# HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

# SAMUEL GREENBERG

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Eileen Steinberg
Date: January 10, 1984

Melrose Park, PA 19027

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SG - Samuel Greenberg [interviewee]
ES - Eileen Steinberg [interviewer]
Date: January 10, 1984

*Tape one, side one:*

ES: This is Eileen Steinberg interviewing Samuel Greenberg, January 10, 1984, side one. Please tell me where you were born and a little bit about your family.

SG: I am Samuel Greenberg and I was born in a small town by name Szumsk. Our family was very poor and with three brothers and my parents.

ES: What was your life like before the war?

SG: The life until before the war was not very pleasant. We were, you would say, very poor. Everything we had to work hard to make a living.

ES: What did your father do for a living?

SG: My father used to go around to farmers, buy from them wheat, take it to the mill and make flour and then, we helped him to sell the flour to the people.

ES: Did your family experience antisemitism before the Hitler period?

SG: Yes, we had plenty antisemitism in our town.

ES: Can you give me some examples.

SG: Examples, it was like there used to be Poles and Ukrainians in our neighbors. Every place, they used to call us a *Żyd* [Jew], they used to beat us up and if you went to the police, they didn't do nothing about it. In other words, it was a life of fear which we went through daily, but we didn't have no choice, we couldn't go nowhere so we had to live with this, try to survive.

ES: Did you or your family belong to any Jewish organizations or to a synagogue before Nazism changed your life?

SG: We belonged before with Mizrachi[1] from Israel, which we belonged to it and then we belonged to a synagogue which was Orthodox and the rabbi from that synagogue was a friend of ours and all our family used to come to that synagogue.

ES: How many families belonged to the synagogue?

SG: It was, I would say about 50, maybe 75 families used to belong to that synagogue.

ES: In your town, what percentage of the population was Jewish?

SG: In that town, where we lived it probably was about 75 - 80% Jewish people. The rest of it was Poles and Ukrainian. And…

ES: Was there any difference between the Poles and Ukrainians the way they treated the Jews?

[1]Mizrachi – a religious Zionist movement in Palestine as well as Poland and Eastern Europe. (www.ushmm.org)

SG: Between the Poles and the Ukrainians, there was antisemitism, too. The Poles didn't like the Ukrainians, the Ukrainians didn't like the Poles, but when it comes against the Jews…

ES: They both didn't like the Jews?

SG: They both worked together.

ES: Could you tell me a little bit about your life in Poland in the early part of 1939, just before the German invasion?

SG: The early '39 was starting to getting too bad. The Poles start to be [unclear] against the Jews. They used to burn their business, they used to beat them up in the streets and they used to run in sometimes to the synagogue and throw stones and they harassed the Jews very bad. They all told the Jews to get out of Poland, they didn't like the Jews completely.

ES: Was your family affected in any way?

SG: We lived in that small town was not natural[ly] affect[ed] as the big cities in Poland was very-- they were thrown out of their business, they were not allowed to go in the train. They used to throw them out from the window from the trains and it [unclear] started growing too bad in 1939 before the war started.

ES: About how many Jews lived in your town in Szumsk?

SG: In my town, was probably I would say, up to 2,500.

[Long pause]

ES: Was it a very organized Jewish community? It seems to be from what you said.

SG: It was all Orthodox, there was no Conservative at that time, or Reform and they all used to go to Orthodox synagogues which was only different Ashkenazi, *Sephardi*, they all were well organized.

ES: Was there a *kehillah*?

SG: There were *kehillah*, yes, everybody was very organized together.

ES: All right. Did you feel that the *kehillah* represented your best interests and helped you?

SG: Before the war, there was nothing the *kehillah* could do, but the only thing was for surviving, you know like dog eats dog. The rich ones tried to get himself buying out they had more money so they could maybe go in another neighborhood to get away from those things and the poor were unlucky in any other place, they had to stay and just had to take it the way it comes.

ES: What happened to you and your family in 1939?

[Long pause]

SG: In 1939, it was-- we was, were divided. The Russians came us, the Russians came us, to us in '39 when Hitler and Stalin made a pact. So, they came to a

lake[2] with the named called Bug and by that Bug, they stopped the [unclear] under Russia and when the Russians came in, in the beginning we didn't know the Russians because it's Iron Curtain, you never know what's going on there. We thought we were liberated from the Poles and now it will stop, especially for the poorer, but it wasn't that way. When they came in, everything they nationalize it. From a small businessman to a big manufacturer, they took everything away. The big manufacturer, they sent away to Siberia. The small ones, they had to work for them for so little, was not enough food to buy for that money that they used to pay you. And on top of it, they used to watch you if you sold something on a store and you have two pennies extra, means you're stealing, [unclear], they gave you 10 years, 5 years [in Siberia]. So, this way, when they came in…

ES: The Russians?

SG: The Russians, it got worse. Every day used to disappear families. At night, used to come and take them away and send them to Siberia. You didn't even know where they were sending them. It was another world, like another fear not to know what the next day is going to be, not to go to say you don't want to work or stay home, this was no answer. If you stayed home, if you didn't work, means even worse, means you don't want to help the government, you're against it, they would send you away, too. So was no choice, go to work and take a chance if you get through the day good, or if not they'll send you to Siberia. So we had another repeat for the Jewish people, was another world to live day from day to survive, not to be sent out to Siberia.

ES: Did they leave your family alone during this period? Your father was able to continue buying his wheat?

SG: No, oh no.

ES: All right, tell me.

SG: There was no business when they came in. My father was buying or something, you know, it was a little stall, they used to make the flours and everything; everything goes, not such a thing as small or big in Russian, everything belongs to the government. You couldn't even sell a piece of candy or you couldn't sell a suit or a frigidaire without the government, everything belongs to them. They used to even say we, the people, belonged to them, too. There was nothing that you could say I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that, whatever they told you has got to be done, whatever they wanted.

ES: You were working for them, then?

SG: Yes, we were working for them.

ES: And doing what they told you to do?

SG: Doing it with a little pay, very little.

[2]Bug River.

ES: Did you receive any help of any kind during this time from people that were not Jewish?

SG: In the town, no, no. Nobody could help you. First off all they didn't have it and second of all, was not allowed to help you. It means you're making lazy out of me, I shouldn't go to work. So, they know if you gave me, lend me $20 or $30, or help me something, it was going to be the same thing, you're going to be sent away.

ES: Punished.

SG: Punished.

ES: Was there any difference in the way the Russians treated the Jews from the rest of the people living in your town?

SG: Not when they came in. But before they came in, before the Russians came in, I remember it was at night time, there are trains rolling through our town and all around, surrounded by Ukrainian, they came in with all kinds-- and they asked the Russians, they came in with axe and knives and they asked the Russians, "What should we do with the Jews?" They wanted to get rid of us. So the Russians told them, "We don't have no Jews and with us, we got Russian, everybody is Russian, so we not allowed to kill them."

