

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:01:08,210

2

00:01:08,210 --> 00:01:09,500

Excuse my inorganization.

3

00:01:09,500 --> 00:01:14,930

And begin, I would  
say, any time now.

4

00:01:14,930 --> 00:01:17,510

Today is July 29, 1992.

5

00:01:17,510 --> 00:01:19,580

We're at the Holocaust  
Oral History Project

6

00:01:19,580 --> 00:01:21,620

in San Francisco, California.

7

00:01:21,620 --> 00:01:23,690

We're interviewing Leon Benson.

8

00:01:23,690 --> 00:01:26,390

My name, the interviewer,  
is Tammy Newnham.

9

00:01:26,390 --> 00:01:27,935

Second interviewer  
is Paul Manigar.

10

00:01:27,935 --> 00:01:31,340

And we're also here  
with John Grant.

11

00:01:31,340 --> 00:01:32,810

OK, Mr. Benson.

12

00:01:32,810 --> 00:01:35,030

Would you give us your  
full birth name, where

13  
00:01:35,030 --> 00:01:36,810  
you were born, and--

14  
00:01:36,810 --> 00:01:39,090  
I was born in Poland.

15  
00:01:39,090 --> 00:01:43,430  
My full birth name was changed  
when I came to the United

16  
00:01:43,430 --> 00:01:46,610  
States, and I adopted  
my relative's name

17  
00:01:46,610 --> 00:01:50,900  
that invited me to come here.

18  
00:01:50,900 --> 00:01:58,160  
My previous name was  
S-Z-M-E-L-C-M-A-N, Szmelcman.

19  
00:01:58,160 --> 00:01:59,330  
Mm-hmm.

20  
00:01:59,330 --> 00:02:05,000  
And my aunt and uncle's  
name were Benson.

21  
00:02:05,000 --> 00:02:08,539  
And they just adopted me.

22  
00:02:08,539 --> 00:02:11,960  
They were like parents to me.

23  
00:02:11,960 --> 00:02:16,415  
And it was a much  
easier name, perhaps.

24  
00:02:16,415 --> 00:02:18,020  
And your first name was?

25

00:02:18,020 --> 00:02:19,790

Was Leon.

26

00:02:19,790 --> 00:02:21,950

French was lay-on.

27

00:02:21,950 --> 00:02:27,806

And the Hebrew name was

Ari ben Hillel Israel,

28

00:02:27,806 --> 00:02:32,165

Which was my father's name,

which is of Sephardic origin.

29

00:02:32,165 --> 00:02:35,060

30

00:02:35,060 --> 00:02:43,410

Well, after the age of 2 and

1/2, perhaps 2, 2 and 1/2,

31

00:02:43,410 --> 00:02:46,410

my parents left

Poland for France,

32

00:02:46,410 --> 00:02:49,500

perhaps with the intention

to come to the United States.

33

00:02:49,500 --> 00:02:54,240

My mother came from a family of

four sisters and four brothers.

34

00:02:54,240 --> 00:02:57,180

Eight children.

35

00:02:57,180 --> 00:02:59,340

Three ended up in

the United States.

36

00:02:59,340 --> 00:03:02,230

One lived in Berlin.

37  
00:03:02,230 --> 00:03:05,400  
And we were the last  
ones to leave Poland.

38  
00:03:05,400 --> 00:03:08,655  
I believe it would be like '31,  
probably the beginning of 31;

39  
00:03:08,655 --> 00:03:09,820  
31.

40  
00:03:09,820 --> 00:03:10,455  
I was born--

41  
00:03:10,455 --> 00:03:11,580  
In what town were you born?

42  
00:03:11,580 --> 00:03:13,790  
Lodz.

43  
00:03:13,790 --> 00:03:16,200  
I was born in 1928.

44  
00:03:16,200 --> 00:03:21,270  
I would surmise I was a little  
bit more than two leaving.

45  
00:03:21,270 --> 00:03:24,400  
But I have no recollection  
whatsoever of Poland,

46  
00:03:24,400 --> 00:03:30,510  
although my parents did speak  
Polish amongst themselves

47  
00:03:30,510 --> 00:03:34,650  
sometimes, or  
Yiddish when it would

48  
00:03:34,650 --> 00:03:41,580  
be convenient not to communicate

something for the kids

49

00:03:41,580 --> 00:03:43,260  
not to know.

50

00:03:43,260 --> 00:03:46,830  
Like parents usually do.

51

00:03:46,830 --> 00:03:49,470  
I had 3-- 2 older brothers.

52

00:03:49,470 --> 00:03:53,040  
We were four at home.

53

00:03:53,040 --> 00:03:56,100  
I was the youngest of  
the three brothers.

54

00:03:56,100 --> 00:03:58,680  
And I had a younger sister.

55

00:03:58,680 --> 00:04:01,590  
My oldest brother was Julian--

56

00:04:01,590 --> 00:04:08,190  
J-U-L-I-A-N. My middle  
brother was Abe.

57

00:04:08,190 --> 00:04:10,785  
And I was Leon.

58

00:04:10,785 --> 00:04:12,900  
I was named after my  
grandfather, which

59

00:04:12,900 --> 00:04:18,540  
was Lewel or Ari in Hebrew.

60

00:04:18,540 --> 00:04:25,290  
And my sister, which was  
Wittle, after my grandmother.

61

00:04:25,290 --> 00:04:29,130

OK, when we--

62

00:04:29,130 --> 00:04:32,700

I don't remember  
arriving in France.

63

00:04:32,700 --> 00:04:34,242

I was probably--

64

00:04:34,242 --> 00:04:35,325

I was an infant, probably.

65

00:04:35,325 --> 00:04:37,920

66

00:04:37,920 --> 00:04:41,670

But I do have good  
memories of France

67

00:04:41,670 --> 00:04:47,670

and quite vivid memories,  
like family memories.

68

00:04:47,670 --> 00:04:50,580

My father was a furrier.

69

00:04:50,580 --> 00:04:55,110

My eldest brother I worked  
with my father, I recall.

70

00:04:55,110 --> 00:05:00,570

We were approximately between  
five and six years apart.

71

00:05:00,570 --> 00:05:03,750

Except my sister, which was  
much closer to me in age.

72

00:05:03,750 --> 00:05:09,860

73

00:05:09,860 --> 00:05:16,175

We were quite comfortable, you  
might say prosperous, excellent

74

00:05:16,175 --> 00:05:16,675

business.

75

00:05:16,675 --> 00:05:19,660

76

00:05:19,660 --> 00:05:28,390

We had a shop, and we employed--  
my dad employed three or four

77

00:05:28,390 --> 00:05:31,270

people, I remember.

78

00:05:31,270 --> 00:05:38,110

And there it was quite a  
cohesive family, and we were--

79

00:05:38,110 --> 00:05:42,730

from a religious point of  
view, we were very observant.

80

00:05:42,730 --> 00:05:49,720

But I would not  
classify Orthodox.

81

00:05:49,720 --> 00:05:53,260

But nevertheless, we  
observed holidays.

82

00:05:53,260 --> 00:05:59,260

Probably we observed kashrut,  
too, which was the kosher--

83

00:05:59,260 --> 00:06:04,150

yeah, it was quite a  
large Jewish population.

84

00:06:04,150 --> 00:06:09,100

I'm going to jump into  
'39, the year of the war.

85  
00:06:09,100 --> 00:06:12,730  
Can you tell me what town  
you lived in, in France?

86  
00:06:12,730 --> 00:06:13,870  
In Paris.

87  
00:06:13,870 --> 00:06:14,720  
Yeah.

88  
00:06:14,720 --> 00:06:16,220  
And your neighborhood,  
the community

89  
00:06:16,220 --> 00:06:19,730  
where you lived, where your  
work, where your father's work

90  
00:06:19,730 --> 00:06:20,230  
was?

91  
00:06:20,230 --> 00:06:23,710  
Yeah, we lived on  
Boulevard Voltaire,

92  
00:06:23,710 --> 00:06:26,410  
and then we moved  
to Villa Monceau,

93  
00:06:26,410 --> 00:06:30,160  
which was also in Paris, in  
a different section of Paris.

94  
00:06:30,160 --> 00:06:31,510  
Do you remember the address?

95  
00:06:31,510 --> 00:06:33,097  
The address was I think three--

96



00:06:33,097 --> 00:06:34,930

I brought some pictures  
with me to show you,

97

00:06:34,930 --> 00:06:37,002

because I recently  
visited Paris.

98

00:06:37,002 --> 00:06:39,460

And I made it my business to  
take a picture of the building

99

00:06:39,460 --> 00:06:41,200

where we lived.

100

00:06:41,200 --> 00:06:42,700

So I have them in  
the envelope here.

101

00:06:42,700 --> 00:06:49,450

102

00:06:49,450 --> 00:06:56,140

Being the youngest probably I  
was the least mature, babied,

103

00:06:56,140 --> 00:07:04,280

and so maybe because of  
that, I might remember less.

104

00:07:04,280 --> 00:07:08,300

I don't know if this  
is a factor or not.

105

00:07:08,300 --> 00:07:11,420

I remember before the  
war shortly broke out,

106

00:07:11,420 --> 00:07:14,990

my brother was  
drafted, mobilized.

107

00:07:14,990 --> 00:07:17,630

Mobilization occurred in '39.

108  
00:07:17,630 --> 00:07:22,220  
And he was-- he joined  
the French army.

109  
00:07:22,220 --> 00:07:28,040  
And we had word from him  
that he was at Maginot Line.

110  
00:07:28,040 --> 00:07:35,690  
And that was the last  
that we heard any news.

111  
00:07:35,690 --> 00:07:44,330  
And then we-- as the occupation  
started by the German army,

112  
00:07:44,330 --> 00:07:49,640  
I remember I was  
being young, naive,

113  
00:07:49,640 --> 00:07:53,270  
and not believing  
that atrocities

114  
00:07:53,270 --> 00:07:58,520  
would occur as we've heard.

115  
00:07:58,520 --> 00:08:03,030  
By the way, I had an aunt  
that lived in Berlin.

116  
00:08:03,030 --> 00:08:06,740  
And that very same  
year, in '39 early,

117  
00:08:06,740 --> 00:08:12,020  
her two children  
came to visit us.

118  
00:08:12,020 --> 00:08:16,380  
One was a boy, one was a girl.

119  
00:08:16,380 --> 00:08:19,280  
And I remember his  
name was Adolf.

120  
00:08:19,280 --> 00:08:23,360  
And the girl's name was Rosie.

121  
00:08:23,360 --> 00:08:26,690  
And they were quite  
young, and they

122  
00:08:26,690 --> 00:08:30,200  
did bring some news with  
them, how the Jews in Germany

123  
00:08:30,200 --> 00:08:32,780  
were treated.

124  
00:08:32,780 --> 00:08:37,112  
But again, being that young,  
probably the age of 7--

125  
00:08:37,112 --> 00:08:40,730  
in '39 I was 7 and 1/2--

126  
00:08:40,730 --> 00:08:44,750  
it did not create  
any impact on me.

127  
00:08:44,750 --> 00:08:47,690  
And probably my  
parents did not want

128  
00:08:47,690 --> 00:08:52,550  
to share the seriousness  
of the oncoming

129  
00:08:52,550 --> 00:08:56,630  
tragedy, because we were young.

130  
00:08:56,630 --> 00:08:59,330

Did you feel-- growing up  
in France, did you ever

131  
00:08:59,330 --> 00:09:01,280  
experience anti-Semitism?

132  
00:09:01,280 --> 00:09:05,210  
Or how did you get  
along with Gentiles?

133  
00:09:05,210 --> 00:09:10,760  
Well, we lived probably  
in a commercial section,

134  
00:09:10,760 --> 00:09:14,300  
not far from Place  
de la Republic,

135  
00:09:14,300 --> 00:09:18,860  
which was the Jewish section.

136  
00:09:18,860 --> 00:09:21,980  
I wouldn't say predominantly  
Jewish, but it was a great mix.

137  
00:09:21,980 --> 00:09:27,440  
But you could find Jewish  
business, neighbors, and so on.

138  
00:09:27,440 --> 00:09:31,670  
I don't recall at that  
age any anti-Semitism,

139  
00:09:31,670 --> 00:09:33,350  
but if there was  
any, it was strictly

140  
00:09:33,350 --> 00:09:38,905  
a vocal anti-Semitism and not  
anything of a violent nature.

141  
00:09:38,905 --> 00:09:40,970  
When you mean vocal?

142  
00:09:40,970 --> 00:09:44,960  
Vocal, perhaps say,  
derogatory remarks.

143  
00:09:44,960 --> 00:09:49,800  
But I cannot recall,  
and again due to my age,

144  
00:09:49,800 --> 00:09:54,146  
I cannot make a  
statement, you know.

145  
00:09:54,146 --> 00:09:56,620  
So mostly you played  
with Jewish children?

146  
00:09:56,620 --> 00:09:59,600  
Played with Jewish as  
well as non-Jewish.

147  
00:09:59,600 --> 00:10:01,820  
Went to school with  
Jewish and non-Jewish

148  
00:10:01,820 --> 00:10:06,780  
and quite harmoniously  
related to one another.

149  
00:10:06,780 --> 00:10:09,530  
And I did not encounter any--

150  
00:10:09,530 --> 00:10:12,530  
and so I cannot point out  
any one or two incidents

151  
00:10:12,530 --> 00:10:14,600  
of anti-Semitic.

152  
00:10:14,600 --> 00:10:18,800  
Probably after the war,  
when I returned, yes,

153

00:10:18,800 --> 00:10:20,740  
but not at that time.

154

00:10:20,740 --> 00:10:23,330

155

00:10:23,330 --> 00:10:29,570  
OK, in '39, after the  
occupation took hold,

156

00:10:29,570 --> 00:10:32,300  
Jews were forced to wear--

157

00:10:32,300 --> 00:10:36,170  
it's well known--  
a star of David.

158

00:10:36,170 --> 00:10:39,110  
I don't remember if it was the  
left or right side, anyway,

159

00:10:39,110 --> 00:10:44,800  
with the word on it  
"juif," which means "Jew."

160

00:10:44,800 --> 00:10:48,700  
So that became  
very intimidating.

161

00:10:48,700 --> 00:10:51,580  
If perhaps anyone  
subconsciously didn't

162

00:10:51,580 --> 00:10:53,372  
knew that you were  
Jewish, all of a sudden,

163

00:10:53,372 --> 00:10:54,872  
"Oh, I didn't know  
you were Jewish."

164

00:10:54,872 --> 00:10:55,950

It had that effect.

165  
00:10:55,950 --> 00:10:59,380  
So there is somewhat  
of, you might

166  
00:10:59,380 --> 00:11:02,440  
say, hidden motive of  
anti-Semitism or not,

167  
00:11:02,440 --> 00:11:05,620  
it's very hard to find it.

168  
00:11:05,620 --> 00:11:08,200  
Did you notice people treating  
you differently after that?

169  
00:11:08,200 --> 00:11:09,640  
No, I cannot say that.

170  
00:11:09,640 --> 00:11:12,880  
Again, due to my age, I  
cannot make any distinction,

171  
00:11:12,880 --> 00:11:19,060  
because I was much too  
young and probably immature.

172  
00:11:19,060 --> 00:11:22,653  
Was this the first thing you  
remember of the occupation,

173  
00:11:22,653 --> 00:11:23,320  
the Jewish star?

174  
00:11:23,320 --> 00:11:25,630  
Or is there something  
else that was

175  
00:11:25,630 --> 00:11:27,830  
your first impression  
of the occupation

176

00:11:27,830 --> 00:11:29,290  
that you encountered?

177

00:11:29,290 --> 00:11:31,570  
Well, the occupation,  
suddenly we

178

00:11:31,570 --> 00:11:38,680  
saw an armored car rolling in  
with the horses-drawn vehicles.

179

00:11:38,680 --> 00:11:43,150  
And there was a lot of like  
pomp and military bands

180

00:11:43,150 --> 00:11:44,210  
were playing.

181

00:11:44,210 --> 00:11:48,190  
And as kids, we ran to see it.

182

00:11:48,190 --> 00:11:50,710  
And we didn't know,  
and some were--

183

00:11:50,710 --> 00:11:54,460  
a lot of sidewalks were  
empty, but some sidewalks

184

00:11:54,460 --> 00:11:58,000  
had some people there.

185

00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:01,075  
I would say most of the  
sidewalks were empty.

186

00:12:01,075 --> 00:12:11,140  
And there were some that tossed  
flowers to the passing armies.

187

00:12:11,140 --> 00:12:14,500  
But there was a



great discomfort,

188  
00:12:14,500 --> 00:12:19,270  
because you used to see  
the French uniform perhaps.

189  
00:12:19,270 --> 00:12:22,810  
And all of a sudden, you  
saw a foreign uniform.

190  
00:12:22,810 --> 00:12:37,600  
And with the anticipation  
that occupation is not good,

191  
00:12:37,600 --> 00:12:42,010  
we just felt very  
uncomfortable, perhaps.

192  
00:12:42,010 --> 00:12:45,680  
We didn't know what  
was going to follow.

193  
00:12:45,680 --> 00:12:47,620  
But the patch was  
much later, when

194  
00:12:47,620 --> 00:12:51,820  
there was a local  
government took hold,

195  
00:12:51,820 --> 00:12:54,250  
and they issued  
certain ordinances.

196  
00:12:54,250 --> 00:12:57,400

197  
00:12:57,400 --> 00:13:04,300  
And then the limitation  
curfews, especially for Jews

198  
00:13:04,300 --> 00:13:07,675  
to stay home after

6:00 or before 6:00.

199

00:13:07,675 --> 00:13:09,910

So after 6:00.

200

00:13:09,910 --> 00:13:13,030

And the standing  
in line for foods.

201

00:13:13,030 --> 00:13:17,080

If you'd be a Jew with  
a patch, with a star,

202

00:13:17,080 --> 00:13:21,880

with a yellow star with  
the word "juif" on it,

203

00:13:21,880 --> 00:13:23,380

there would be,  
again, intimidating

204

00:13:23,380 --> 00:13:29,590

and you were afraid of that.

205

00:13:29,590 --> 00:13:32,230

Plus the marching  
of the soldiers

206

00:13:32,230 --> 00:13:33,820

with the black  
uniforms, whether there

207

00:13:33,820 --> 00:13:36,430

were SS or military  
personnel, we

208

00:13:36,430 --> 00:13:40,780

didn't know who was at the time.

209

00:13:40,780 --> 00:13:44,260

You must remember, I was  
just seven 7, 7 and 1/2,

210

00:13:44,260 --> 00:13:47,770  
but I'm reaching back for  
my impressions in my memory.

211

00:13:47,770 --> 00:13:49,660  
You remember seeing  
black uniforms?

212

00:13:49,660 --> 00:13:50,680  
Yes, I do.

213

00:13:50,680 --> 00:13:53,250  
Yeah.

214

00:13:53,250 --> 00:13:55,010  
When you waited  
in line for food,

215

00:13:55,010 --> 00:13:57,670  
did you wait along  
with non-Jews as well?

216

00:13:57,670 --> 00:14:00,310  
Yes, with the  
general population.

217

00:14:00,310 --> 00:14:01,150  
Yes, yeah.

218

00:14:01,150 --> 00:14:03,040  
And then when you got  
the food, was there

219

00:14:03,040 --> 00:14:04,705  
a different kind of treatment?

220

00:14:04,705 --> 00:14:05,986  
Or a different kind of ration?

221

00:14:05,986 --> 00:14:07,150  
Anything like that?

222

00:14:07,150 --> 00:14:08,320

Not really.

223

00:14:08,320 --> 00:14:11,500

Everyone really  
was kind of hushed.

224

00:14:11,500 --> 00:14:14,260

But you could  
probably hear murmurs.

225

00:14:14,260 --> 00:14:15,520

"The Jews are here again."

226

00:14:15,520 --> 00:14:17,890

Or "the Jews are in line,  
and they're taking our food."

227

00:14:17,890 --> 00:14:19,180

Something like that.

228

00:14:19,180 --> 00:14:22,120

Well, when war's on and things  
become limited, of course

229

00:14:22,120 --> 00:14:24,830

the Jew will take a back seat.

230

00:14:24,830 --> 00:14:28,210

And as a matter of  
fact, I-- sometimes

231

00:14:28,210 --> 00:14:32,830

we had to stay in line with  
ration tickets for many hours,

232

00:14:32,830 --> 00:14:35,900

and the store did not receive  
the merchandise as yet,

233

00:14:35,900 --> 00:14:42,910

or the food, but

you formed a line.

234

00:14:42,910 --> 00:14:46,210

It was important to form  
a line, to make-- early.

235

00:14:46,210 --> 00:14:50,560

So sometimes you end up standing  
in line for four or five hours

236

00:14:50,560 --> 00:14:52,450

until they open the store.

237

00:14:52,450 --> 00:14:54,430

So we would take turns.

238

00:14:54,430 --> 00:15:00,790

I would be the first one to  
take a position in the line.

239

00:15:00,790 --> 00:15:05,350

And then my brother would  
come later and relieve me.

240

00:15:05,350 --> 00:15:06,580

Then my mother might come.

241

00:15:06,580 --> 00:15:10,030

You know, until the store  
opened and actually they

242

00:15:10,030 --> 00:15:12,130

started selling  
whatever they had.

243

00:15:12,130 --> 00:15:15,790

At these were coupons issued.

244

00:15:15,790 --> 00:15:22,120

Now, as I recall that after  
a certain time of rationing,

245

00:15:22,120 --> 00:15:29,830  
the Jews received different,  
well, smaller portions or less.

246  
00:15:29,830 --> 00:15:34,960  
Like, as an example, of meat,  
where the weight would be less

247  
00:15:34,960 --> 00:15:38,260  
probably, or the sugars.

248  
00:15:38,260 --> 00:15:39,040  
Or bread.

