

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,850
Interview slate one coming up.

2
00:00:01,850 --> 00:00:07,460

3
00:00:07,460 --> 00:00:08,075
George Salton.

4
00:00:08,075 --> 00:00:09,500
This is camera one, marker one.

5
00:00:09,500 --> 00:00:19,855

6
00:00:19,855 --> 00:00:20,480
Should I start?

7
00:00:20,480 --> 00:00:20,980
Yes.

8
00:00:20,980 --> 00:00:22,280
All right.

9
00:00:22,280 --> 00:00:25,850
I was liberated
in spring of 1945.

10
00:00:25,850 --> 00:00:29,360
And I was by that
time a prisoner

11
00:00:29,360 --> 00:00:34,430
in various concentration
camps for over three years,

12
00:00:34,430 --> 00:00:36,120
and it was the 10th camp.

13
00:00:36,120 --> 00:00:38,490

The name of the camp was Wobbelin.

14
00:00:38,490 --> 00:00:43,290
It was a camp that apparently the Germans didn't finish.

15
00:00:43,290 --> 00:00:47,235
When we arrived there, the buildings were not finished.

16
00:00:47,235 --> 00:00:49,610
They were no floors, and a few barracks, and the windows.

17
00:00:49,610 --> 00:00:52,340
We slept on the sand.

18
00:00:52,340 --> 00:00:55,190
The place was very disorganized.

19
00:00:55,190 --> 00:00:57,440
It was based-- but it was springtime.

20
00:00:57,440 --> 00:01:03,050
It was a time of double pain, because inside, the discipline

21
00:01:03,050 --> 00:01:07,610
and organization and supply of food were deteriorating,

22
00:01:07,610 --> 00:01:10,880
the madness and the evil was increasing,

23
00:01:10,880 --> 00:01:17,030
while nature placed leaves on the trees outside of the wires.

24
00:01:17,030 --> 00:01:19,040
And birds were

singing and flowers

25

00:01:19,040 --> 00:01:23,630
appeared in greater
numbers, as if to mock

26

00:01:23,630 --> 00:01:28,690
the many starving and dying
prisoners inside the camp.

27

00:01:28,690 --> 00:01:30,390
There was no work there.

28

00:01:30,390 --> 00:01:33,520
There was really very
little organization.

29

00:01:33,520 --> 00:01:37,840
The German SS men
still, however,

30

00:01:37,840 --> 00:01:40,360
maintained a certain
process, calling us

31

00:01:40,360 --> 00:01:47,800
out every morning for
a assembly to count us.

32

00:01:47,800 --> 00:01:50,530
It was not meaningful anymore
because so many people

33

00:01:50,530 --> 00:01:55,820
died every night that the
count didn't mean anything.

34

00:01:55,820 --> 00:02:00,760
And nevertheless, we who
were still alive and able

35

00:02:00,760 --> 00:02:04,270
got up every morning and

appeared for the assembly

36

00:02:04,270 --> 00:02:05,860
and for count.

37

00:02:05,860 --> 00:02:07,900
We did it because we are afraid.

38

00:02:07,900 --> 00:02:13,430
I suppose in those days only
the dead were not afraid.

39

00:02:13,430 --> 00:02:15,120
We were.

40

00:02:15,120 --> 00:02:17,440
And so it happened one day--

41

00:02:17,440 --> 00:02:19,510
and I believe it was
the beginning of May.

42

00:02:19,510 --> 00:02:23,410
I know now that it was the
1st of May, but at that time

43

00:02:23,410 --> 00:02:26,140
I believed that it is
the beginning of May.

44

00:02:26,140 --> 00:02:31,330
At one of those assemblies,
it was announced that

45

00:02:31,330 --> 00:02:33,850
the prisoners in this
camp, Camp Wöbbelin--

46

00:02:33,850 --> 00:02:38,350
in which there must have been
about 4,000 or 5,000 prisoners

47

00:02:38,350 --> 00:02:40,040
that were still alive--

48
00:02:40,040 --> 00:02:44,980
they were to be placed on a
train to be evacuated again.

49
00:02:44,980 --> 00:02:50,050
Mind you that during
those late days

50
00:02:50,050 --> 00:02:54,190
of the war, as the fronts
were moving and advancing,

51
00:02:54,190 --> 00:02:58,430
we were being evacuated
from camp to camp.

52
00:02:58,430 --> 00:02:58,930
May I?

53
00:02:58,930 --> 00:03:05,760

54
00:03:05,760 --> 00:03:10,480
And so it happened at about
noon or 10 o'clock that day,

55
00:03:10,480 --> 00:03:15,430
we were placed in
boxcars, some 100 or 80,

56
00:03:15,430 --> 00:03:17,400
or 120 people to a boxcar.

57
00:03:17,400 --> 00:03:20,740
It was obviously very crowded.

58
00:03:20,740 --> 00:03:23,890
The train was-- well,
let me tell you,

59

00:03:23,890 --> 00:03:27,250
but the camp is-- all camps
was surrounded by double fence.

60

00:03:27,250 --> 00:03:29,950
And that in the
railroad line was there

61

00:03:29,950 --> 00:03:33,490
waiting boxcars, when an
area between the two fences--

62

00:03:33,490 --> 00:03:37,240
is significant as
the story evolves.

63

00:03:37,240 --> 00:03:42,100
We were on that train the whole
night, hungry and miserable.

64

00:03:42,100 --> 00:03:46,450
There was some random
shootings from the guards

65

00:03:46,450 --> 00:03:48,850
which surrounded us.

66

00:03:48,850 --> 00:03:55,510
And then by next morning, again,
as I remember it very well,

67

00:03:55,510 --> 00:03:59,290
about 10:00, the
doors were opened

68

00:03:59,290 --> 00:04:03,760
and the prisoners were
saying to other prisoners

69

00:04:03,760 --> 00:04:06,160
that the locomotive
did not show up.

70

00:04:06,160 --> 00:04:07,720

And therefore, there
are some doubts

71

00:04:07,720 --> 00:04:12,280

about us being transported
to some new destination.