ES: Were you ordered to go to a ghetto to work?

SG: We, we went-- in the beginning, when the Germans came in when the war started and they occupied our town, the Germans came in it was in September 1941. So they came in before the Rosh Hashanah. And we all were at that time in synagogue. So they came in, the Russian-- I mean the Germans, with Ukrainians, and everybody from the synagogue with a *taleysim* [prayer shawls] on, they took them to a station to clean and to work for them, everybody and whatever they could do to beat them, you know, and to do anything to the Jews, they were allowed to do. They told, from [unclear] Gentiles whatever whether it was Russian or Poles, you could do to the Jew whatever you want, he's yours. So, then, when the Germans came in, the Gentiles, the Ukrainians there, they had their time with a woman, they had their time when they asked the Russians before, can they kill the Jews and the Russians said no. When the Germans came in, they says you could do anything you want and take everything you want.

ES: The Germans set up the ghettos?

SG: Yes. In another five months, the Germans took two small towns, the town of Szumsk and another town was near Szumsk and they made, the town was called Vishnivits[3] and they made one ghetto, and this was in the wintertime. It was around February, big snow, and I'll never forget, they came into our house and they said, "Get out." They didn't even let you dress. Whatever you got out and you leave everything behind you and some, we especially knew a day or two before is going to happen so we went wherever to could to a warm, a [unclear] Gentile which we know, Ukrainian, and

[3]Vishnivits – Yiddish spelling of this town, also known as Vishnevets [Russian] and Wiśniowiec [Polish] (jewishgen.org)

gave him a coat, some of our belongings to take us over to that town. So we are just to take it, not to go in the snow. So at that time, they was coming into every house, one German and most of them Ukrainian with guns. In every house, they put you out and they gave you wagons, was also wagons now [unclear] and every family was driving in a deep snow, was about a foot of snow or more, with children, babies, everybody is going into that town. And that town, they took only one street, like a big street, and one side of that street was a lake and the other side, they put a fence, real tall, about five or eight foot tall, you couldn't get over. And they drove in all the people.

ES: All the Jews?

SG: The Jews, yeah. All the Jews, they drove in there with the children and they said to them, here you're going to live. It started very bad because this is the children and this, you know, all kinds of people, some sick, so they put them in a room, I would say, like this kitchen. That was my place. They put in 15[4] people. So when you are going to lay down, you have to lay everybody together because otherwise, when you lay down, you can't get up [unclear] a place. You used to sleep on the side.

ES: There wasn't room for everyone even to sleep together?

SG: No, on the floor. I'm not talking about in a bed, we're on the floor for sleeping. So, right away, in that place where the people were living, the elderly start to die. Every minute, you find dead people. Some able, you know, because too hard was to breathe or something, so we used to every day, was funerals from 5 to 10 to 15 funerals a day from all those people. Then, when it's coming to feed, to cooking, it's like what was written in the Bible where it says in the *tokheha*[5] where it says the seven women was baking in one oven together. That was exactly what I saw there, five, six women proving [unclear] she wanted to feed her child this one and there was only one little stove so everybody was pulling their hair, fighting, to get a little water to cook up to give the children. Bread, you never could have enough because there was no room. If you stopped-- she couldn't go into the oven, she had to stand on somebody because the room was in the same place, and was no wood. We used to go out and steal some wood. So if you get caught, they beat you up or they throw you in jail or the kill you. But we used, took chance and you brought wood in and that's where we have to live for bread. And bread, they give it out four ounces per person a day and that was to live on.

ES: That was not very much. So they took everybody, all the Jews from both of these towns and put them in this one ghetto?

SG: Yes.

ES: What was the name of the ghetto?

SG: Vishnivits.

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[4]The tape is very difficult to hear, it could possibly be 50 people.

[5]*tokheha* - Literally: "Rebuke" and a name given to a Torah reading in Leviticus which lists curses that will be visited upon the people of Israel if they do not follow God's ways. (Jewish Theological Seminary Weekly Parasha web message.)

ES: Okay, that was…

SG: Vishnivits.

ES: The name of the ghetto.

SG: Yeah.

ES: After they put you there, did they allow you to go to work?

SG: After they brought us over there, they used to pick up the young men to work, to send out on the fields. Then, on the fields, they used to beat us daily. They used to do whatever they could find, any time, in the head, on the heart, with their boots while you were working because they say you're not working, and how could you work on a quarter pound of bread and nothing to eat. So, they used to take us [unclear] and they made the Jewish ones, they made him policeman, they should govern us and at the top of the policeman was a German. So, they used to beat a policemen so the policemen should beat us, they should keep everybody in line. So, they used to ride, you know, in a coach nice horses, the big German, and we used to walk and they used to make fun of us because we were walking and do everything and they came in and started doing things which-- it was a big, you know, mountain. They asked us to take that mountain, you know, and bring them over on this side, just to bring that dirt over, [unclear]. Then, one time, we came home, so the girls couldn't go to work, they didn't take girls and there was a *Judenrat*, it was called, head of the ghetto, they took some people and they made it, how it happened, they had to give them so many people to work every day. One day, I remember they came in and they said all the young girls from 12 to 21 and every mother would give a girl at that time. They didn't know what they wanted. They just--the police start coming in and grabbing from the houses every girl from their mothers, beating them, they used to shoot for them and they brought them out. They took in about 500 girls to a big house and then, they cut their hair completely, the most beautiful curls, every kind, all…

ES: Shave.

SG: Shaving their head and sent them home.

ES: They just wanted their hair?

SG: They just wanted their hair.

ES: When you were in the ghetto, were you there with your mother and your father and two brothers?

SG: When I was in the ghetto in Vishnivits, I was with my father-in-law and mother-in-law and my wife because my mother and father was in another town in the ghetto. I wasn't together with them.

ES: Oh, so you and your wife and your wife's parents and your little girl were together in the ghetto. Did you know where you parents were?

SG: I knew where they was in a town not far from Szumsk, not far from us, was no way to go, no way.

ES: You had to stay in the ghetto?

SG: We had to stay in the ghetto and then, in the ghetto, we carried not like a Mogen David, like a star, there they took on a piece of rag, only yellow, you put a rag here and there exactly a rag, they didn't ask us to cut it out it should look like something but you had to have a rag.

ES: On the front and on the back.

SG: On the front and on the back and you could see on the front and on the back so as soon as you walk out, they recognize you.

ES: They knew you were a Jew.

SG: Sure.

ES: How long were you in the ghetto?

SG: The ghetto, I would say, 1910, it was 1942, that's 32 years old, 31, 32.

ES: Until you were 32 years old, but what year, until what year? When did they close the ghetto?

SG: Oh. This the ghetto was there, it started in '41, like February and they killed everybody in '42 in September.

ES: That's when the ghetto was closed?

SG: It was closed up.

ES: They took everyone out?