249  
00:15:39,040 --> 00:15:42,130  
Maybe I just vaguely  
remember that.

250  
00:15:42,130 --> 00:15:43,420  
Yeah.

251  
00:15:43,420 --> 00:15:45,698  
Was that a decision made by  
the person handing it out

252  
00:15:45,698 --> 00:15:46,240  
or was that--

253  
00:15:46,240 --> 00:15:52,760  
That was probably made by the  
occupying local government,

254  
00:15:52,760 --> 00:15:59,480  
which were was a German  
military ruling--

255  
00:15:59,480 --> 00:16:02,740  
it was a committee  
or I cannot say.

256  
00:16:02,740 --> 00:16:05,110  
I mean, I don't know  
how to define it.

257  
00:16:05,110 --> 00:16:09,840  
Probably it was not a  
civil, as we know it,

258  
00:16:09,840 --> 00:16:12,340  
a civilian government.

259  
00:16:12,340 --> 00:16:16,380  
This was definitely military,  
because it was the occupation.

260  
00:16:16,380 --> 00:16:18,610  
Yeah.

261  
00:16:18,610 --> 00:16:23,746  
Now, and we kind  
of struggled on.

262  
00:16:23,746 --> 00:16:24,670  
What changes--

263  
00:16:24,670 --> 00:16:31,345  
My dad had tried to attend to  
business as usual, but being it

264  
00:16:31,345 --> 00:16:35,260  
was a Jewish store,  
eventually it was pointed out.

265  
00:16:35,260 --> 00:16:41,950  
And a lot of German soldiers,  
usually in the upper ranks,

266  
00:16:41,950 --> 00:16:47,380  
came in to buy furs to send back  
to their wives, their friends,

267  
00:16:47,380 --> 00:16:51,410  
to their fiancées,  
girlfriends, or whatever.

268

00:16:51,410 --> 00:16:53,200  
So it was a popular store.

269  
00:16:53,200 --> 00:16:54,640  
A very popular--

270  
00:16:54,640 --> 00:17:00,680  
And perhaps I think one was  
recommending to the other one,

271  
00:17:00,680 --> 00:17:04,180  
there's a good place to  
buy furs to send back,

272  
00:17:04,180 --> 00:17:09,190  
or whether it was furs or foxes,  
which was very predominant.

273  
00:17:09,190 --> 00:17:11,182  
I remember that.

274  
00:17:11,182 --> 00:17:15,970  
And all of a sudden, before you  
know it, our store was empty.

275  
00:17:15,970 --> 00:17:18,534  
They paid but probably minimal.

276  
00:17:18,534 --> 00:17:21,579

277  
00:17:21,579 --> 00:17:25,240  
But I do remember my father  
built a double wall in one

278  
00:17:25,240 --> 00:17:27,849  
of the rooms, where we lived.

279  
00:17:27,849 --> 00:17:34,400  
And they would put up  
hooks on the original wall,

280



00:17:34,400 --> 00:17:39,140  
and hang the pelts or  
the furs, the skins.

281  
00:17:39,140 --> 00:17:44,200  
And then someone would come  
in, who was a friend, I think.

282  
00:17:44,200 --> 00:17:48,140  
And my dad had built a  
wall beyond that, another--

283  
00:17:48,140 --> 00:17:48,860  
in front of that.

284  
00:17:48,860 --> 00:17:51,050  
In other words, it was  
totally covered up.

285  
00:17:51,050 --> 00:17:55,040  
And they put  
crystals in the wall,

286  
00:17:55,040 --> 00:18:00,960  
to preserve furs, the skins.

287  
00:18:00,960 --> 00:18:10,530  
And somehow they came  
in and broke the wall,

288  
00:18:10,530 --> 00:18:13,200  
and hauled everything  
out much later.

289  
00:18:13,200 --> 00:18:15,570  
Maybe months later.

290  
00:18:15,570 --> 00:18:18,120  
So we didn't know how they--  
whether it was by scent

291  
00:18:18,120 --> 00:18:21,390  
of the crystals or whatever.

292  
00:18:21,390 --> 00:18:23,520  
Or just they knew  
what was going on,

293  
00:18:23,520 --> 00:18:31,380  
because my father had  
these pelts in the shop,

294  
00:18:31,380 --> 00:18:33,490  
and he was bringing  
them home nightly.

295  
00:18:33,490 --> 00:18:35,820  
OK, so whether someone  
was trailing him or not,

296  
00:18:35,820 --> 00:18:38,490  
we don't know.

297  
00:18:38,490 --> 00:18:45,980  
And we finally saw the light,  
what the Germans are up to.

298  
00:18:45,980 --> 00:18:53,540  
Just to eliminate  
the Jews in France.

299  
00:18:53,540 --> 00:19:02,090  
And one evening,  
dusk, I would say,

300  
00:19:02,090 --> 00:19:07,505  
they sectioned off a  
part of several blocks

301  
00:19:07,505 --> 00:19:12,930  
with trucks, like  
covered wagons.

302  
00:19:12,930 --> 00:19:15,210  
I think they referred to  
them a little later that it's

303  
00:19:15,210 --> 00:19:16,830  
called a Sonderkommando.

304  
00:19:16,830 --> 00:19:18,960  
Sonderkommando.

305  
00:19:18,960 --> 00:19:22,400  
And they had like the--

306  
00:19:22,400 --> 00:19:28,232  
they didn't have a uniform, but  
they had these like work suits.

307  
00:19:28,232 --> 00:19:29,190  
What do you call those?

308  
00:19:29,190 --> 00:19:31,000  
With a zipper down the middle?

309  
00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:31,740  
Coveralls?

310  
00:19:31,740 --> 00:19:34,140  
Coveralls, Yeah.

311  
00:19:34,140 --> 00:19:36,480  
And of course, they  
had their hats on,

312  
00:19:36,480 --> 00:19:40,200  
and you could see the  
SS insignia on it.

313  
00:19:40,200 --> 00:19:43,500  
And they rounded  
up, floor by floor.

314  
00:19:43,500 --> 00:19:47,880  
And the question was, who  
was a Jew and who was not.

315

00:19:47,880 --> 00:19:49,650

And they were  
hauling out people.

316

00:19:49,650 --> 00:19:51,270

However, my father  
was taken earlier.

317

00:19:51,270 --> 00:19:54,300

My father was not well.

318

00:19:54,300 --> 00:19:59,610

And he-- the doctor sent  
him to the hospital.

319

00:19:59,610 --> 00:20:01,170

Somehow, they came and got him.

320

00:20:01,170 --> 00:20:03,910

And we thought they were  
taking him to the hospital.

321

00:20:03,910 --> 00:20:11,340

And they took him by  
ambulance, and we never

322

00:20:11,340 --> 00:20:13,820

heard of him since.

323

00:20:13,820 --> 00:20:16,910

So that was-- so we were  
left without my father.

324

00:20:16,910 --> 00:20:19,350

And my brother was of course--

325

00:20:19,350 --> 00:20:20,960

we did not-- at  
that time, we didn't

326

00:20:20,960 --> 00:20:25,790

know that my oldest

brother was a prisoner.

327

00:20:25,790 --> 00:20:27,972

Of that we had no idea.

328

00:20:27,972 --> 00:20:29,130

Do you know when this was?

329

00:20:29,130 --> 00:20:30,290

What year?

330

00:20:30,290 --> 00:20:33,080

It was late in '39, Yeah.

331

00:20:33,080 --> 00:20:38,000

Yeah, when France-- after  
the Germans invaded Poland,

332

00:20:38,000 --> 00:20:41,780

they then invaded France.

333

00:20:41,780 --> 00:20:44,120

And of course, England,  
which I think they

334

00:20:44,120 --> 00:20:47,620

had an alliance,  
a mutual alliance.

335

00:20:47,620 --> 00:20:49,010

I learned that later, too.

336

00:20:49,010 --> 00:20:51,700

337

00:20:51,700 --> 00:20:55,017

So let me see.

338

00:20:55,017 --> 00:20:56,850

You were still going  
to school at this time?

339

00:20:56,850 --> 00:20:58,220

Or when did that stop?

340

00:20:58,220 --> 00:21:00,700

Well, that already  
stopped there, yeah.

341

00:21:00,700 --> 00:21:04,210

But there was also,  
I had a Jewish tutor

342

00:21:04,210 --> 00:21:07,810

coming to the house  
to teach me Hebrew.

343

00:21:07,810 --> 00:21:13,250

And before that, when I returned  
home from public school,

344

00:21:13,250 --> 00:21:18,190

I went to cheyder  
for about two hours,

345

00:21:18,190 --> 00:21:22,060

just to learn Hebrew and  
prepare for my bar mitzvah

346

00:21:22,060 --> 00:21:25,285

or whatever, which was  
quite a distance then.

347

00:21:25,285 --> 00:21:28,990

As I said, we were  
an observant family.

348

00:21:28,990 --> 00:21:33,060

We observed Shabbat  
and all the holidays.

349

00:21:33,060 --> 00:21:40,660

And I remember we have  
three sets of dishes,

350

00:21:40,660 --> 00:21:42,460

one for the meat  
and for the dairy,

351

00:21:42,460 --> 00:21:46,510

and also the third set  
was used for Passover.

352

00:21:46,510 --> 00:21:49,990

And utensils, pots  
and pans, and so on.

353

00:21:49,990 --> 00:21:55,300

But we were not Orthodox.

354

00:21:55,300 --> 00:21:58,690

The reason I say that is because  
our business was open Saturday,

355

00:21:58,690 --> 00:21:59,830

you know.

356

00:21:59,830 --> 00:22:08,380

My dad did not participate,  
but we almost had not quite

357

00:22:08,380 --> 00:22:10,150

but just we kept open Saturdays.

358

00:22:10,150 --> 00:22:13,370

I remember that, you know.

359

00:22:13,370 --> 00:22:16,480

After the occupation,  
was your family

360

00:22:16,480 --> 00:22:20,980

still able to observe Shabbat?

361

00:22:20,980 --> 00:22:24,960

After the occupation--  
you mean, post-war?

362  
00:22:24,960 --> 00:22:31,010  
Post-war, my family  
was dispersed.

363  
00:22:31,010 --> 00:22:33,730  
They were rounded  
up, as I was saying.

364  
00:22:33,730 --> 00:22:36,220  
Earlier, they  
rounded up the block.

365  
00:22:36,220 --> 00:22:39,010  
I meant during the occupation.

366  
00:22:39,010 --> 00:22:44,355  
It was extremely difficult.  
As best as we could, probably.

367  
00:22:44,355 --> 00:22:45,910  
Yeah.

368  
00:22:45,910 --> 00:22:47,590  
As best as we could, yeah.

369  
00:22:47,590 --> 00:22:50,410  
Of course, you could  
not go to synagogue,

370  
00:22:50,410 --> 00:22:51,790  
because there was a high risk.

371  
00:22:51,790 --> 00:22:58,680

372  
00:22:58,680 --> 00:23:04,800  
You know, to find Jews as  
a group in one dwelling

373  
00:23:04,800 --> 00:23:07,660  
would be extremely dangerous.



374

00:23:07,660 --> 00:23:15,640

So we did not, but within our  
own house we probably observed.

375

00:23:15,640 --> 00:23:21,750

I remember my dad putting on  
the phylacteries, tefillim.

376

00:23:21,750 --> 00:23:29,500

And pretty much oriented towards  
a solemn Jewish life, yeah.

377

00:23:29,500 --> 00:23:32,100

Was there any attempt by your  
parents or family in any way

378

00:23:32,100 --> 00:23:35,712

to hide their Jewishness  
before they were identified?

379

00:23:35,712 --> 00:23:36,212

Or?

380

00:23:36,212 --> 00:23:39,420

381

00:23:39,420 --> 00:23:40,710

I don't believe so, no.

382

00:23:40,710 --> 00:23:43,380

Because there was no need to.

383

00:23:43,380 --> 00:23:46,860

The neighbors knew us as Jews.

384

00:23:46,860 --> 00:23:50,100

Of course, my parents  
spoke with a heavy accent,

385

00:23:50,100 --> 00:23:53,280

so it was obvious that

they were foreigners.

386

00:23:53,280 --> 00:23:57,630

And I even think my oldest  
brother had an accent somewhat.

387

00:23:57,630 --> 00:24:01,270

So no, it was no--

388

00:24:01,270 --> 00:24:02,400

no.

389

00:24:02,400 --> 00:24:08,310

The only time you were hiding  
you're Jewish, being Jewish,

390

00:24:08,310 --> 00:24:12,690

was in public on the street,  
when you went to shop,

391

00:24:12,690 --> 00:24:14,040

to the store, or anywhere else.

392

00:24:14,040 --> 00:24:16,680

393

00:24:16,680 --> 00:24:19,890

Other than that, you hoped  
that no one would point out

394

00:24:19,890 --> 00:24:24,540

that you-- because  
you couldn't evade

395

00:24:24,540 --> 00:24:30,210

wearing the star of David,  
the yellow star of David.

396

00:24:30,210 --> 00:24:34,440

Because if someone would  
be caught not wearing it

397

00:24:34,440 --> 00:24:37,190  
and they would find  
out you're Jewish,

398  
00:24:37,190 --> 00:24:41,220  
I'm sure there would be  
an instant, severe, harsh

399  
00:24:41,220 --> 00:24:42,305  
punishment.

400  
00:24:42,305 --> 00:24:45,220

401  
00:24:45,220 --> 00:24:47,200  
OK, you asked me--

402  
00:24:47,200 --> 00:24:50,830  
the question was, did we  
practice after the war?

403  
00:24:50,830 --> 00:24:52,330  
I actually meant during the war.

404  
00:24:52,330 --> 00:24:54,070  
Yes, OK.

405  
00:24:54,070 --> 00:24:55,810  
Because we became--

406  
00:24:55,810 --> 00:25:02,140  
OK, we got rounded up all,  
all hauled out quickly.

407  
00:25:02,140 --> 00:25:06,850  
We took with us 35 kilos that  
we could take, or even less.

408  
00:25:06,850 --> 00:25:08,920  
I don't remember exactly.

409  
00:25:08,920 --> 00:25:15,470

And we actually took  
whatever we could.

410  
00:25:15,470 --> 00:25:19,730  
I think that we were  
prepared somewhat,

411  
00:25:19,730 --> 00:25:22,830  
because we knew that these  
things were going on.

412  
00:25:22,830 --> 00:25:24,440  
So we were already  
prepared, and there

413  
00:25:24,440 --> 00:25:30,080  
were some suitcases,  
valise ready to go,

414  
00:25:30,080 --> 00:25:33,140  
grab with us if they come.

415  
00:25:33,140 --> 00:25:36,770  
And we were taken  
to a place not far

416  
00:25:36,770 --> 00:25:45,800  
from where we lived called Place  
d'Hiver, which was the circus.

417  
00:25:45,800 --> 00:25:46,970  
It's a monument building.

418  
00:25:46,970 --> 00:25:48,950  
It's not a tent  
as we know here is

419  
00:25:48,950 --> 00:25:51,230  
a circus, a traveling circus.

420  
00:25:51,230 --> 00:25:56,120  
But it's a building  
where the circus performs

421  
00:25:56,120 --> 00:25:58,460  
9, 10 months out of the year.

422  
00:25:58,460 --> 00:26:00,915  
Cirque d'Hiver, It's called  
the circus of winter.

423  
00:26:00,915 --> 00:26:01,790  
Yeah, Cirque d'Hiver.

424  
00:26:01,790 --> 00:26:02,750  
Yeah.

425  
00:26:02,750 --> 00:26:05,480  
How did you get the  
information that they

426  
00:26:05,480 --> 00:26:06,480  
were going round you up?

427  
00:26:06,480 --> 00:26:07,720  
Did they give you notice?

428  
00:26:07,720 --> 00:26:08,750  
No, no.

429  
00:26:08,750 --> 00:26:12,290  
No, just by word of mouth  
and hear the action.

430  
00:26:12,290 --> 00:26:14,650  
Because you must remember,  
the streets are quite empty.

431  
00:26:14,650 --> 00:26:17,330  
And if there was a truck rolled  
by, you looked out a window

432  
00:26:17,330 --> 00:26:18,920  
and you saw what's going on.

433

00:26:18,920 --> 00:26:21,710

And bad news travels fast.

434

00:26:21,710 --> 00:26:24,560

And that was the case.

435

00:26:24,560 --> 00:26:29,000

And we did hear that it  
happened in other cities

436

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:34,760

and also in Paris, in  
other neighborhoods.

437

00:26:34,760 --> 00:26:40,490

So it was almost expected to  
go, but we didn't know when.

438

00:26:40,490 --> 00:26:47,070

Sooner or later, we'd be  
the victims of the roundup.

439

00:26:47,070 --> 00:26:49,760

So when it was time for  
you to be rounded up,

440

00:26:49,760 --> 00:26:52,357

the trucks appeared and  
they called you out?

441

00:26:52,357 --> 00:26:52,940

Or they came--

442

00:26:52,940 --> 00:26:55,520

They just ran into  
the building and they

443

00:26:55,520 --> 00:26:57,980

kept shouting  
"Juden raus, Juden,"

444

00:26:57,980 --> 00:27:00,470

and they kept  
banging at the doors.

445  
00:27:00,470 --> 00:27:03,740  
On the door, just at random.

446  
00:27:03,740 --> 00:27:07,850  
They pretty much knew where to  
find the Jews, I would think.

447  
00:27:07,850 --> 00:27:10,040  
Whether they had informants  
I cannot say that,

448  
00:27:10,040 --> 00:27:15,200  
but they just knew where to go.

449  
00:27:15,200 --> 00:27:17,420  
And we were herded  
out into the trucks

450  
00:27:17,420 --> 00:27:19,694  
and taken to this  
place, Cirque d'Hiver.

451  
00:27:19,694 --> 00:27:22,470

452  
00:27:22,470 --> 00:27:26,120  
And from there we stayed  
maybe a day or two days.

453  
00:27:26,120 --> 00:27:27,410  
I don't remember exactly.

454  
00:27:27,410 --> 00:27:32,060  
And we were sent to  
Drancy, which was--

455  
00:27:32,060 --> 00:27:36,480  
I found out later, this  
was a dispersement camp.

456

00:27:36,480 --> 00:27:38,910

And from there we  
stayed less than a week.

457

00:27:38,910 --> 00:27:43,875

And we went as a family  
unit, without my dad

458

00:27:43,875 --> 00:27:46,350

and without my oldest brother.

459

00:27:46,350 --> 00:27:50,460

It was my middle brother,  
and my sister, and my mother.

460

00:27:50,460 --> 00:27:54,240

Can you describe the conditions  
in the first place, the circus?

461

00:27:54,240 --> 00:27:55,050

The circus?

462

00:27:55,050 --> 00:27:56,010

How'd you sleep?

463

00:27:56,010 --> 00:27:58,900

It was just we slept on  
the floor, on benches.

464

00:27:58,900 --> 00:28:00,720

There were seats,  
where the people,

465

00:28:00,720 --> 00:28:03,420

where the audience would sit.

466

00:28:03,420 --> 00:28:08,100

And we kind of  
slumped over, slept.

467

00:28:08,100 --> 00:28:10,885

We couldn't make a



long seat out of it

468

00:28:10,885 --> 00:28:12,510

like you would do on  
an airplane today,

469

00:28:12,510 --> 00:28:15,150

you know, and stretch out.

470

00:28:15,150 --> 00:28:18,210

So we slept in between the  
chairs, in between the floor,

471

00:28:18,210 --> 00:28:20,010

between the rows.

472

00:28:20,010 --> 00:28:20,510

OK.

473

00:28:20,510 --> 00:28:23,160

474

00:28:23,160 --> 00:28:25,950

And Drancy was different.

475

00:28:25,950 --> 00:28:30,360

I don't remember if it was  
barracks or it was a unit.

476

00:28:30,360 --> 00:28:35,630

And the food was once a day,  
I remember, or twice a day.

477

00:28:35,630 --> 00:28:39,450

It just was bare necessity.

478

00:28:39,450 --> 00:28:42,707

Bread and soup or  
something like that.

479

00:28:42,707 --> 00:28:44,040

And you stayed with your family?

480  
00:28:44,040 --> 00:28:45,960  
Yes, yeah.

481  
00:28:45,960 --> 00:28:47,530  
Then we were sent--

482  
00:28:47,530 --> 00:28:52,500  
then finally as new  
arrivals was a total--

483  
00:28:52,500 --> 00:28:55,950  
new arrivals and departures.

484  
00:28:55,950 --> 00:28:59,730  
And we were hauled on trains.

485  
00:28:59,730 --> 00:29:03,270  
These were closed car trains,  
like cattle cars you might

486  
00:29:03,270 --> 00:29:05,490  
call them or anything else.

487  
00:29:05,490 --> 00:29:06,460  
We put in there.

488  
00:29:06,460 --> 00:29:12,280  
We were just I would say  
probably 80 to 100 people.

489  
00:29:12,280 --> 00:29:13,080  
Male, female.

490  
00:29:13,080 --> 00:29:15,570  
The family stay together.

491  
00:29:15,570 --> 00:29:19,220  
And we just took off.

492  
00:29:19,220 --> 00:29:20,540

The train took off.

493

00:29:20,540 --> 00:29:22,005

Stand or sit?

494

00:29:22,005 --> 00:29:22,880

Well, we could stand.

495

00:29:22,880 --> 00:29:23,450

We could sit.

496

00:29:23,450 --> 00:29:24,533

We could lay on the floor.

497

00:29:24,533 --> 00:29:26,120

Yes, there was no--

498

00:29:26,120 --> 00:29:28,830

this was a very hard floor.

499

00:29:28,830 --> 00:29:31,430

And we had our  
suitcases, some bags,

500

00:29:31,430 --> 00:29:33,080

or whatever else we carried.

