she was carrying the suitcase. A little suitcase, real suitcase. So what we going to do now. So, I find the apartment, so I looking for a hardware store.

NL: A hardware store.

BG: I asked the janitor what I need, wire and things that I need because I need plumbing and everything. I come in the hardware store on the avenue well this is a side street, they were two blocks away and I look around and I find two teenagers working and I say I want to talk to the patrone, the patrone's, the boss. They went to him and says, "Come in, can I help you?" I say, "Look," really, I told him the truth. Look, I can't tell him I'm a French when I have an accent. I said, "Look, I am a Czechoslovakian Jew, and I need help and I come to you." I tell him the truth. Straight.

NL: Straight. You weren't afraid to admit to him.

BG: Well, I figured, what can he do.

NL: He can tell the police.

BG: Police, if he call the police I go out. Look at me, he didn't. No. [unclear] Business people don't do this.

RG: Business people did not do that. Know who did that? The *proste*, [Yiddish: crude, simple] the arbiter, the Communists.

BG: The Communists. They sell you for a kilo of sugar, for a kilo of sugar. For anything, for a pack of cigarettes but not the business people. They making business with us. He gave a look on me, he looks, he called the teenagers and they make me an order to pack me everything. Now when he says the price I look at him, he don't give me black market. He says, "I was surprised. Now you are surprised. I see." He says, "I don't think I am going to charge, you are in trouble." Can you imagine?

NL: Unusual.

BG: He says wholesale, no I have a lot of, a few of such a thing.

NL: Yeah.

BG: When you tell them the truth they like it. So but he say two things. "You have to take it away by yourself. I give you a wheelbarrow. My door is open for you, anything but you don't send me nobody." "What you want," he said, "My door is open for you."

NL: Amazing.

BG: So I took it away and I give away for the old man and in four days he make me the wires, he make electric, water. Now you need.

NL: So what did you want all this equipment for?

BG: Fixing the water and the electric.

RG: To make it, to put in, so they could put in the sink and water. I had no water.

BG: A sink.

NL: You were able to get water?

BG: There was water there but it was broken everything.

NL: I see, you needed pipes.

BG: Pipes.

NL: And electricity?

BG: Yeah and the wires, and our sink, there was no sink even.

NL: So you created?

BG: I bring up our material. In four days, in three or four days, the old man made me everything.

NL: Amazing.

BG: Now you need a meter. The rule is, the whole world, if you have electric, you must have a meter. Did I know, listen, I had guts, did I know the radio and the papers said pregnant women have to have six months before making an application, she should take the six months and get up for a meter. And old, sick people two years. Other people don't get no meters at all. How can you get a meter? So I said don't worry. I told them don't worry, I asked him the old man where is our section, like here in Frankfurt, I come in the electric company, and I stopped to look in faces of the girls who worked there, I go to a girl at the counter with cigarettes, hello can I help you and I say, "Introduce me to the manager."

RG: To the top.

BG: I know she can do nothing. I did this a few times, see. The manager called me in, "Can I help you? Sit down." I say, "Look, I can [unclear] but I won't." I told him, "I need a meter." He started to talk you know, and I figure the guy maybe he make between 12 and 1500 a month, maybe. I say look, "I give you 2500 francs, I give

you a pack of cigarettes now, a pack of cigarettes when you finish it, you know. A bottle of Cognac, and a bottle of liquor.”

NL: My goodness. He couldn't refuse.

BG: I will tell you.

NL: You had to.

BG: He took his jacket, he took his car, he measured it out, next day he come and put me in the meter.

NL: Amazing.

BG: Now all right we have already furniture, we bought a bed, we bought, we have already a table. We have living.

NL: Fundamentals.

BG: You couldn't see there no Germans, no Polish, it was a simple city, a brick factory was, you know, there. Only we had a neighbor.

NL: This is still Lyon.

BG: Lyon, yes, Lyon. We had a neighbor, we lived on this side and a neighbor was living with two kids on this side, enough. That was apartment. We living there, now you need coal and wood. This was the same thing, you could, are entitled to 50 kilo coal, 50 kilo wood a month, not more. How can you live? For me it was no, no, no problem. There was a coal store, and I don't know what's happened to me, I went in lunchtime. I went in lunchtime, I come in lunchtime there is a nice young lady and we started to talk, she likes wine, she likes cigarettes, her husband's a prisoner of war, she stayed with her mother-in-law, and a worker, so she says, "Why you come here?" She wasn't dummy. I say, "Look I need coal and I need wood." She says, "You know we can't." "Look, you give me a stack of wood, 50 kilo of wood, I give you two liters of wine. You give me 50 kilo of coal, I will give you a pack of cigarettes." We made a deal. You know how much I *schlepped*. I had to go lunchtime. The mother was sleeping, the worker went to lunch, I filled up the basement with coal and with wood. I even get for the synagogue. Two sacks coal.

NL: You must have *schlepped* for hours.

BG: All right, I was young, what's a matter, with wheelbarrow I bring it down.

NL: Oh, with a wheelbarrow.

BG: And wheelbarrow I bring it down and in the city, lunchtime I know. After

...

NL: How far was this the coal office from work.

RG: About a block.

BG: One block. One block. So we are living this way so all of a sudden.

NL: This is now?

BG: Forty-three ['43].

NL: The winter of '43?

BG: This is in the summer.

NL: October, in the summer, you are preparing for the winter.

BG: For the winter of '43-'44. So we were there, we were there and my wife in '44, I used to send home money for my parents and for her parents.

NL: Still?

BG: Yes, packages and money. Well look, her parents were there, her sister with a kid and the father and mother, the brother-in-law was in camp, in my house was three kids, and my father and mother and my sister-in-law.

NL: And where were they in '44?

BG: In Hungary. Hungary.

NL: They were still safe?

BG: They are still safe. I was, so I used to send them through the Swiss Red Cross. Every month money for both for them and for mine.

NL: And where did have to go to get to the Swiss Red Cross.

BG: I sent it to the Swiss Red Cross, I had the address, in Switzerland and I send them the address, we had to send them and I every had, from every money, I had always a receipt and at home we, from home we had a letter they received the money always.

NL: Receipt.

BG: Forty-four ['44]. February my wife goes to send away a package. And I see she left, 11:00; 4:00 in the afternoon she is not home; 5:00 afternoon she is not home. I am getting crazy, I say they must have picked her up. I go out from the house, I went out from the house, walk around, walk around. All of a sudden she comes back. 6:00, what's happened? You tell her what is happened. You tell her what is happened.

RG: I'll tell you the truth. I don't even remember it right here. I came in with a package and Shep was not here and here was a German, and here was a German and I was here and he says to me...

NL: The Post Office this is?

BG: Yes it was but upstairs it was a custom house.

RG: Custom house. He says to me "*Du schweine Jude wast hast du mit dein man. Ich weiss nicht du bist Jude?*"<sup>18</sup> and I made believe calm.

BG: He sees that it goes Goldenberg.

RG: Nothing cool. Yeah.

NL: What language. You spoke in German?

BG: French.

NL: French. You spoke French.

RG: Yeah. I spoke French. And again and again and again and again, and he started to poke me, he this and that and I still said, "*Qu'est ce vous parlez? Je ne comprend pas ce que vous dites.*"<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>German: You dirty Jew, what did you do with your husband? I don't know you are Jewish.

<sup>19</sup>French: What are you speaking? I don't understand what you are saying.



BG: She spoke French.

RG: Tell me in French.

NL: In French.