SG: This day I'll never forget in my life. It was in a Saturday among before Rosh Hashanah, they allowed for one hour everybody from the ghetto to go out to buy food. People were starving. So, like, you know when someone dies before they take an electric chair they give him to eat whatever you want, so remember, we didn't know it. So, we went out. I remember now and I bought for the family a bucket of cherries. They were selling -- the Gentiles brought cherries and other fruit you know to the ghetto…

ES: Right outside ghetto.

SG: Outside the ghetto, used to buy. I bought this and we ate them, we ate the whole bucket and the next morning--this was Saturday night--the next morning, we heard something is going on, start kind of shooting all the way around the ghetto. And they start shooting, people come out and look out and they killed them right on the spot. Whoever just opened the door to see what was going on. A lady was coming out with a bucket of water and she was shot right, halfway to the house, so we didn't know what was going on, we didn't believe it. The rumor was they were taking us from this ghetto to another ghetto. So, when I looked out and I see people coming in, they were driving out from the houses in the streets of the ghetto, I fled by myself, I didn't know why. I feel that maybe they will take the family away and I would be able to come to them later so I hide myself under the bed, that was the hiding. It was a small place anyway and there was not [unclear] so I ran down and my family, all of them, was-- I heard them come in and I hear them holler at them, "*Raus, raus,"* [Ger: get out] and they weren't outside and they moved them away and I didn't know where and I didn't believe it. The sun was shining. I only heard a motorcycle going back and forth that the Germans used

to ride in and I couldn't believe in my life that they could take people in the middle of the day and do something. So, when I was laying there, they came in later in the evening, looking. They took whatever there was, you know, in each house in the ghetto. The Gentiles, not the Germans, it was the Gentiles, cleaned out all the houses, whatever was left because they [unclear]. So, I could see their boots under the bed, looking and they looked maybe at something behind it but they just didn't bend down to look, they would find me. And about the middle of the night, there was a nice moon, I'll never forget [unclear]. God put me that mind, otherwise I would lay until morning, they would find me and kill me so I went that lake, I told you and one side, I passed by that lake and as soon as I came out to the freeway where the cars going there, I saw already clothes lying, lingerie from women, shoes and I didn't know. I started running. I ran into a little town which I knew the farmers we used to deal with them before and he says, "Why do you come in here since everybody is killed." They killed everybody. So, I didn't know what to do. Myself, I almost passed out.

ES: They shot everybody right there?

SG: They brought the in, they had two big graves. They brought them into the graves surrounded by the Gentiles, everybody was undressed and they were standing in line like you stand in line for something and everybody was next and if for some reason, the woman wasn't killed, some maybe hidden in the lake or something, they piled them up because one policeman later on explained it to me, he couldn't sleep for two days what he saw there. He said they piled them up, they made them on there, four on each side.

ES: So, they couldn't get away or run away?

SG: No, the dead ones. The ones that were living, because, they should fill in, in that grave. Do you know what I mean? They wanted them to fit in. The people had to stand in the graves and the dead ones to line them up like matches and the rest of them would fall in. Children, they throw in, throw in alive. On the top of this, it was too, they took something, I don't know it kind of burns, a white stuff, comes in big gallons, and they put it on and it eats up their whole bodies. Whatever was alive, it was eat up alive. Something a hot stuff, I don't know what they would call it, a chemical like this. They pour it out on top of the dead. They didn't even [unclear] them or nothing.

ES: It was a mass grave for the whole ghetto?

SG: A mass grave for the whole, I don't know, 2,000 people maybe, close to 3,000. It was two small towns. At that time when I ran away there, and hide myself, the guy says to me, here's a loaf of bread, I can't keep you here because I'm not allowed, and go wherever you want.

ES: Did anyone else escape besides yourself?

SG: Yes, that time when I was hiding myself from the Nazis in the woods, I met one time a girl from my town, which I know. She was hidden by one of the Gentiles and she survives and she is now in Israel. And I heard about two more from my town

where they survived. They were hidden the same thing in the woods, and some way they survived.

[Tape one, side one ended.]

*Tape one, side two:*

ES: This is Eileen Steinberg interviewing Samuel Greenberg January 10, 1984, side two. Mr. Greenberg, can you tell me what happened after you left this farmer who gave you the bread and told you that you couldn't stay there any longer?

SG: Okay. After the farmer gave me the loaf of bread, I went a couple miles away to another farmer which I knew him before, too. And they gave me a place where the stable was at to hide. Of course, in the daytime, you couldn't be around. The Germans advertised to the Ukrainians, whoever brings a Jew alive, gets a package of cigarettes. So all the youngsters, the Ger-, the G-, the Ukrainians, used to go out and hunt for Jews wherever they find them, used to bring them to the Germans and the Germans gave them the cigarettes and then they killed them. So, that's why I had to hide myself from the Germans and from the Ukrainians. But this particular farmer, his son knew me. I was known very well. In the evening, his father told me, you know what, we have in here, we call it a friend, Sam, he is alive. So he went to see me and that's what he told me, "You know, everybody in that ghetto is killed." Now, the second day, they caught about another 150 people, people where they had bunkers, people from cellars, people that were some places hidden. The Ukrainian got them together and they brought them over and he says, "I know him, too, because he used to live in our town and he knew all the Jewish people, he told me their names and I just don't know what's it's going to be with them. So, if you want, Sam, go over there, too, I think they won't kill no more, this was their quota." So, I said to him, "Listen, you want to do me a favor, go there, you know who the people are, come and tell me the next day what happened to them. If they're still alive, and if they're working, I'll go out with them. It means the killing stopped." The next day, he came and says, "I'm awful sorry to tell you, they took them out and they killed the rest of them, none of them is alive." "But," he says "the way I see it, there is no escape for you. You're the only Jew I can think of in this town alive now. The best thing to do is get it over with. Winter is coming, where are you going to live, how are you going to exist". He says, "No more Jews around, go over to them and, and get it over with." I said to him, "This I'll never do. [unclear] with God's help, I'll try to see if I can survive. If I cannot adjust, God wants me to get killed. If not, I'll try the best." So, I went from him because I didn't trust him already. And he was working for them. I started coming around to places, to stables where they're keeping their animals and I sneak in to there and I was lying, I used to see them and they used to come out to feed the animals and everything, they never knew it. So I was there for a day or two. I had that loaf of bread a little bit and at night I used to go out at night time for a little bit of water. One time, I was laying there and the owner went to milk the cow and discovered me and he said to me, "You're still alive? You came from the grave out, how are you alive?," he says, "Everybody is killed, no more Jews in the whole world." I says, "I'm here, whatever you're going to do, do with me." He says, "I know you very well I