501

00:29:33,080 --> 00:29:37,250

Blankets, warm jackets, so on.

502

00:29:37,250 --> 00:29:39,710

Maybe we put two sweaters.

503

00:29:39,710 --> 00:29:41,210

You know, it was  
very uncomfortable,

504

00:29:41,210 --> 00:29:43,917

because this was  
at the end of fall.

505

00:29:43,917 --> 00:29:45,125  
I remember it was still warm.

506  
00:29:45,125 --> 00:29:48,020

507  
00:29:48,020 --> 00:29:49,300  
And--

508  
00:29:49,300 --> 00:29:51,873  
You remember this is  
1940 now, probably?

509  
00:29:51,873 --> 00:29:53,620  
This was '40.

510  
00:29:53,620 --> 00:29:55,340  
The end of '40 or early '41.

511  
00:29:55,340 --> 00:29:57,200  
I just-- this is my point.

512  
00:29:57,200 --> 00:30:00,470  
I'm quite confused because of--

513  
00:30:00,470 --> 00:30:01,220  
it's hazy.

514  
00:30:01,220 --> 00:30:02,510  
I cannot relate the times.

515  
00:30:02,510 --> 00:30:04,100  
I've tried.

516  
00:30:04,100 --> 00:30:06,300  
And it's probably in  
late '40, I would say.

517  
00:30:06,300 --> 00:30:07,490  
Yeah, I'm sure.

518

00:30:07,490 --> 00:30:09,530  
Yes.

519  
00:30:09,530 --> 00:30:11,000  
'39, '40.

520  
00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:13,100  
Towards the end of October,  
September, October,

521  
00:30:13,100 --> 00:30:15,170  
somewhere in that.

522  
00:30:15,170 --> 00:30:21,380  
Or it could have been '41 at  
the same time frame of the year.

523  
00:30:21,380 --> 00:30:23,750  
Because I remember it was fall.

524  
00:30:23,750 --> 00:30:28,160  
We still had some hot  
days, very warm days.

525  
00:30:28,160 --> 00:30:32,788  
When you were at Drancy,  
did you talk to other Jews?

526  
00:30:32,788 --> 00:30:34,580  
Was there any mention  
of what was going on?

527  
00:30:34,580 --> 00:30:37,080  
Yes, just everything  
was very speculative.

528  
00:30:37,080 --> 00:30:41,810  
No one knew, but  
there was great fear.

529  
00:30:41,810 --> 00:30:44,000  
And we knew about--

530

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:47,090

also, we didn't see as  
many German soldiers there,

531

00:30:47,090 --> 00:30:50,270

but we saw French police.

532

00:30:50,270 --> 00:30:52,700

That was part of the Vichy.

533

00:30:52,700 --> 00:30:55,520

You know, they were  
probably supervised

534

00:30:55,520 --> 00:30:58,880

by the German police, yes.

535

00:30:58,880 --> 00:31:00,380

And a lot of civilian  
people, which

536

00:31:00,380 --> 00:31:04,640

would order us around, too.

537

00:31:04,640 --> 00:31:06,830

OK, from there--

538

00:31:06,830 --> 00:31:10,150

When you were taken from  
your home, was it French or?

539

00:31:10,150 --> 00:31:11,570

No, those were Germans.

540

00:31:11,570 --> 00:31:12,260

OK.

541

00:31:12,260 --> 00:31:14,690

And those were the  
Sonderkommando, as I remember.

542

00:31:14,690 --> 00:31:15,800  
Yeah, yeah.

543  
00:31:15,800 --> 00:31:17,780  
At the camp it was Frenchmen?

544  
00:31:17,780 --> 00:31:19,940  
Within the camp, yes.

545  
00:31:19,940 --> 00:31:24,920  
Also within the camp was  
totally run by French personnel,

546  
00:31:24,920 --> 00:31:25,550  
I would say.

547  
00:31:25,550 --> 00:31:29,370

548  
00:31:29,370 --> 00:31:31,850  
Or they were German,  
German, French-speaking.

549  
00:31:31,850 --> 00:31:37,170  
Because you had a lot of French  
from the section of Alsace

550  
00:31:37,170 --> 00:31:40,000  
that spoke fluent German.

551  
00:31:40,000 --> 00:31:43,330  
And some, when the  
German army came in,

552  
00:31:43,330 --> 00:31:49,600  
they completely were  
liberated, their term.

553  
00:31:49,600 --> 00:31:55,970  
Because they professed  
to be Germans.

554

00:31:55,970 --> 00:31:58,270

And you speak-- at this  
age, did you speak French?

555

00:31:58,270 --> 00:31:59,503

French, yeah.

556

00:31:59,503 --> 00:32:00,140

Hebrew?

557

00:32:00,140 --> 00:32:00,640

A little.

558

00:32:00,640 --> 00:32:02,350

No, no.

559

00:32:02,350 --> 00:32:06,490

Just French and  
perhaps some words a

560

00:32:06,490 --> 00:32:08,800

Yiddish that we caught  
from our parents.

561

00:32:08,800 --> 00:32:11,560

Yeah.

562

00:32:11,560 --> 00:32:17,170

My parents perhaps would speak  
80% Yiddish amongst them.

563

00:32:17,170 --> 00:32:19,820

And there was some Polish.

564

00:32:19,820 --> 00:32:24,040

And of course some heavy  
French, heavy-accented

565

00:32:24,040 --> 00:32:27,210

French to transact  
business or whatever.

566



00:32:27,210 --> 00:32:28,176  
Yeah.

567  
00:32:28,176 --> 00:32:31,410  
At Drancy, do you remember  
any particular interaction

568  
00:32:31,410 --> 00:32:34,720  
with French police?

569  
00:32:34,720 --> 00:32:35,740  
No.

570  
00:32:35,740 --> 00:32:38,050  
Well, no interaction  
with police.

571  
00:32:38,050 --> 00:32:40,360  
Just wait what to do next.

572  
00:32:40,360 --> 00:32:42,910  
We just didn't know what  
direction, what's going to be,

573  
00:32:42,910 --> 00:32:45,910  
what's going to happen, where  
are we heading and so on.

574  
00:32:45,910 --> 00:32:49,613  
Just we look perhaps for the  
next handout of bread and soup

575  
00:32:49,613 --> 00:32:50,530  
or whatever available.

576  
00:32:50,530 --> 00:32:52,150  
What did you do all day?

577  
00:32:52,150 --> 00:32:53,740  
Just sat.

578  
00:32:53,740 --> 00:32:57,430

Just sat and saw people  
moving, coming and going.

579  
00:32:57,430 --> 00:33:02,950  
And just speculative thoughts  
of what's going to be.

580  
00:33:02,950 --> 00:33:05,530  
I am sure the  
parents did not want

581  
00:33:05,530 --> 00:33:09,850  
to show any anxiety towards  
the kids, the young kids.

582  
00:33:09,850 --> 00:33:16,450  
But it was obvious that the  
behavior was not the same

583  
00:33:16,450 --> 00:33:19,930  
as when you were home,  
home life, you know?

584  
00:33:19,930 --> 00:33:24,160  
Do you have a sense of how  
large the camp was or how--

585  
00:33:24,160 --> 00:33:25,720  
It was quite a large camp.

586  
00:33:25,720 --> 00:33:30,310  
I would say probably--

587  
00:33:30,310 --> 00:33:32,790  
I would guess about  
10,000 15,000.

588  
00:33:32,790 --> 00:33:36,130  
Maybe, just say kind  
of a rough estimate.

589  
00:33:36,130 --> 00:33:38,290  
Maybe less.

590

00:33:38,290 --> 00:33:42,860

But there was continuous  
movement, coming and going.

591

00:33:42,860 --> 00:33:45,970

And we left at camp,  
we went on trains

592

00:33:45,970 --> 00:33:48,618

for about four or five days.

593

00:33:48,618 --> 00:33:50,410

You had a break when  
you were on the train?

594

00:33:50,410 --> 00:33:51,940

The train stopped.

595

00:33:51,940 --> 00:33:55,840

There were air  
raids, I remember.

596

00:33:55,840 --> 00:33:57,870

And they gave us some--

597

00:33:57,870 --> 00:34:02,770

tossed in some loaves of  
bread with us, you know.

598

00:34:02,770 --> 00:34:08,500

And I think my mother had some  
sugar, some food in some bags

599

00:34:08,500 --> 00:34:11,960

that she'd managed to carry  
with us, or some dried fruit.

600

00:34:11,960 --> 00:34:16,945

I don't remember exactly what  
it might have been, you know.

601

00:34:16,945 --> 00:34:20,770

And that was part of our  
food during the transit.

602

00:34:20,770 --> 00:34:23,020

Did they give you that  
at the beginning or?

603

00:34:23,020 --> 00:34:24,010

Yes, at the beginning.

604

00:34:24,010 --> 00:34:28,449

Because those doors were sealed  
during the entire transit.

605

00:34:28,449 --> 00:34:32,739

And it was just awful the  
longer we were on the trains

606

00:34:32,739 --> 00:34:41,080

because people urinated,  
people defecated, and so on.

607

00:34:41,080 --> 00:34:42,940

People were sick.

608

00:34:42,940 --> 00:34:44,909

It was hot.

609

00:34:44,909 --> 00:34:45,909

We didn't know where we.

610

00:34:45,909 --> 00:34:50,380

There were little slatted  
windows to look at,

611

00:34:50,380 --> 00:34:52,510

or we could look down.

612

00:34:52,510 --> 00:34:56,770

I was much too small to  
look up where we are.

613

00:34:56,770 --> 00:35:00,032

Some people tried to  
shout out, "where are we?"

614

00:35:00,032 --> 00:35:01,990

when the train stopped  
and he saw someone walk.

615

00:35:01,990 --> 00:35:06,290

You know, where are we  
heading or whatever.

616

00:35:06,290 --> 00:35:08,290

And I don't know if there  
was a response or not,

617

00:35:08,290 --> 00:35:12,700

but you could well  
see that we were

618

00:35:12,700 --> 00:35:17,960

heading towards a destination  
that was not very pleasant.

619

00:35:17,960 --> 00:35:20,980

But we still did not  
believe that we were heading

620

00:35:20,980 --> 00:35:24,160

towards an extermination camp.

621

00:35:24,160 --> 00:35:25,600

It was just a--

622

00:35:25,600 --> 00:35:29,890

it was speculative, as I recall.

623

00:35:29,890 --> 00:35:32,980

Finally, we arrived.

624

00:35:32,980 --> 00:35:36,990

We arrived at a place

called Birkenau.

625

00:35:36,990 --> 00:35:40,480

Because when you stepped off--  
when the doors were slammed

626

00:35:40,480 --> 00:35:47,330

open, you saw the inscription on  
the station there, "Birkenau."

627

00:35:47,330 --> 00:35:50,320

628

00:35:50,320 --> 00:35:55,060

And immediately as you descended  
and you carried your baggage

629

00:35:55,060 --> 00:35:59,680

with you, people were  
weak, sick, and kind of--

630

00:35:59,680 --> 00:36:01,600

imagine being  
locked up five days

631

00:36:01,600 --> 00:36:12,700

in a train that was just made  
for animals or for other kinds

632

00:36:12,700 --> 00:36:15,100

of shipments.

633

00:36:15,100 --> 00:36:17,230

It was certainly inhuman.

634

00:36:17,230 --> 00:36:19,420

Inhumane, I should say.

635

00:36:19,420 --> 00:36:25,425

And I'm sorry I can't  
be as dramatic perhaps

636

00:36:25,425 --> 00:36:27,050  
as if I would have  
been older probably.

637  
00:36:27,050 --> 00:36:30,480  
Would have been  
more descriptive.

638  
00:36:30,480 --> 00:36:37,440  
But the impression of  
the older people on me

639  
00:36:37,440 --> 00:36:42,600  
probably left an  
indelible impression

640  
00:36:42,600 --> 00:36:44,650  
more in their  
behavior, their panic.

641  
00:36:44,650 --> 00:36:49,455  
It was not a normal behavior  
that one would be used to.

642  
00:36:49,455 --> 00:36:53,130  
You could see the  
anxiety, the total panic.

643  
00:36:53,130 --> 00:36:56,280

644  
00:36:56,280 --> 00:36:57,150  
Uncertainty.

645  
00:36:57,150 --> 00:36:59,790

646  
00:36:59,790 --> 00:37:04,650  
So as we arrived and the doors  
were slammed open, with a bang,

647  
00:37:04,650 --> 00:37:08,040  
and you heard shouts

of "raus, raus,

648

00:37:08,040 --> 00:37:13,540  
raus," everybody grabbed what  
they could, went their way,

649

00:37:13,540 --> 00:37:17,475  
and they stepped out  
on some kind of steps.

650

00:37:17,475 --> 00:37:20,010

651

00:37:20,010 --> 00:37:26,070  
And everyone was clinging  
to one another, family wise.

652

00:37:26,070 --> 00:37:29,850  
And immediately they said,  
"woman to the right," or left.

653

00:37:29,850 --> 00:37:31,180  
"Men to the left," you know.

654

00:37:31,180 --> 00:37:32,700  
Or vice versa, whichever.

655

00:37:32,700 --> 00:37:34,350  
They separated us.

656

00:37:34,350 --> 00:37:37,990  
And then weren't parted,  
my mother and my sister.

657

00:37:37,990 --> 00:37:42,441  
And I were still with my other  
brother, my middle brother.

658

00:37:42,441 --> 00:37:45,840  
Do you remember the  
conversation with your mother

659



00:37:45,840 --> 00:37:47,507  
or what was said?

660  
00:37:47,507 --> 00:37:49,590  
I don't think there was  
any time for conversation.

661  
00:37:49,590 --> 00:37:52,680  
We were just kind of  
torn apart immediately.

662  
00:37:52,680 --> 00:37:55,424

663  
00:37:55,424 --> 00:37:59,325  
We saw men in black  
uniforms with the boots

664  
00:37:59,325 --> 00:38:03,060  
on with the whips.

665  
00:38:03,060 --> 00:38:05,580  
They weren't whips, but short--

666  
00:38:05,580 --> 00:38:08,400  
I don't know if there's  
a word for that.

667  
00:38:08,400 --> 00:38:11,580  
And they designated left,  
right, links rechts,

668  
00:38:11,580 --> 00:38:14,070  
whatever the direction was.

669  
00:38:14,070 --> 00:38:17,610  
And panic, fear,  
no self-control.

670  
00:38:17,610 --> 00:38:20,250  
And we just went where  
we were directed.

671

00:38:20,250 --> 00:38:21,750

Before you know,  
we didn't see them,

672

00:38:21,750 --> 00:38:25,020

because the lines moved rapidly.

673

00:38:25,020 --> 00:38:27,990

Just the objective  
was to get them out

674

00:38:27,990 --> 00:38:31,560

as fast as you can, and get  
them out of here, because just

675

00:38:31,560 --> 00:38:34,350

like herds, you know.

676

00:38:34,350 --> 00:38:37,380

And they told us after we  
stepped out to leave everything

677

00:38:37,380 --> 00:38:40,590

behind right there.

678

00:38:40,590 --> 00:38:45,540

To leave all our bundles  
behind, and to make sure

679

00:38:45,540 --> 00:38:48,900

that we have put our names  
on it, because they'll

680

00:38:48,900 --> 00:38:50,820

be shipped to us.

681

00:38:50,820 --> 00:38:53,010

We'll receive everything.

682

00:38:53,010 --> 00:38:56,010

Everything will be  
delivered to us.

683  
00:38:56,010 --> 00:39:00,210  
And we're going to be  
working in the working camps.

684  
00:39:00,210 --> 00:39:03,630  
At the time , I don't think  
I was aware that this is kind

685  
00:39:03,630 --> 00:39:07,170  
of what I've learned  
later as I grew.

686  
00:39:07,170 --> 00:39:14,340  
And ended up in very  
primitive stables in Birkenau.

687  
00:39:14,340 --> 00:39:17,760  
And just herded, and my  
brother and me were together,

688  
00:39:17,760 --> 00:39:19,530  
and we totally--

689  
00:39:19,530 --> 00:39:21,750  
I don't think that  
anyone could describe--

690  
00:39:21,750 --> 00:39:25,920

691  
00:39:25,920 --> 00:39:28,440  
How did you-- did you  
hold on to your brother?

692  
00:39:28,440 --> 00:39:29,580  
I'm going to cut now, OK?

693  
00:39:29,580 --> 00:39:32,250

694  
00:39:32,250 --> 00:39:33,200

Mm-hmm.

695

00:39:33,200 --> 00:39:36,750

696

00:39:36,750 --> 00:39:37,570

OK.

697

00:39:37,570 --> 00:39:40,740

How did your brother  
and you stay together?

698

00:39:40,740 --> 00:39:43,470

Were you holding  
hands or arms or?

699

00:39:43,470 --> 00:39:48,120

Probably-- yes, we pretty much  
hung on to each other, yeah.

700

00:39:48,120 --> 00:39:54,390

And we were directed  
to these barracks.

701

00:39:54,390 --> 00:39:59,190

We found out they were horse  
stables, as I indicated.

702

00:39:59,190 --> 00:40:02,190

And after a period  
of maybe half an hour

703

00:40:02,190 --> 00:40:07,860

or so, they drove us out  
and told us to undress.

704

00:40:07,860 --> 00:40:10,650

705

00:40:10,650 --> 00:40:12,480

And they took our clothes.

706

00:40:12,480 --> 00:40:16,140  
We had to leave our clothes  
where we were standing.

707  
00:40:16,140 --> 00:40:18,150  
And we had to advance.

708  
00:40:18,150 --> 00:40:19,860  
They told us to advance.

709  
00:40:19,860 --> 00:40:22,470  
We were give some wooden  
shoes with canvas tops,

710  
00:40:22,470 --> 00:40:23,820  
some striped uniforms.

711  
00:40:23,820 --> 00:40:27,060

712  
00:40:27,060 --> 00:40:30,210  
A around cap, also striped.

713  
00:40:30,210 --> 00:40:33,120  
And after we had this one,  
they told us to stay in line

714  
00:40:33,120 --> 00:40:36,300  
and roll up our left sleeve.

715  
00:40:36,300 --> 00:40:38,820  
And there we were tattooed.

716  
00:40:38,820 --> 00:40:50,670  
And-- did you get enough?

717  
00:40:50,670 --> 00:40:51,170  
Mm-hmm.

718  
00:40:51,170 --> 00:40:52,790  
OK.

719

00:40:52,790 --> 00:40:56,510

And I don't know if B is  
for Birkenau or whatever.

720

00:40:56,510 --> 00:40:57,480

I have no idea.

721

00:40:57,480 --> 00:41:02,613

I do know that some  
earlier arrivals had an A,

722

00:41:02,613 --> 00:41:03,905

and they had it on the forearm.

723

00:41:03,905 --> 00:41:07,610

724

00:41:07,610 --> 00:41:11,750

And I kind of liked  
this number, the 81, 82.

725

00:41:11,750 --> 00:41:13,640

It's kind of a rhythmic number.

726

00:41:13,640 --> 00:41:16,410

727

00:41:16,410 --> 00:41:18,710

If there's such thing as  
liking anything about it,

728

00:41:18,710 --> 00:41:20,720

you know, but it was  
easy to remember.

729

00:41:20,720 --> 00:41:25,460

And I'll tell you why the  
number was good, that I liked.

730

00:41:25,460 --> 00:41:31,790

Because once we were  
assigned to work kommandos,

731  
00:41:31,790 --> 00:41:38,820  
before we left the  
camp to our jobs,

732  
00:41:38,820 --> 00:41:42,740  
they would call the numbers  
to see if everyone is present.

733  
00:41:42,740 --> 00:41:46,200  
And God help those who did  
not understand or didn't

734  
00:41:46,200 --> 00:41:47,390  
hear the number.

735  
00:41:47,390 --> 00:41:49,640  
So I imagine if it would  
be a scattered number,

736  
00:41:49,640 --> 00:41:56,630  
like 9736, you know, this is  
8181, which a rhythmic number.

737  
00:41:56,630 --> 00:41:58,462  
It was easy to remember.

738  
00:41:58,462 --> 00:42:00,170  
And they would shout  
out, "einundachtzig,

739  
00:42:00,170 --> 00:42:01,970  
zweiundachtzig."

740  
00:42:01,970 --> 00:42:06,778  
And you would have to say  
like "present" or "jawohl"

741  
00:42:06,778 --> 00:42:07,820  
or whatever the word was.

742  
00:42:07,820 --> 00:42:12,230

I don't remember exactly,  
but you had to respond.

743  
00:42:12,230 --> 00:42:13,250  
If there were no--

744  
00:42:13,250 --> 00:42:17,480  
if there was no  
response, or the man,

745  
00:42:17,480 --> 00:42:23,720  
the person was not in line  
or he was left on a block

746  
00:42:23,720 --> 00:42:27,410  
or he was infirm, and  
they would come to that spot,

747  
00:42:27,410 --> 00:42:30,140  
where that person was  
assigned to stand in line,

748  
00:42:30,140 --> 00:42:32,842  
and they would  
just cross him off.

749  
00:42:32,842 --> 00:42:35,300  
The reason for that is when we  
would return in the evening,

750  
00:42:35,300 --> 00:42:36,950  
they would do the  
same thing, and they

751  
00:42:36,950 --> 00:42:40,100  
would see if someone escaped  
or someone didn't come back

752  
00:42:40,100 --> 00:42:40,970  
with them.

753  
00:42:40,970 --> 00:42:46,460  
So they call that the Appell,



or appeal, Appell, just

754

00:42:46,460 --> 00:42:48,950

like you would do  
in a classroom,

755

00:42:48,950 --> 00:42:52,880

check your students off.

756

00:42:52,880 --> 00:42:57,320

OK, but I really jumped  
because from Birkenau,

757

00:42:57,320 --> 00:43:00,120

we stayed there for  
about maybe two weeks.