72

00:04:12,280 --> 00:04:13,840

Later that morning,
we were asked

73

00:04:13,840 --> 00:04:16,209

to-- we were ordered
to leave the boxcars,

74

00:04:16,209 --> 00:04:19,420

line up in the area in
front of the boxcars,

75

00:04:19,420 --> 00:04:21,640

right in front of the
fence and the gate that

76

00:04:21,640 --> 00:04:24,910

led to the inner camp,
where the camp was,

77

00:04:24,910 --> 00:04:27,400

with instructions
that was orders.

78

00:04:27,400 --> 00:04:31,660

I need to remember that,
orders, barked, orders that all

79

00:04:31,660 --> 00:04:36,820

the Jews should step forward.

80

00:04:36,820 --> 00:04:38,650

I would estimate
that at that time,

81

00:04:38,650 --> 00:04:41,440
among the 6,000-- or
4,000 to 6,000 prisoners,

82

00:04:41,440 --> 00:04:46,330
there must have been a few
hundred Jews, maybe 400 Jews.

83

00:04:46,330 --> 00:04:49,720
Most of us, being
sufficiently experienced

84

00:04:49,720 --> 00:04:51,670
and knowing what to expect--

85

00:04:51,670 --> 00:04:54,310
most of us Jews, I should say--

86

00:04:54,310 --> 00:04:56,440
tried to ignore this order.

87

00:04:56,440 --> 00:04:59,290
Some people who really
didn't care step forward,

88

00:04:59,290 --> 00:05:02,050
others were being singled
out in this commotion

89

00:05:02,050 --> 00:05:04,900
by prisoners who are not Jewish.

90

00:05:04,900 --> 00:05:12,730
And then in the midst of that
confusion and shouting and fear

91

00:05:12,730 --> 00:05:17,650
accompanied by
shouts and beatings,

92

00:05:17,650 --> 00:05:23,380
there was a-- we heard the

cannon fire, artillery cannon

93

00:05:23,380 --> 00:05:26,770

fire, and some place close by.

94

00:05:26,770 --> 00:05:28,960

And all of us looked

in the direction

95

00:05:28,960 --> 00:05:32,290

of the sound, from

which the sound came,

96

00:05:32,290 --> 00:05:35,110

down the corridor

that the railroad

97

00:05:35,110 --> 00:05:37,180

track cuts through the forest.

98

00:05:37,180 --> 00:05:39,460

And in the distance,

we could see

99

00:05:39,460 --> 00:05:43,000

a tank, a kind of a green tank.

100

00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:46,160

And I quite frankly didn't know

and didn't care at that time

101

00:05:46,160 --> 00:05:50,560

whether it was a German or

Russian or American tank.

102

00:05:50,560 --> 00:05:53,710

We didn't know exactly where we

were and which part of Germany,

103

00:05:53,710 --> 00:05:57,550

and we did not know at all

how the war was coming,

104

00:05:57,550 --> 00:06:01,000

even though we knew
that there were

105

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:04,420

changes because of the movement
of the prisoners from camp

106

00:06:04,420 --> 00:06:06,040

to camp.

107

00:06:06,040 --> 00:06:10,450

And there was this
tank, and it was

108

00:06:10,450 --> 00:06:15,400

surrounded by smoke, which I
suppose was the smoke emitted

109

00:06:15,400 --> 00:06:16,180

by the cannon.

110

00:06:16,180 --> 00:06:19,960

And it stood there on
the horizon, almost--

111

00:06:19,960 --> 00:06:26,680

I remember seeing it as some
kind of a prehistoric animal,

112

00:06:26,680 --> 00:06:28,930

ready to snarl or attack.

113

00:06:28,930 --> 00:06:32,680

And I was-- and most
of us who could see it

114

00:06:32,680 --> 00:06:35,260

were stunned by that sight.

115

00:06:35,260 --> 00:06:38,650

And the Germans, of course,

reacted to it very quickly.

116
00:06:38,650 --> 00:06:41,860
They opened the inner gate,
the gate to the inner camp,

117
00:06:41,860 --> 00:06:47,890
and made all of us move,
walk into the camp,

118
00:06:47,890 --> 00:06:51,760
gave up the idea of
singling out Jews.

119
00:06:51,760 --> 00:06:54,280
They did hold back the--

120
00:06:54,280 --> 00:06:56,740
the German trusties
were called kapos

121
00:06:56,740 --> 00:07:00,520
who were basically
the administrators

122
00:07:00,520 --> 00:07:03,790
of the day-to-day
workings of the camp.

123
00:07:03,790 --> 00:07:07,810
And we just went in, and
there was nothing more.

124
00:07:07,810 --> 00:07:09,910
There was no-- the
tank didn't appear,

125
00:07:09,910 --> 00:07:11,980
there were no
additional cannon fire.

126
00:07:11,980 --> 00:07:15,310
It would have been

about 10:00 or 11:00

127
00:07:15,310 --> 00:07:18,980
when this happened,
in the morning.

128
00:07:18,980 --> 00:07:22,790
The German guards continued
to occupy the towers that

129
00:07:22,790 --> 00:07:26,150
surrounded the electric
wire around the fence,

130
00:07:26,150 --> 00:07:29,930
for reasons which
were their own.

131
00:07:29,930 --> 00:07:32,330
They continue random
shooting into the camp.

132
00:07:32,330 --> 00:07:34,190
Prisoners were being shot.

133
00:07:34,190 --> 00:07:37,820
And those of us who were
inside searched out,

134
00:07:37,820 --> 00:07:39,470
and I in particular
searched out,

135
00:07:39,470 --> 00:07:41,960
a position between
the barracks where

136
00:07:41,960 --> 00:07:44,360
I was not in the line of fire.

137
00:07:44,360 --> 00:07:50,660
And some food was
available for stealing

138
00:07:50,660 --> 00:07:53,000
because the kapos
who in the past

139
00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:55,490
protected the supply
of potatoes or cabbage

140
00:07:55,490 --> 00:07:59,160
or whatever was there were
no longer inside the camp.

141
00:07:59,160 --> 00:08:06,870
So there we were, not knowing
what's going to happen.

142
00:08:06,870 --> 00:08:11,090
And clearly, I did not
anticipate liberation.