couldn't kill you, well do me a favor, get out." Was two feet of snow! I had five jackets, one on top of the other, couldn't cover the holes on my body. So, I figured this way, I'm going to go in the snow and if I freeze, it's an easy death. But I don't care, I'll die but I don't want to face the bullet to be killed. So, I went from there and I started going and going and going and going and [unclear] another farmer. He was like in a suburbs far away. This was before Christmas and I think I'll go in to him. So, I knocked on the door. Same thing, he got scared, he couldn't believe it that somebody alive. I told him my name. He let me in, put me in the stable because in the house, nobody kept me. I was not human. The dogs they kept in the house, for me, I was to go any place but I didn't care. So he became-- this guy why are you self-conscious. He says, "I would like you to sleep there with the animals, you're going to freeze to death and I don't want it on my conscious." I said, "You know, if I freeze, throw me out the next day, I don't care, but give me a place to die, I don't want to live already." So it was Christmas. He had me brought in some big bread, white bread, and he gave me a broth and brought me a milk and a little bit, you know, got warm there and I said to him, "Do me a favor will you keep your dog out while I sit there." He said, "It's impossible, I keep the dog inside, I can't let you there." I says, "Whatever you want to do, please let me stay." The tears in my eyes are begging. He says, "You want it that way, stay that way." So I went in there and I was there about maybe a week and in that year, for the first time, there was so much snow, was so cold. If somebody was listening to the war, there was a lot of Germans died there. My whole body was one piece, only my soul probably kept inside, I didn't even know it. And then, excuse me, lice came all over my body and I couldn't find a place even to rest. So, I used to put my hand out and they would freeze up and I would put it back, same thing, full of lice, they came back alive. So, I couldn't find what to do. Lay day in the snow, you know, all over the snow and I see they're all dead and I come and laying down again and they're right back. So, with all this lice, one day he comes down and says to me, "You know, you can't stay here. My girls, the Germans are coming in today, they are going to have dates with the Germans and if they find you here, they will kill you. I just don't want you." So, I went out from there and I'll never forget when I looked out, there was a full moon, snow up to here. I was walking without any hope for life to survive, just praying to freeze. [unclear] So, I came in over a bridge and there was a lake and I stand there on the bridge and I think to myself, get it over with. Looking down the bridge, the water was coming back and forth, coming like talking to me, don't do it, don't do it. With all my strength, I picked myself up and I ran out to that bridge and I started running like somebody else without knowing where. While I'm running, again to my mind came, go back to that farmer who was working for the Nazis, you know, and stay there. I came in and the snow was still up to the roof. So, I went as high as the roof, and there was, the roofs there are made out of from straw so I took the straw apart and got myself in and I was laying there maybe 20 days or 25 days. I had bread that the guy when he threw me out, he gave me a bag of bread that I was to take

with me. Little by little-- who wants to eat? At a time like this, you do not hungry. You only think to survive. And I was laying there laying. I hear them every day, coming to feed the horses, milking the cows and taking hay for them and he was going and every day and he was near me because I'm already in. The last day he came in and he grabbed hay and he grabbed me because he didn't I'm there. When he grabbed me, he fell down. He didn't know, was nervous. He takes a look at me and he says, "You're still alive?" I said, "I'm still alive!" "Oh my God, you can't stay here, the Germans will kill me. Please do me a favor, what do you want from my life? I have a family here. Go wherever you want." I says, "Do whatever you want to do to me, it's a snow like this," I said, "Let me stay overnight." He says to me, "I know in the daytime you can't go but the next morning, I'm coming in and I don't want to see you, just out!" So, I don't know nothing what to do, what can I do? He had a daughter. The daughter came in milking the cow and he told her already and I says to the daughter, "You know what my wife had a nice fur coat" and I told her in the beginning you know a week before when they are coming in, that I gave away clothes and everything. So I says, "I'm going to go to that place at night and bring you the fur coat and give it to you, how long are you going to keep me. She says, "I'm going to keep you from a month to two." I says, "Your father don't wants me here, where are you going to keep me?" She says, "Outside." You're not familiar but people, some farmers, they getting from the farm, from the fields, their straw, after they've taken out the weeds and they make a big mountain, 10-15, you know, up.

ES: Haystack.

SG: Haystack. She says, "I'm going to go up there with a ladder and I'll make a hole deep and I'll let you in. And every time, I won't say when, but whenever I have a moment, I'll bring you some to eat." I says, "Okay." So, she went at night, she took another worker with her from there, too, who was a prisoner of war, a Russian prisoner of war, that the Germans gave him because he was working for them. They gave him to her for the farm, so he was there and he felt sorry for me, that prisoner. They both went up and they dug a hole, I don't know, about 10 feet down. That night, I walked over there and I was sitting there and every, whenever she could, she brought milk in a bucket, milk, whatever she cooked in the house and gave it to me. I was sitting there for two months until it got a little warm. Can you figure out another part I survived? There was no one, snow was on the roof but inside there, the only problem again that I had was the lice they came in again. I had to fight for life or death. And then, one day, it was already, I would say April, they start making whiskey down there. He worked for the Germans he used to ride for them, make parties for them, so they started making whiskey. There was coming outside a chimney from the house where that smoke goes out and they probably were drunk and everything and start coming out fire and it caught that straw on fire.

ES: [Unclear]

GS: I see it started burning and I smelled smoke.

ES: In the haystack?

SG: In the haystack. Before me, the horses were already burning. I thought God, what should I do? Where else can I go, and are you going to jump? The fire came close, there was no choice and it's daytime. I jumped from there, up till now I had a broken rib, down. I went a mile, maybe less than a mile, there was woods and I ran. They came out, they were probably drunk already, run after me. They saw a person running away from a fire. It got so nobody even came in, like something, nobody say nothing. I went over and I was in that woods through the day. There was everything burned down and the daughter told them that I was there and they blamed me. That I smoked probably and made a fire. I never smoked then, and don't smoke even now. But they blame me. So, for spite, because I did it, they went right away to my town and took my house apart. We had a house made out of brick, very nice. They took apart all the house and made it himself. And to me, if he catches me, he's going to kill me himself.

ES: The farmer you're talking about?

SG: The farmer, yeah for what, because I made a fire. I'm telling you the way it happened, I don't even smoke and you can't smoke in a stack of straw. So, I was staying in that woods. What are you going to do? There was people coming in there and children. I waited until at night. I came at night and snuck through the [unclear] around there and that guard was, that prisoner was standing guard until the fire was extinguished completely and he said to me, "Please run away, they're looking for you, they're going to kill you." I said to him, "I never do it." He said, "I know you didn't do it but they were drunk, they were making that's whiskey and that's what happened." So, I started running again. Where you running. It was already summer. So, I went in running and looking and as I came in a place, I see it's a big mountain where they are cutting stones, big stones, out from that mountain and there's a hole, so I figure I'm going to get into that hole and whatever will be, will be. Nobody will see me, and I'll survive, if not, whatever could be; at least a place. It was warm already and I was laying in that hole watching the birds and I say God, how lucky the birds are, if I could have one bird to send a message to something, how lucky would I be? What can you do? I know to pray, I know prayers, I used to pray whatever I knew day and night, you know, from the heart. It wasn't coming from the mouth, from the heart full of fears, and beg to God, just God help me, give me a way how to get out of it. And one day while I'm praying and I was probably emotional so the farmer was coming in to look around to carve the stones, checking his-- he probably heard my words or something and he bends down and he sees me. "Come out, come with me, I'm going to give you over to the Germans," and he says "there's no use for you to live, there's no more Jews, why should you live here, why should you suffer?" A good- hearted man, right? So, I said, "listen, if I have to die or to be shot, let it happen by itself. But you know me from, I know your children when I was growing up, and you're going to give me up for what, what kind of interest, what kind is going to bring you for a profit if you're going to give me over to the Germans?" About halfway

there with him, he turns around and says, "You know what, maybe you're right, I know anyway, you wouldn't argue with them, go." And he let me go and I ran away from him.