758

00:43:00,120 --> 00:43:04,180

It was a terrible place to be.

759

00:43:04,180 --> 00:43:11,320

And I got separated from  
my brother, because they--

760

00:43:11,320 --> 00:43:16,180

this was like a  
supply camp, Birkenau.

761

00:43:16,180 --> 00:43:17,680

When the orders  
came in they need

762

00:43:17,680 --> 00:43:23,500

20 people to this kommando,  
kommando was at first a job.

763

00:43:23,500 --> 00:43:29,350

And I was probably very  
fortunate to end up

764

00:43:29,350 --> 00:43:32,080

getting assigned  
to what they called

765

00:43:32,080 --> 00:43:36,340  
the Union kommando, which was  
a factory, an armaments factory

766

00:43:36,340 --> 00:43:40,540  
called the Union,  
was run by Krupp,

767

00:43:40,540 --> 00:43:45,070  
a well-known German  
armament manufacturer,

768

00:43:45,070 --> 00:43:50,485  
and was assigned to be an  
assistant to a lathe operator.

769

00:43:50,485 --> 00:43:52,960  
In which I would hand  
things to the main operator,

770

00:43:52,960 --> 00:43:57,070  
you know, and gradually  
learn to operate a lathe.

771

00:43:57,070 --> 00:44:00,880  
And my brother was left behind,  
and I never heard from him ever

772

00:44:00,880 --> 00:44:02,165  
since.

773

00:44:02,165 --> 00:44:03,790  
And this is while  
you were in Birkenau.

774

00:44:03,790 --> 00:44:07,285  
Birkenau, and they  
took me and not him.

775

00:44:07,285 --> 00:44:10,090  
I think he wanted to come with  
me, and they did not allow him.

776  
00:44:10,090 --> 00:44:11,840  
He wanted to follow me.

777  
00:44:11,840 --> 00:44:14,740  
They just pointed out, you  
come here, stay over there,

778  
00:44:14,740 --> 00:44:17,590  
and my brother just  
wanted to come, too.

779  
00:44:17,590 --> 00:44:19,000  
And he was older.

780  
00:44:19,000 --> 00:44:23,680  
He was older by, let's say,  
five-- five, six years.

781  
00:44:23,680 --> 00:44:25,750  
So you changed barracks, then?

782  
00:44:25,750 --> 00:44:29,050  
Or we just marched  
out to Auschwitz,

783  
00:44:29,050 --> 00:44:32,770  
which was probably a good  
2 miles or 2 and 1/2 miles.

784  
00:44:32,770 --> 00:44:34,840  
It wasn't very far,  
but nevertheless it

785  
00:44:34,840 --> 00:44:40,330  
was between two and  
three miles, I would say.

786  
00:44:40,330 --> 00:44:42,490  
So once you got  
assigned to a job,

787

00:44:42,490 --> 00:44:43,990  
you would then  
move to Auschwitz?

788  
00:44:43,990 --> 00:44:44,680  
Yes.

789  
00:44:44,680 --> 00:44:45,070  
Is that what you're saying?

790  
00:44:45,070 --> 00:44:46,510  
Your brother was  
left in Birkenau?

791  
00:44:46,510 --> 00:44:47,500  
Yeah, they did not--

792  
00:44:47,500 --> 00:44:48,610  
Assign him.

793  
00:44:48,610 --> 00:44:49,600  
--assign him.

794  
00:44:49,600 --> 00:44:52,120  
So whether he got another  
job somewhere else,

795  
00:44:52,120 --> 00:44:54,970  
I really can't say, because  
I've never heard from him since.

796  
00:44:54,970 --> 00:44:56,133  
Mm-hmm.

797  
00:44:56,133 --> 00:44:57,550  
Can you describe  
a little bit what

798  
00:44:57,550 --> 00:44:59,950  
Birkenau was like, what  
the barracks were like?

799

00:44:59,950 --> 00:45:01,690  
The barracks?

800  
00:45:01,690 --> 00:45:03,490  
The barracks had no--

801  
00:45:03,490 --> 00:45:05,530  
we slept on the floor.

802  
00:45:05,530 --> 00:45:08,007  
It was just like a ground floor.

803  
00:45:08,007 --> 00:45:09,340  
Because there were horses there.

804  
00:45:09,340 --> 00:45:14,770  
It was a Polish cavalry  
division, we found out.

805  
00:45:14,770 --> 00:45:16,360  
And the horses were--

806  
00:45:16,360 --> 00:45:19,050

807  
00:45:19,050 --> 00:45:21,810  
this was the quarters  
for the horses.

808  
00:45:21,810 --> 00:45:24,450  
So we just slept on the ground.

809  
00:45:24,450 --> 00:45:26,308  
We could see mountains  
from the distance,

810  
00:45:26,308 --> 00:45:28,350  
and we found those were  
the Carpathian Mountains.

811  
00:45:28,350 --> 00:45:29,840  
We found out that out.

812  
00:45:29,840 --> 00:45:32,700  
And the major city not far from  
there was Krakow, I believe,

813  
00:45:32,700 --> 00:45:35,760  
which I had an uncle there.

814  
00:45:35,760 --> 00:45:40,230  
And this was in southern  
Poland, Silesia, I believe.

815  
00:45:40,230 --> 00:45:42,090  
Yeah.

816  
00:45:42,090 --> 00:45:46,770  
And the food was minimal.

817  
00:45:46,770 --> 00:45:48,210  
And you had to line up.

818  
00:45:48,210 --> 00:45:54,360  
Well, they did give us some  
kind of a canteen with a spoon.

819  
00:45:54,360 --> 00:45:59,010  
And we had to line  
up twice a day.

820  
00:45:59,010 --> 00:46:00,930  
I think it was twice a day.

821  
00:46:00,930 --> 00:46:05,460  
For the soup, and somewhat  
of a morsel of bread.

822  
00:46:05,460 --> 00:46:09,155  
And especially if you  
were as young as I was,

823  
00:46:09,155 --> 00:46:10,530  
someone would

knock the bread out

824

00:46:10,530 --> 00:46:13,710  
of my hand, another prisoner.

825

00:46:13,710 --> 00:46:16,360  
And nothing I could do about it.

826

00:46:16,360 --> 00:46:19,340  
Or spill the soup, you know?

827

00:46:19,340 --> 00:46:23,280  
This camp was several  
nationalities.

828

00:46:23,280 --> 00:46:28,620  
And of course also it was not  
necessarily just a Jewish camp.

829

00:46:28,620 --> 00:46:32,220  
In Birkenau, you had  
Russians, you had Ukrainians,

830

00:46:32,220 --> 00:46:34,770  
you had Poles, you had  
French, you had Hungarians.

831

00:46:34,770 --> 00:46:40,050  
You had a total mix, a  
total European mix of Jews

832

00:46:40,050 --> 00:46:41,430  
and non-Jews.

833

00:46:41,430 --> 00:46:43,590  
And the non-Jews,  
the stronger ones

834

00:46:43,590 --> 00:46:49,470  
would be aggressively  
behave towards the Jews.

835

00:46:49,470 --> 00:46:54,120  
And if they could do them in,  
they took advantage of it.

836  
00:46:54,120 --> 00:46:56,030  
It was a matter of  
survival, if you want

837  
00:46:56,030 --> 00:46:57,280  
to look at it from that point.

838  
00:46:57,280 --> 00:46:59,160  
Yeah.

839  
00:46:59,160 --> 00:47:03,750  
And so I lost perhaps  
a hunk of bread,

840  
00:47:03,750 --> 00:47:06,600  
but I learned the  
first thing, too,

841  
00:47:06,600 --> 00:47:08,190  
as soon as you get  
it, start eating it

842  
00:47:08,190 --> 00:47:09,760  
and take a bite on it.

843  
00:47:09,760 --> 00:47:12,790  
Or break it up and put it  
in your pockets or whatever.

844  
00:47:12,790 --> 00:47:16,860  
And then were not safe,  
because this is within a camp.

845  
00:47:16,860 --> 00:47:18,750  
This camp had capos.

846  
00:47:18,750 --> 00:47:22,710  
Capos-- prisoners  
within a camp that



847  
00:47:22,710 --> 00:47:27,960  
were assigned this kommando  
or this type of a job.

848  
00:47:27,960 --> 00:47:29,980  
And some were quite ruthless.

849  
00:47:29,980 --> 00:47:32,580  
I don't remember seeing  
any Jewish capos.

850  
00:47:32,580 --> 00:47:37,800  
Mostly were non-Jewish  
or Aryan capos,

851  
00:47:37,800 --> 00:47:40,650  
might have been some  
Jews, but I don't recall.

852  
00:47:40,650 --> 00:47:45,810  
And they wore a armband  
on their right arm,

853  
00:47:45,810 --> 00:47:49,260  
to identify who they were  
with the word C-A-P-O, capo,

854  
00:47:49,260 --> 00:47:52,030  
these camp police.

855  
00:47:52,030 --> 00:47:59,760  
OK, when we left Birkenau  
and arrived in Auschwitz,

856  
00:47:59,760 --> 00:48:02,850  
it was like paradise.

857  
00:48:02,850 --> 00:48:06,360  
Because those were military  
blocks, army blocks.

858

00:48:06,360 --> 00:48:07,950  
And there were bunk beds.

859  
00:48:07,950 --> 00:48:14,580  
There was three beds to  
one stack, you might say.

860  
00:48:14,580 --> 00:48:19,680  
And I was assigned a top  
stack, because I was young

861  
00:48:19,680 --> 00:48:23,400  
and I could climb with a  
little ladder on the side.

862  
00:48:23,400 --> 00:48:25,170  
And it was a nice bed.

863  
00:48:25,170 --> 00:48:28,920  
It was sheets,  
believe it or not.

864  
00:48:28,920 --> 00:48:30,345  
It was a nice blanket.

865  
00:48:30,345 --> 00:48:32,337  
There was even a pillow.

866  
00:48:32,337 --> 00:48:34,170  
Well, there was straw  
or hay in that pillow,

867  
00:48:34,170 --> 00:48:35,970  
but there was a pillow.

868  
00:48:35,970 --> 00:48:39,900  
Might have even been  
feathers, yeah, in the pillow.

869  
00:48:39,900 --> 00:48:44,050  
And it was a nice mattress,  
very clean, extremely clean,

870

00:48:44,050 --> 00:48:45,460  
comfortable.

871

00:48:45,460 --> 00:48:48,390  
And it had to be  
meticulously cleaned kept.

872

00:48:48,390 --> 00:48:52,650  
The floors had to be  
just mopped daily.

873

00:48:52,650 --> 00:48:57,420  
So we thought if this is  
the camp, it's not so bad.

874

00:48:57,420 --> 00:49:00,150  
I probably arrived in the  
late afternoon in that camp,

875

00:49:00,150 --> 00:49:03,660  
and assigned a bed,  
and I went up there.

876

00:49:03,660 --> 00:49:10,020  
And we missed a meal for a day,  
because we were late coming in.

877

00:49:10,020 --> 00:49:13,110  
But I was next to a window,  
quite a tall window,

878

00:49:13,110 --> 00:49:17,310  
almost from the floor  
almost to the ceiling.

879

00:49:17,310 --> 00:49:19,860  
And you could see  
the electric wires.

880

00:49:19,860 --> 00:49:24,780  
As I looked out, you could see  
the electric wires to my right.

881

00:49:24,780 --> 00:49:28,890

And you could see the  
lights, blue lights, I think,

882

00:49:28,890 --> 00:49:29,670

during the night.

883

00:49:29,670 --> 00:49:32,790

884

00:49:32,790 --> 00:49:34,830

They were double  
or triple wires,

885

00:49:34,830 --> 00:49:42,750

and they had a toten head, which  
is a skull, which means danger,

886

00:49:42,750 --> 00:49:44,940

or electricity.

887

00:49:44,940 --> 00:49:48,810

And also, you had the  
flash sign that's--

888

00:49:48,810 --> 00:49:51,780

889

00:49:51,780 --> 00:49:52,604

like--

890

00:49:52,604 --> 00:49:53,437

Like lightning bolt?

891

00:49:53,437 --> 00:49:57,025

Like a lightning  
bolt sign, yeah.

892

00:49:57,025 --> 00:49:58,980

And finally, somehow I  
must have fallen asleep

893

00:49:58,980 --> 00:50:01,105

and slept probably through  
the whole night through.

894

00:50:01,105 --> 00:50:02,590

But what happened  
the next morning,

895

00:50:02,590 --> 00:50:09,960

I looked out that window, I saw  
a cadaver, a body stretched out

896

00:50:09,960 --> 00:50:11,100

on that wire.

897

00:50:11,100 --> 00:50:14,070

Either someone tried to escape  
or most likely someone probably

898

00:50:14,070 --> 00:50:16,170

committed suicide.

899

00:50:16,170 --> 00:50:20,610

And probably just was  
electrocuted there.

900

00:50:20,610 --> 00:50:26,880

And I remember even seeing  
the removing of the body

901

00:50:26,880 --> 00:50:30,720

by other prisoners  
within the camp.

902

00:50:30,720 --> 00:50:36,540

I was just petrified,  
and I could not--

903

00:50:36,540 --> 00:50:40,110

I've always had a  
vision in front of me.

904

00:50:40,110 --> 00:50:44,250  
And I couldn't look out  
the window, because I

905  
00:50:44,250 --> 00:50:46,075  
thought I'll see others there.

906  
00:50:46,075 --> 00:50:48,930

907  
00:50:48,930 --> 00:50:51,270  
So maybe that was my  
first traumatic shock,

908  
00:50:51,270 --> 00:50:53,430  
more than anything else.

909  
00:50:53,430 --> 00:50:56,820  
And you might say probably  
that was the first dead body

910  
00:50:56,820 --> 00:50:57,990  
that I saw in my life.

911  
00:50:57,990 --> 00:51:04,470

912  
00:51:04,470 --> 00:51:08,120  
OK, then we were assigned to--

913  
00:51:08,120 --> 00:51:09,700  
assigned what job.

914  
00:51:09,700 --> 00:51:12,660  
We lined up every morning,  
early in the morning,

915  
00:51:12,660 --> 00:51:16,410  
like 7:00 or 7:30,  
perhaps earlier.

916  
00:51:16,410 --> 00:51:19,980

And we took inventory  
of the group.

917  
00:51:19,980 --> 00:51:26,220  
Like they called the numbers,  
which was by an SS-man.

918  
00:51:26,220 --> 00:51:29,100  
And as we marched out  
through the famous arc

919  
00:51:29,100 --> 00:51:33,480  
gate that is so well known  
now, that said "Arbeit macht

920  
00:51:33,480 --> 00:51:41,550  
frei," "work will free you,"  
as we step out of that gate,

921  
00:51:41,550 --> 00:51:46,500  
there were SS-men with rifles.

922  
00:51:46,500 --> 00:51:48,270  
And they immediately--  
as we walked,

923  
00:51:48,270 --> 00:51:51,570  
they would step  
alongside, perhaps

924  
00:51:51,570 --> 00:51:57,290  
every third or fourth row,  
and they would accompany us

925  
00:51:57,290 --> 00:51:57,915  
to the factory.

926  
00:51:57,915 --> 00:51:59,040  
Was that the first itme  
you saw them again?

927  
00:51:59,040 --> 00:52:00,260  
On the returning.

928  
00:52:00,260 --> 00:52:03,490  
Yes, well, you could  
see it from both sides.

929  
00:52:03,490 --> 00:52:05,340  
But being so young,  
you'd have to read it

930  
00:52:05,340 --> 00:52:06,480  
backwards to really--

931  
00:52:06,480 --> 00:52:10,410  
and it was German, which  
I didn't read quite well.

932  
00:52:10,410 --> 00:52:13,800  
But anyway, you got used to  
it, because if you didn't

933  
00:52:13,800 --> 00:52:16,140  
know what it was, you were  
told by others what it means,

934  
00:52:16,140 --> 00:52:18,480  
you know.

935  
00:52:18,480 --> 00:52:19,611  
What did you think?

936  
00:52:19,611 --> 00:52:21,330  
Did you believe what it meant?

937  
00:52:21,330 --> 00:52:22,560  
I don't think.

938  
00:52:22,560 --> 00:52:28,170  
I was too young to  
understand the impact of it,

939  
00:52:28,170 --> 00:52:30,180  
that work will for you.



940  
00:52:30,180 --> 00:52:34,650  
You know, I didn't take  
it probably seriously.

941  
00:52:34,650 --> 00:52:38,130  
Perhaps it was a slogan or  
a catchword or whatever.

942  
00:52:38,130 --> 00:52:40,800  
You know.

943  
00:52:40,800 --> 00:52:44,140  
Did your whole barracks go  
to the same work as you?

944  
00:52:44,140 --> 00:52:45,610  
No, some people  
from the barrack.

945  
00:52:45,610 --> 00:52:50,500  
No, the barrack, I would say,  
was two stories as I recall.

946  
00:52:50,500 --> 00:52:55,480  
And probably would be  
maybe more than 200,

947  
00:52:55,480 --> 00:52:58,510  
250 people in this barrack.

948  
00:52:58,510 --> 00:52:59,320  
It was rows.

949  
00:52:59,320 --> 00:53:08,560  
Each floor would have rows of  
three stacked beds, you know.

950  
00:53:08,560 --> 00:53:13,710  
And I was on the main--  
on the lower floor.

951

00:53:13,710 --> 00:53:16,490  
And next to the window, there  
were some that were not,

952  
00:53:16,490 --> 00:53:18,870  
were away from the window.

953  
00:53:18,870 --> 00:53:21,600  
They were three deep  
from the wall away,

954  
00:53:21,600 --> 00:53:25,260  
and then you had a  
hallway, a walkway.

955  
00:53:25,260 --> 00:53:32,070  
And of course, they woke you  
up quite early, 5:30, 6:00.

956  
00:53:32,070 --> 00:53:34,950  
And you had to go wash.

957  
00:53:34,950 --> 00:53:36,520  
We didn't get towels.

958  
00:53:36,520 --> 00:53:40,980  
Not the shower, but there  
was like troughs you know?

959  
00:53:40,980 --> 00:53:42,810  
Troughs for animals.

960  
00:53:42,810 --> 00:53:46,140  
And the water was  
running continuously.

961  
00:53:46,140 --> 00:53:47,640  
Or urinals, if you please.

962  
00:53:47,640 --> 00:53:49,170  
I don't know what.

963

00:53:49,170 --> 00:53:51,840  
And you caught the water as  
the water was running through,

964  
00:53:51,840 --> 00:53:54,462  
and you would wash your  
hands and face, you know.

965  
00:53:54,462 --> 00:53:57,180  
And we did have showers.

966  
00:53:57,180 --> 00:53:59,880  
It was kind of community  
showers upon returning

967  
00:53:59,880 --> 00:54:01,923  
from work, but not every day.

968  
00:54:01,923 --> 00:54:03,840  
Those showers, once you  
entered those showers,

969  
00:54:03,840 --> 00:54:06,450  
they had what they  
called a selection.

970  
00:54:06,450 --> 00:54:08,310  
Some were sent to  
the crematories,

971  
00:54:08,310 --> 00:54:11,520  
some who did not look good  
to them as you returned.

972  
00:54:11,520 --> 00:54:13,770  
Let me-- let me cover this  
a little later, because I'm

973  
00:54:13,770 --> 00:54:16,470  
trying to give you a  
chronological sequence

974  
00:54:16,470 --> 00:54:18,490

as best as I recall.

975

00:54:18,490 --> 00:54:22,170

Did you have  
restroom facilities?

976

00:54:22,170 --> 00:54:23,920

Yes, we had restroom facilities.

977

00:54:23,920 --> 00:54:24,570

Yeah.

978

00:54:24,570 --> 00:54:26,580

No, it was, I would  
say, in comparison

979

00:54:26,580 --> 00:54:31,170

it was like the Hilton in  
comparison to Birkenau.

980

00:54:31,170 --> 00:54:33,090

Yeah, it was clean.

981

00:54:33,090 --> 00:54:37,200

Everything was just perfect  
order, absolutely clean.

982

00:54:37,200 --> 00:54:40,170

983

00:54:40,170 --> 00:54:42,060

Perhaps fanatically clean.

984

00:54:42,060 --> 00:54:43,620

Of course, we did  
the cleaning, so.

985

00:54:43,620 --> 00:54:46,770

986

00:54:46,770 --> 00:54:49,340

If you were in the

barracks after work

987

00:54:49,340 --> 00:54:52,810

or before, were you  
free to go out and go?

988

00:54:52,810 --> 00:54:53,310

Yes.

989

00:54:53,310 --> 00:54:56,555

Yes, once we were brought  
back into barracks,

990

00:54:56,555 --> 00:55:01,800

to the camp, which was  
encircled, we were free.

991

00:55:01,800 --> 00:55:07,890

The minute we passed the  
gate, we were free to roam.

992

00:55:07,890 --> 00:55:11,760

And many things went  
down, like people

993

00:55:11,760 --> 00:55:16,320

were saying their foods,  
their rations for cigarettes.

994

00:55:16,320 --> 00:55:19,290

Some people, some  
books were smuggled in.

995

00:55:19,290 --> 00:55:21,300

Some people wanted  
to read books,

996

00:55:21,300 --> 00:55:23,940

and they were given  
them a morsel of bread

997

00:55:23,940 --> 00:55:28,620

for maybe a little novel, a

book, or something like that.

998

00:55:28,620 --> 00:55:30,810

And they also had--

999

00:55:30,810 --> 00:55:34,584

we were paid with some coupons.

1000

00:55:34,584 --> 00:55:36,480

And we could go to

a canteen and buy

1001

00:55:36,480 --> 00:55:44,040

like beets, red beets in cans,

or some other minimal items.

1002

00:55:44,040 --> 00:55:45,100

Beans or beets?