143
00:08:11,090 --> 00:08:15,740
The whole-- I must confess, that
the whole notion of being free,

144
00:08:15,740 --> 00:08:20,750
of living a life
that was my own,

145
00:08:20,750 --> 00:08:26,960
was outside of my expectation.

146
00:08:26,960 --> 00:08:28,350
I have been in camp since--

147
00:08:28,350 --> 00:08:32,210
I was a prisoner since I was 14.

148
00:08:32,210 --> 00:08:37,760
I have been under German
control since I was 11.

149

00:08:37,760 --> 00:08:41,150

I just didn't know
what it meant to be

150

00:08:41,150 --> 00:08:45,570

able to decide when to get
up, or what to do, or--

151

00:08:45,570 --> 00:08:48,530

the whole notion of
liberation and freedom

152

00:08:48,530 --> 00:08:51,740

was not something
I was counting on.

153

00:08:51,740 --> 00:08:54,770

And I had no idea
and no expectation

154

00:08:54,770 --> 00:08:59,630

that this was the day
when the thing that I

155

00:08:59,630 --> 00:09:02,150

had forgotten about
may happen, that I

156

00:09:02,150 --> 00:09:05,660

may be liberated and free.

157

00:09:05,660 --> 00:09:10,850

So there I was, sitting behind
a barrack with other prisoners.

158

00:09:10,850 --> 00:09:15,890

Mind you, in that camp there
were hundreds and hundreds

159

00:09:15,890 --> 00:09:20,210

of unburied bodies, because
the whole process of managing

160

00:09:20,210 --> 00:09:23,720
the camp has stopped.

161
00:09:23,720 --> 00:09:28,780
And so there we were
sitting behind the barrack.

162
00:09:28,780 --> 00:09:30,880
I think I had two
or three potatoes.

163
00:09:30,880 --> 00:09:34,870
And some prisoners started
fires, little fires.

164
00:09:34,870 --> 00:09:39,810
And I had my bowl that
all prisoners carried,

165
00:09:39,810 --> 00:09:41,800
and it was essential
to have in order

166
00:09:41,800 --> 00:09:45,700
to receive rations of soup
whenever it was available.

167
00:09:45,700 --> 00:09:47,770
And I tried to cook
these potatoes.

168
00:09:47,770 --> 00:09:53,960
And time passed.

169
00:09:53,960 --> 00:09:56,990
I really didn't think
about anything very much.

170
00:09:56,990 --> 00:10:00,950
When I noticed out of
the corner of my eye,

171
00:10:00,950 --> 00:10:06,890

in the distance among other
barracks, people running, just

172
00:10:06,890 --> 00:10:09,110
individual prisoners I
could see running, all

173
00:10:09,110 --> 00:10:13,130
in a certain direction.

174
00:10:13,130 --> 00:10:17,930
And I still had a
survival instinct

175
00:10:17,930 --> 00:10:20,100
even though I was by
that time very tired,

176
00:10:20,100 --> 00:10:23,360
and my life was
ebbing, and I was

177
00:10:23,360 --> 00:10:25,310
on the verge of
becoming a Muselmann,

178
00:10:25,310 --> 00:10:28,940
if you know what it is, someone
who no longer really cares

179
00:10:28,940 --> 00:10:30,990
about surviving.

180
00:10:30,990 --> 00:10:33,350
Still, the instinct was
there, and I saw these people

181
00:10:33,350 --> 00:10:37,020
running in this one direction.

182
00:10:37,020 --> 00:10:40,350
And I wanted to know why.

183

00:10:40,350 --> 00:10:42,830

Maybe there was food, maybe something good was happening,

184

00:10:42,830 --> 00:10:44,990

and I wanted to take advantage of it.

185

00:10:44,990 --> 00:10:46,580

Maybe there was something bad, and I

186

00:10:46,580 --> 00:10:48,740

needed to know about it to try to avoid it.

187

00:10:48,740 --> 00:10:53,060

Mind you, as a youngster, I survived the many years

188

00:10:53,060 --> 00:10:57,290

of concentration camps and many selections

189

00:10:57,290 --> 00:10:59,720

by making myself invisible.

190

00:10:59,720 --> 00:11:05,330

15-year-old boys were not supposed to stay alive in camps

191

00:11:05,330 --> 00:11:08,465

because they were not old enough to be productive workers.

192

00:11:08,465 --> 00:11:11,270

193

00:11:11,270 --> 00:11:12,410

We have to reload.

194

00:11:12,410 --> 00:11:13,430

That's what "cut" means?

195
00:11:13,430 --> 00:11:14,130
Yeah.

196
00:11:14,130 --> 00:11:14,630
Yeah.

197
00:11:14,630 --> 00:11:21,220

198
00:11:21,220 --> 00:11:21,720
Got it.

199
00:11:21,720 --> 00:11:23,110
Right here.

200
00:11:23,110 --> 00:11:23,610
Two.

201
00:11:23,610 --> 00:11:30,860

202
00:11:30,860 --> 00:11:36,080
So there I was sitting, hidden
against one of the barracks,

203
00:11:36,080 --> 00:11:38,150
protecting myself
from the line of fire,

204
00:11:38,150 --> 00:11:41,420
when I noticed people running.

205
00:11:41,420 --> 00:11:43,250
In the distance
between the barracks,

206
00:11:43,250 --> 00:11:49,850
I could see individuals in their
white and blue striped prison

207

00:11:49,850 --> 00:11:51,380
uniforms running.

208

00:11:51,380 --> 00:11:55,070
And I initially
wanted to ignore it

209

00:11:55,070 --> 00:12:00,470
because it was safe and warm
sitting in the sun over there,

210

00:12:00,470 --> 00:12:04,610
but my survival
instincts made me

211

00:12:04,610 --> 00:12:07,202
want to find out why
the people were running

212

00:12:07,202 --> 00:12:08,160
and what was happening.

213

00:12:08,160 --> 00:12:12,770
There were maybe good
things that were happening.

214

00:12:12,770 --> 00:12:14,390
Maybe there was
food, and I needed

215

00:12:14,390 --> 00:12:16,280
to know about it to
take advantage of it.

216

00:12:16,280 --> 00:12:19,040
They were maybe
bad things that I

217

00:12:19,040 --> 00:12:20,990
needed to know about to avoid.