RG: I don't know what are you talking. I don't know this and I don't know that and I said I don't have idea, I mail it for a friend of mine. And they went away and I don't know where or what or when and they were, I can't explain it to you. So then it was already dark, it was a quarter of, after 5:00, quarter after 5:00, I was left over only with the Germans, with one German and all of sudden he says to me, in German "*Hab keine angst.*" [German: Don't be afraid].

NL: Don't be worried.

RG: Don't be worried. *Hab keine angst.*

BG: And go home don't come no more.

RG: Now wait. And I look at him. "*Je ne comprend pas. Je ne sais pas ce que vous dites.*"

NL: Good for you.

BG: She said she don't understand what he said.

RG: *Je ne sais pas.* All of a sudden, the Frenchman came in.

BG: He said go home.

RG: He really, they really thought that I don't understand.

NL: You put on an act.

RG: I didn't let myself, he poke me in this and that and I didn't.

NL: Remarkable. Remarkable.

RG: Then he says to me the Frenchman, "*Je sais que vous savez qu'est qu'il vous dit.*" I know that you know what he is talking to you, but you are so good in your act.

BG: In French he said this.

NL: He was aware that you were putting on an act.

RG: Surely he knew I was Jewish.

NL: He knew.

RG: So he says, don't worry. He is between us.

BG: So then she come home.

NL: Go home.

BG: So then.

NL: So you think he, the German was bribed?

RG: Yes.

NL: The German was bribed?

RG: That's right. He says to me don't bring any more packages.

BG: We didn't either but they ...

RG: Then we got a letter from my home, that they were deported.

BG: And I get a letter.

RG: And he got a letter.

BG: They marked it down, they took her mother to the ghetto. They knew where the letter come. Listen I forgot to tell you something, in '43 what happened. This is some interesting thing, I couldn't understand myself never. We go in, in 1943, we go in the trolley car.

NL: This is in Lyon.

BG: In Lyon, all of a sudden a policeman comes to us. He says, "Please go down and next wagon the Gestapo is asking paper." I don't see him before and I don't see him after. He must have known me. Can you imagine this?

NL: Such a...

BG: It was a, I am telling, we had luck.

RG: And how about then in [unclear]? When they the Gestapo [unclear] stop us and get...

BG: Wait, wait I am not finished. In '44, '44 was so dangerous, a man couldn't go out on the streets. So before Passover, I said "Rose, Rose let's go buy some clothes, new clothes", we had money, I said, "Maybe tomorrow they pick me up." Friends used to tell, "Goldenberg, you go so nice dressed, why are you spending the money?" No, why you spend the money? I say, "Look,"-- they know I have money-- "Look I don't what is going to happen tomorrow, they could pick me up, so I will enjoy today." Some people had money and they were so, scared for the money. Look, so we went out, we didn't go like to Market Street. We went in like Walnut Street. Little bit side, all of a sudden, like from here to the door, I see a pick up truck and a doctor, a doctor in the pickup truck, I see in it, and the Gestapo and the French with the Gestapo and the Gendarmerie. I say, "Rose, roll your collar you can't turn around, or they going to," this I couldn't understand I tell you why....

[Tape one, side two ended.]

*Tape two, side one:*

NL: This is tape two, continuing our interview with Mr. Goldenberg.

BG: Yes. So now we arrived, he grabbed us by the hand and took us to the two guys.

RG: [unclear]

BG: He get hold of us, you are not Jewish.

RG: You are not part *Juif*<sup>20</sup>.

NL: You are not part *Juif*.

BG: You are not Jewish. He grabbed us, he don't want the Germans should ask us. You understand. This I could understand why the guy, later, three weeks later, I find the guy I say, "Andre, what the heck you do with the Gestapo?" He says, "Look, I had no choice, they took him, I don't want to go in the Russian front, they took him to fight. If I go to the partisans, they pick up my mother,"-- but they did it, if somebody run away, they pick up the father and mother. So, what can I tell you, it was this. So now in, we go home.

NL: You bought.

BG: No, we don't buy. No we lost out.

NL: You lost out.

BG: We bought later.

NL: You bought later.

BG: But this time we lost our appetite. In 1944, it was so, I am telling you, dangerous a man couldn't go out in the middle of the day. All right, 8:00 when the workers go, 5:00, so 5:00 we took a walk from our house, but this was a, really it was, there was, how you call the *Luftschutzen* [German: bunker, air raid shelter] they go against the bomb.

NL: Air raid shelter.

BG: Shelter, the air raid shelter. So I used to stay with the guys, I used to watch, you know. So we used to, so it was air raid, only for air raid. All of a sudden we go out for a walk. We come back, listen to this, what guts I had, we come back, four Gestapo was in the door.

RG: In the door.

NL: Oh my gosh.

BG: In the door. So we went, and we knock on our door, she says, "*Sommes pas là*," [French: they are not here].

RG: I said to him, I said, "*Ils ne sommes pas là, viens*," [They are not here, come] they are not here.

BG: Yeah. French.

<sup>20</sup>Part of the Jewish people.

RG: Come on.

BG: Listen to this, we walking and when I went to the left, this time I was smoking a lot, I took out a cigarette I said, "Permit me." He light the cigarette and I walk away. You know why on the second, I said I not gonna ask him, he going to ask me who you are.

NL: Funny. *Chutzpah*.

BG: They never. They were looking for me. For us.

NL: They were looking for you.

BG: Yeah so don't ask questions what was. All night they were there until 11:00. 11:00 was curfew. So we had friends, they had two boys, Jewish friends, and one of the kids goes out, 11 or 12 year old, so he come back and he says they left. So she took chances. So it was, well it was really no police, she took out some clothes in the morning and...

RG: I took the money.

BG: Not all the money.

RG: I took the money.

BG: Well you had in the house, we took all the money. Then you still left \$50,000 in [unclear].

RG: 50,000 francs.

BG: 50,000 francs.

NL: Where did you go, Mrs. Goldenberg?

BG: We slept the one night we slept with friends.

RG: We were sleeping with friends.

BG: One night.

RG: But then the boys came and said that they left, so I run back.

BG: Took out some clothes and the money.

RG: Took out some clothes and took the money.

BG: And she come back.

RG: And took the pictures. What it was. That you had to watch.

BG: My God, if they find pictures they find you.

RG: They find pictures.

NL: You're finished.

BG: So we went, we went, we went to other friends back in [unclear]. A friend we had there, a chairman, a lawyer, he was in the San [St.] Louis ship on 1938. One of the guys.

NL: And he came back to Europe of course.

BG: Yeah, he got separated, his wife and his daughter was in England and he was in France and he find out, remember, after the war she come down. She was living there with a woman whose husband was taken away, with the woman and a little boy. So he says come up, we are good friends, come up, you going to stay here. So we stayed

there. I forgot to tell you what, foolishness we did. In 1943, Passover once we did. You see when you think, our friend, they were very religious. Very religious so I bought new dishes for Passover.

NL: Oy.

BG: Wait a minute you are not finished.

RG: He's just starting.

BG: Not finished.

RG: They had to be *toyveled*.<sup>21</sup>

BG: The lady with me we went, took baskets and we went to the Rhone<sup>22</sup> in the Rhone to *toyvel*,

RG: To *toyvel*.

BG: We went up, about five blocks up, about five blocks and took chances. That's what I tell you we did such a...

NL: Well it is a religious injunction.

BG: Yeah but you know, what they say, if you can do it, you can do it. You know, everything has a measurement. But we took, she, not Rose, the lady and me took the two baskets, a big one, I had a little one and she had a little one, went to. But I had connections. I got what I want, everything I could get.

NL: Oh that was fortunate, of course.

BG: The money. The cigarettes. Cigarettes and sugar and wine.