1003

00:55:45,100 --> 00:55:46,140

Beets, beets.

1004

00:55:46,140 --> 00:55:46,880

Oh, beets.

1005

00:55:46,880 --> 00:55:49,740

Red beets, as a

candy, like, you know?

1006

00:55:49,740 --> 00:55:52,430

I remember that distinctly,

because I spilled all my beets

1007

00:55:52,430 --> 00:55:55,080

and I had a stain on my coat.

1008

00:55:55,080 --> 00:55:58,860

And people could buy

cigarettes with their coupons.

1009

00:55:58,860 --> 00:56:03,300

They were not always available

as merchandise there.

1010  
00:56:03,300 --> 00:56:04,890  
But whenever, there  
were immediately

1011  
00:56:04,890 --> 00:56:10,050  
lines, and the  
strongest one had first.

1012  
00:56:10,050 --> 00:56:13,860  
OK, but there was a time,  
I don't recall exactly

1013  
00:56:13,860 --> 00:56:17,370  
what time, probably  
6:30 or 7:00,

1014  
00:56:17,370 --> 00:56:20,910  
that we had to go into  
camp, into the dormitories,

1015  
00:56:20,910 --> 00:56:22,020  
or to the block.

1016  
00:56:22,020 --> 00:56:24,090  
They called it the block.

1017  
00:56:24,090 --> 00:56:28,380  
And once inside, the best place  
was to curl up on your bed

1018  
00:56:28,380 --> 00:56:30,450  
and just stretch out.

1019  
00:56:30,450 --> 00:56:31,380  
There were no chairs.

1020  
00:56:31,380 --> 00:56:36,810  
There were no benches to sit  
or tables at to converse.

1021

00:56:36,810 --> 00:56:41,520  
And you heard a yell from  
your block fÃ¼hrer to be quiet,

1022  
00:56:41,520 --> 00:56:43,560  
to shut up and to be quiet.

1023  
00:56:43,560 --> 00:56:46,260  
So it was just silence.

1024  
00:56:46,260 --> 00:56:48,060  
And they had capos there, too?

1025  
00:56:48,060 --> 00:56:48,780  
Capos, yes.

1026  
00:56:48,780 --> 00:56:51,120  
Yeah, there was one--

1027  
00:56:51,120 --> 00:56:53,700  
as a matter of fact, the  
one that was in our block

1028  
00:56:53,700 --> 00:56:54,480  
was a German.

1029  
00:56:54,480 --> 00:57:00,960  
He was a political with the  
a green angle on his number,

1030  
00:57:00,960 --> 00:57:03,240  
on his coat number.

1031  
00:57:03,240 --> 00:57:05,430  
We all had our numbers sewn.

1032  
00:57:05,430 --> 00:57:06,990  
The Jews had yellow triangles.

1033  
00:57:06,990 --> 00:57:13,020  
Here we didn't wear anymore  
the yellow star of Davids,



1034  
00:57:13,020 --> 00:57:15,210  
but we were nullified by color.

1035  
00:57:15,210 --> 00:57:20,070  
Red were-- green were  
criminals, I believe.

1036  
00:57:20,070 --> 00:57:22,810  
Red were political prisoners.

1037  
00:57:22,810 --> 00:57:24,900  
There were some black triangles.

1038  
00:57:24,900 --> 00:57:27,030  
I don't remember what  
that meant, signified.

1039  
00:57:27,030 --> 00:57:29,040  
And I know the yellow were Jews.

1040  
00:57:29,040 --> 00:57:31,350  
OK.

1041  
00:57:31,350 --> 00:57:35,250  
So the lights went  
off quite early,

1042  
00:57:35,250 --> 00:57:37,710  
and your mind--  
you couldn't sleep,

1043  
00:57:37,710 --> 00:57:39,630  
and your mind just went wild.

1044  
00:57:39,630 --> 00:57:43,260  
Just with all  
kinds of fantasies.

1045  
00:57:43,260 --> 00:57:45,030  
I might come out of this place?

1046

00:57:45,030 --> 00:57:47,320

And how long is this  
going to last, you know?

1047

00:57:47,320 --> 00:57:51,420

And before you know, the shouts  
woke you up in the morning.

1048

00:57:51,420 --> 00:57:55,470

You had to dress, shower,  
and out you went again.

1049

00:57:55,470 --> 00:57:58,290

Do you remember the people that  
slept on either side of you?

1050

00:57:58,290 --> 00:57:59,100

Yes.

1051

00:57:59,100 --> 00:57:59,790

Or below me.

1052

00:57:59,790 --> 00:58:00,542

Sure, yeah, I do.

1053

00:58:00,542 --> 00:58:02,250

What relationship did  
you have with them?

1054

00:58:02,250 --> 00:58:05,880

It was quite-- there was a  
camaraderie, I would say.

1055

00:58:05,880 --> 00:58:09,720

Yes, we had all  
in common, perhaps

1056

00:58:09,720 --> 00:58:13,800

each one would relate to one  
another, where you're from,

1057

00:58:13,800 --> 00:58:16,050

and what was your family like.

1058

00:58:16,050 --> 00:58:19,470

You know, we were a mix of  
different nationalities,

1059

00:58:19,470 --> 00:58:21,210

of course.

1060

00:58:21,210 --> 00:58:26,122

But this camp was, I would say,  
a more than half was Jewish.

1061

00:58:26,122 --> 00:58:28,080

There were a lot of  
non-Jews in that camp, too.

1062

00:58:28,080 --> 00:58:31,060

1063

00:58:31,060 --> 00:58:32,427

How did you communicate?

1064

00:58:32,427 --> 00:58:33,010

What language?

1065

00:58:33,010 --> 00:58:37,150

We just motioned, talked  
whatever we could.

1066

00:58:37,150 --> 00:58:40,570

You'd be surprised when you have  
to communicate with people, you

1067

00:58:40,570 --> 00:58:41,620

somehow--

1068

00:58:41,620 --> 00:58:44,260

somehow through a  
third person sometimes

1069

00:58:44,260 --> 00:58:46,900

that would know the  
language, you know.

1070  
00:58:46,900 --> 00:58:49,058  
You'd pick and  
choose your friends,

1071  
00:58:49,058 --> 00:58:50,350  
whom you were comfortable with.

1072  
00:58:50,350 --> 00:58:52,660  
You stayed away  
from the rowdy ones.

1073  
00:58:52,660 --> 00:58:55,960  
Mostly being Jewish, you'd  
stick to your own kind,

1074  
00:58:55,960 --> 00:58:59,170  
because you're most comfortable  
when you can communicate with.

1075  
00:58:59,170 --> 00:59:01,810  
Some were Hungarian  
Jews, I remember.

1076  
00:59:01,810 --> 00:59:03,730  
And they spoke Yiddish.

1077  
00:59:03,730 --> 00:59:07,330  
OK, we could  
communicate Yiddish.

1078  
00:59:07,330 --> 00:59:10,420  
Mostly, probably,  
there were Czech Jews.

1079  
00:59:10,420 --> 00:59:14,410  
You could speak--  
some spoke Yiddish.

1080  
00:59:14,410 --> 00:59:17,620  
And you could also

encounter a lot of people

1081  
00:59:17,620 --> 00:59:21,168  
that were quite assimilated,  
unless they were very Jewish

1082  
00:59:21,168 --> 00:59:22,960  
oriented, but they  
would not speak Yiddish.

1083  
00:59:22,960 --> 00:59:24,335  
They wouldn't  
speak the language.

1084  
00:59:24,335 --> 00:59:26,890  
It was a little  
bit more difficult.

1085  
00:59:26,890 --> 00:59:29,860  
But Yiddish would be probably  
the universal language

1086  
00:59:29,860 --> 00:59:33,040  
amongst Jews, probably.

1087  
00:59:33,040 --> 00:59:37,170  
Especially in France., Yiddish  
was quite prevalent, yeah.

1088  
00:59:37,170 --> 00:59:40,300

1089  
00:59:40,300 --> 00:59:43,120  
Now, the job I had,  
as I indicated,

1090  
00:59:43,120 --> 00:59:45,670  
was assistant to a  
lathe operator, which

1091  
00:59:45,670 --> 00:59:49,090  
was a Jew from Czechoslovakia.

1092

00:59:49,090 --> 00:59:52,690

And he worked in  
the Skoda factory.

1093

00:59:52,690 --> 00:59:55,340

Skoda is a well-known  
armament factory.

1094

00:59:55,340 --> 01:00:00,140

Also, I think they made  
automobile cars as well.

1095

01:00:00,140 --> 01:00:04,300

And this person-- now here's  
where I'm going to surprise

1096

01:00:04,300 --> 01:00:06,340

you--

1097

01:00:06,340 --> 01:00:07,810

knew Elie Wiesel.

1098

01:00:07,810 --> 01:00:09,490

And Elie Wiesel  
was in our group.

1099

01:00:09,490 --> 01:00:13,760

1100

01:00:13,760 --> 01:00:18,980

And Elie Wiesel,  
as I remember him,

1101

01:00:18,980 --> 01:00:24,200

conducted a holiday service.

1102

01:00:24,200 --> 01:00:27,170

And it was the Rosh Hashanah  
service or the Yom Kippur

1103

01:00:27,170 --> 01:00:29,340

service.

1104  
01:00:29,340 --> 01:00:32,120  
OK, well, we were  
making in this complex

1105  
01:00:32,120 --> 01:00:39,790  
of the factory, were  
tools to manufacture

1106  
01:00:39,790 --> 01:00:42,970  
what you would stamp out--

1107  
01:00:42,970 --> 01:00:44,110  
plates.

1108  
01:00:44,110 --> 01:00:46,630  
I don't know the term.

1109  
01:00:46,630 --> 01:00:48,880  
It's a punch press, right.

1110  
01:00:48,880 --> 01:00:52,840  
It would stamp out from metal,  
from sheet metal, that would be

1111  
01:00:52,840 --> 01:00:55,930  
related to armaments, to parts.

1112  
01:00:55,930 --> 01:00:59,130

1113  
01:00:59,130 --> 01:01:02,880  
The man I was,  
assisting he was boring,

1114  
01:01:02,880 --> 01:01:05,850  
drilling the barrel  
to hand grenades.

1115  
01:01:05,850 --> 01:01:09,390  
And the German hand grenade had  
a short barrel, metal barrel

1116  
01:01:09,390 --> 01:01:13,260  
hollow in the middle,  
and then a wooden handle

1117  
01:01:13,260 --> 01:01:15,600  
would be attached, about  
probably 12 inches,

1118  
01:01:15,600 --> 01:01:17,130  
approximately.

1119  
01:01:17,130 --> 01:01:20,520  
And there be a hole drilled  
in the wooden handle.

1120  
01:01:20,520 --> 01:01:23,490  
And at the end would be  
like little porcelain knob

1121  
01:01:23,490 --> 01:01:26,010  
that you can pull it.

1122  
01:01:26,010 --> 01:01:28,440  
Pull it, there was  
a string inserted.

1123  
01:01:28,440 --> 01:01:30,420  
We did not do the  
finished product,

1124  
01:01:30,420 --> 01:01:33,000  
but every lathe  
did something else,

1125  
01:01:33,000 --> 01:01:37,390  
like it's a chain reaction.

1126  
01:01:37,390 --> 01:01:40,140  
And I was pouring  
sometimes a liquid

1127



01:01:40,140 --> 01:01:44,640  
to cool the knife that would  
cut the metal or drill the metal

1128  
01:01:44,640 --> 01:01:46,300  
and keep it cool.

1129  
01:01:46,300 --> 01:01:48,450  
And sometimes it was  
put in automatic,

1130  
01:01:48,450 --> 01:01:52,620  
and I would watch the depth  
of it, or the thickness

1131  
01:01:52,620 --> 01:01:55,470  
while the man I  
was assisting would

1132  
01:01:55,470 --> 01:01:59,820  
walk away or have a break.

1133  
01:01:59,820 --> 01:02:05,700  
Adjacent to us was  
an enclosed enclosure

1134  
01:02:05,700 --> 01:02:07,770  
with partially glassed.

1135  
01:02:07,770 --> 01:02:11,070  
The upper part was-- a low part  
was wall and the other part was

1136  
01:02:11,070 --> 01:02:12,960  
glass, and there was--

1137  
01:02:12,960 --> 01:02:17,790  
where they were hardening.

1138  
01:02:17,790 --> 01:02:19,410  
"Tempering" is the word.

1139

01:02:19,410 --> 01:02:27,500  
Tempering this finished  
tool that would stamp out.

1140  
01:02:27,500 --> 01:02:31,100  
That's the best I can describe  
it and define it to you.

1141  
01:02:31,100 --> 01:02:33,650  
And it would go in that  
room, and they would put it

1142  
01:02:33,650 --> 01:02:36,695  
into ovens to temper it.

1143  
01:02:36,695 --> 01:02:38,570  
And they would dip it  
in water and temper it,

1144  
01:02:38,570 --> 01:02:41,490  
just to make it hard.

1145  
01:02:41,490 --> 01:02:45,930  
And I believe in that  
room Elie Wiesel was.

1146  
01:02:45,930 --> 01:02:51,440  
And we had services, just  
phonetically, you might say.

1147  
01:02:51,440 --> 01:02:53,780  
Repeat what I say.

1148  
01:02:53,780 --> 01:02:57,320  
On a shift basis,  
like five would go in,

1149  
01:02:57,320 --> 01:03:00,500  
carrying something, pretending  
that we are bringing

1150  
01:03:00,500 --> 01:03:03,050  
in something to temper.

1151  
01:03:03,050 --> 01:03:05,210  
And they'd leave  
with something else,

1152  
01:03:05,210 --> 01:03:06,860  
because we had  
supervisors to continue.

1153  
01:03:06,860 --> 01:03:09,500  
Those were German,  
civilian Germans.

1154  
01:03:09,500 --> 01:03:14,750  
But whether they were  
SS, we don't know.

1155  
01:03:14,750 --> 01:03:18,380  
But there were technical  
people, so I would probably

1156  
01:03:18,380 --> 01:03:22,280  
surmise that they were also  
under the watch of the SS,

1157  
01:03:22,280 --> 01:03:24,680  
because they were also  
employees of Krupp.

1158  
01:03:24,680 --> 01:03:26,810  
They were supervisors.

1159  
01:03:26,810 --> 01:03:29,210  
Some were quite  
nice, I must say.

1160  
01:03:29,210 --> 01:03:32,403  
Some would bring us  
some candy, and they

1161  
01:03:32,403 --> 01:03:33,820  
would look left  
and right and see,

1162  
01:03:33,820 --> 01:03:36,710  
and they would  
leave it in a place.

1163  
01:03:36,710 --> 01:03:40,650  
And they would say, "Junge,  
this is for you, you know."

1164  
01:03:40,650 --> 01:03:42,830  
And it would be some morsel  
of some kind of candy.

1165  
01:03:42,830 --> 01:03:44,270  
So.

1166  
01:03:44,270 --> 01:03:46,640  
So it was encouraging.

1167  
01:03:46,640 --> 01:03:51,980  
So in this room, you  
said there were services.

1168  
01:03:51,980 --> 01:03:53,510  
People went in and out?

1169  
01:03:53,510 --> 01:03:54,350  
Yeah.

1170  
01:03:54,350 --> 01:03:57,590  
And these guys, this  
happened during the day?

1171  
01:03:57,590 --> 01:03:58,310  
Or?

1172  
01:03:58,310 --> 01:04:00,410  
During the day, yes.

1173  
01:04:00,410 --> 01:04:01,620  
During the day.

1174

01:04:01,620 --> 01:04:05,335

First of all, this individual,  
I'm certain it was Elie Wiesel.

1175

01:04:05,335 --> 01:04:07,460

Because I have a book, that  
he was with that group,

1176

01:04:07,460 --> 01:04:07,960

identifying.

1177

01:04:07,960 --> 01:04:09,020

I brought it with me.

1178

01:04:09,020 --> 01:04:12,800

1179

01:04:12,800 --> 01:04:14,210

At the time, you didn't know.

1180

01:04:14,210 --> 01:04:17,540

At that time, probably Elie  
wouldn't mean an awful lot

1181

01:04:17,540 --> 01:04:19,970

to us if we'd know the  
first name, you know,

1182

01:04:19,970 --> 01:04:22,340

or even the last name.

1183

01:04:22,340 --> 01:04:25,550

But I have heard  
Elie Wiesel speak,

1184

01:04:25,550 --> 01:04:29,920

and I tried to identify  
with him, and I couldn't.

1185

01:04:29,920 --> 01:04:33,320

In Temple Emanu-El here in  
San Francisco some years back.

1186  
01:04:33,320 --> 01:04:34,970  
And I could not--

1187  
01:04:34,970 --> 01:04:37,100  
he just was rushed off.

1188  
01:04:37,100 --> 01:04:39,950  
But I'm quite sure that  
it was Elie Wiesel.

1189  
01:04:39,950 --> 01:04:41,488  
So you went into this room?

1190  
01:04:41,488 --> 01:04:42,530  
Can you tell me about it?

1191  
01:04:42,530 --> 01:04:44,990  
Yes, and perhaps some  
prayers were recited.

1192  
01:04:44,990 --> 01:04:48,140  
First of all, we were  
told by this individual

1193  
01:04:48,140 --> 01:04:52,130  
that I think, that I'm almost  
positive it was Elie Wiesel,

1194  
01:04:52,130 --> 01:04:58,370  
that today is Rosh  
Hashanah, you know.

1195  
01:04:58,370 --> 01:04:59,180  
No calendars.

1196  
01:04:59,180 --> 01:05:01,190  
We didn't know where we were at.

1197  
01:05:01,190 --> 01:05:04,140  
We didn't know the day of  
the month, let alone the day

1198  
01:05:04,140 --> 01:05:04,640  
of the week.

1199  
01:05:04,640 --> 01:05:11,480  
You know, because  
there was no days off.

1200  
01:05:11,480 --> 01:05:12,750  
You know, the war was on.

1201  
01:05:12,750 --> 01:05:16,625  
And we worked Sundays, saturdays  
there were three shifts.

1202  
01:05:16,625 --> 01:05:20,220

1203  
01:05:20,220 --> 01:05:24,170  
So this individual, that  
in fact is Elie Wiesel,

1204  
01:05:24,170 --> 01:05:26,770  
said that today's Rosh Hashanah.

1205  
01:05:26,770 --> 01:05:29,030  
And maybe a week later,  
10 days later, he said,

1206  
01:05:29,030 --> 01:05:29,990  
today is Yom Kippur.

1207  
01:05:29,990 --> 01:05:34,340  
You know, and  
somehow we tried to

1208  
01:05:34,340 --> 01:05:39,680  
by prayers in that room,  
whatever he could pass on

1209  
01:05:39,680 --> 01:05:47,550  
to us, and we would murmur,

and just the awareness

1210  
01:05:47,550 --> 01:05:50,840  
could kind of satisfy you.

1211  
01:05:50,840 --> 01:05:51,340  
OK.

1212  
01:05:51,340 --> 01:05:54,270

1213  
01:05:54,270 --> 01:05:55,980  
I don't know if this  
is a time to show

1214  
01:05:55,980 --> 01:05:57,540  
you this book of Elie Wiesel.

1215  
01:05:57,540 --> 01:06:00,108  
Would that be all right?

1216  
01:06:00,108 --> 01:06:02,100  
OK, this is in French.

1217  
01:06:02,100 --> 01:06:03,530  
And he wrote a foreword to it.

1218  
01:06:03,530 --> 01:06:07,400

1219  
01:06:07,400 --> 01:06:08,540  
This is the--

1220  
01:06:08,540 --> 01:06:12,500  
"Les Enfants de Buchenwald,"  
"The Children of Buchenwald."

1221  
01:06:12,500 --> 01:06:13,290  
OK.

1222  
01:06:13,290 --> 01:06:14,998



This is a description  
of a friend of mine

1223  
01:06:14,998 --> 01:06:17,060  
that gave me this book.

1224  
01:06:17,060 --> 01:06:19,880  
And here's a preface.

1225  
01:06:19,880 --> 01:06:22,190  
And it's Elie Wiesel.

1226  
01:06:22,190 --> 01:06:24,880

1227  
01:06:24,880 --> 01:06:33,005  
And it's interesting, but mostly  
deals with the post-war period.

1228  
01:06:33,005 --> 01:06:37,960

1229  
01:06:37,960 --> 01:06:42,570  
Well, this went on probably  
till 1944 like this.

1230  
01:06:42,570 --> 01:06:49,240  
We lost a lot of people due  
to the selection in camp.

1231  
01:06:49,240 --> 01:06:51,600  
Let me identify or define  
the word "selection."

1232  
01:06:51,600 --> 01:06:54,330  
It's when you return from camp  
maybe once a week, you never

1233  
01:06:54,330 --> 01:06:56,280  
knew when this  
would be, you were

1234

01:06:56,280 --> 01:06:57,990  
led in with the  
same accompanying

1235  
01:06:57,990 --> 01:06:59,730  
SS-men alongside you.

1236  
01:06:59,730 --> 01:07:02,190  
We were in columns  
of five abreast.

1237  
01:07:02,190 --> 01:07:03,630  
And you would march  
into the camp.

1238  
01:07:03,630 --> 01:07:05,172  
When they would  
still march with you,

1239  
01:07:05,172 --> 01:07:09,390  
you knew immediately that they  
were taking you to the showers.

1240  
01:07:09,390 --> 01:07:12,870  
And those were not the  
showers that are well

1241  
01:07:12,870 --> 01:07:14,940  
known in the crematorium.

1242  
01:07:14,940 --> 01:07:16,500  
But that's were  
the real showers.

1243  
01:07:16,500 --> 01:07:18,060  
You would take a shower.

1244  
01:07:18,060 --> 01:07:23,240  
But as you left the shower, you  
were directed to go to the left

1245  
01:07:23,240 --> 01:07:25,410  
or to the right.