218

00:12:20,990 --> 00:12:24,410

That was the instinct
of a prisoner

219
00:12:24,410 --> 00:12:28,550
who, no matter what
the circumstances,

220
00:12:28,550 --> 00:12:31,160
still wanted to survive.

221
00:12:31,160 --> 00:12:36,320
So after noticing the movement
of people and the running,

222
00:12:36,320 --> 00:12:37,340
I followed.

223
00:12:37,340 --> 00:12:40,460
I followed between the
barracks, moved on,

224
00:12:40,460 --> 00:12:45,170
and came to an area of the camp
where the latrines, toilets,

225
00:12:45,170 --> 00:12:46,700
were located.

226
00:12:46,700 --> 00:12:50,990
It was a special area, not only
because the toilets were there,

227
00:12:50,990 --> 00:12:52,880
but because this
is the place where

228
00:12:52,880 --> 00:12:55,820
prisoners who are about to
die for some strange reasons

229
00:12:55,820 --> 00:12:56,510
went to die.

230

00:12:56,510 --> 00:13:00,120

And there were mountains of
bodies and many dead people.

231

00:13:00,120 --> 00:13:01,800

And so I ran in that direction.

232

00:13:01,800 --> 00:13:06,990

And as I came onto that
place, I notice many prisoners

233

00:13:06,990 --> 00:13:11,090

yelling and screaming
and jumping and dancing.

234

00:13:11,090 --> 00:13:15,830

And there, standing
among them, were

235

00:13:15,830 --> 00:13:19,040

seven giants, young people.

236

00:13:19,040 --> 00:13:23,570

They must have been 18
or 19, American soldiers.

237

00:13:23,570 --> 00:13:26,520

There were seven or eight of
them standing inside the camp.

238

00:13:26,520 --> 00:13:30,380

Apparently, they cut the
wire and came into the camp.

239

00:13:30,380 --> 00:13:38,670

They were bewildered by us,
wild and unkempt and dirty

240

00:13:38,670 --> 00:13:42,630

and, I'm sure, smelly people,
jumping and dancing and trying

241

00:13:42,630 --> 00:13:46,050
to embrace them and kiss them.

242
00:13:46,050 --> 00:13:47,250
And I did, too.

243
00:13:47,250 --> 00:13:51,690
I also joined the crowd
and yelled and screamed,

244
00:13:51,690 --> 00:13:57,470
and somehow knew that the
day of liberation has come.

245
00:13:57,470 --> 00:13:59,660
It was a strange
feeling for me, however,

246
00:13:59,660 --> 00:14:03,620
because as I remember,
on the one hand,

247
00:14:03,620 --> 00:14:06,570
I was overwhelmed
by this unexpected

248
00:14:06,570 --> 00:14:11,220
and unhopd for
encounter of freedom.

249
00:14:11,220 --> 00:14:15,750
But at the same time, what was
happening was outside of me.

250
00:14:15,750 --> 00:14:18,990
I really-- I didn't
know what to make of it.

251
00:14:18,990 --> 00:14:21,710
I knew I was free, but
I didn't count on it.

252
00:14:21,710 --> 00:14:26,320

I somehow didn't
know what it meant.

253
00:14:26,320 --> 00:14:29,950
And I knew it was
great, but I was

254
00:14:29,950 --> 00:14:32,050
overjoyed because
all people around me

255
00:14:32,050 --> 00:14:35,860
were overjoyed and were
singing and dancing.

256
00:14:35,860 --> 00:14:39,460
But I was 17.

257
00:14:39,460 --> 00:14:45,760
I was free, but what it
meant, I wasn't sure.

258
00:14:45,760 --> 00:14:49,850
The soldiers were there
for a few minutes.

259
00:14:49,850 --> 00:14:52,960
They were patrols,
whose job, I'm sure--

260
00:14:52,960 --> 00:14:55,000
whose assignment was not
to liberate the camp,

261
00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:59,140
but to march along a certain
road to some destination.

262
00:14:59,140 --> 00:15:03,640
And after 10 minutes or
15 minutes, they left.

263
00:15:03,640 --> 00:15:06,160

They just moved on
through the wire.

264
00:15:06,160 --> 00:15:08,920
We looked around incidentally
during that celebration

265
00:15:08,920 --> 00:15:12,060
and wonderful feeling.

266
00:15:12,060 --> 00:15:13,690
And the Germans were gone.

267
00:15:13,690 --> 00:15:14,710
The towers were empty.

268
00:15:14,710 --> 00:15:17,080
There were no soldiers,
there were no guards.

269
00:15:17,080 --> 00:15:18,580
And the Americans have left.

270
00:15:18,580 --> 00:15:22,580
And some of us who
remembered the stories

271
00:15:22,580 --> 00:15:24,800
that our parents told
us from the first war,

272
00:15:24,800 --> 00:15:27,560
when the Austrians
and the Russians

273
00:15:27,560 --> 00:15:30,950
kept moving back and
forth across little towns

274
00:15:30,950 --> 00:15:33,560
and advancing and
retreating, some of us

275

00:15:33,560 --> 00:15:37,410
said the Germans may come back.

276

00:15:37,410 --> 00:15:40,380
So we left.

277

00:15:40,380 --> 00:15:42,780
Some groups of
people, the Frenchman,

278

00:15:42,780 --> 00:15:47,280
I saw arrange themselves
into a marching order

279

00:15:47,280 --> 00:15:49,140
and walked out of the gate.

280

00:15:49,140 --> 00:15:55,020
And five of us Jewish young men
who knew each other from home

281

00:15:55,020 --> 00:15:59,640
left through the hole in
the fence into the forest,

282

00:15:59,640 --> 00:16:03,150
not to search for
freedom, or for--

283

00:16:03,150 --> 00:16:06,910
but to hide, because we
thought that the Germans might

284

00:16:06,910 --> 00:16:07,410
come back.

285

00:16:07,410 --> 00:16:11,070
So while we were free, and
while the Germans were gone,

286

00:16:11,070 --> 00:16:14,860
we were not really

free, because we--

287

00:16:14,860 --> 00:16:17,380

freedom didn't
come like a sunrise

288

00:16:17,380 --> 00:16:22,290

where one day we were in
the dark, the next day there

289

00:16:22,290 --> 00:16:26,670

was light and warmth and
nurturing and rejoicing

290

00:16:26,670 --> 00:16:29,100

and celebration.