NL: Money talks.

BG: Money talks.

RG: If you didn't have no money you couldn't have anything.

BG: All right but some people with money they couldn't know where to go. You had to.

RG: They were scared.

BG: You were scared. Look, we went to [unclear] with my wife. She seen a nice pair of shoes or a nice blouse I went into the store. He says, "You have a coupon for it?" Everything. I say no. I said, "I give you a pack of cigarettes."

NL: That did it.

BG: But sugar and wine was also very, very.

NL: Scarce.

BG: But you have to schlep it you know. Cigarettes, it was in the pocket, I had always two or three pack of cigarettes in the pocket. You gonna ask me where I got cigarettes. I gonna tell you where, the partisans, I was welcome with the partisans. I said I need.

RG: With the underground.

BG: The underground. I need.

<sup>21</sup>Dipped in running water.

<sup>22</sup>River.

NL: Is that the *Maquis*?

BG: The *Maquis*, yes, I need 200 cigarettes, they asked me which brand. So they bring me.

NL: They were in Lyon.

BG: Well around Lyon around the mountain, I come up to them, they come to me. They need 200,000 francs, I give them. You know. They needed, I say look, I need the liquor, they bring me but sometimes they needed. They said Albert, Albert, you have a bottle or two.

NL: Sure.

BG: I said I have, I give them. So, they bring me double back.

NL: Were there any partisan actions in the city? Sabotage?

BG: In Lyon, in the city wasn't too much. No.

RG: It was but not that much.

BG: Not much, not much. Around Lyon. Around Lyon.

NL: Around Lyon.

BG: Around Lyon. They sabotaged there the rails, the rails and the bridges. The railroad and the bridges. But in the city wasn't too much.

NL: Did you ever hear of the Eclaireurs Israelites? The boy scouts.

BG: No.

NL: The French Jewish boy scouts?

RG: Not, no, no at this time.

BG: Not at this time no it wasn't.

NL: Yeah.

BG: They could do nothing, the Jews can do nothing. You know they took over the Jewish store, they took over everything.

RG: The Jewish people, the highly Jewish religious people in Lyon, the Levys.

BG: The Blums. The Lehmans.

RG: The Blums. Lehmans.

BG: You know they are Jews. Now I am going to tell you from 19 ...

RG: They were very much in contact with the United States.

NL: Is that so?

RG: Very much.

BG: Look.

NL: In '42, '43.

RG: Right.

BG: We had, look, we had, I am telling you they had the kitchen the Joint. The Lehmans.

RG: The Lehmans got money, received money to keep up the Joint.

BG: Through Switzerland.

NL: Through Switzerland.

BG: Through Switzerland.  
RG: From United States.  
BG: Through Switzerland, through Switzerland.  
NL: Until '43 when the office was closed.  
RG: Right. Then...  
BG: Forty-two ['42], August 24, they closed it.  
NL: August 24, they closed it.  
BG: August 24. I am never going to forget it. This was an official, they picked up so many people.  
RG: The Lehmans, the, the, the Levys.  
NL: Old French families.  
BG: They are the French families. In 19 ...  
RG: Like, Leon Blum's<sup>23</sup> family, all the old French, real Jews, and they were good Jews.  
BG: And I am going to tell you. They were, they were [unclear] Jews. Now I am going to tell you what happened when I was 1934 in France. In 1940, 41, we talking, a guy says he is from Chambray and I said how come I was there, he says there is 30 Jewish families, and they don't bother them, they have no synagogue, they are not far for Grenoble. You know in Grenoble there are Hassidim family so for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur they are going to get to Grenoble or to Geneva, Switzerland. I told him what's happened. He said the police didn't find the Jews. He was a Levy. I know a Levy, a Blum, a Cohen, a Lehman and they are all Jews, they are the old Jews.  
NL: Authentic Jews.  
BG: Yeah, French Jews. The Meyers.  
RG: They were in contact, the Meyers. In contact with the United States.  
BG: Yeah.  
RG: Very, very-- I'm telling you if it wouldn't be for America.  
BG: After the war, we were liberated.  
RG: We wouldn't exist even. That much Jews. [unclear].  
BG: How about in '44.  
NL: It is good to hear because this part of the work of American Jewry is not sufficiently well known.  
RG: Yes, I could tell you that.  
BG: In 1944, June 15, we had a friend, a friend, name is Haydel and they were talking, you know, a good friend, she says ...  
RG: We were talking like tonight, I says to her you know, Haydel [unclear].  
BG: No, Haydel says ...  
RG: You understand Jewish?

<sup>23</sup>André Léon Blum (1872 – 1950) was a French socialist politician and three-time Prime Minister of France. He was imprisoned by the Vichy in Buchenwald.

NL: Yes.

RG: I'll buy the material, you cut them for me, I will make them. And she says, "You know what Rose, I don't want my husband to know about everything. I'll go with you," and we are buying, and you're borrowing money, because I have two sisters *mit* [German: with] seven kids.

BG: Seven kids. The mother was taken away.

RG: Seven kids, you give me the money and I will buy them and then I will pay you back.

NL: What were you going to make, I didn't hear.

BG: A dress.

RG: A dress. I says don't worry about it.

BG: It was June 15.

RG: Don't worry about it, I'll give you the money. And we go together and you buy whatever you want. I'll pay for it. She's here.

BG: She come back, the husband didn't come back.

RG: She is here.

BG: She is in New York. She is very religious.

RG: Wait. I went out. I got up in the morning, "Oh," I said, "Bennie I am late. Haydel is going to be waiting."

BG: We were living down there by Otto, if I remember.

RG: I run to her and I come there and I see blood on the mirror, blood on the floor and you know, I got, I couldn't move. I got so bad, I couldn't move. I says, "Ohhhhhh," just like that and the concierge...

BG: The janitor.

RG: The janitor comes over to me, get the hell out of here. *Sauvez vous!*<sup>24</sup> *Sauvez vous, les Gestapos.*

BG: They picked up six people there.

RG: The Gestapo he takes six-- *Sauvez-vous.*

BG: You know what?

RG: And she didn't let me go out the same way. I went out this way and I run, I come home, and I tell him.

BG: I say look.

RG: He says to me. Right away to hide.

BG: First is the father, you shouldn't go. They had, they had a tailor shop and this was the store where they had the goods and they make the measurements. I said to the father first, tell him he shouldn't go. At lunch I used to go to the son and [unclear].

RG: Eating.

<sup>24</sup>French: Save yourself!



BG: First you go tell for the father, he shouldn't go, what's happened. Now they had a child in the country. She saved the child. She went down. She had a sister-in-law and a mother-in-law that were living down the outskirts. They had a laundry, you know dry cleaning. He says you go the other side, you gonna see Helen is working and everything quiet. So she walked through.

RG: And I went, and I said *Court, Court Moron, Court Lafayette*.

BG: In French *Court Moron, Court Lafayette*.<sup>25</sup>

RG: It was so busy. How can I go there and I am so excited.

BG: I said go there, you have to help.

RG: I go.

BG: You have to save the kid.

RG: I go, I pick myself up and I go. And I go there and I see the little girl is playing outside.

BG: The daughter.

BG: His sister's daughter.

RG: And she is pressing. I said, "Helen come here." I said, "Is everything okay in the house? Is everything okay?" and she said yes.

BG: She said yeah.

RG: I said, "What is the matter?" She said to me, "What's the matter?"

BG: They picked up your brother and your sister.

RG: "Take your mother, take the kids and go."

BG: Go after Boruch.