1246  
01:07:25,410 --> 01:07:28,380  
But a black uniformed with a--

1247  
01:07:28,380 --> 01:07:32,084

1248  
01:07:32,084 --> 01:07:33,540  
Truncheon?

1249  
01:07:33,540 --> 01:07:34,110  
A whip.

1250  
01:07:34,110 --> 01:07:35,910  
If there's a word,  
I can't think of it.

1251  
01:07:35,910 --> 01:07:36,960  
You know.

1252  
01:07:36,960 --> 01:07:39,300  
Anyway, a swagger is the word.

1253  
01:07:39,300 --> 01:07:43,740  
A little swagger in their hand,  
and they would kind of put it

1254  
01:07:43,740 --> 01:07:47,970  
on your shoulder and they  
would say "links, rechts."

1255  
01:07:47,970 --> 01:07:54,120  
And those who went left didn't  
look physically good to them.

1256  
01:07:54,120 --> 01:08:01,210  
See, because the nourishment  
was not very sufficient.

1257  
01:08:01,210 --> 01:08:04,500  
So people would  
degenerate gradually.

1258  
01:08:04,500 --> 01:08:07,560  
And as the new  
arrivals came in, they

1259  
01:08:07,560 --> 01:08:10,740  
would choose the more  
robust and healthier people

1260  
01:08:10,740 --> 01:08:12,270  
to replace those.

1261  
01:08:12,270 --> 01:08:17,200  
So the weaker ones, and however  
you had to put out on a 10,

1262  
01:08:17,200 --> 01:08:21,029  
12 hours probably by the time  
you came, was almost half

1263  
01:08:21,029 --> 01:08:24,750  
a day of time.

1264  
01:08:24,750 --> 01:08:27,960  
And people-- if you  
don't eat a proper meal,

1265  
01:08:27,960 --> 01:08:32,670  
you just cannot put out.

1266  
01:08:32,670 --> 01:08:37,770  
And that was their aim, to  
replace, continually select,

1267  
01:08:37,770 --> 01:08:45,029  
weed out, so to speak, the less  
healthy-looking by appearance

1268  
01:08:45,029 --> 01:08:46,380  
and eliminate them.

1269  
01:08:46,380 --> 01:08:49,256

And they ended up  
in the crematorium.

1270  
01:08:49,256 --> 01:08:55,590  
Yeah, and the crematoria were  
very close from Auschwitz,

1271  
01:08:55,590 --> 01:08:57,090  
from the camp that I was in.

1272  
01:08:57,090 --> 01:09:00,060  
And of course, the  
crematoria were in Auschwitz.

1273  
01:09:00,060 --> 01:09:02,740  
You could see, I remember,  
four chimney stacks,

1274  
01:09:02,740 --> 01:09:05,100  
red chimney stacks.

1275  
01:09:05,100 --> 01:09:07,979  
And you could see the stench.

1276  
01:09:07,979 --> 01:09:09,270  
You could smell the stench.

1277  
01:09:09,270 --> 01:09:13,319  
You could see the  
ember, cinders,

1278  
01:09:13,319 --> 01:09:18,779  
ember flowing in the air,  
just like burned flesh.

1279  
01:09:18,779 --> 01:09:21,899  
If you ever barbecue  
something, I'm

1280  
01:09:21,899 --> 01:09:26,040  
sorry to define it that way, but  
that's the way you would smell.

1281

01:09:26,040 --> 01:09:29,520

And we probably became  
immune to that smell,

1282

01:09:29,520 --> 01:09:32,640

because it was perpetually  
going on there.

1283

01:09:32,640 --> 01:09:36,029

Occasionally we'd see  
sparks and a flame

1284

01:09:36,029 --> 01:09:37,529

shoot out through the chimney.

1285

01:09:37,529 --> 01:09:41,729

In the winter months,  
when the days were shorter

1286

01:09:41,729 --> 01:09:44,670

and it had got  
darker sooner, you

1287

01:09:44,670 --> 01:09:49,290

could really see a glow  
coming out of chimneys.

1288

01:09:49,290 --> 01:09:50,470

When did you first realize?

1289

01:09:50,470 --> 01:09:51,345

Pardon me?

1290

01:09:51,345 --> 01:09:53,220

When did you first  
realize what was going on?

1291

01:09:53,220 --> 01:09:55,053

There was an underground  
communication there

1292

01:09:55,053 --> 01:09:56,010

by the other people.

1293

01:09:56,010 --> 01:09:59,490

There were some people that,  
as I indicated, were political.

1294

01:09:59,490 --> 01:10:01,020

Perhaps they were--

1295

01:10:01,020 --> 01:10:03,510

Leon Blum was in  
Buchenwald later on.

1296

01:10:03,510 --> 01:10:04,950

I found out that  
Leon Blum, which

1297

01:10:04,950 --> 01:10:07,170

was the prime minister  
before the war,

1298

01:10:07,170 --> 01:10:10,530

was a prisoner, a political  
prisoner in Buchenwald.

1299

01:10:10,530 --> 01:10:13,433

We didn't know until  
we heard about it.

1300

01:10:13,433 --> 01:10:14,850

There were some  
military personnel

1301

01:10:14,850 --> 01:10:17,460

from various  
countries, too, that

1302

01:10:17,460 --> 01:10:22,410

probably escaped as a military  
person, or hid as a civilian.

1303

01:10:22,410 --> 01:10:26,220

And they eventually ended up

in Camp and these people knew.

1304

01:10:26,220 --> 01:10:28,980

There definitely  
was communication.

1305

01:10:28,980 --> 01:10:30,630

I know personally  
there was a crystal--

1306

01:10:30,630 --> 01:10:33,900

they had crystal radios,  
and they had communicat--

1307

01:10:33,900 --> 01:10:36,300

I wouldn't say-- it was  
a one-way communication.

1308

01:10:36,300 --> 01:10:38,490

They could listen to the news.

1309

01:10:38,490 --> 01:10:42,960

I know personally, of  
a person in transit

1310

01:10:42,960 --> 01:10:45,420

from Drancy to Auschwitz.

1311

01:10:45,420 --> 01:10:50,260

He listened to a crystal  
radio, and this man's name was

1312

01:10:50,260 --> 01:10:54,720

a Wexler, Mr.  
Wexler, W-E-X-L-E-R.

1313

01:10:54,720 --> 01:10:57,450

And he listened, and  
he couldn't give us

1314

01:10:57,450 --> 01:11:00,450

a good report,  
because the rhythm



1315  
01:11:00,450 --> 01:11:05,760  
of the wheels of the train  
were quite disturbing to--

1316  
01:11:05,760 --> 01:11:08,730  
whenever we stopped, and  
we stopped quite often

1317  
01:11:08,730 --> 01:11:12,730  
because we had air raids,  
bombardments, you know,

1318  
01:11:12,730 --> 01:11:16,770  
we actually saw once  
we crossed Germany,

1319  
01:11:16,770 --> 01:11:23,190  
we saw buildings through  
the slats, as best we could.

1320  
01:11:23,190 --> 01:11:26,130  
Which we realized  
the war was on.

1321  
01:11:26,130 --> 01:11:29,700  
Because in Paris  
where you lived,

1322  
01:11:29,700 --> 01:11:32,940  
there was some  
bombardment of Paris

1323  
01:11:32,940 --> 01:11:35,190  
by basically cannons  
or something,

1324  
01:11:35,190 --> 01:11:38,110  
but Paris was not  
destroyed at all.

1325  
01:11:38,110 --> 01:11:41,040  
It was not damaged hardly.

1326  
01:11:41,040 --> 01:11:44,940  
So here in transit,  
we could see,

1327  
01:11:44,940 --> 01:11:49,470  
sense, we could hear distant  
explosions of bombs, you know.

1328  
01:11:49,470 --> 01:11:56,140  
And while we were in  
hold bases, this man

1329  
01:11:56,140 --> 01:11:59,830  
would listen to his little  
crystal, little earphone.

1330  
01:11:59,830 --> 01:12:01,900  
It was a small as a matchbox.

1331  
01:12:01,900 --> 01:12:07,750  
And he would tell us, I just  
heard London giving the news.

1332  
01:12:07,750 --> 01:12:12,940  
You know, it was kind of  
a real pepper upper, too,

1333  
01:12:12,940 --> 01:12:13,870  
in retrospect.

1334  
01:12:13,870 --> 01:12:17,890  
Now I remember that probably  
didn't mean much to me

1335  
01:12:17,890 --> 01:12:18,550  
at that time.

1336  
01:12:18,550 --> 01:12:22,570

1337  
01:12:22,570 --> 01:12:28,530

And so on, we  
stayed there until--

1338  
01:12:28,530 --> 01:12:29,760  
we had good times.

1339  
01:12:29,760 --> 01:12:33,510  
When I say good times, we had  
more at times in Auschwitz.

1340  
01:12:33,510 --> 01:12:36,930  
We had less food and  
sometimes hardly any food.

1341  
01:12:36,930 --> 01:12:39,720

1342  
01:12:39,720 --> 01:12:48,990  
And finally we heard  
bombardment in the distance,

1343  
01:12:48,990 --> 01:12:51,600  
and the sky lit up.

1344  
01:12:51,600 --> 01:12:52,890  
I think it was in '40--

1345  
01:12:52,890 --> 01:12:56,520  
late '43 or early '44.

1346  
01:12:56,520 --> 01:12:58,440  
Or mid '44.

1347  
01:12:58,440 --> 01:13:04,800  
Middle of '44, when the Russian  
camp, the Russian advancement.

1348  
01:13:04,800 --> 01:13:07,680  
Because that area of  
Poland is not far,

1349  
01:13:07,680 --> 01:13:09,630

I believe, from  
the Russian border.

1350  
01:13:09,630 --> 01:13:15,992

1351  
01:13:15,992 --> 01:13:17,200  
This is a selection question.

1352  
01:13:17,200 --> 01:13:20,950  
Did you-- the selections  
happened only at night

1353  
01:13:20,950 --> 01:13:21,880  
after you came back?

1354  
01:13:21,880 --> 01:13:22,780  
After, yes.

1355  
01:13:22,780 --> 01:13:23,470  
Upon return.

1356  
01:13:23,470 --> 01:13:25,300  
Always upon return from work.

1357  
01:13:25,300 --> 01:13:26,500  
Not everynight.

1358  
01:13:26,500 --> 01:13:31,720  
At least not from  
our kommando group.

1359  
01:13:31,720 --> 01:13:34,810  
I am sure they alternated,  
because there were so many

1360  
01:13:34,810 --> 01:13:36,310  
coming and going at all times.

1361  
01:13:36,310 --> 01:13:39,280  
You had night shifts,  
you had midday shifts.

1362  
01:13:39,280 --> 01:13:43,420  
And you would line up  
probably 200 or 300, you know,

1363  
01:13:43,420 --> 01:13:47,080  
and march out, and  
then march back in.

1364  
01:13:47,080 --> 01:13:50,650  
Were you worried about keeping  
yourself strong or healthy?

1365  
01:13:50,650 --> 01:13:55,420  
Well, it's something you just  
don't think about, perhaps.

1366  
01:13:55,420 --> 01:13:59,650  
You just take every hour at  
a time, every day at a time.

1367  
01:13:59,650 --> 01:14:02,560  
And when you wake up,  
you say, "am I alive?"

1368  
01:14:02,560 --> 01:14:03,400  
I guess I'm here."

1369  
01:14:03,400 --> 01:14:05,567  
You know, and just--

1370  
01:14:05,567 --> 01:14:06,775  
you just don't want to think.

1371  
01:14:06,775 --> 01:14:10,180

1372  
01:14:10,180 --> 01:14:16,930  
You know that death is lurking,  
because these guards were

1373  
01:14:16,930 --> 01:14:19,570

hostile.

1374  
01:14:19,570 --> 01:14:22,990  
Their faces were stern.

1375  
01:14:22,990 --> 01:14:27,520  
Like we would be rejects.

1376  
01:14:27,520 --> 01:14:29,440  
We were.

1377  
01:14:29,440 --> 01:14:32,200  
And were treated as such.

1378  
01:14:32,200 --> 01:14:36,280  
So you just didn't want to turn  
towards one and look at him,

1379  
01:14:36,280 --> 01:14:39,160  
or you would just look  
straight ahead, you know?

1380  
01:14:39,160 --> 01:14:43,390  
And it's amazing what the  
human body, as young or as old

1381  
01:14:43,390 --> 01:14:47,830  
as you are, can absorb  
and cope with it,

1382  
01:14:47,830 --> 01:14:53,530  
and just hope to go  
on with the condition

1383  
01:14:53,530 --> 01:14:56,840  
that you are imposed upon.

1384  
01:14:56,840 --> 01:14:59,320  
I'm sorry I'm being  
philosophical here.

1385  
01:14:59,320 --> 01:15:01,900

And continue, and  
continue, and continue,

1386  
01:15:01,900 --> 01:15:05,320  
you hope that there's  
no turn for the worst.

1387  
01:15:05,320 --> 01:15:11,470  
And in retrospect, I  
think now that everything

1388  
01:15:11,470 --> 01:15:15,310  
was done instinctively,  
automatically,

1389  
01:15:15,310 --> 01:15:17,350  
just became a robot.

1390  
01:15:17,350 --> 01:15:21,310  
And since you do what  
you're told, and that's it.

1391  
01:15:21,310 --> 01:15:22,880  
There is no you.

1392  
01:15:22,880 --> 01:15:25,120  
You just do it.

1393  
01:15:25,120 --> 01:15:31,180  
And God help those who  
can't, because no one would

1394  
01:15:31,180 --> 01:15:31,990  
refuse, really.

1395  
01:15:31,990 --> 01:15:37,160  
Because everyone knew what  
would be awaiting you.

1396  
01:15:37,160 --> 01:15:39,280  
I might point out,  
on the away in,

1397

01:15:39,280 --> 01:15:45,850  
you've heard about this famous  
block in Auschwitz that was

1398

01:15:45,850 --> 01:15:49,540  
the experimental, that Mengele.

1399

01:15:49,540 --> 01:15:51,250  
We didn't know there  
was a Mengele then.

1400

01:15:51,250 --> 01:15:58,190  
We knew there was a block  
of youngsters about my age.

1401

01:15:58,190 --> 01:16:01,100  
And there were-- as we marched  
in and out, they were looking.

1402

01:16:01,100 --> 01:16:05,840  
We were separated by a  
fence, a wired fence.

1403

01:16:05,840 --> 01:16:09,950  
But this was not electrically  
activated, that fence.

1404

01:16:09,950 --> 01:16:10,700  
Just separated.

1405

01:16:10,700 --> 01:16:15,470  
And these kids would look out,  
out of that building, and wave

1406

01:16:15,470 --> 01:16:22,550  
to us, and we had no mirrors,  
so we could look at them

1407

01:16:22,550 --> 01:16:23,780  
and see how we looked.

1408

01:16:23,780 --> 01:16:25,505



There were totally shaven.

1409

01:16:25,505 --> 01:16:28,040

1410

01:16:28,040 --> 01:16:32,150

And we didn't know exactly--  
we thought it was a hospital.

1411

01:16:32,150 --> 01:16:35,960

But we did not know that there  
was an experiment-- experiment

1412

01:16:35,960 --> 01:16:42,960

block, experimentation on  
genetic experiments, you know.

1413

01:16:42,960 --> 01:16:47,900

Also a little further, there  
was a block, a block, again,

1414

01:16:47,900 --> 01:16:49,070

I'll define as a building.

1415

01:16:49,070 --> 01:16:53,240

It was a red brick building  
with apparently a New England

1416

01:16:53,240 --> 01:16:58,980

roof, a sloped roof.

1417

01:16:58,980 --> 01:17:01,440

Quite-- it had a lot  
of nice eye appeal,

1418

01:17:01,440 --> 01:17:05,400

because looked very  
rustic the building.

1419

01:17:05,400 --> 01:17:08,585

And some windows  
even had flower pots.

1420  
01:17:08,585 --> 01:17:09,960  
You can make  
imagine it somewhere

1421  
01:17:09,960 --> 01:17:12,060  
in the German countryside.

1422  
01:17:12,060 --> 01:17:15,150  
But this was Poland.

1423  
01:17:15,150 --> 01:17:20,700  
And you saw a lot of females  
there, looking out, made up,

1424  
01:17:20,700 --> 01:17:27,900  
makeup, lipstick, perhaps  
some pink cheeks and so on,

1425  
01:17:27,900 --> 01:17:32,580  
and dressed differently, not  
in their uniforms that we wore

1426  
01:17:32,580 --> 01:17:33,750  
with the stripes.

1427  
01:17:33,750 --> 01:17:35,400  
They wore some, perhaps.

1428  
01:17:35,400 --> 01:17:38,670  
And we found out that  
those were prostitutes.

1429  
01:17:38,670 --> 01:17:44,290  
Whether it was for the SS or for  
the prisoners, I have no idea.

1430  
01:17:44,290 --> 01:17:47,080  
Yeah.

1431  
01:17:47,080 --> 01:17:48,265  
So I would--

1432

01:17:48,265 --> 01:17:49,730

I just don't know what this--

1433

01:17:49,730 --> 01:17:52,350

1434

01:17:52,350 --> 01:17:55,710

Were there-- with  
your daily rations,

1435

01:17:55,710 --> 01:17:57,900

did you find yourself  
trying to figure out

1436

01:17:57,900 --> 01:18:00,600

other ways of getting food or  
were there any other option?

1437

01:18:00,600 --> 01:18:05,130

Well, somewhere, I  
was just too young,

1438

01:18:05,130 --> 01:18:09,660

because some who were  
smokers were somehow--

1439

01:18:09,660 --> 01:18:13,890

they were totally  
organizing some kind of a,

1440

01:18:13,890 --> 01:18:18,570

you might call it a black market  
within or without the camp.

1441

01:18:18,570 --> 01:18:19,950

We had a lot of  
things, that some

1442

01:18:19,950 --> 01:18:24,930

of these things that people  
brought with them, the baggage.

1443

01:18:24,930 --> 01:18:27,450  
Some people would take  
viable things, probably.

1444  
01:18:27,450 --> 01:18:30,645  
Like if they had gold-- also  
the gold and silver that

1445  
01:18:30,645 --> 01:18:33,210  
was taken out of their  
rings, their wedding rings.

1446  
01:18:33,210 --> 01:18:37,173  
If they had a watch or  
they had gold teeth,

1447  
01:18:37,173 --> 01:18:38,340  
which they were knocked out.

1448  
01:18:38,340 --> 01:18:42,960  
And those were done also by  
prisoners, by Jewish prisoners.

1449  
01:18:42,960 --> 01:18:46,410  
Somehow in return, they probably  
would carry something back

1450  
01:18:46,410 --> 01:18:49,950  
with them and trade off  
for something in turn.

1451  
01:18:49,950 --> 01:18:52,680  
There was a continuous  
trade going on.

1452  
01:18:52,680 --> 01:18:56,850  
As young as I was, I distinctly  
remember in the block,

1453  
01:18:56,850 --> 01:18:59,930  
once we were closed inside,  
there was trading going on.

1454

01:18:59,930 --> 01:19:02,800

1455

01:19:02,800 --> 01:19:04,250

It's human nature.

1456

01:19:04,250 --> 01:19:05,200

It's so resilient.

1457

01:19:05,200 --> 01:19:07,600

It's unbelievable.

1458

01:19:07,600 --> 01:19:10,260

So--

1459

01:19:10,260 --> 01:19:11,760

Were you ever able \_

1460

01:19:11,760 --> 01:19:13,140

No, I was just too young.

1461

01:19:13,140 --> 01:19:14,280

I would not--

1462

01:19:14,280 --> 01:19:18,240

I had nothing to offer  
anyone other than my food

1463

01:19:18,240 --> 01:19:22,950

that I just learned to eat as  
fast as I could, so we had a--

1464

01:19:22,950 --> 01:19:26,400

maybe they were square loaves  
of bread, just like a loaf,

1465

01:19:26,400 --> 01:19:27,240

you know.

1466

01:19:27,240 --> 01:19:29,220

And you got 1/5 of that.

1467

01:19:29,220 --> 01:19:30,480

A fifth.

1468

01:19:30,480 --> 01:19:33,660

Sometimes they were  
small, they were a tenth.

1469

01:19:33,660 --> 01:19:35,370

Because these people  
had cut this bread,

1470

01:19:35,370 --> 01:19:39,000

and had another business  
going on the side, probably.

1471

01:19:39,000 --> 01:19:41,640

And there's no way  
you could speak up.

1472

01:19:41,640 --> 01:19:42,960

You know.

1473

01:19:42,960 --> 01:19:46,320

But we got the full  
measure of the liquid soup

1474

01:19:46,320 --> 01:19:49,560

or some chicory  
coffee, I remember.

1475

01:19:49,560 --> 01:19:51,300

Yeah.

1476

01:19:51,300 --> 01:19:55,350

And sometimes you fished  
for a piece of potato

1477

01:19:55,350 --> 01:19:58,950

or a piece of carrot,  
and it was just liquid.

1478

01:19:58,950 --> 01:20:02,190

Sometimes you were lucky, you  
had three pieces of potato.

1479

01:20:02,190 --> 01:20:05,520

And that was basically-- also,  
and there was maybe sometimes

1480

01:20:05,520 --> 01:20:10,650

a little piece of-- a little  
container with marmalade.

1481

01:20:10,650 --> 01:20:13,260

Or if it was on a Sunday  
might be, oh, sometimes

1482

01:20:13,260 --> 01:20:15,320

even a piece of margarine.

1483

01:20:15,320 --> 01:20:17,790

Or sometimes it was none.

1484

01:20:17,790 --> 01:20:24,420

As I say, there was a definite  
market within the camp.