291

00:16:29,100 --> 00:16:34,860

Freedom came as something
that happened, but did not

292

00:16:34,860 --> 00:16:37,800

affect us immediately.

293

00:16:37,800 --> 00:16:40,500

So we went into the forest,
not knowing what to do.

294

00:16:40,500 --> 00:16:45,420

I remember there were some
guns and pistols laying around

295

00:16:45,420 --> 00:16:46,020

in the forest.

296

00:16:46,020 --> 00:16:48,180

Obviously, the Germans
were retreating already

297

00:16:48,180 --> 00:16:49,440

at that time.

298

00:16:49,440 --> 00:16:53,040
We tried to carry some
of these weapons with us,

299
00:16:53,040 --> 00:16:56,430
expecting that we may
have to hide in the forest

300
00:16:56,430 --> 00:16:58,470
and defend ourselves,
but quite frankly,

301
00:16:58,470 --> 00:17:01,660
the weapons were too
heavy for us to carry.

302
00:17:01,660 --> 00:17:05,280
And we came to a little town--

303
00:17:05,280 --> 00:17:07,740
the town's name is Ludwigslust--

304
00:17:07,740 --> 00:17:10,560

305
00:17:10,560 --> 00:17:13,410
only to discover as we
walked into the town--

306
00:17:13,410 --> 00:17:16,020
I think looking for some
shelter, maybe for something

307
00:17:16,020 --> 00:17:16,950
to eat--

308
00:17:16,950 --> 00:17:19,000
that the town was
still in German hands.

309
00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:21,510
I remember us walking,
coming around the corner,

310
00:17:21,510 --> 00:17:24,480
and on the opposite
side of the street,

311
00:17:24,480 --> 00:17:28,050
there were two German
officers with a woman walking,

312
00:17:28,050 --> 00:17:29,940
and they were still
in uniform and armed.

313
00:17:29,940 --> 00:17:32,460
And they looked at us
and we looked at them,

314
00:17:32,460 --> 00:17:34,590
and they moved on,
and we jumped over

315
00:17:34,590 --> 00:17:37,440
a hedge and hid in
a little shack that

316
00:17:37,440 --> 00:17:40,152
apparently was used by a
painter to store his paint.

317
00:17:40,152 --> 00:17:41,610
And we were just
hiding over there,

318
00:17:41,610 --> 00:17:46,910
waiting for darkness to leave
the town and hide in the forest

319
00:17:46,910 --> 00:17:47,410
again.

320
00:17:47,410 --> 00:17:51,750
So here we are liberated, but
really did not recognize then.

321
00:17:51,750 --> 00:17:58,760
And towards the evening,
as the sun started setting,

322
00:17:58,760 --> 00:18:03,100
American GIs came
walking into town.

323
00:18:03,100 --> 00:18:06,450
And we were liberated.

324
00:18:06,450 --> 00:18:08,400
And that-- we were liberated.

325
00:18:08,400 --> 00:18:16,770
We then knew that the times
of oppression and pain

326
00:18:16,770 --> 00:18:19,440
and beatings were behind us.

327
00:18:19,440 --> 00:18:22,230
And rather than saying, me,
let me talk about myself,

328
00:18:22,230 --> 00:18:24,140
I really didn't know
what the future held.

329
00:18:24,140 --> 00:18:29,790
I recognized that most
likely I was alone.

330
00:18:29,790 --> 00:18:35,040
I recognized that most likely
my parents did not survive.

331
00:18:35,040 --> 00:18:37,470
I recognized that I
was really unprepared.

332

00:18:37,470 --> 00:18:43,950
I was obviously unprepared for
freedom and self-sufficiency.

333
00:18:43,950 --> 00:18:49,080
At the-- and I was driven
only to contact my relatives

334
00:18:49,080 --> 00:18:50,640
in the United
States in the hopes

335
00:18:50,640 --> 00:18:52,920
that my brother
may have survived.

336
00:18:52,920 --> 00:19:00,300
And when the family was
separated back in early '42,

337
00:19:00,300 --> 00:19:06,690
my father instructed all of
us to contact our relatives

338
00:19:06,690 --> 00:19:10,780
in New York, because this is
how we would find each other.

339
00:19:10,780 --> 00:19:17,460
So that's how it happened, a
day of pain and misery, and then

340
00:19:17,460 --> 00:19:23,100
a low-key development
that snuck up on us.

341
00:19:23,100 --> 00:19:25,110
Wonderful day, a day
I shall never forget,

342
00:19:25,110 --> 00:19:30,000
a day I remember with great
joy and great pleasure.

343

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:35,070

But it wasn't a day that
held the kind of excitement

344

00:19:35,070 --> 00:19:37,290

that one would expect
to see in the movies.

345

00:19:37,290 --> 00:19:43,890

It was a day when freedom
came, liberation came,

346

00:19:43,890 --> 00:19:46,110

unannounced and unexpected.

347

00:19:46,110 --> 00:19:48,882

348

00:19:48,882 --> 00:19:51,200

OK.

349

00:19:51,200 --> 00:19:55,920

We have about two minutes left.

350

00:19:55,920 --> 00:19:57,147

Did--

351

00:19:57,147 --> 00:19:59,480

Well, let me talk a little
bit about what happened next.

352

00:19:59,480 --> 00:20:03,686

353

00:20:03,686 --> 00:20:10,010

Once the Americans came to town
in Ludwigslust, the five of us

354

00:20:10,010 --> 00:20:12,160

decided to-- we didn't
know what to do.

355

00:20:12,160 --> 00:20:14,630

We really stayed in this
little shack in which paint was

356

00:20:14,630 --> 00:20:19,220

stored, slept, and went
around to the American--

357

00:20:19,220 --> 00:20:22,160

to the kitchens that cooked
for the American soldiers--

358

00:20:22,160 --> 00:20:24,470

which by then
occupied the town--

359

00:20:24,470 --> 00:20:28,280

and begged for some food.