ES: What happened after you left him?

SG: After I left him, was my only place to survive. It was in the summertime and the fields was full grown with all kind of wheats, so at the place they were high and I used to sit every day on the field in the wheats. I recall one time three days and three nights it was raining. I was laying, water all over my whole body, thrown upside down, clothes was wet and I couldn't raise my head. At night, I used to go out there and sneak into a farmer and knock in his door and taking a chance and ask him for a loaf of bread. Some of them used to say go back to the cemetery, you're not alive. Some used to look in the window and says, "Come here, here is a loaf of bread but please don't come, you're disturbing, don't come, don't disturb." So, while the summer was going on, and I was laying in one place and the other one hiding, day and night, until as you know, there comes a time when you have to harvest, you have to take out those wheats from the fields. So, they started cutting the fields around me and so, one time they were cutting wheat and they came across me. There was no place to go. So, another farmer found me and he says, "Listen, don't stay in my fields, go over in some other fields. I'm afraid if they find you in my fields, they're going to blame me that I know about you." So, by this time, there's a lot of wheats cut off and here they put them in bundles and they stand them up to be dried in the sun. So, I used to hide between the bundles, make myself like a little house, a dog house, and stay there. One day, the Ukrainians that called themselves *Banderivtsis*[6] came along and they start looking around in that field and they discover me. When they discovered me, there was a young fellow which I watched him growing up, I knew his father. So, he said to me the same question, how are you alive, how do you survive? So, they took me down to a basement with a guard and they asked me to stay there until the evening and they'll take care of me, which I know in the evening they're going to kill me. By no choice, sitting and waiting with pain that any minute when it gets dark, you're going to be shot. I couldn't have any in my mind how I'm going to survive. As you know, the Germans after they killed the Jews, start fighting with the *Banderivtsis* and that day they made a [unclear] at that place where I was sitting in the basement under *Banderivtsis* and they, *Banderivtsis,* they didn't have a time to kill me because the Germans was right, about a half mile from them so the guard said to me, "Listen, run away, the Germans is coming, we're running away too," and that way, I opened the door and I ran away. When I ran away without knowing where to run, together with them, on the field I separated from them and I ran to a, near my town where

[6]*Banderivtsis* – also spelled *Banderovtsy,* speaker is probably adding the "s" for English plural. This term refers to a group of Ukrainian nationalists who followed Stepan Bandera and fought for Ukrainian freedom. They were, however, accused of antisemitic acts. (*The Holocaust*, Nora Levin); Friedman notes that they joined the Nazis in fighting both Soviets and Jews, Philip Friedman, Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust, Philadelphia: JPS, 1980, p. 257-8.

there was living a preacher who used to be a customer and I ran into that preacher and I asked him to help me. He says, "I'm awfully sorry, I can do nothing for you. If they find you here, you're going to be killed. If you want, go outside, you got a big, big place with old trees from fruits and go sit under the trees and there's bushels all around. If they find you there, they won't blame me." But if I'm in their house. They'll blame. I didn't have no choice. I ran in in that place with the fruit trees there, it was about a mile long full of fruit, and while I was sitting there, the Germans was attacking the *Banderivtsis* and they ran away through that place where that preacher was and the Germans ran after them. So, I heard the things, I heard the footsteps of the Germans and I was only holding my head and cried God, help me, because it was the middle of the day, no place to go, the only thing they had to do was just to go over and pick up a fruit and they would see me. Usually in the summertime it's hot and soldiers go in there and they're looking for a piece of fruit. I could tell you the truth, not even one came and took a step aside from the road to pick up a fruit. Two hours I was sitting with fear of death and they passed until it got dark and I survive again. From there, I had to go again, where can I go? So, I started running again from one farmer to the other, like cats and mouse. This farmer chased me out. I went back again to the other. The other farmer found me again and chased me out, I went back to the other. And this was holding on through the summer until '44 and the Russians start coming closer to the town. I heard news that the Russians are about 10-15 miles from my town. So, I prayed to God, God, help me I should be survive and when they come in, I'll be alive. Well, one evening, I was not so [unclear] and a farmer came in and he didn't know it, went on the same stack of straw where I am hid-, hiding myself and that night, the Russians came in. They slept in the top of that straw. I didn't know it was Russians there. I thought maybe it was the owner or maybe some parties there and you know, as you're sleeping, you turn around because you don't know if you're asleep. So, while I was dreaming, they took with their bayonet and they were digging, they thought maybe somebody laying there. Digging in that straw. But the bayonet is not that deep, they just couldn't-- [unclear], when they start digging I was quiet and they went away. In the morning, the farmer came out to find me and says, "You know what, the Russians is here," and that's the way I saw myself-- the light at the end of the tunnel, I saw the light of the war and I'm alive. So, after this, I still was scared because the *Banderivtsis* was just hiding the way I did, and if they find any Jew alive, even the Russians were there, they used to kill them. So, one night, I'm already free but I was still scared to go in the daytime so at night, I'm walking through and I figure I'm going to a farmer to get something to eat. When I walked into a field, all of a sudden I see that guy who caught me then, that *Banderiv* who caught me in the fields, to kill, met me and he said to me, what are you doing, you still alive? I says, "Listen you know what, the Russian is here, you hiding yourself, I don't know nothing what you did, I never saw you do nothing and please don't do any harm to me, please, I lived through so far. And he brought in, he had kind of a gun with him or something he could kill me right…

[Tape one, side two ended.]

*Tape two, side one:*

ES: Eileen Steinberg interviewing Samuel Greenberg, January 10, 1984, side three. What happened in the morning, Mr. Greenberg?