1485

01:20:24,420 --> 01:20:28,710

People were dealing  
and wheeling.

1486

01:20:28,710 --> 01:20:33,130

And being as young  
as I was, just I

1487

01:20:33,130 --> 01:20:35,160

didn't really think I  
could care to participate

1488

01:20:35,160 --> 01:20:37,470

in that type of thing.

1489

01:20:37,470 --> 01:20:40,410

Although I'm sure they were  
quite respectable people

1490  
01:20:40,410 --> 01:20:42,360  
that were forced to do it.

1491  
01:20:42,360 --> 01:20:45,146  
Just for survival.

1492  
01:20:45,146 --> 01:20:48,014  
Yeah.

1493  
01:20:48,014 --> 01:20:51,680  
Can you give me a sense of the  
people who slept next to you

1494  
01:20:51,680 --> 01:20:52,180  
each night?

1495  
01:20:52,180 --> 01:20:56,010  
Did they-- was it the same  
people most of the time?

1496  
01:20:56,010 --> 01:20:58,560  
Yeah, once we were assigned to--

1497  
01:20:58,560 --> 01:21:03,240  
unless someone, if he wasn't  
there, we knew where he was.

1498  
01:21:03,240 --> 01:21:08,640  
We just knew that he was  
a victim of the selection

1499  
01:21:08,640 --> 01:21:11,680  
and eliminated.

1500  
01:21:11,680 --> 01:21:17,460  
And then someone else would take  
his place, from a new arrival.

1501  
01:21:17,460 --> 01:21:21,270  
But usually the new  
arrivals would ask us



1502

01:21:21,270 --> 01:21:24,270

how things are, what to look  
out for, what not to do,

1503

01:21:24,270 --> 01:21:26,170

what to do, and so on.

1504

01:21:26,170 --> 01:21:27,750

And we would kind  
of-- because you do

1505

01:21:27,750 --> 01:21:33,600

learn the idiosyncrasies  
of your superiors, what

1506

01:21:33,600 --> 01:21:39,030

they are looking for and how to  
stay out of trouble, you know.

1507

01:21:39,030 --> 01:21:40,750

Of course, no one  
looked for trouble.

1508

01:21:40,750 --> 01:21:43,320

But just more or  
less to be up early,

1509

01:21:43,320 --> 01:21:46,410

not to be the last  
one out of the bed,

1510

01:21:46,410 --> 01:21:48,570

you know, but be there,  
eager, always showing

1511

01:21:48,570 --> 01:21:52,530

a certain eagerness  
to do things.

1512

01:21:52,530 --> 01:21:55,182

And these were for the capos.

1513

01:21:55,182 --> 01:21:56,640

Because the capos  
could also create

1514

01:21:56,640 --> 01:21:58,707

a lot of problems for you.

1515

01:21:58,707 --> 01:22:00,540

If there was somebody  
that they didn't like,

1516

01:22:00,540 --> 01:22:04,200

and they would be  
just reported to--

1517

01:22:04,200 --> 01:22:07,710

the SS were in continuous  
touch with the capos, you know.

1518

01:22:07,710 --> 01:22:11,820

And they would direct them  
what they would do with us,

1519

01:22:11,820 --> 01:22:15,300

or how to deal with us.

1520

01:22:15,300 --> 01:22:19,550

So that's a good  
question, really.

1521

01:22:19,550 --> 01:22:21,120

Yeah, there was a total--

1522

01:22:21,120 --> 01:22:24,180

kind of a continual  
turnover, you might say.

1523

01:22:24,180 --> 01:22:28,170

And I must say, I was  
one of the fortunates

1524

01:22:28,170 --> 01:22:30,070

to come out of there, yeah.

1525

01:22:30,070 --> 01:22:36,060

And Auschwitz

housed about 20,000,

1526

01:22:36,060 --> 01:22:39,510

probably more than

20,000 prisoners.

1527

01:22:39,510 --> 01:22:42,050

Yeah, so it was a

perpetual turnover.

1528

01:22:42,050 --> 01:22:46,290

Did you find yourself becoming

more resistant to get friendly

1529

01:22:46,290 --> 01:22:51,150

with the people next to

you because of that or?

1530

01:22:51,150 --> 01:22:52,740

We were-- yes.

1531

01:22:52,740 --> 01:22:54,090

Yeah, there were some people--

1532

01:22:54,090 --> 01:22:55,830

as I said, you

choose your friends

1533

01:22:55,830 --> 01:22:59,580

and whom you were compatible

with of commonship,

1534

01:22:59,580 --> 01:23:05,490

of background or just of appeal

to one another, you know.

1535

01:23:05,490 --> 01:23:09,240

And you do have a

friend or two, who

1536  
01:23:09,240 --> 01:23:13,020  
you form kind of  
little inner group,

1537  
01:23:13,020 --> 01:23:16,860  
and mostly we would talk  
about the war, when it's

1538  
01:23:16,860 --> 01:23:20,850  
going to be over,  
was the soup good,

1539  
01:23:20,850 --> 01:23:25,530  
and the supervisor  
smiled to me today,

1540  
01:23:25,530 --> 01:23:29,760  
and he left something  
on the side for me.

1541  
01:23:29,760 --> 01:23:31,410  
You know, something like that.

1542  
01:23:31,410 --> 01:23:35,010  
But mostly it was  
fantasies, too.

1543  
01:23:35,010 --> 01:23:38,640  
What we'd like to eat now.

1544  
01:23:38,640 --> 01:23:40,330  
Or wasn't that good.

1545  
01:23:40,330 --> 01:23:44,910  
And we refused to eat what  
our mothers gave us, you know.

1546  
01:23:44,910 --> 01:23:46,930  
Or we were nagged by  
our parents to finish

1547

01:23:46,930 --> 01:23:50,190  
the meal as small children.

1548  
01:23:50,190 --> 01:23:52,493  
You know, make sure you  
take the sandwich to school.

1549  
01:23:52,493 --> 01:23:53,160  
Don't forget it.

1550  
01:23:53,160 --> 01:23:53,940  
Don't leave it laying.

1551  
01:23:53,940 --> 01:23:54,780  
Eat it, you know?

1552  
01:23:54,780 --> 01:23:57,450

1553  
01:23:57,450 --> 01:24:01,230  
And those were the things  
that we talked about.

1554  
01:24:01,230 --> 01:24:06,900  
And those were flashbacks, you  
might say, and some fantasies.

1555  
01:24:06,900 --> 01:24:10,440  
What we'd like,  
what if we could,

1556  
01:24:10,440 --> 01:24:14,190  
and what we're going to  
do after this war is over.

1557  
01:24:14,190 --> 01:24:16,615  
You know.

1558  
01:24:16,615 --> 01:24:19,382  
Can you give us any details  
about any particular friends

1559

01:24:19,382 --> 01:24:19,882  
you had?

1560  
01:24:19,882 --> 01:24:22,590

1561  
01:24:22,590 --> 01:24:26,393  
Yes, there was another  
French young fellow.

1562  
01:24:26,393 --> 01:24:27,810  
He was a little  
bit older than me.

1563  
01:24:27,810 --> 01:24:30,600

1564  
01:24:30,600 --> 01:24:36,900  
And he had a lot of  
relatives left behind,

1565  
01:24:36,900 --> 01:24:40,920  
aunts and uncles, like I did.

1566  
01:24:40,920 --> 01:24:47,280  
And mostly we talked  
about our families,

1567  
01:24:47,280 --> 01:24:57,330  
and perhaps talked about movies,  
you know, or school activities.

1568  
01:24:57,330 --> 01:25:02,640  
Like on weekends, we would  
have some kind of activity

1569  
01:25:02,640 --> 01:25:06,340  
that would not be relating  
to school or class itself,

1570  
01:25:06,340 --> 01:25:11,290  
but like a we were too young.

1571

01:25:11,290 --> 01:25:16,160

School had dances, but we were too young to participate ,

1572

01:25:16,160 --> 01:25:17,910

but there were other activities, you know,

1573

01:25:17,910 --> 01:25:22,050

where we would be in a mixed group with girls and boys.

1574

01:25:22,050 --> 01:25:26,616

You know, they would look something like that, you know?

1575

01:25:26,616 --> 01:25:30,540

Or young kids that we might have dated or were equal

1576

01:25:30,540 --> 01:25:32,060

age in the neighborhood.

1577

01:25:32,060 --> 01:25:37,040

Just more fantasy than the reality perhaps.

1578

01:25:37,040 --> 01:25:41,260

And basically, we heard sirens howl,

1579

01:25:41,260 --> 01:25:46,850

and we knew there was another bombardment coming on.

1580

01:25:46,850 --> 01:25:50,090

And I'm sure that the Allies pretty much

1581

01:25:50,090 --> 01:25:54,470

had outlined the camps, because at no time did I--

1582

01:25:54,470 --> 01:25:57,740

can I remember ever a  
camp being bombed or being

1583

01:25:57,740 --> 01:26:01,730

mistaken for an army barrack.

1584

01:26:01,730 --> 01:26:06,770

Not just in Auschwitz,  
but as well in other camps

1585

01:26:06,770 --> 01:26:09,860

while they evacuated  
us from Auschwitz, when

1586

01:26:09,860 --> 01:26:12,510

the Russian front approached.

1587

01:26:12,510 --> 01:26:16,700

We marched for days  
after we left Auschwitz.

1588

01:26:16,700 --> 01:26:20,870

Our next step was Gross-Rosen,  
a German town, a small town.

1589

01:26:20,870 --> 01:26:23,720

It was a horrible  
camp with the ovens.

1590

01:26:23,720 --> 01:26:27,210

Just as we entered the  
camp, you had ovens.

1591

01:26:27,210 --> 01:26:30,500

You just saw the ovens.

1592

01:26:30,500 --> 01:26:32,220

So many other people died.

1593

01:26:32,220 --> 01:26:33,770

We were an open--



1594  
01:26:33,770 --> 01:26:36,322  
we partly we marched.

1595  
01:26:36,322 --> 01:26:38,030  
And I must tell you  
an interesting story.

1596  
01:26:38,030 --> 01:26:41,455  
Perhaps it might--

1597  
01:26:41,455 --> 01:26:43,630  
It's that some people took--

1598  
01:26:43,630 --> 01:26:46,150  
when we were evacuated  
from Auschwitz,

1599  
01:26:46,150 --> 01:26:50,890  
some people took the sheet  
off their bed and folded it

1600  
01:26:50,890 --> 01:26:55,120  
and somehow hid it  
under their coat.

1601  
01:26:55,120 --> 01:27:00,010  
And I wondered, what are they  
going to do with this sheet?

1602  
01:27:00,010 --> 01:27:01,305  
But these people knew exactly.

1603  
01:27:01,305 --> 01:27:04,930  
You see, it was in the  
winter months, and it snowed.

1604  
01:27:04,930 --> 01:27:06,970  
And they planned to escape.

1605  
01:27:06,970 --> 01:27:10,180  
And with that sheet, they

would unfold that sheet

1606

01:27:10,180 --> 01:27:16,160  
and cover themselves, or just  
put their sheet on their body

1607

01:27:16,160 --> 01:27:21,820  
and just blend with the snow  
and hope that they would escape.

1608

01:27:21,820 --> 01:27:25,780  
So that was an interesting  
point, how people

1609

01:27:25,780 --> 01:27:27,970  
tried to survive, escape.

1610

01:27:27,970 --> 01:27:29,890  
There were some escapes.

1611

01:27:29,890 --> 01:27:31,230  
Some people did?

1612

01:27:31,230 --> 01:27:32,830  
Yes.

1613

01:27:32,830 --> 01:27:37,600  
I'm sure, because I'll tell you,  
at one point when we arrived,

1614

01:27:37,600 --> 01:27:40,450  
and we marched at five,  
and we could never

1615

01:27:40,450 --> 01:27:44,620  
deviate from five in a  
line, when there was four,

1616

01:27:44,620 --> 01:27:48,128  
there was immediate  
alert amongst the SS.

1617

01:27:48,128 --> 01:27:50,170  
See all you had to do is  
just kind of squat down,

1618  
01:27:50,170 --> 01:27:52,870  
and fall down, and cover  
yourself with a white sheet,

1619  
01:27:52,870 --> 01:27:54,850  
and you most likely,  
most likely would

1620  
01:27:54,850 --> 01:28:02,350  
blend in with the snow  
and the landscape.

1621  
01:28:02,350 --> 01:28:04,300  
And we would stop.

1622  
01:28:04,300 --> 01:28:08,650  
They would stop us and count  
again, five at a time, you see.

1623  
01:28:08,650 --> 01:28:10,510  
And eventually, I guess  
they would put out

1624  
01:28:10,510 --> 01:28:15,340  
some form of a bulletin that  
there's an escapee in the area.

1625  
01:28:15,340 --> 01:28:17,800  
And one time there  
was a roundup,

1626  
01:28:17,800 --> 01:28:21,340  
and they brought one escapee.

1627  
01:28:21,340 --> 01:28:24,100  
And they were  
holding him in a town

1628  
01:28:24,100 --> 01:28:26,200

where we have not  
arrived yet, or were

1629  
01:28:26,200 --> 01:28:28,823  
to arrive while marching.

1630  
01:28:28,823 --> 01:28:30,490  
And they had him  
there, and they already

1631  
01:28:30,490 --> 01:28:39,090  
had a gallows built. And in  
front of us, they would hang

1632  
01:28:39,090 --> 01:28:42,540  
this escapee, this individual.

1633  
01:28:42,540 --> 01:28:43,620  
And we had to watch it.

1634  
01:28:43,620 --> 01:28:45,750  
We were forced to watch it.

1635  
01:28:45,750 --> 01:28:53,940  
And by the way, the man  
that tripped the parapet--

1636  
01:28:53,940 --> 01:28:56,940  
Is it a parapet?--

1637  
01:28:56,940 --> 01:29:01,110  
was the son of this man,  
which was a father and son.

1638  
01:29:01,110 --> 01:29:03,630  
We found that out  
later while marching.

1639  
01:29:03,630 --> 01:29:06,900  
So no one else I, guess, would  
have the courage to escape.

1640

01:29:06,900 --> 01:29:10,032

I remember that very vividly.

1641

01:29:10,032 --> 01:29:17,460

I saw him just trip, and it  
was just not even a hiss.

1642

01:29:17,460 --> 01:29:19,995

Just a dead silence.

1643

01:29:19,995 --> 01:29:25,495

And we marched right out and  
passed his body hanging there.

1644

01:29:25,495 --> 01:29:27,870

Do you remember anything like  
that happening in Auschwitz

1645

01:29:27,870 --> 01:29:29,550

while you were in camp?

1646

01:29:29,550 --> 01:29:31,740

No, we never saw any  
hangings in Auschwitz.

1647

01:29:31,740 --> 01:29:34,450

In Auschwitz, there were a  
lot of beatings going on.

1648

01:29:34,450 --> 01:29:37,320

If someone missed a number  
while they would call you,

1649

01:29:37,320 --> 01:29:40,680

called your number before you  
moved out or when you moved in,

1650

01:29:40,680 --> 01:29:45,138

and sometimes the  
SS-man might have

1651

01:29:45,138 --> 01:29:46,680

been from a different

part of Germany

1652  
01:29:46,680 --> 01:29:49,830  
and would have a  
different pronunciation,

1653  
01:29:49,830 --> 01:29:51,937  
just like here in the  
United States, you know.

1654  
01:29:51,937 --> 01:29:53,145  
And you didn't catch on fast.

1655  
01:29:53,145 --> 01:29:55,880

1656  
01:29:55,880 --> 01:29:58,880  
You had no time  
and, God help you,

1657  
01:29:58,880 --> 01:30:04,100  
you would be whacked with a  
club or were kicked, beaten,

1658  
01:30:04,100 --> 01:30:06,530  
punched, usually it was a  
double punch with a fist

1659  
01:30:06,530 --> 01:30:08,150  
and the elbow follow up.

1660  
01:30:08,150 --> 01:30:09,800  
And then you would just--

1661  
01:30:09,800 --> 01:30:12,020  
yeah, you would just drop there.

1662  
01:30:12,020 --> 01:30:14,630  
And then someone,  
after they dismiss us,

1663  
01:30:14,630 --> 01:30:16,880

we would help him up.

1664  
01:30:16,880 --> 01:30:19,115  
But I've never seen  
anyone being killed,

1665  
01:30:19,115 --> 01:30:21,260  
you know, or died there.

1666  
01:30:21,260 --> 01:30:23,960  
Usually they were  
beaten severely.

1667  
01:30:23,960 --> 01:30:27,320  
And they were kind of  
helped into the block.

1668  
01:30:27,320 --> 01:30:30,200  
And he would have to be,  
again, in line the next day,

1669  
01:30:30,200 --> 01:30:32,750  
regardless of how he  
felt to go to work.

1670  
01:30:32,750 --> 01:30:36,440  
Because he would not  
exist the next day.

1671  
01:30:36,440 --> 01:30:38,090  
So those things, we  
were aware of them.

1672  
01:30:38,090 --> 01:30:40,910  
We knew it, we saw  
it, and we felt it.

1673  
01:30:40,910 --> 01:30:44,877  
But this hanging, there  
was this one camp that

1674  
01:30:44,877 --> 01:30:46,880  
was just close to Gross-Rosen.

1675  
01:30:46,880 --> 01:30:49,630  
We were heading  
in that direction.

1676  
01:30:49,630 --> 01:30:53,060  
And we were arrived  
to this village.

1677  
01:30:53,060 --> 01:30:58,560  
I think it was Bavaria, in  
the southern part of Germany.

1678  
01:30:58,560 --> 01:31:02,120  
Because we were  
headed for Buchenwald.

1679  
01:31:02,120 --> 01:31:07,700  
And finally, we spent  
some times in Gross-Rosen.

1680  
01:31:07,700 --> 01:31:10,610  
It was an awful camp.

1681  
01:31:10,610 --> 01:31:12,200  
No food, nothing.

1682  
01:31:12,200 --> 01:31:15,770  
We just-- we were so  
many that we slept--

1683  
01:31:15,770 --> 01:31:18,300  
we were told to spread  
our legs on the floor,

1684  
01:31:18,300 --> 01:31:22,070  
and we were stacked one  
back against my chest.

1685  
01:31:22,070 --> 01:31:26,160  
We were in a file,  
someone's BACK



1686

01:31:26,160 --> 01:31:30,720

and that's how we sat  
all through the night.

1687

01:31:30,720 --> 01:31:31,460

Sitting up?

1688

01:31:31,460 --> 01:31:33,240

Sitting up, yeah.

1689

01:31:33,240 --> 01:31:35,370

There was no room.

1690

01:31:35,370 --> 01:31:36,970

So we cramped in.

1691

01:31:36,970 --> 01:31:40,620

There were so many of  
us that we cramped in,

1692

01:31:40,620 --> 01:31:47,670

and some were called out to  
haul away the dead bodies

1693

01:31:47,670 --> 01:31:50,400

into the crematoria on a board.

1694

01:31:50,400 --> 01:31:54,540

There was a wooden board,  
and they would just

1695

01:31:54,540 --> 01:31:57,570

pick them up by the arms and  
legs, place them on a board,

1696

01:31:57,570 --> 01:31:58,710

and just carry that board.

1697

01:31:58,710 --> 01:32:00,335

And some of these  
people that attended,

1698

01:32:00,335 --> 01:32:04,350  
delivered them to the ovens,  
they almost dropped themselves.

1699

01:32:04,350 --> 01:32:08,760  
Because we had-- at this camp  
we had hardly had any food.

1700

01:32:08,760 --> 01:32:13,110  
It's just miraculous  
how we really survived.

1701

01:32:13,110 --> 01:32:16,350  
I guess I must have great genes.

1702

01:32:16,350 --> 01:32:18,510  
Did you get less rations?

1703

01:32:18,510 --> 01:32:23,520  
Well, the war was  
very intense, and I

1704

01:32:23,520 --> 01:32:25,920  
don't think there was no--

1705

01:32:25,920 --> 01:32:30,270  
transportation was probably at  
a total halt at certain times

1706

01:32:30,270 --> 01:32:32,970  
in certain areas in Germany.

1707

01:32:32,970 --> 01:32:34,590  
And if there was  
any food, I think

1708

01:32:34,590 --> 01:32:42,750  
the SS were first to get  
it, as bad as it was.

1709

01:32:42,750 --> 01:32:45,510  
So there was periods that

we just probably just

1710  
01:32:45,510 --> 01:32:48,450  
had one morsel of bread.

1711  
01:32:48,450 --> 01:32:50,880  
And there were days  
that we didn't have

1712  
01:32:50,880 --> 01:32:52,770  
any, in this particular Camp

1713  
01:32:52,770 --> 01:32:55,510  
Finally, the Russian  
front approached.

1714  
01:32:55,510 --> 01:32:57,870  
We could hear bombardment again.

1715  
01:32:57,870 --> 01:32:59,730  
Red sky in the evening.

1716  
01:32:59,730 --> 01:33:01,350  
They moved us out of there.

1717  
01:33:01,350 --> 01:33:04,920  
There, they put us on  
trains, on open car trains.

1718  
01:33:04,920 --> 01:33:11,912  
Just like you would haul coal  
or other items like that.

1719  
01:33:11,912 --> 01:33:13,370  
You mean that it  
didn't have a top?

1720  
01:33:13,370 --> 01:33:14,250  
It didn't have a top.

1721  
01:33:14,250 --> 01:33:16,770  
No, just open.

1722  
01:33:16,770 --> 01:33:18,790  
No roof at all.

1723  
01:33:18,790 --> 01:33:21,900  
And we would huddle there, just  
amongst us to keep us warm.

1724  
01:33:21,900 --> 01:33:28,650  
We were packed in 80, 90,  
100 perhaps, per each car.

1725  
01:33:28,650 --> 01:33:29,263  
And--

1726  
01:33:29,263 --> 01:33:30,180  
Was there room to sit?