360

00:20:28,280 --> 00:20:29,870

There were really
no arrangements.

361

00:20:29,870 --> 00:20:31,260

And I'm not complaining.

362

00:20:31,260 --> 00:20:33,320

I'm just recognizing
there were no arrangements

363

00:20:33,320 --> 00:20:36,950

to take care of us or the
hundreds of other prisoners

364

00:20:36,950 --> 00:20:42,500

that were liberated then
in the camp, in Wöbbelin.

365

00:20:42,500 --> 00:20:45,330

American soldiers
were quite generous

366

00:20:45,330 --> 00:20:47,270
and helpful and sympathetic.

367
00:20:47,270 --> 00:20:50,870
They gave us food, they
gave us whatever they had,

368
00:20:50,870 --> 00:20:52,280
including Hershey bars.

369
00:20:52,280 --> 00:20:57,380
And after a few days
of that existence,

370
00:20:57,380 --> 00:20:59,810
Americans then started
making arrangements

371
00:20:59,810 --> 00:21:05,210
to ship the various liberated
prisoners to their homes.

372
00:21:05,210 --> 00:21:09,140
Where we were liberated was
to become the Russian zone,

373
00:21:09,140 --> 00:21:12,110
and the Americans
were, of course,

374
00:21:12,110 --> 00:21:15,200
expecting to retreat
from that area

375
00:21:15,200 --> 00:21:18,060
on the other side of the river.

376
00:21:18,060 --> 00:21:20,690
So the French were
sent home to the West,

377
00:21:20,690 --> 00:21:23,000
and the Italians

went down South.

378

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:27,170

And the Poles and the
Ukrainians, the Czechs,

379

00:21:27,170 --> 00:21:28,040

were shipped East.

380

00:21:28,040 --> 00:21:31,970

We were-- while we are
Jewish, we were still Polish.

381

00:21:31,970 --> 00:21:36,650

One day, the Americans gathered
us from this little shack

382

00:21:36,650 --> 00:21:42,230

and put us on a truck with
other people of Polish origin,

383

00:21:42,230 --> 00:21:44,510

and sent East
towards the Russians

384

00:21:44,510 --> 00:21:46,910

whose lines were
right outside of town.

385

00:21:46,910 --> 00:21:49,580

And the Russians didn't want
to accept us, didn't want to,

386

00:21:49,580 --> 00:21:51,170

whatever the reasons were.

387

00:21:51,170 --> 00:21:54,080

The guards standing
there on the roadside

388

00:21:54,080 --> 00:21:59,180

did not allow the truck to
pass, so we were brought back.

389
00:21:59,180 --> 00:22:02,450
The British came and
put us on their trucks

390
00:22:02,450 --> 00:22:08,240
and took us to a
town called Lubeck.

391
00:22:08,240 --> 00:22:10,820
And I must tell you, on
that road something happened

392
00:22:10,820 --> 00:22:12,920
that was a part
of the liberation.

393
00:22:12,920 --> 00:22:18,320
And I think it was the day when
I really realized that the--

394
00:22:18,320 --> 00:22:19,590
Let's wait.

395
00:22:19,590 --> 00:22:20,323
OK.

396
00:22:20,323 --> 00:22:20,990
We have to put--

397
00:22:20,990 --> 00:22:38,770

398
00:22:38,770 --> 00:22:39,850
OK.

399
00:22:39,850 --> 00:22:45,340
After the Russians refused
to pass the truck with people

400
00:22:45,340 --> 00:22:51,940
from Poland and turned us

back, by some arrangement,

401
00:22:51,940 --> 00:22:55,390
British soldiers
showed up with trucks.

402
00:22:55,390 --> 00:22:57,880
And we were, all of
us, placed on a number

403
00:22:57,880 --> 00:23:01,630
of trucks driven
by British soldiers

404
00:23:01,630 --> 00:23:06,280
and taken West towards
a town of Lubeck.

405
00:23:06,280 --> 00:23:08,200
Obviously, into
that part of Germany

406
00:23:08,200 --> 00:23:11,350
that was to be British zone
and not the Russian zone,

407
00:23:11,350 --> 00:23:13,720
or the Eastern zone.

408
00:23:13,720 --> 00:23:16,840
Something happened on
this trip that I remember

409
00:23:16,840 --> 00:23:19,570
was great emotion.

410
00:23:19,570 --> 00:23:22,540
Because even though it
happened maybe a week

411
00:23:22,540 --> 00:23:25,390
or eight days after
the liberation,

412
00:23:25,390 --> 00:23:28,390
it was that punctuation
mark that really made

413
00:23:28,390 --> 00:23:31,700
me realize that I'm whole again.

414
00:23:31,700 --> 00:23:35,080
Or, I can at least
hope to be whole again.

415
00:23:35,080 --> 00:23:37,270
We were sitting on
the back of the truck

416
00:23:37,270 --> 00:23:39,040
as the trucks were moving.

417
00:23:39,040 --> 00:23:41,740
And behind us was,
obviously, another truck

418
00:23:41,740 --> 00:23:45,220
with two British soldiers
and their uniforms

419
00:23:45,220 --> 00:23:46,330
driving that truck.

420
00:23:46,330 --> 00:23:50,440
And the truck, because
of various obstacles,

421
00:23:50,440 --> 00:23:52,980
the trucks would stop every
once in a while and move.

422
00:23:52,980 --> 00:23:56,530
And the few of us that
were sitting in that truck

423

00:23:56,530 --> 00:24:00,250
spoke Yiddish to each
other, Jewish Yiddish.

424
00:24:00,250 --> 00:24:05,950
And at one point, the drivers
of the truck behind us

425
00:24:05,950 --> 00:24:08,950
started blowing the horn.

426
00:24:08,950 --> 00:24:09,820
The truck stopped.

427
00:24:09,820 --> 00:24:21,270
And they came out running,
speaking Yiddish to us,

428
00:24:21,270 --> 00:24:28,980
telling us that they were Jews,
and being surprised and happy

429
00:24:28,980 --> 00:24:30,930
that they had found
Jewish survivors,

430
00:24:30,930 --> 00:24:33,000
because somehow, they
didn't expect to find any.