SG: In the morning, when I got up, I couldn't believe it, that I'm alive and he didn't do nothing to me. But still, you know you don't trust any animal like they were. I said to him in the morning, you know what, I'm going to go enlist in the Russian army because when the Russians came in, they drafted anybody anyway so I figured by me, lost all my family and nobody to go to, what's the use for me to stay, they're going to kill me anyway. After so much, what I went through, so I went for 10 miles to another town and enlisted in the Russian army. When the Russian asked me how did I survive, I explained it to him, they killed 23 in my family and I'm the only one surviving. So, he said to me how could it be possible to kill a whole town of people and you're the only one survivor. The only thing is possible, you work for the Germans against us. And for that, they sent me to Siberia. And this was my second start of survival with the Russians. That's the way it was. So, they took me to ghetto with all the Ukrainian *Banderivtsi*s where they killed all the Jews, put me together with them and sent me to Siberia as [unclear] because he couldn't believe it that I could be survived unless I worked for the Germans against the Russians. So, when I came to Siberia, I was going by train two months until I got to Siberia.

ES: Tell us about the train trip.

SG: The train trip used to stop in every town and the town where they went through, they picked up all the *Banderivtsi*s, all the Vlasovsists[7], all the Ukrainians that they knew that worked for the Germans and they filled up trains by trains, train by train and of course, unlucky Jews that were like me that they enlisted, they took them by the same thing, together, and it took us about two months. Through that time, at least, we had food. We slept in the, in the trains. We had to sleep on the floor, it was no luxury but it was better than before and until we came there. We came to Russia and one day, they took us out and they gave us uniforms. I recognized five of the ones that helped to kill the Jews in the graves. So, I was scared when I saw and I didn't know why I'm with them. I figure I'm a Jew, I survived, why am I with murderers? So, the *Henker* [Ger.: hangmen] were there, they call them KGB now, called me in and he says listen Sam, tell me about those people what you know. I says this one and that one and that one, they were staying and helping to kill people, throwing them alive in their graves. He said don't worry, they'll never see the sun, they'll be put away for life. You work with us and you'll get sleep with them now and get information and tell us what they're talk about us. So, I said I'm afraid that at night choke me. He said don't worry, we will have our people watching you, and in Russia, you don't say no, you have to do it. So, I was

[7]Vlasovists – term for the people who worked for the Russian General Andrei Vlasov who collaborated with the Germans. (Holocaust Chronicle)

sleeping there for two weeks and they were talking to each other. I understand Ukrainian and I heard what they're saying about the Russians, and they're cursing them and they see. I gave it to them all and they were happy with me. One day, the head of the KGB came in and he says to me, "You're going to work for us. Whatever is true, the story, how did it happen and why they killed them." I said, plain, I didn't know anything different, I says, "They took all the Jews in a ghetto without food and one day, they made graves and they killed them." How many Communists they kill? I said Communists, I said the Jews. He said Jews don't mean nothing, I asked you how many Communists they killed. I said there were a lot of Jewish Communists, too, they killed everybody. That was the end. As soon as he find out they killed Jews, they didn't bother. He only wants to know if I know they killed the head of a Communist or something and they never wanted to learn nothing. They all bring in that place there and [unclear] so with me, for being so good, they shipped me right on the front line. He says, "You are a Jew, we'll force you to the front line, we know you will not run away to the Germans like the Ukrainians do, they run over to their side and you'll be a good soldier." He says, "Take a gun and kill them like they killed your parents." How can you go and kill a person how they give us four ounces of bread and soup was from grass they used to cook and they didn't give enough grass to eat the soup. I used to go out, I used to take us out on maneuvers or something, I couldn't carry the gun. I lost weight and I was almost thinking I'm going to die of starvation. Here I was, you're killed and you got another right to die. So, what can you do? This time for me was a help too that I didn't smoke. The Russians smoked there. I used to give away my-- they gave me out so much to smoke, to them and they gave me a little bit more. I hid this and then, they sent me over on the front line to Germany. So, I think there I was going by train back [unclear] on foot, hundreds and hundreds of thousand[s] of miles we walked, not all in one time of course. We walked so many miles a day and that time, the Germans was going back and I always used to pray they should stop somewhere you know, it gives us a rest so they didn't-- we just used to run after them and don't give them a chance to stop. So, from Siberia to Bassik [phonetic], the capitol of Warsaw. Up to there and they stopped, the Germans, and they started fighting again. I was going day and night. I thought I'll never make it. They used to ride on the horses the officers, and the soldiers used to go by foot and carry the bags for them. The only thing that was a little better, when we came to Poland, we had food more. The farmers used to come out with food for us so we survived a little better and got stronger but I never thought I was going to be able to walk so much and after a time when I had with Hitler.

ES: Everything you went through.

SG: Everything I went through. So, anyway…

ES: [sneezes]

SG: Bless you. Anyway, when we came in under Warsaw, we stopped there from…

ES: In Warsaw?

SG: Before on the outskirts of Warsaw because the Poles at that time didn't want the Russians to help them. They said they're going to take Warsaw by themselves so Stalin said let them take it. So, they couldn't make it and the Russians-- the Germans killed them all out. After the Germans got rid of the Poles there, Stalin says go ahead. We went in there, we drove them out of Warsaw. And from there we start running and running and running and running afterward until Berlin.

ES: You walked all the way…

SG: There was no riding.

ES: From Siberia to Berlin?

SG: To Berlin. At home at night, if that foot could talk, it would tell you all the details of which place I was going through. I remember one time we came in and he says stop. There was a foot of snow and the whole division fell in the snow, fell asleep. He would wake us up, everybody would [unclear]. One time, I came in, I touched my heels and they started breaking off from frost. So, we came in. Then, we came in at the German territory…

ES: What year was this?

SG: This was already before the war, 19-- at the end of 1944, the beginning of '45. We came into Germany then. Then, we had a lot of food already. The Germans used to run away, we got in, we got food, we got drink and everybody got their strength back. So, they sent me down-- I'll never forget this one night, they say people shouldn't believe in dreams, one night, my job was to pick up the mines. You know, the few mines that were laying in on the front lines. My job was to go and pick up the mines that the Germans put in and they used to say if a bullet would kill you, sometimes hit you in a place you could survive, but that a mine is only dead or live. So, anytime you used to go out on a mission, you used to fill out [unclear]. If you're going out dead or alive, watch yourself. You watch at night, you had to pick up the mines, the big ones. So, when I was waiting till midnight and my rifle, and I fell asleep and I was dreaming that a horse bit me in my hand and I was awake and I was fearful, so scared and I got out in that mission to do it and the Germans were maybe about a mile away, they could see us and they started shooting and I got wounded in the head.

ES: Oh, my.