RG: Go, go away. Go away. *Gay schon nuch Boruch!*<sup>26</sup>

BG: Our friends' son. We see them in America.

RG: She said, "Rose, you are *meshugga* [Yiddish: crazy]." And I said, "No I am not. They took a Avrum, they took Haydel, they took couple more people." I mention the name.

BG: I'll tell you why. This was the place where the French police used to come in, and tell us watch yourself, tonight, they going to, into the neighborhood.

RG: Raffle.

BG: There going to be a raffle. Why you know why they did. Used to come to the *préfecture* [police headquarters], they used to come to the *préfecture* and they asked, they ask for the Jews, for the refugees' names, they didn't want to see that, the police, the French police.

NL: Notis [phonetic].

BG: Notis was there in place. They were living there long ago, you know. He left there in school, he come here with a little kid. So they know each other, French

<sup>25</sup>French: Courtyards

<sup>26</sup>Go now to Boruch.

police was very good. I used to go in there in the *préfecture* till in 1944 a lot of times, '44. You know, I used to have the friend, I used to go to give her a pack of cigarettes.

RG: Not after '44.

BG: In '44, after '44. End of '43 I didn't go no more. It was dangerous. But I used to go in there, what was going on, you know, they would let us know. And this was the place, where, and they told them to go away from the house. They warned them, they says, they going to go nine in the Brotow [phonetic] section where we were living. Oh they not going to come here and they pick them up. And she told us when she told them.

RG: So when I told her that, I said, "Helen, *sauvez vous, sauvez vous*."

BG: *Gay nuch Boruch*.

RG: *Gay nuch Boruch*. She took the mother. And the father.

NL: She listened to you.

RG: Yes, of sure she did and she took away the mother and the father and her kids in a place and then she was running.

BG: Taking the boy.

RG: Taking the boy, her brother's son. Because they beat you to death.

BG: Listen. You have to give up.

BG: Listen there was, there was.

RG: Wait one minute.

BG: All right.

RG: Excuse me.

BG: Okay.

RG: And she went away and she got the kid. Two hours later.

BG: The Gestapo was there.

RG: The Gestapo was there, after the kid. And you want to tell me that a mother would give it out so easy, her baby.

BG: You know what they did?

RG: So now that she came back. I asked her, "Haydel what was it?" She said, "Abrumche<sup>27</sup> they killed him right away. Me, I make believe that I am dead and they left me."

BG: They sent her away to Auschwitz.

RG: And they send me to Auschwitz.

BG: Listen, in 19, I am telling you in 1943, in 1943 they come into the synagogue, in the *Beis Midrash* [Yiddish: House of Study], with a picture. If we know this guy, [unclear], good friend of mine. As a matter of fact, he did me a favor he give me the Red Cross address where I could have connections sent.

NL: Send packages.

<sup>27</sup>Little Abraham.

BG: Yes, money, yeah. So, we went on, we send on a man to the father and mother, there was the father, the mother, the uncle and a nephew. Fact is the father was some 82 year old. Strong men, they were strong, he says, "*Mein Yankel vet mir nisht ausgeben*"<sup>28</sup>. It took three days, where we know they come after me to pick him up. So the nephew come back. He told us, you know what they did? When they come in, he was, they hang him with the *kop* [Yiddish: head] down and the dogs was biting him he had to give out. So that he was suffering, he was filled with bites, he was bleeding all round and they picked up...

RG: He didn't, even the father didn't recognize him.

BG: Didn't recognize his son.

RG: When they had him.

BG: Three days they kept up.

NL: Three days.

BG: Three days.

NL: And then left them go?

BG: No they sent them to Auschwitz. No. The whole gang they sent to Auschwitz.

NL: But he survived.

BG: No he could not survive.

NL: Only the father survived?

BG: Only the nephew. Only the nephew. It was awful what they did. No use talk about it. After we were liberated, in 19-- I am telling you we have another such a thing with the police. We used to go to a barber there, on the corner, where you talk about the war. Six, seven Jewish guys. We didn't know he was working for the Germans. The *Maquis*<sup>29</sup> hanged him while he sell the French but he don't sell us. Can you understand that? He don't sell us Jewish people. It's unbelievable, such a thing. It's, it's ...

NL: You see every layer of human behavior in such a crisis.

BG: Yes. He sell his own brothers, the French people.

NL: His own brothers.

BG: He didn't sell us.

RG: And how about when I was by Mr. Cherblanc? I am in a store.

BG: In the grocery where we had a friend.

RG: Good friend. Good friend.

BG: He was French, he was French but look ...

RG: All of a sudden I hear, screaming, crying, [unclear] I take a look at a Jew that we knew, Hassidic Jew with a beard, like that, and a daughter and a son.

BG: Two sons in the army.

<sup>28</sup>Yiddish: My Yankel will not inform on me.

<sup>29</sup>French underground resistance fighters.

RG: And two sons in the army.  
BG: In the French army officers.  
RG: Yeah. And you know, I couldn't keep myself, my feet started to go like water. So, she said to me like this. My name wasn't Goldenberg, it was Rose. Rosetta.  
BG: They call her Rosetta.  
RG: Keish, Keish, a Hungarian name.  
BG: Bender, Keish.  
RG: I had Bender.  
BG: We had so many names.  
RG: She knew me as Hatah. *Madame Hatah qu'est qu'il y a avec vous? Qu'est que vous pleurais? C'est les Juifs. C'est seulement les Juifs.*<sup>30</sup>  
BG: It's the Jew.  
RG: It's only the Jew.  
BG: But.  
NL: As if they were the scum of the earth.  
RG: Right. Right. And I couldn't help it when she said that, my fear started to come worse.  
BG: Look we had our bakery.  
RG: I kept myself like anything and she says to me, I says, I didn't say nothing. Absolutely nothing.  
BG: After the war.  
RG: After the war. I went in and I said to her like this, "*Madame Cherblanc, vous savez que je moi je suis Juif*"<sup>31</sup>.  
BG: *Vous n'etes pas Juif.* She said, "You are not Jewish, you are Czechoslovakian."  
RG: *Vous savez que moi je suis Juif.* So she says to me like this, "Why do you telling me that? You are not Jewish, you know you are not." I says, "Yes I am. I was born and die a Jew."  
NL: She must have been shocked.  
RG: She was white as a ghost. She didn't know.  
BG: We didn't bother too much with her after the war.  
RG: I, I couldn't. I knew.  
NL: No respect.  
BG: Listen I have a bakery. They have a baker, mostly where I should go to Gentiles. She says I don't know what they are talking about the Jews. I know there are Jewish people, they are like, like us. They told them on radio what to say, and this and this and this. You know we had a problem in Lyon at this time. We have 300 people we have to help.

<sup>30</sup>French: What is the matter with you? What makes you cry? It's the Jews. It's only the Jews.

<sup>31</sup>French: You know that I am Jewish.

NL: 300 people.  
BG: In Lyon.  
NL: 300 Jewish families.  
BG: Families we have to help.  
NL: They were in hiding. And they had no cards.  
RG: They had no ration cards.  
NL: Where were they from? Do you know?  
R/BG: From all around. They were from all around. Rumania, Poland, Russia, Germany, Belgium, from all around.  
NL: All of Europe.  
BG: Not everybody had cards. You know not everybody had cards. We had people who had money so you know, you know you have money, we tax you, you was six people used to go and collect the money.  
NL: Is that so?  
BG: Every Wednesday we used to get to give them the money. He had two kids, we give him money, you had one kid, you have three kids. How many times and I had my 15 families alone.  
NL: 15 families.  
BG: Well, after August 24, after August 24, 24, 1942 every Jew was illegal. So you if you were illegal you had no ration card. You are not, you are not.  
RG: We had a lot of support from the underground.  
BG: The party. The underground.  
NL: The underground.  
BG: I had the underground connection.  
NL: The partisans.  
BG: Yes.  
NL: Now was this the Jewish scouts?  
RG: No.  
BG: No, was mixed.  
NL: The *Maquis*.  
BG: The *Maquis*, to me in my house used to come, a captain and a sergeant, they weren't Jewish.  
NL: They weren't Jewish.  
BG: You know, Andre and Paul, I tell him don't bring me more, so once he come in with two other ones. I don't want.  
NL: What was his name?  
BG: Andre and Paul. They used to...  
NL: How do you spell his last name?  
BG: I don't know. I never knew how they come about the name. We called them Andre and Paul that's all.