431
00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:38,970
And I remember the feeling
of seeing people in uniform

432
00:24:38,970 --> 00:24:42,240
with authority, with
guns, with hands

433
00:24:42,240 --> 00:24:46,746
on the wheel that could make
a truck turn left or right,

434
00:24:46,746 --> 00:24:47,550

that were Jewish.

435

00:24:47,550 --> 00:24:50,760

436

00:24:50,760 --> 00:24:56,700

And it was the moment when
I realized that I was equal.

437

00:24:56,700 --> 00:24:59,460

It was the moment
when I realized

438

00:24:59,460 --> 00:25:07,270

that the days of
humiliation and fear,

439

00:25:07,270 --> 00:25:12,240

and the days when I was
treated as somehow subhuman,

440

00:25:12,240 --> 00:25:15,780

were behind me, because
it was possible for me,

441

00:25:15,780 --> 00:25:22,020

it was attainable for me to
feel that there were no limits,

442

00:25:22,020 --> 00:25:26,490

and possible for me to really
understand that I was free.

443

00:25:26,490 --> 00:25:29,560

444

00:25:29,560 --> 00:25:33,580

Maybe that's how long it took
for me to really understand

445

00:25:33,580 --> 00:25:35,950

what liberation was.

446

00:25:35,950 --> 00:25:40,270

That's how long it took
for me to really comprehend

447

00:25:40,270 --> 00:25:42,700

that liberation was
more than just being

448

00:25:42,700 --> 00:25:47,080

able to go out of the camp
and cross the barbed wire.

449

00:25:47,080 --> 00:25:51,650

Liberation was something
that had to happen in me.

450

00:25:51,650 --> 00:25:57,580

I had to realize and understand
that liberation was also

451

00:25:57,580 --> 00:26:01,180

a feeling of sufficiency
and equality,

452

00:26:01,180 --> 00:26:05,590

and that that happened that
day with the British soldiers.

453

00:26:05,590 --> 00:26:08,706

Anyway, life went on we.

454

00:26:08,706 --> 00:26:12,250

We were settled
in a DP camp in--

455

00:26:12,250 --> 00:26:14,064

Let me ask you a couple things.

456

00:26:14,064 --> 00:26:14,920

OK.

457

00:26:14,920 --> 00:26:16,480

One--

458
00:26:16,480 --> 00:26:18,070
Sandra, you heard the beeps?

459
00:26:18,070 --> 00:26:19,550
Yeah.

460
00:26:19,550 --> 00:26:20,050
What?

461
00:26:20,050 --> 00:26:22,690
Did you at some point--

462
00:26:22,690 --> 00:26:25,960
did an American soldier
share his rations with you?

463
00:26:25,960 --> 00:26:27,010
Can you describe--

464
00:26:27,010 --> 00:26:30,260

465
00:26:30,260 --> 00:26:30,760
Yes.

466
00:26:30,760 --> 00:26:32,500
I'm obviously going
to back in time.

467
00:26:32,500 --> 00:26:35,770

468
00:26:35,770 --> 00:26:39,640
On May 2nd, the
evening of May 2nd,

469
00:26:39,640 --> 00:26:44,890
which was the day of our
liberation, that evening,

470

00:26:44,890 --> 00:26:50,320
as we were hiding in this little
shack hoping to be undetected,

471

00:26:50,320 --> 00:26:53,260
to be able to somehow
escape in the darkness

472

00:26:53,260 --> 00:26:58,510
back into the forest, the
American soldiers marched in,

473

00:26:58,510 --> 00:26:59,920
and we were liberated.

474

00:26:59,920 --> 00:27:04,870
And we just stayed there
and did not leave the shack.

475

00:27:04,870 --> 00:27:08,560
And the following day or two--

476

00:27:08,560 --> 00:27:13,420
which I, who was very
weak and very skinny,

477

00:27:13,420 --> 00:27:16,900
and I'm sure looked
terrible, I spent my days

478

00:27:16,900 --> 00:27:22,150
sitting in the sun and
resting and trying to warm up

479

00:27:22,150 --> 00:27:25,180
and trying to recover.

480

00:27:25,180 --> 00:27:29,770
Young American soldiers--
who did not look young to me;

481

00:27:29,770 --> 00:27:33,860

they looked like
giants or angels--

482
00:27:33,860 --> 00:27:40,930
would come by and give me food,
give me a bar of chocolate,

483
00:27:40,930 --> 00:27:43,000
or share some food
that they had.

484
00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:46,060

485
00:27:46,060 --> 00:27:47,650
Yes, that's what happened.

486
00:27:47,650 --> 00:27:51,760
I'm sure they felt sympathy
for this little teenager who

487
00:27:51,760 --> 00:27:55,360
was half alive and half dead.

488
00:27:55,360 --> 00:28:02,020
And I'm sure they recognized
that we deserved pity.

489
00:28:02,020 --> 00:28:04,040
I'm sure they also
recognized that we

490
00:28:04,040 --> 00:28:08,560
may be one of the reasons
why they risk their lives

491
00:28:08,560 --> 00:28:11,620
for the Germans.

492
00:28:11,620 --> 00:28:16,630
And also, you saw children
for the first time?

493

00:28:16,630 --> 00:28:19,490

Oh, you are-- you have seen
some of my other stories.

494

00:28:19,490 --> 00:28:19,990

Yes.

495

00:28:19,990 --> 00:28:26,240

496

00:28:26,240 --> 00:28:32,330

When the American soldiers
left Wobbelin, and some of us

497

00:28:32,330 --> 00:28:35,570

were concerned that there might
be a repetition of the stories

498

00:28:35,570 --> 00:28:39,200

that we had from
our parents of what

499

00:28:39,200 --> 00:28:41,570

happened during the
first war, and were

500

00:28:41,570 --> 00:28:46,310

concerned that the Germans
might come back, we left.

501

00:28:46,310 --> 00:28:51,230

We walked through the forest
where there were many--

502

00:28:51,230 --> 00:28:54,080

there were weapons
and abandoned trucks.

503

00:28:54,080 --> 00:28:56,720

And as we walked
through the forest,

504

00:28:56,720 --> 00:28:59,690
came out into a clearance,
or a little side road,

505
00:28:59,690 --> 00:29:01,410
and there were refugees there.