SG: [Unclear] But, only my luck was, I didn't wear any helmet, just a plain hat with a rim around it. It went through here and outside the other way. If it went straight, I wouldn't be here today to tell you that story. So, they [unclear] to the trenches and everybody says how lucky you are, you're alive, you're wounded, now the war will end and you'll be all right. They took me to a hospital, they bandaged, they looked it over and says you're lucky, it's a quarter of an inch to the brains and the bullet went through and didn't touch it. Five days later, they want to send me back and it was three or four days '45, and before April, May, the war was winding down and down. I begged them,

"Please let me do something." They said, "No. You're well enough, you can go." One doctor, she took care of me, it was a Jewish one, a Russian doctor. So I start passing a few tears and says do me a favor, "I know I won't survive" because before Berlin millions of them, Russians [unclear], they killed right and left. It was impossible to exist. "Let me stay," and I told her I lost so many people and I'm the only one, I want to be a survivor to let, to let the world know what, what happened. She says, "You know what I'm going to do, I'm going to bandage you up under your eyes and I figured out that you cannot go and you have to help me for the more heavier sickness. One is with half an arm, one, you know, we used to bring in all kinds of wounded people and now, you're going to be my helper," and that's the way I survived. So, I used to, my job was day and night, there was a basement there, and we used to pick up all the wounded what they were dying over the day. They used to bring them to our cellar and throw them down. So the cellar up to at night was filled up to the steps with dead ones. At night, I used to come in and bury them. Mass graves. In the daytime, they used to bring in truckloads, 50-100 trucks at one time, wounded one. They brought them in, who take care so much? They used to die. So at night, there I was taking the old and dead ones and throwing them in the basement and filled up the basement wait until they are all took out from the basement, then I do it again. And one day, we heard the war ended. It was 1945 when the war ended. So, I can't tell you what happy it was, it was on one side happy and the other side was--where I'm going to go? Who belongs to me and who do I belong to? There's nobody around. So, they came in, the Russians, and later on they discharged in a town in Germany that was called Magdeburg. They discharged me from that town.

ES: Where was the hospital?

SG: The hospital?

ES: What town?

SG: The hospital was around Magdeburg, Magdeburg, yeah it was on the outskirts of Magdeburg. And then, they asked everybody to go home. Give me your names, when you're going. They came to me. He says, "Where are you going to go. I explained to him, I started crying, I have nowhere to go." In fact, I didn't know if my brother was alive in Russia but I didn't hear from him. I said, "You know what, let me go back to Poland." I still didn't believe that after the war, there would be such antisemitism the way it was before. I was naïve. I thought everybody if they saw a Jew, they would feel so sorry, they didn't know what to do with them to help them. So naïve I was. So, they discharged me and I went back to Poland to Lódz. There, I went, there was our organization again, a Mizrachi, they call them an orthodox. There were all survivors from everywhere, there were there from Germany, from Auschwitz, there were about 100 survivors, young and old, that were staying there. And from, from the United States, they used to a little bring fruit. There was a farm they used to give us to eat. It was life a little better. So when I was there, so the people wanted to go to other towns like Krakow, the other states to see each other. Well, this shocked me again after the

war. My room, was roommates, about three or five, may they rest in peace, survivors from Auschwitz, 20, 21, and 18 years old, brothers and sisters. They came with a bus to take [unclear] survivors from war to Krakow for a conference. That day, when they went through the woods there to Krakow came out Poles, they stopped that bus and they says all the Jews get out only and they killed them right alongside the bus. When I saw this, I says God what happened in this world. We were talking, everybody is just telling how they survived Auschwitz and how bad it was and they finally arrive alive and now, they got killed after the war. It was such a outcry. I think the whole world was crying. All that was [unclear], the people couldn't get over what happened. So, I saw there's no way again. It was like they sing a song with the Jews, there's no place for you, you go further. It was for me the same. I thought I'll see [unclear] Jews maybe upset or something. I sees no place in there. So, I started a connection with from Israel. There was a company where they transfer from Poland to Germany through a border, only at night, you have to pay. So, I got to them , most of all we start [unclear] after this tragedy had happened, when they killed those, everybody got out of Poland. So, we got with them and they brought us over to Stettin. It's in Germany. And I was there, and they said whoever wants to go to Israel can go. But you have to go to Italy through big mountains and it's a lot of dangers. So, whoever they could go, they went and I says I couldn't go, I have to stay. So, the rest of us, they says, "You know what, we're going to take you over to the American zone." You know there was two zones and if you go to the American zone, from there it's going to be better. So, we were there maybe about a month. They fed us already. We was looking like Anne Frank's room, we was in a big apartment house and we were sitting on top of that room with no lights, nothing. Nobody didn't even know that. To me, when I'm reading about Anna Frank's apartments there were about 40 of us, was no place even to move around. And they, from the Israelis they used to come in and bring us food and give us the news, and one night, they came with a truck and here's another [unclear], they came to the border, the Russian says, "You can't go, we're going to send you to Siberia, the guard. So the guy, the head that took us over from the Israelis, he went to him and said, "What do you want?" He says, "Give us all the gold and the watches and hand whatever you got." He took off his hat, his cap and everybody threw whatever they had, gold rings, gave them to him and he opened the gates and we were on the other side. On the other side, everybody said thank God we are alive. This was the last gates that I can see forever. We came there, right away we came to a-- I can't think what the town was and there was already Americans, a unit and another one. They took us in and they make a DP, Displaced Camp and they fed us already. It was good. There were people living, people used to go already in business, people in black markets, all kinds, but for me, life was all-- I didn't look for nothing. I just wanted to find a place I could get somebody who I knew and I would have somebody to wait for me to come back and I would have a place to sleep nicely. So I was there and I start putting out in the newspaper to the United States and I find an uncle of mine, my

mother's sister who live in Philadelphia. Then, I wrote to them and they sent me a visa, it's nothing it's just one, two, three, but I just, like I said, they sent me a visa and I came to Philadelphia in 1948 in April, alone with a little handbag, $2.00 in my pocket that my uncle sent me over to Germany when I was there and my aunt took me in and I start to work. They got me a job in a factory as a shipper for $30 a week, 40 hours a week. I worked there. The job was not so pleasant and not so easy. By the end, after this, when I tried to be good and work a lot, the boss fired me. She said she has her own nephew and she wants him. So, she had to get somebody out and I'm not too long there so I'm the only one that wants to go. So, I went out from there and my aunt says, "Don't worry, you worked here already, we'll find you something else." So, I went in here and I started working at Fourth and Bainbridge at Bainbridge Delicatessen. Are you familiar with Philadelphia, Fourth and Bainbridge. Sam Auspitz.

ES: Yes, I know it very well.

SG: There, I worked for-- I don't want to say for how much he paid me. There, it was not 40 hours, whenever the last customer walked out. Worked very hard. And after Christmas, he fired me too. So, I said to myself, what should I do? I have no choice, I have to look for a home. The way I explained it to you, we used to buy wheat and make meal, like a businessman. I'll start a business. So, I went-- in business, you have to have money. Well, money I didn't have it so I went into a realtor there and I bought a business for $3,000 in his name. The mortgage was his and the store was his and it wasn't mine until I paid the last bill. The last bill I didn't pay, he takes away the store from me. I had $150 under the table plus, I have to give to him. To make it a short story, I took over the business and in a year's time, I paid all the mortgage. In two year's time, I bought the building with three apartments. Four or five year's time, the city came along and bought the building that were all around it.

ES: So, what did you do then?