NL: Paul.

BG: One was Paul, one was Andre.

RG: They never gave no other name.

BG: We called them Andre and Paul, they don't know my name either. They call me Albert.

NL: How did you make your first contact?

BG: It was appointed, it was appointed.

NL: They would come into the city?

RG: No, a Jewish guy. Moishe and a Jewish guy.

BG: They were acquainted.

RG: He met him in Salerno.

BG: In Salerno. There where they picked up the 28 Jews.

RG: Yeah. And he says to him, "Once I see you are a Jewish guy. You have guts come on, I need you."

NL: He spotted you.

BG: He gave us the first break.

RG: The first break.

BG: After the war he messed himself up.

NL: So you did important welfare work, Mr. Goldenberg?

BG: We, I did, I tell you I had 15 people from Belgium when I was in 1917 Belgium. They, they, they were in a bakery, he says he was there, he says you see this guy, two years, he says, my life is my family. He had nothing, he was a poor man, we even give him money but the ration cards, bread, for the meat, everything there everything was rationed, you know, if you were not registered at city hall you got nothing so after 24 of August I am nothing either.

NL: You had reserves.

BG: Look, I had reserves.

NL: Connections.

BG: I had connections, it's true. Look in 1944...

RG: He gave us the best things.

BG: We had connections through this, we had connections. In 1944 Shavuot, I come out, I used to go always to the synagogue, till 1944, we had open a little synagogue.

NL: Did you?

RG: We had all the holidays.

BG: Always.

RG: Every day they went to synagogue to *daven* [Yiddish: pray], not only the holidays.

BG: Every day we had open a little place.

RG: Every day they went to *daven*.

BG: So listen to this, in '44, Shavuot, I come down from the house, I find a French guy he says, "Hey Albert, come let's play billiards." I don't want to refuse him, you never can tell. So I went and played one, one he win, one I win and he says, "You know what, let's play Albert who wins pays for the cognac." He loves his cognac. So I come out, it's dark, and I say look, but I walk and I come to the synagogue, people coming in crying. What happened? The Gestapo come in and they take everybody papers. Who had Jew on the papers, they don't touch them. Five guys don't have Jewish on their paper, they pick them up and I didn't either. I tell you I had always luck, mother luck was with me.

NL: There was no point to it, why were they picking up people who weren't Jews?

BG: Oh, of course you were denying you were Jewish.

RG: Denied you were a Jew.

BG: You are in the synagogue you are Jewish. Don't you understand?

NL: I see.

BG: You have to have the papers Jew.

NL: Oh. Oh.

BG: I don't have it. He called me in for a billiards, I would not have-- so this time we closed down the synagogue. But the French police told us we can't protect you...

NL: Can't protect you no more.

BG: Can't protect us no more. But we had the problem. We had the 300 families that we had to help. So, this Wednesday we was near the synagogue on the corner. We told them next Wednesday we were going to be on another corner.

NL: In an apartment.

BG: No on the street. Used to walk in the street, to give them money, you know, you can do it. Like now, half dark.

NL: At twilight.

BG: Twilight. We went in the twilight and well if you always go in one place people say what the heck so many people walking around here. So you know, we made it, so now we are in the Rue de Seze, now we are in Rue Boileau. [unclear], in the neighborhood. Now her sister lives there, in there, one sister she lives.

NL: Stayed in Lyon?

BG: Yes, she married there. She was deported, she was first in the French camp, she came out and they grabbed her in Lyon, she come back, she was lucky, she come back. She married, she met a guy.

NL: In camp?

BG: Coming home. He passed away, he was a fine, fine boy. They had one son. And she is in Lyon, in Rue Boileau, in this neighborhood. Listen to this. In 1979, I was in a wedding in East Orange, we were in a wedding. So we were there talking you

know, all of a sudden Rose says she wanted to take a piece of watermelon. All of sudden she had a girl who was *krecksin* [Yiddish: groaning], you know angry. She recognized her and she heard a French accent. She says, "You are, you are French?"

RG: *Vous etes Française*<sup>32</sup>? I recognized her accent. *Vous etes Française*? And she says to me, "*Oui, oui, vous parlez Francais*"<sup>33</sup>. Oh yes, oh yes, *oui, oui*.

BG: She asked her from where are you, she says from Lyon.

NL: Oh my goodness.

BG: She says, "I have in Lyon a sister," she says. She says she come after me she call me. I say, "Where you live," she told me where she lived. I say, "I was living there and there." I started to tell her the street. She says, "How can you remember after 32 years everything." I say, "I could remember after 50 years." I was in Vienna, I still remember every street I was.

RG: I don't remember from today to tomorrow.

BG: Thank God, I have a good memory.

NL: But your memories are astonishing, astonishing.

BG: One thing I still have. My memory thanks God is A-1 and I am good in figures. And I am good in geography and in history. I know much more history like any American college kid I see.

NL: I can imagine because most American children don't know European history.

BG: Hey, when I went to business school, when we went to business school so we used to joke around with the teachers, we 16, 17 year old kids, so he says, alright, how come we was 16 Jewish boys and two Gentiles. How come, he says, "You are so good in geography, arithmetic and history?" I say, "You know very well we are Jews. Jews like to go, for to go we like to know where to go and a Jew is a businessman he know the figures." He was laughing.

NL: Quite. So we are up to June now, '44.

BG: In '44.

NL: It was near liberation.

BG: Near liberation, we were liberated 4th of September 1944.

NL: Now before we get to that Mr. Goldenberg, were you getting any news by radio in Lyon?

BG: Yeah we had.

NL: In '43, you didn't have a radio.

BG: We don't have a radio but I think we had at one time.

RG: In Cussey we had a radio.

BG: We had a radio.

RG: But after that.

<sup>32</sup>French: Are you French?

<sup>33</sup>French: Do you speak French?



BG: No we didn't want to bother with them but we had a friend.  
NL: Friends in Lyon?  
BG: Yes.  
NL: And they gave you news.  
BG: Yes.  
RG: Yes.  
NL: So now I am coming to the sad part. You heard from your parents until when?  
BG: From my parents I heard until 1944; June we heard from England they cleaned up the whole Carpathians.  
NL: But from your parents directly when did you hear?  
RG: From my parents I had one letter...  
BG: In April.  
RG: In April. When?  
NL: When?  
BG: '44.  
NL: 1944.  
RG: I had one letter from my parents.  
BG: I had, I had a letter.  
RG: That's it.  
NL: Excuse me that was about the time when the Germans came into Hungary?  
BG: The Germans come in in March.  
NL: March '44.  
BG: In '44, but it is not the Germans.  
NL: I know. Szalasi.<sup>34</sup>  
BG: The Hungarian Szalasi, Szalasi with Sterka with the Prime Minister and Szalasi with the Iron Cross. You know the name.  
NL: And you heard when?  
BG: I had, my last letter I had in May.  
NL: In May.  
BG: And then I got back one letter in August when the postman came out they took them away from the ghetto. But they don't know from whom the letter comes. They don't know if the letter comes, they said, they were for Bela Goldenberg they come to me. Everybody, matter of fact, I am going to tell you another thing. Her sister was in Bergen-Belsen. Listen to this, when she come back she told us. So all of a sudden she heard the soldiers speaking Hungarian.  
RG: No they had a card from her too.