506
00:29:01,410 --> 00:29:03,650
I don't know whether
they were German--

507
00:29:03,650 --> 00:29:05,270
I expect they were Germans.

508
00:29:05,270 --> 00:29:08,750
They could have been
Lithuanians, or whatever--

509
00:29:08,750 --> 00:29:13,100
wagons with horses
and lots of refugees,

510
00:29:13,100 --> 00:29:14,480
with women and children.

511
00:29:14,480 --> 00:29:19,160
And I remember walking and
seeing two young children.

512
00:29:19,160 --> 00:29:21,440
They might have been
like my grandchildren

513
00:29:21,440 --> 00:29:25,220
now, three or four or two.

514
00:29:25,220 --> 00:29:30,110
And I was surprised, how
a child-- to see a child,

515
00:29:30,110 --> 00:29:32,990
to see how a child
looked, because I

516
00:29:32,990 --> 00:29:35,150
haven't seen a child
for three or four years.

517
00:29:35,150 --> 00:29:37,460
I knew that children
exist, of course,

518
00:29:37,460 --> 00:29:38,720
but I haven't seen a child.

519
00:29:38,720 --> 00:29:44,510
And it was a special
experience to see a child,

520
00:29:44,510 --> 00:29:46,100
to remember how a child look.

521
00:29:46,100 --> 00:29:51,680
And to see how really beautiful
and innocent they were.

522
00:29:51,680 --> 00:29:55,640
I was kind of like seeing
a flower that one has only

523
00:29:55,640 --> 00:29:57,020
read about.

524
00:29:57,020 --> 00:29:59,210
And I remember going
down on my knees

525
00:29:59,210 --> 00:30:03,860
in front these two little
children and looking at them.

526
00:30:03,860 --> 00:30:07,220
And they were not afraid of me.

527
00:30:07,220 --> 00:30:09,170

I didn't touch them, but
they were just there.

528
00:30:09,170 --> 00:30:15,800
And when I stood up, I did
feel a little bit more human.

529
00:30:15,800 --> 00:30:23,270
I did feel that I-- the
anger, and the desire maybe

530
00:30:23,270 --> 00:30:26,610
for revenge, have left me.

531
00:30:26,610 --> 00:30:30,320
I did feel a little
bit more human.

532
00:30:30,320 --> 00:30:34,040
I also felt sad, I
must add, because I'm

533
00:30:34,040 --> 00:30:37,850
sure I realized that they were
no Jewish children around.

534
00:30:37,850 --> 00:30:41,390
They were no Jewish children of
the year of age three or four

535
00:30:41,390 --> 00:30:45,800
or five or seven or eight
any place in central Europe.

536
00:30:45,800 --> 00:30:47,840
But, yes, I saw two children.

537
00:30:47,840 --> 00:30:50,000
There were more children,
but I saw these two,

538
00:30:50,000 --> 00:30:52,070
and I looked at them.

539
00:30:52,070 --> 00:30:53,900
And I, to this
day, I remember how

540
00:30:53,900 --> 00:30:59,870
surprised I was to see how a
child look, because I forgot.

541
00:30:59,870 --> 00:31:04,700
And that experience was one
of those many experiences

542
00:31:04,700 --> 00:31:11,970
that I'm sure was led me to a
path of healing and becoming

543
00:31:11,970 --> 00:31:12,470
free.

544
00:31:12,470 --> 00:31:15,030

545
00:31:15,030 --> 00:31:18,210
You are, of course, have seen
some of my other stories,

546
00:31:18,210 --> 00:31:20,970
and that's not fair.

547
00:31:20,970 --> 00:31:24,910
When the Americans
came into the camp,

548
00:31:24,910 --> 00:31:28,830
can you describe to me your
physical condition, how

549
00:31:28,830 --> 00:31:30,810
you looked, what you weighed?

550
00:31:30,810 --> 00:31:34,890

551

00:31:34,890 --> 00:31:39,220

In that camp in Wobbelin--

552

00:31:39,220 --> 00:31:42,810

which was, as I said, the
10th camp in my history,

553

00:31:42,810 --> 00:31:45,840

and I have been in
camps by 10 years--

554

00:31:45,840 --> 00:31:51,540

I have basically deteriorated
very badly physically.

555

00:31:51,540 --> 00:31:53,730

I couldn't walk very well.

556

00:31:53,730 --> 00:31:56,730

My hip hurt me.

557

00:31:56,730 --> 00:32:02,520

And I was really very
weak and reaching

558

00:32:02,520 --> 00:32:07,770

the state in which a
prisoner no longer cared

559

00:32:07,770 --> 00:32:10,500

whether he or she survived.

560

00:32:10,500 --> 00:32:12,270

Now, I did not reach that point.

561

00:32:12,270 --> 00:32:15,090

I still-- when I saw
people running out

562

00:32:15,090 --> 00:32:17,100

of the corner of my
eye, I still got up

563
00:32:17,100 --> 00:32:19,350
and went looking
what was happening.

564
00:32:19,350 --> 00:32:20,910
But I was in very bad shape.

565
00:32:20,910 --> 00:32:24,810
And I think if I wasn't
liberated, in a matter of days,

566
00:32:24,810 --> 00:32:26,940
I would have been one
of those bodies that

567
00:32:26,940 --> 00:32:31,210
was laying in mountains of
dead in front of the toilets.

568
00:32:31,210 --> 00:32:38,520
I would guess that I had
maybe a week or 10 days left.

569
00:32:38,520 --> 00:32:41,640
And if I wasn't liberated and
was not given additional food

570
00:32:41,640 --> 00:32:43,830
and was allowed to rest
and sit in the sun,

571
00:32:43,830 --> 00:32:47,150
I wouldn't have recovered.

572
00:32:47,150 --> 00:32:48,110
OK.

573
00:32:48,110 --> 00:32:51,240
We're very close to
running out of film.

574

00:32:51,240 --> 00:32:52,850

And I think we should
reload, and then

575

00:32:52,850 --> 00:32:54,470

move on to the DP camp.

576

00:32:54,470 --> 00:32:56,020

OK.

577

00:32:56,020 --> 00:33:26,000