SG: So, I was all right. Now, I forgot to tell you another thing. When I came here, I got married in 1952. I got married in 1952, same, from a poor family which I know her and we both went in the same business. So when I came in the last business and I sold, and I, the business too, I wasn't [unclear] I call up neighbors and I went to windows breaking up and everything and in 1975, I make it short, too, I was in Ardmore, supposed to be a nice neighborhood. Came in two *schwarzes* [Ger.: Blacks] and they stuck a knife in me and they almost killed me and they stabbed me in the intestine and they made a hole, stuck me a knife. He came in the day time, he asked for the money and I raised my hand and he stuck a knife. They took me in the hospital I was there and I almost died, they had to sew my intestine. So, here I see in America, I had the taste American life, too. Plus this all my life, I was working seven days a week and hard. You now, in America, money don't come so easy. They say in America money lays in the streets, that when you bend down, you can't stand up. So, God punished me again and my wife got sick of cancer in 1968 and she was sick 10 years in and out of hospitals. I

can't tell you the whole thing, suffering, for the whole family, myself and the children. The same thing, God gave us two children. One's name is Sherry and the other one, Brian. Very nice kids. They're both very well, they both have good education and I gave it to them. They both got married. One is working in computers and the other one is a carpenter so the way you see you're getting happiness with sorrow. So, altogether, what I can say I went through in my life, more sorrow than happiness.

ES: You certainly did.

SG: So a lot of people asking me question. How come, why? I says listen, "If I would know the answer why, I could give you. I don't know, it just it's my *mazel* [luck] maybe it was that way, and my *mazel* was that I survived. I'm not any better from the other ones, I didn't pay more money [to] the enemy to let me alive but that's the way my life did endure and it was always in God's ways. I believe in God, I pray to God and up to now, I thank God I'm happy. I remarried again two [unclear] from the family and I'm with her five years and we're both happily married and I thank God for every minute of it and I hope now to God to live that my children could see and listen and know what their father went through, it should be for generations to generations to come, that they should know about it that every word I say was true which are not, which I couldn't all tell in details what I went through in my life.

ES: This will help them to understand better.

SG: So…

[Tape two, side one ended.]

*Tape two, side two:*

ES: This is Eileen Steinberg interviewing Samuel Greenberg January 10, 1984, side four. Mr. Greenberg, I would just like to ask you a few questions that weren't covered in the story that you've been telling us. First of all, I know you had a brother that survived. Now, he was with your parents in the small town that you were from. How did he survive and when did you discover that he was alive?

SG: Yes, I had in the Szumsk Ghetto, a brother, and he was with my parents but when the Russians came in after the pact, made a pact with Hitler, they-- my brother was under their place and the place where he was living was Russia. And in 1940, they drafted the youngsters in the army and my brother was drafted and he was drafted in the army and the war started, they sent him away to Siberia and from that time on, I didn't hear nothing. All the time I thought he is not alive, I never believed he is alive. Well, right after the war when I came to Germany in the DP camps on the American place, where I was with the Americans, where they took care of me, I asked them to send a letter to my uncle in Philadelphia to, and I wrote my uncle that nobody survived, everybody got killed, I'm the only one surviving. At that time, my brother from Siberia sent a letter to Philadelphia and said to my uncle and aunt that nobody in the family is alive, everybody is killed, he is the only one survivor. So, my uncle when saw that, he took the letter from my brother sent it to me to Germany and my letter he sent to Siberia and that's the way we found out each other were alive.

ES: When did your brother come to Philadelphia?

SG: From then on, when I knew my brother was alive, I started writing him that I would like you should come in to the United States. But later on, when they start moving out all the Polish citizens from Russia to Israel, my brother with his family came to Israel. From Israel, I begged him and I want him to be with me, he is the only one so he was alive so I wrote him and I begged him to come to Philadelphia. Let's be together, the only two survivors. And he came in to Philadelphia in year 196--, '57. He came to Philadelphia, all of his family. And they were very nice. He had a little hard time in the beginning but later on he found himself a job and he was very successful. He was a young man, full of ambitious, an educated man and he only was 49 years old. All of a sudden, he got sick with a heart attack and he got what they called hardening of the arteries and in 1969, he died, 49 years old. This was another shock to all my *tsures* [Yiddish: troubles] that I went through in my life. So, the way you see it, that human life is not always pleasure. It's pleasure but a lot of heartache. But you must taking it both together, if you want to stay alive, this is my thing. You must taking it to look if it gets dark, it will never be dark and if it gets light, it's never too light. So, you are only afterwards after fate.

ES: Can you tell me when you first heard about the mass murder in the crematoria and what was going on in Germany?

SG: The whole time that we were in the ghettos and everything, we didn't know nothing. We didn't know it from one town on the other that got killed. Rumors used to go they'll only kill this town because they find one, a terrorist and that's why they killed this town, the other towns is all right. The only thing I found out after the war; after the war, we heard about the concentration camps in Germany, we heard about the concentration camps in Poland, we heard all about the gas chambers. But up to that, we didn't know nothing. We didn't know anything.

ES: I know we talked a little bit about this before but once again, could you tell us how your religious faith helped strengthen you and helped you to survive these ordeals?

SG: This is what I believe a miracle. I was raised orthodox, a real orthodox, you know, from Hasidim, and all my life and as a child more, my grandmother, my grandfather--I'm named after him I didn't even know him--and all that time, I know they always believed in God, they were very orthodox and the Bible I always was reading about miracles, about Pharoah, the 10 plagues that get him and then the miracles that God showed to him and I was just reading it. But this time, all the miracles I lived through my own and I saw it with my prayers, that my belief in God, you shall used to say, at the time when there was no way, was the end of the road, I used to say, "God, I'm in your hand and whatever you do, I'll leave it to you. I'm not--got nowhere to go, not my mind don't even tell me where to go, my faith is in you, God, and whatever you do, I'll accept it." And this miracle came along, right in my mind came true like a flash, white, he says "Listen, I want to go there," which I never thought that. And I went that way. And the same the time when I was ready to throw myself in the river, the same thing, the moon, I was talking to the moon, I says, "Moon, did you ever tell somebody, the way I'm drown because nobody would know." But then came, "Stupid, why should you drown yourself, if you're alive, that means God is watching over you, don't do that, run away." I ran away and I find a way, and God gave me another way to survive and I found another place. So, that's the way I could figure out in my belief that faith in God, I mean a faith with all your heart, not a faith with your mouth, but this had to come from your heart, gives you survival, gives you life.

ES: I know that talking to me has been a difficult experience for you, remembering all the terrible things that happened to you and I know one of the reasons that you wanted to do this is because you want your children to know about your experiences. What would you like your children and other people who listen to this tape to learn from your experiences?

SG: I would like my children and all the young people and the grandchildren to continue to listen to my tape and all the other tapes and to make sure that they should be never be forgotten.

ES: Thank you very much.

SG: You're welcome. [Tape two, side two ended. Interview ended.]