<sup>34</sup>Ferenc Szalasi – head of the fascist Arrow Cross Party; was made head of state October 15, 1944 and cooperated with the Germans. ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com))

BG: No, but she said that in Bergen-Belsen, she come all of a sudden-- so she went to the guy she says, "You are Hungarian," she says, "I come from there, too." She says, "From where are you?" He says from Motchelitch [phonetic], well in Hungarian it was Motchelitch. She says, "I have a brother-in-law," he says, "Who is it?" "Bela Goldenberg." He says, "We used to live on the same street." He was an older guy.

RG: He helped her a lot.

BG: He used to bring her, the three weeks she was there he used to bring her a piece of bread, a piece of, for this sister, she told me.

NL: Oh.

RG: A potato.

BG: A potato, a piece of cheese.

RG: Right. He helped her.

BG: I am telling you, you have all around good people, and I see it right away in 1940 with the soldier remember we went to the Czechoslovakian army, he did not have to take her. He took a chance. He felt sorry, she is a young girl, and...

NL: And you were a compatriot?

BG: Yeah. So he was a Frenchman, he was not a Czech, he was Frenchman.

NL: Oh, he was a Frenchman.

BG: It was French soldiers who took us to the Czech army.

NL: Oh I see, that's right.

RG: Would you like hot coffee?

BG: You.

NL: No thank you, dear.

BG: Yeah, we were liberated '44.

NL: He needs the coffee and you need the coffee.

BG: No we eat before you come. Everybody eats, we were shopping and we went around with the butcher and we went shopping. We were liberated.

NL: So, in September you were liberated and what of importance should we know about, June, July, August? 1944?

BG: I'm telling you, I'm telling you what had happened.

RG: How about the last minute when they took us and we jumped down from the train.

BG: Yeah, they took us.

RG: The last minute.

BG: In August they took us, from the street, they took everybody.

NL: The police? The French police?

BG: No, the Germans.

NL: The Germans.

BG: But it was already close to liberation.

NL: They just seized you off the street?

BG: Off the street.  
NL: Put you into a truck?  
BG: They took us in.  
RG: In a truck and then a train.  
BG: In a train.  
NL: In a train, okay, where did they take you to?  
BG: They took us to Auschwitz, probably.  
RG: Yeah they took us to Auschwitz but the underground ...  
BG: The underground blew up the bridge.  
RG: ... had connections with the train conductor.  
NL: Oh my goodness.  
RG: And told them you going to come to a tunnel, slow down.  
BG: The people should come out.  
RG: Open all the doors.  
BG: And the people should jump. Who wants to jump.  
RG: And everything.  
NL: Oh my, and most of the people did, I hope.  
BG: All of them.  
RG: All of them.  
BG: There was...  
RG: 16,000 people.  
NL: 16,000 Jews?  
BG: There were Gentiles too, not only Jews, the whole train was loaded. There was Gentiles, too.  
RG: I don't remember how many people they said it was.  
BG: How could a Jewish transport have more than 16,000. It was about 12,000 not 16,000.  
NL: 12,000?  
RG: 12,000.  
BG: It was a long train. It was Gentiles, more Gentiles than Jews. There were Gentiles.  
NL: And bound for Auschwitz.  
BG: They were bound for Auschwitz, Germany, who knows where. Auschwitz they couldn't take us this time.  
NL: Auschwitz was already finished?  
BG: No it wasn't finished. Auschwitz was.  
NL: Oh it was November they stopped.  
BG: January '45 was when Auschwitz was liberated. January '45.  
NL: So in July, August '44 it was still dangerous of course in Lyon?

BG: I couldn't go out to the street. I'm telling you, when I lighted the cigarette with the Gestapo, this was something else, who I said it. But on the moment I said if I am not going to ask him he going to ask me who the heck are you and they were waiting for me.

NL: Of course.

BG: If they would be French police they would recognize me when I told them *permettez* [French: permit me], excuse me, light my cigarette.

NL: The accent.

BG: The accent when I told them *merci beaucoup* [French: thank you very much], they are French.

RG: But I don't know what happened to me. I says to him, "*Ils ne sont pas à la maison. Viens. Viens, ils ne sont pas là*"<sup>35</sup>.

BG: We knock on our door.

RG: We knocked on our own door. And I said, "*Ils ne sont pas à la maison.*"

BG: We had plenty. Between other things you know, we see such a things but I am telling you when we were there at City Hall and they cleaned up 60 families and they left us on the sixth floor were also a young couple from the Maccabi. We didn't know. I tell you, we didn't know, there were two, three Jewish families there and 60 Jewish families, and I am telling you, they were running from Strasbourg, from Milhausen and from Paris, all was going to Lyon, Marseilles, but Marseilles become so dangerous they couldn't go out on the street. And Nice, Monte Carlo was also, when I was there in Nice, we have to come back, they had started, I had permission to stay at the hotel and they come every day and said next week you have to leave. The French, the French.

NL: Did you have any contact with the Italian police because they were in charge of the southern part?

RG: No.

BG: They were there. But, but they didn't bother. They was second fiddle.

NL: For a time they even saved some Jews.

BG: Italia wasn't dangerous. They were second fiddle. The Germans were there, the Gestapo they were. In Lyon was Barbie, he was there, Barbie, Barbie.<sup>36</sup> He says he is innocent when he took away '44 April the children. We know about it.

NL: You did know about it?

BG: We know about it.

RG: Sure. We were there.

BG: We were there and another thing and I don't know why they don't mention it. They are in a city, in a village, well they find two German soldiers shot, they went and

<sup>35</sup>They are not home. Come. Come, they are not there.

<sup>36</sup>Klaus Barbie – SS officer in charge of the Gestapo in Lyon, France from November, 1942 to August, 1944 (<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/trial-of-nazi-criminal-klaus-barbie>)

they took out all the men, and they massacred them. The same way like in Czechoslovakia.

NL: [unclear]

BG: Yeah. The same thing.

NL: This was in, in Lyon.

BG: Yeah, near Lyon, near Lyon. Well, the same thing. Look, I say one thing, the world does not going to change, 'till they not going to take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, the democrats not going to do it. If you shoot a woman you have to take you and your life, shoot a kid you have to take, if they would do it, in 1920, 19 and 20 with the Turks and with the Germans, you know they massacred one and half million Armenians. They don't do nothing. What is it? Mr. Lloyd George said in Versailles Treaty. You can't all German people so push away, well I was living home in the old country when I was a young boy and the Versailles Treaty. You can't do it, a country like Germany, enslave them away. England. You know, I tell you something when we heard they bomb England we were happy...

RG: We were very happy.

BG: ... we were happy. It was their fault, they put Hitler to the, to the wall, that's all.

NL: After Munich.

BG: They helped them. Before Munich. They helped them against Communism but he changed, he was a pig. You know Hitler would, if he would have had good generals and they would go 1940 they would go to England, England would be occupied with the Germans.

NL: Oh yes.

BG: We were there, I know what's happened.

NL: No doubt.

BG: But he figured he going to come later to England. I don't know if you heard about him. He start to go in 1941, to England. He put, he put on boats, England put oil on their [unclear] Canal and burn it. We seen it, I was talking to soldiers, they help burn everything in Lyon.

NL: Really.

BG: They, they, they saved, you know, a few of them, burnt 'em and they bring them all around the hospital.

NL: Now what happened to you and your wife in August? When you were liberated, where did you go?

BG: We stayed there in Lyon.

NL: You stayed in Lyon.

BG: So we had two, three apartments. So one this hole, it was nothing but I had there things so I bring it here and the other one in Rue Nazareth, I give away a friend come from the camps. His name was Fogle, he was living there and we staying there. In

'44 we used to go from Joint<sup>37</sup>, we used to pick up the people coming back in '45 from Germany. To the airport we used, I used to go with people, into the train who come back from the camp they were looking really, really-- it's a lot on the eyes when they come back. Now in '45, we went back, we wanted to go back to Belgium. All of a sudden we come to Paris, she was pregnant with Madeleine and we come to Paris and the Battle of the Bulge started in December. So we stuck in Paris, so Madeleine was born in Paris. Then I don't know why I changed in '45, we would go down in August see what's going on and I would become sick. Everybody friend was missing, everybody was missing, I couldn't go back. We stuck in.

NL: You heard that your family had perished.

BG: My family, I know my family was perished. This I know, in '44. When in June.

RG: We went back to Belgium after the war.

NL: After the war.

RG: We went to see what goes on.

BG: We had a store there, I don't know.

RG: And it was not one friend left.

BG: Everybody is missing.

RG: Every stone was full of blood.

BG: Blood. Full of blood. It was terrible so I couldn't stay there. I was three days with a friend then I went down to Brussels to my old friend whom I liked and I say, "I can't stay in Belgium," so we went back to France.

NL: To France, you never went back to Hungary?

BG: No. I want to go back. I find out my brother is living, she didn't let me. She said you have a big mouth you going to fall in trouble with Communists. I wanted to go see.

NL: Well now it is somewhat more liberal in Hungary I think.

BG: What I have to do there?

NL: But you want to see your brother?

BG: My brother died, he went to Israel, he died.

NL: Didn't you say?

BG: In '45 he was living.

NL: Oh I see. I see.

BG: He went—it's funny, the same day when we took the boat to America, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1947, the same day he left Hungary to Italy to go to Israel. We find out, you know he wrote my sister.

NL: And where were you in '45 and '46?

BG: We were there.

<sup>37</sup>Joint Distribution Committee

NL: In Paris?

BG: No, we come to Paris back in the fall of '46.

NL: And in the early part of '46?

BG: I was in Lyon.

NL: In Lyon.

BG: You know, you say the tricks, I tell you, this is already after the war, we have bad people too in the Jews. Somebody denounced me to the OPA.<sup>38</sup>

NL: In America?

BG: No, in Lyon. In Lyon.

NL: What is the OPA?

BG: You know the department who take care of the apartments and the OPA. I am going to America, a goy didn't do it, a Jewish guy must do it. So I get a letter, listen to this, I get a letter in the OPA when I leave I have to give my apartment up for this prisoner, ex-prisoner of war. You know. My apartment if I move.

NL: Right, your apartment if you move.

BG: If I move.

NL: Okay.

BG: But I couldn't give it to him. When I made the change with her sister and her brother-in-law, they had an apartment in Paris.

NL: I see, I see.

BG: And they have their business in Lyon so her brother-in-law gets scared. And I said to her, her sister knew I could do the tricks, I said, let's go to the, to the police. So it was already in '46, I come up to the, this time I was kosher I was everything alright. I come up and I stopped to look at faces like usually and I go to a face and I put 50 francs in my letter, 50 francs like you say if \$20, let's say, for example. I see he took the 50 dollars he put away in his drawer. "Can I help you?" I said, "Introduce me to the manager." He has my letter, I know he can do nothing. I come into the manager, call in, "Can I help you, Mr. Goldenberg?" Yes, I say look, he give me a chair, he was very friendly, he give me a glass of wine, the French are friendly, he says and I give him a cigarette you know, we're talking, he says, "What did you, what do you want?" I say, "Look here, listen to this, you see this letter," and he reads it, he reads it. "I want this letter should change to Mr. and Mrs. Piergotesman [phonetic]." He looks at me, he looks at me, he looks at me, but I say, "Not tomorrow, not after tomorrow, now."

NL: Making demands?

BG: Yeah, well you know, I say always in Jewish, a *langem krank ist besser fin der teut*<sup>39</sup>. You make it right away.

<sup>38</sup>The Office of Price Administration was established with the Office for Emergency Management of the U.S government in August, 1941. Its purpose was to control money and rents after the outbreak of World War II. Wikipedia.

<sup>39</sup>Yiddish: A long illness is better than death.

NL: Quick.

BG: He looking at me, looking at me, says, "What do you offer?"

NL: What is your offer?

BG: I figure the same way. Look, I gave you 2500 francs. And this time with a little inflation, so maybe he made 20, 20, 20, 100 francs and I, you know what, I say, "I have a pack of cigarettes in my pocket, a full pack of cigarettes. I give you a package of cigarettes." So we start to bargain and made it for 3000 dollars right away. I come out and give the letter to my brother-in-law. He opened his eyes.

NL: Another deal.

RG: And he was French born.

BG: He was a Frenchman. I have another thing, I did a favor. When, December 7 before we left we have to have the *visa de sortie*<sup>40</sup> in France.

RG: But you have to go from one...

BG: No, from America, you have to come with a *visa de sortie*, we come to America. I am at the prefecture in Paris, I don't know nobody there. I don't know nobody there, well I have connections in Lyon but in Paris I don't have any big connections. All of sudden I hear out the window a young guy he is *krechtsing*<sup>41</sup> he don't speak good French and I say his accent is Hungarian. Yes. The accent I recognize an accent today too. I asked him, "What is the trouble?" in Hungarian. Oh, he says, "I find my father a letter he is in Kallesura in hospital. I didn't see him since 1941 and I would like to go to visit him but they don't give me no visa."

RG: *Visa de sortie*.

BG: *Visa de sortie*, they give him. To come back. [They won't give the visa to return.] So I asked the girl, I say, by this time I speak good French I say, "What is here this business?" She says, "He is, he is not full two years in the country so if he goes out he couldn't get back a *visa de sortie*." "Can you do something for him?" She says she couldn't do nothing. So I took out a pack of cigarettes, cigarettes was big deal, give her to introduce me to the manager. Look.

NL: Wait till your daughter hears all of this.

BG: She knows. Listen, so the manager calls me in and says, "Can I help you?" I say look, this and this and this. He says, "You know we," I says, "Don't tell me you can't do it. Tell me how much it costs?" He says, "5000."

NL: Oh my. Oh my.

BG: It's too much I said. Now the kid has, has 4000 francs so how you going to go to Kallesura? So we start to bargaining. I says, "I am going to ask," so he says, "All right give me 4000," so I go out to the kids and I say, "Give him how much he want," and I say, "I am not going to give him," we come back, I say, "You know what, he gave you 3000. So give him five, 35, 2500," he says, "Okay come tomorrow to the

<sup>40</sup>Visa

<sup>41</sup>moaning



consul and pick it up,” and I picked it up. He said, “You need something come to see me.” But this was December 7 and December 12 we leave.

RG: We left.

BG: We left the country.

NL: Did you go on a quota number from Czechoslovakia?

BG: Yes, Czechoslovakia.

NL: Mmm hmm. And were there many, there couldn't have been many Czech?

BG: There was, there was.

NL: There couldn't have been so many Czech Jews because there weren't so many who survived? But you say there were considerable numbers? On the boat?

BG: On the boat, on the boat was all kinds of people.

NL: Yes.

BG: On the visa, we had, we had, who we had? Flegleman, and this time the Sommack [phonetic] had the visa, she come with another boat. No the Sommack come with us.

RG: The Sommarks came with us.

BG: We go with the Nathans with their 14 year old son, they went to Chicago.

RG: They say her husband was deported.

BG: Her husband, her husband was lost. Who else was?

NL: And how old was the baby?

BG: The baby she is.

NL: The daughter was how old?

BG: She was two years and 10 months. She was two year and 10 months. She speak only French when we come here.

NL: Is that so?

BG: Only French.

NL: Does she remember some of it?

BG: Nah.

NL: No.

BG: You know what happened, she went to the day nursery when we moved into Philadelphia, we arrived to Vineland. My sister was living in Vineland.

[Tape two, side one ended.]

1'

*Tape two, side two:*

NL: Continuing our interview with Mr. Goldenberg, side two, tape two.

BG: We were lucky we were close to get killed when we arrived here.

NL: Oh my.

BG: You know what? We come in to New York and my sister and my brother, rest in peace, they were waiting for us in New York. They were there for a wedding for a week, they were already a week in New York and a big snow fall down. And we come out in the Holland tunnel, we come out in the Holland Tunnel and I see there stays a truck and I don't know, the snow was knocking on the window and I grabbed Madeleine and I pushed her down and she instead she should sit down, she went in, in the truck. You don't know, I don't know it was a miracle too. You know what is happened, the truck they couldn't take it out, they had to take him in a garage to take the car out and then it exploded. My brother-in-law was hit in the chest, my sister was, my sister's glasses was broke, she had some inside the injury you know what, instead Madeleine and me when I see what goes on I push myself in the back and I hold Madeleine this way we were.

NL: What an introduction to America.

BG: It was an introduction.

RG: Six weeks I was in hospital.

BG: And the hospital.

RG: In three months, the doctor came to the house. He gave me needles.

BG: Eleven needles.

RG: B12 shots.

NL: B12 shots.

BG: And they give you four or six pints blood they give you in the hospital.

RG: He says to me like this, the doctor, "How come he spoke such good French."

NL: So you can talk with him in French.

RG: I says, he says to me, "*Comment ça se fait Madame Goldenberg*"<sup>42</sup>?

BG: They give you the best food.

RG: He gave me the best of food and the best. This, that, I said, "Doctor, I don't even taste nothing what they gave me in here."

BG: We are kosher.

NL: Not kosher.

RG: He says, "What is the matter?" I said, "That is not kosher. I am not allowed to eat that."

BG: He said, "You are upset, you are Orthodox."

<sup>42</sup>What happened, Mrs. Goldenberg?

RG: He said what?  
BG: He said, "You are Orthodox."  
NL: He didn't know that.  
RG: No.  
BG: He know we are Jewish but he don't know we are kosher. But he know my sister.  
RG: I said to him, "*Monsieur* Doctor, take me home."  
BG: Take me home.  
RG: Let me go home, I'll make blood. In hospital I couldn't make blood, they gave me six pints and just the way they gave me it ran. And I couldn't make blood.  
BG: She come home and...  
RG: And I got home and slowly by slowly. He came, first he came three weeks, every day. Then he came every third day, every fourth day. I am telling you.  
BG: He was mayor at one time in the '70's, he was the mayor of Vineland.  
NL: Is that so. Is that so?  
RG: Well that is an unusual community.  
BG: Yes.  
NL: Very unusual. How long did you stay in Vineland?  
BG: Ten months. November '48, matter of fact, the day that Truman was elected I find my apartment. I had a job and I was working only half a day, I was looking around for an apartment, finding an apartment and when I leave in the morning, I go to work, people are hollering Truman win, Truman win and in the paper was Dewey defeated Truman.  
NL: That was an historic election. It was.  
BG: Politics, is politics. I like politics, well I was always, I learned politics in the old country.  
RG: Then when we came in I started to work, my husband started to work and slowly by slowly you know, we saved here, we saved there. We really...  
BG: We have to confess, we have to confess we were big money makers. We were in the 50's we made \$120, \$130 a week, each of us.  
NL: Oh, that was good money.  
BG: We make big money, no, we were good.  
NL: You were both industrious, hard workers.  
BG: We were, I was a tailor. But then I became an operator.  
NL: An operator.  
BG: You know how to say in Yiddish I become *schister* [Yiddish: shoemaker]. And Rose never was a tailor either. She went with lies in a place, she said she worked in Belgium on a four needle but she never saw a four-needle.  
RG: But one thing, the manager was very open.  
BG: He was a wonderful man.

RG: And he helped me.

BG: He said for the forelady, I want this girl should make money like the other people makes. Take care of her

NL: Fair.

BG: Very seldom. He was talking to me and my wife and you know we know people here, we had a lot of Jewish foremens but they pushed away the Jews.

NL: Is that so? Is that so?

BG: Oh come on.

NL: Is that so.

BG: In Vineland I had the same thing.

NL: Really?

BG: When I went into work, I come here the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> of January I was working already, I went in the shop. So I know you have to know the system, I didn't know too much, I knew how to handle the machine, but I don't know the system so I figure.

NL: Somebody will teach you.

BG: No, they gonna teach me. But don't take advantage of me. So 40 cents was the minimum rating. In the union you get \$10 bonus, instead you should give me the \$10, he give me only \$5. So I called him I said, "Geisman, [unclear]." <sup>43</sup> Then few weeks later he mishandled me again. You understand Jewish? Good. I said, [unclear; speaking Yiddish].

NL: So he stopped.

BG: He stopped. I left it.

NL: You went to some other place.

BG: I was there a *goyishe* firm company, a *Yiddishe* foreman. I went to another place, a *Yiddishe* company, a *goyishe* foreman, he treated me fairly. She was working there too. She went there too. He paid them 90 cents, over the minimum and this *paskuniak* <sup>44</sup> he give me 40 cents. You have all kind this of people. I see you have all kind.

NL: Right.

BG: All kinds of people in your life. We had so many experiences. I say you have good one here too in Philadelphia and in America. It's all around too, some *paskuniaks*...

RG: But when we came and wherever he went, when he said that came Friday, said, "I'm not coming *Shabbos*."

BG: I don't want to work on *Shabbos*. I lost a few jobs.

RG: He says to him, "Don't come Monday."

<sup>43</sup>Mr. Goldenberg speaks both Yiddish and English but it is unclear.

<sup>44</sup>low life

BG: No matter what. Then I made my mind I had to work, so for the last 15 years I was working for After Six. I made good money.

RG: But really to the six weeks, I made \$130.

NL: My goodness.

RG: And that was a lot of money.

BG: She had a very hard job, which not everybody could pick it up.

RG: To the year I made \$300 a week.

BG: We made good money. We made good money.

NL: Oh my!

RG: And my husband made more.

BG: We made very good money.

NL: You must have been excellent.

BG: We were.

NL: Excellent.

BG: She is excellent, I am not excellent. I am good. She is perfect.

RG: Come on.

BG: She is perfect.

NL: Well it has been fantastically interesting, dramatic, valuable story for the next generation to learn and we'll send you a copy of this so you can share it with your daughter.

BG: I will appreciate it.

NL: And thank you.

BG: And if you see Clara, tell her that you were in our house.

NL: Of course I will, yes. Thank you.

BG: I don't talk to her for two years already.

NL: I'll tell her. Thank you.

BG: Thank you.

[Tape two, side two ended; interview ended.]