1727  
01:33:30,180 --> 01:33:32,040  
Just room to sit.

1728  
01:33:32,040 --> 01:33:34,750  
Just sit.

1729  
01:33:34,750 --> 01:33:35,730  
Was it snowing?

1730  
01:33:35,730 --> 01:33:37,170  
It was snowing, yes.

1731  
01:33:37,170 --> 01:33:38,700  
Well, we could stretch.

1732  
01:33:38,700 --> 01:33:42,240  
Each wagon had one SS-man  
sitting at the end.

1733  
01:33:42,240 --> 01:33:44,640  
It was like a--

1734  
01:33:44,640 --> 01:33:46,560

what's the last car on a train?

1735

01:33:46,560 --> 01:33:47,255

It's the--

1736

01:33:47,255 --> 01:33:47,755

Caboose.

1737

01:33:47,755 --> 01:33:48,720

Caboose, yeah.

1738

01:33:48,720 --> 01:33:53,808

Like a caboose ladder, with  
a rifle man, with a rifle.

1739

01:33:53,808 --> 01:33:55,350

But I don't think  
these were SS--men.

1740

01:33:55,350 --> 01:33:57,990

These were older  
German soldiers.

1741

01:33:57,990 --> 01:34:00,960

See, the war has progressed  
to a point where they needed

1742

01:34:00,960 --> 01:34:03,780

those people into battle.

1743

01:34:03,780 --> 01:34:06,870

And these people  
were older folks.

1744

01:34:06,870 --> 01:34:09,600

So I remember this one had  
quite a handlebar mustache,

1745

01:34:09,600 --> 01:34:12,810

and he was continually twisting  
it while he was holding on

1746

01:34:12,810 --> 01:34:14,820  
to his rifle there.

1747  
01:34:14,820 --> 01:34:18,600  
And he was kind  
of a kind fellow.

1748  
01:34:18,600 --> 01:34:22,050  
I think he made some remarks  
that he doesn't want it,

1749  
01:34:22,050 --> 01:34:24,840  
something to that effect, yeah.

1750  
01:34:24,840 --> 01:34:28,230  
And he hauled out a piece  
of bread from his knapsack,

1751  
01:34:28,230 --> 01:34:30,570  
and he cut the rind  
off, and he tossed it

1752  
01:34:30,570 --> 01:34:33,790  
at us, just the  
rind of the bread.

1753  
01:34:33,790 --> 01:34:36,780  
It must have been old and  
stale bread, and had two.

1754  
01:34:36,780 --> 01:34:42,720  
But those were just about the  
last days probably approaching.

1755  
01:34:42,720 --> 01:34:47,640  
Finally, we arrived in  
Weimar, where Buchenwald

1756  
01:34:47,640 --> 01:34:50,185  
was not far from there.

1757  
01:34:50,185 --> 01:34:52,560  
Do you know how many days you

marched and how many days--

1758

01:34:52,560 --> 01:34:54,150

Oh, it was a number of days.

1759

01:34:54,150 --> 01:34:58,140

I would roughly say five,  
six, maybe seven days.

1760

01:34:58,140 --> 01:35:00,480

Again, it was stop  
and go, stop and go

1761

01:35:00,480 --> 01:35:06,030

to the continuous  
bombardments and alerts.

1762

01:35:06,030 --> 01:35:11,010

You could hear the  
sirens howl continually.

1763

01:35:11,010 --> 01:35:16,320

And they would-- the  
soldier would climb down

1764

01:35:16,320 --> 01:35:22,060

from the caboose seat, and he  
would stay between the wagons.

1765

01:35:22,060 --> 01:35:23,560

Or would look to  
the left and right,

1766

01:35:23,560 --> 01:35:25,560

see if there are any escapees.

1767

01:35:25,560 --> 01:35:27,180

Just he would walk--

1768

01:35:27,180 --> 01:35:29,580

let's say, two  
wagons were attached.

1769

01:35:29,580 --> 01:35:33,600

He would walk between them,  
and he would step on the--

1770

01:35:33,600 --> 01:35:36,450

where they joined  
and look in, peek in,

1771

01:35:36,450 --> 01:35:39,060

to see what we're doing, and  
walk over to the other side,

1772

01:35:39,060 --> 01:35:44,100

see if anyone is  
climbing out and over.

1773

01:35:44,100 --> 01:35:46,260

So and this went on  
for quite a while.

1774

01:35:46,260 --> 01:35:49,830

And when it snowed, it  
snowed quite heavy at times.

1775

01:35:49,830 --> 01:35:53,220

We had our blankets  
that we carried with us.

1776

01:35:53,220 --> 01:35:56,190

They were actually rags  
more than blankets.

1777

01:35:56,190 --> 01:35:58,530

We covered ourselves,  
and we learned how

1778

01:35:58,530 --> 01:36:00,585

to just wedge into one another.

1779

01:36:00,585 --> 01:36:06,010

You know, keep warm and  
covered with the blankets.



1780

01:36:06,010 --> 01:36:07,740

And in the morning,  
the snow was thick,

1781

01:36:07,740 --> 01:36:11,400

and we would just scrape the  
snow off and just eat it.

1782

01:36:11,400 --> 01:36:14,970

Eat the snow, as form  
of liquid or whatever.

1783

01:36:14,970 --> 01:36:21,810

And there really was no  
food except at some stops

1784

01:36:21,810 --> 01:36:25,640

they would have also  
more slices of bread

1785

01:36:25,640 --> 01:36:27,880

they were just hand us.

1786

01:36:27,880 --> 01:36:29,260

But no water whatsoever.

1787

01:36:29,260 --> 01:36:31,260

And sometimes, you wonder  
what's more important,

1788

01:36:31,260 --> 01:36:35,320

to have some water or  
actually solid food?

1789

01:36:35,320 --> 01:36:36,760

I remember we stopped one town.

1790

01:36:36,760 --> 01:36:38,467

We got off, and there was some--

1791

01:36:38,467 --> 01:36:41,050

water was trickling down, some

dirty water from the locomotive

1792

01:36:41,050 --> 01:36:42,340  
on the side.

1793

01:36:42,340 --> 01:36:45,430  
And we just went and just  
scooped up that water

1794

01:36:45,430 --> 01:36:48,640  
and just drank that  
water, you know.

1795

01:36:48,640 --> 01:36:56,170  
Well, finally we did arrive,  
as I said, in Weimar.

1796

01:36:56,170 --> 01:37:01,120  
And we were trucked in  
to the camp Buchenwald.

1797

01:37:01,120 --> 01:37:03,670  
And Buchenwald  
reminded me somewhat

1798

01:37:03,670 --> 01:37:07,090  
of the first camp of Birkenau.

1799

01:37:07,090 --> 01:37:12,970  
Because there were just barracks  
with very primitive three

1800

01:37:12,970 --> 01:37:16,603  
level, like shelves  
continuous from one end

1801

01:37:16,603 --> 01:37:17,770  
of the barrack to the other.

1802

01:37:17,770 --> 01:37:20,150  
And they were quite long.

1803

01:37:20,150 --> 01:37:22,540  
And there was a  
door on each end.

1804  
01:37:22,540 --> 01:37:26,800  
And these shelves were on  
each side of this barrack.

1805  
01:37:26,800 --> 01:37:29,290  
And in the middle  
you had a walkway.

1806  
01:37:29,290 --> 01:37:31,150  
And you would like  
stored on a shelf.

1807  
01:37:31,150 --> 01:37:35,320  
You just climbed in there and  
just slept on that hard board.

1808  
01:37:35,320 --> 01:37:37,660  
And there were three levels.

1809  
01:37:37,660 --> 01:37:39,530  
And you always preferred  
the lower level,

1810  
01:37:39,530 --> 01:37:41,530  
because it would be  
somewhat warmer in the lower

1811  
01:37:41,530 --> 01:37:43,780  
level than the upper level.

1812  
01:37:43,780 --> 01:37:46,420  
And those were in Buchenwald.

1813  
01:37:46,420 --> 01:37:50,840  
And I must have been in  
Buchenwald about maybe five,

1814  
01:37:50,840 --> 01:37:53,170  
six, maybe seven months.

1815  
01:37:53,170 --> 01:37:55,930  
And then we again  
heard the advancement

1816  
01:37:55,930 --> 01:37:59,770  
of the American 8th  
army, Patton's army.

1817  
01:37:59,770 --> 01:38:03,490  
And we heard distant  
bombardment in the evening.

1818  
01:38:03,490 --> 01:38:06,520  
And we became quite  
cheerful, somewhat hopeful,

1819  
01:38:06,520 --> 01:38:10,030  
I should say, but  
always with a doubt,

1820  
01:38:10,030 --> 01:38:11,860  
because what are they  
going to do to us

1821  
01:38:11,860 --> 01:38:14,666  
before the Americans get here?

1822  
01:38:14,666 --> 01:38:18,600  
There was some information flow.

1823  
01:38:18,600 --> 01:38:22,030  
There was a flow of  
information continuously.

1824  
01:38:22,030 --> 01:38:26,410  
Whether they might have been  
just canards or discussion,

1825  
01:38:26,410 --> 01:38:32,140  
but whatever the case might  
have been, we heard things.

1826

01:38:32,140 --> 01:38:34,810

But we saw flares in  
the sky that we never

1827

01:38:34,810 --> 01:38:37,800

seen before, markers.

1828

01:38:37,800 --> 01:38:43,350

We heard the roar of airplanes  
without bombardments.

1829

01:38:43,350 --> 01:38:48,070

One time, very close to  
the end before liberation,

1830

01:38:48,070 --> 01:38:51,910

there was one prep  
plane circled the camp

1831

01:38:51,910 --> 01:39:00,640

and outlined with smoke or with  
the white smoke, of like you

1832

01:39:00,640 --> 01:39:04,210

see the planes, sometimes  
the commercial advertisers,

1833

01:39:04,210 --> 01:39:09,130

and almost outlined  
the camp, a circle.

1834

01:39:09,130 --> 01:39:15,520

So you looked out, and you saw  
the entire camp was outlined

1835

01:39:15,520 --> 01:39:18,340

in white smoke as a marker.

1836

01:39:18,340 --> 01:39:20,270

That smoke drifted  
and diminished,

1837

01:39:20,270 --> 01:39:21,910  
and others would  
come and outline it.

1838  
01:39:21,910 --> 01:39:25,630  
What it meant, I still  
don't know today.

1839  
01:39:25,630 --> 01:39:31,770  
Probably, don't use the area  
as a point of bombardment,

1840  
01:39:31,770 --> 01:39:33,480  
perhaps, or something like that.

1841  
01:39:33,480 --> 01:39:38,490  
Because the Allies knew  
where the camps were.

1842  
01:39:38,490 --> 01:39:40,415  
And the bombardment intensified.

1843  
01:39:40,415 --> 01:39:45,660  
You could hear artillery from a  
distance, stronger, more often.

1844  
01:39:45,660 --> 01:39:50,406  
And you could also see the  
behavior of the guards.

1845  
01:39:50,406 --> 01:39:53,400  
They were quite nervous.

1846  
01:39:53,400 --> 01:39:57,520  
And they didn't change us often.

1847  
01:39:57,520 --> 01:39:58,020  
We knew.

1848  
01:39:58,020 --> 01:40:01,320  
We could tell the types  
who are in the towers.

1849

01:40:01,320 --> 01:40:04,380

We almost identified the same.

1850

01:40:04,380 --> 01:40:06,270

And then we didn't see them.

1851

01:40:06,270 --> 01:40:08,820

And they spent-- sometimes

we saw several hours

1852

01:40:08,820 --> 01:40:11,190

with no guards, you know.

1853

01:40:11,190 --> 01:40:16,800

So we knew that the end,

liberation is close,

1854

01:40:16,800 --> 01:40:17,745

or the end is close.

1855

01:40:17,745 --> 01:40:20,340

1856

01:40:20,340 --> 01:40:23,380

Whichever comes faster.

1857

01:40:23,380 --> 01:40:29,155

Fortunately, these people up on

the towers and the SS casernes

1858

01:40:29,155 --> 01:40:34,790

that were right across from

the main gate, became empty.

1859

01:40:34,790 --> 01:40:40,120

And at the very beginning, when

we heard a distant bombardment,

1860

01:40:40,120 --> 01:40:43,690

cannons, machine guns, they

did take out a lot of people

1861

01:40:43,690 --> 01:40:45,530  
from Auschwitz.

1862

01:40:45,530 --> 01:40:47,140  
We found out later,  
they were found

1863

01:40:47,140 --> 01:40:51,760  
in a forest not far from  
there, all machine gunned.

1864

01:40:51,760 --> 01:40:56,230  
But fortunately, a  
great number survived.

1865

01:40:56,230 --> 01:41:00,270  
I believe that Buchenwald  
housed 70,000--

1866

01:41:00,270 --> 01:41:05,260  
at the time 74,000, 75,000  
prisoners, because we were all

1867

01:41:05,260 --> 01:41:06,610  
brought in from various camps.

1868

01:41:06,610 --> 01:41:09,160

1869

01:41:09,160 --> 01:41:12,490  
And about 20 some  
thousand were surviving.

1870

01:41:12,490 --> 01:41:16,550  
I'm pretty sure the  
statistics are available.

1871

01:41:16,550 --> 01:41:20,710  
And we were the fortunate  
ones, and we survived.

1872

01:41:20,710 --> 01:41:23,890



The Jeeps kept rolling in.

1873

01:41:23,890 --> 01:41:26,290

Where were you when--

1874

01:41:26,290 --> 01:41:28,180

were you stuck in the barracks?

1875

01:41:28,180 --> 01:41:29,290

Yes.

1876

01:41:29,290 --> 01:41:30,620

We were prohibited.

1877

01:41:30,620 --> 01:41:32,860

We had to stay in the barracks.

1878

01:41:32,860 --> 01:41:33,760

We could not leave.

1879

01:41:33,760 --> 01:41:35,500

We would have  
instantly been shot

1880

01:41:35,500 --> 01:41:37,480

by the guards in the towers.

1881

01:41:37,480 --> 01:41:39,220

We didn't know whether  
they were up there

1882

01:41:39,220 --> 01:41:42,580

or they were-- downstairs  
was a tower as you

1883

01:41:42,580 --> 01:41:45,190

might have seen on the serial  
some years back, Stalag,

1884

01:41:45,190 --> 01:41:46,600

on television.

1885

01:41:46,600 --> 01:41:50,695

Those type of towers, very  
primitive with the step

1886

01:41:50,695 --> 01:41:52,450

stool or ladders  
kind of walking up,

1887

01:41:52,450 --> 01:41:57,820

and they would have  
a turret spotlight.

1888

01:41:57,820 --> 01:41:59,095

And it had machine guns.

1889

01:41:59,095 --> 01:42:01,780

1890

01:42:01,780 --> 01:42:04,390

Just like the Berlin  
Wall, basically.

1891

01:42:04,390 --> 01:42:09,700

Those always reminded  
me of the camp lookouts,

1892

01:42:09,700 --> 01:42:13,270

guards towers where they were.

1893

01:42:13,270 --> 01:42:15,085

And we didn't see them.

1894

01:42:15,085 --> 01:42:16,660

We didn't know what  
to make out of--

1895

01:42:16,660 --> 01:42:20,500

we didn't know where can we  
go, if we go out and leave,

1896

01:42:20,500 --> 01:42:21,910

you know.

1897  
01:42:21,910 --> 01:42:24,430  
But we did know one thing.

1898  
01:42:24,430 --> 01:42:26,770  
We knew where the SS food was.

1899  
01:42:26,770 --> 01:42:34,180  
And there was a canine commando,  
a group of SS canine dogs,

1900  
01:42:34,180 --> 01:42:35,500  
shepherds.

1901  
01:42:35,500 --> 01:42:36,850  
You know, they had dog food.

1902  
01:42:36,850 --> 01:42:39,250  
They had biscuits,  
very hard biscuits.

1903  
01:42:39,250 --> 01:42:43,295  
And somehow, someone,  
one prisoner said,

1904  
01:42:43,295 --> 01:42:44,170  
there's no one there.

1905  
01:42:44,170 --> 01:42:46,000  
Come on, let's go  
get these biscuits.

1906  
01:42:46,000 --> 01:42:48,730  
Now, this was about meters  
from outside of the camp,

1907  
01:42:48,730 --> 01:42:49,940  
very close.

1908  
01:42:49,940 --> 01:42:51,130  
So we could make a dash.

1909

01:42:51,130 --> 01:42:56,020

We could almost see Germans  
fleeing from the outside

1910

01:42:56,020 --> 01:42:58,120

in cars, you know.

1911

01:42:58,120 --> 01:43:01,510

Just civilians, you  
know, just leaving

1912

01:43:01,510 --> 01:43:04,640

either out the front of the  
camp or on the side of the camp,

1913

01:43:04,640 --> 01:43:05,650

you know.

1914

01:43:05,650 --> 01:43:08,110

And there were  
some people in camp

1915

01:43:08,110 --> 01:43:12,490

that were politically  
organized, former soldiers

1916

01:43:12,490 --> 01:43:17,550

or former resistance  
fighters, or whatever

1917

01:43:17,550 --> 01:43:19,300

they might have been,  
that immediately you

1918

01:43:19,300 --> 01:43:23,350

could see a certain order took  
place from within the camp

1919

01:43:23,350 --> 01:43:25,750

and to quiet everyone down.

1920

01:43:25,750 --> 01:43:29,600

And then where hope prevailed.

1921

01:43:29,600 --> 01:43:32,170

All before you can start out--

1922

01:43:32,170 --> 01:43:37,930

1923

01:43:37,930 --> 01:43:41,123

you mentioned a couple of  
things, like for example,

1924

01:43:41,123 --> 01:43:43,540

you lived on a very day to day  
or even hour to hour basis,

1925

01:43:43,540 --> 01:43:45,190

and sometimes you  
talked to people

1926

01:43:45,190 --> 01:43:48,940

about what you'd do when you  
got out, when the war was over.

1927

01:43:48,940 --> 01:43:51,580

Could you talk a little more  
about your sense of time?

1928

01:43:51,580 --> 01:43:54,732

And also on a  
related note, I mean,

1929

01:43:54,732 --> 01:43:56,440

did you have a sense  
that this would end?

1930

01:43:56,440 --> 01:43:56,940

Hope.

1931

01:43:56,940 --> 01:44:00,790

Yes, I think hope is what  
kept us really going.

1932

01:44:00,790 --> 01:44:05,150

Because this thing, hope, is  
so vaguely defined, really.

1933

01:44:05,150 --> 01:44:08,440

It's perhaps one of  
the greatest things

1934

01:44:08,440 --> 01:44:10,270

that a person could have.

1935

01:44:10,270 --> 01:44:13,510

Because when you lose hope,  
you just abandon ship,

1936

01:44:13,510 --> 01:44:15,610

and you lose everything.

1937

01:44:15,610 --> 01:44:20,380

It's hope that stirs you,  
drives you, and motivates

1938

01:44:20,380 --> 01:44:32,098

you to continue on and  
drive the best you can.

1939

01:44:32,098 --> 01:44:33,515

That's my answer  
to your question.

1940

01:44:33,515 --> 01:44:35,500

It was a very good question.

1941

01:44:35,500 --> 01:44:36,720

Excellent, yeah.

1942

01:44:36,720 --> 01:44:40,770

Now, that answered  
part of your question.

1943

01:44:40,770 --> 01:44:41,950

Can you repeat?

1944  
01:44:41,950 --> 01:44:43,650  
Oh, just about  
your sense of time.

1945  
01:44:43,650 --> 01:44:44,490  
I mean, could you--

1946  
01:44:44,490 --> 01:44:46,440  
Sense of time was totally--

1947  
01:44:46,440 --> 01:44:50,100  
totally, there was  
no sense of time.

1948  
01:44:50,100 --> 01:44:54,360  
We didn't-- we didn't know  
the time of day, really.

1949  
01:44:54,360 --> 01:44:56,623  
There was no clock  
in that factory.

1950  
01:44:56,623 --> 01:44:58,290  
You know, there was  
a whistle that blew.

1951  
01:44:58,290 --> 01:45:02,070  
You know, it was time for  
lunch, which was 30 minutes.

1952  
01:45:02,070 --> 01:45:05,990  
But we had no breaks, and  
there was a final long whistle

1953  
01:45:05,990 --> 01:45:08,340  
that means the shift has ended.

1954  
01:45:08,340 --> 01:45:11,400  
So when you mean sense of  
time, give me an example

1955

01:45:11,400 --> 01:45:13,300  
of what you mean by it.

1956  
01:45:13,300 --> 01:45:16,020  
Well, for example, I  
mean, did you have a sense

1957  
01:45:16,020 --> 01:45:17,760  
that you were going  
to live through this?

1958  
01:45:17,760 --> 01:45:18,370  
Well--

1959  
01:45:18,370 --> 01:45:21,180  
Did you think a week in  
advance or a day in advance?

1960  
01:45:21,180 --> 01:45:24,120  
Well, that is  
difficult to answer,

1961  
01:45:24,120 --> 01:45:30,990  
because when you have hope,  
you just take a day at a time,

1962  
01:45:30,990 --> 01:45:33,990  
an hour at a time,  
a week at a time,

1963  
01:45:33,990 --> 01:45:41,670  
and say I've made it so far,  
hoping that you can continue

1964  
01:45:41,670 --> 01:45:43,710  
and things don't get worse.

1965  
01:45:43,710 --> 01:45:44,580  
That's all.

1966  
01:45:44,580 --> 01:45:49,260  
And I think there's a  
built-in mechanism in us,



1967  
01:45:49,260 --> 01:45:53,010  
whether you are in Vietnam  
or you face a war in Iraq,

1968  
01:45:53,010 --> 01:45:57,215  
you somehow adjust  
to the situation.

1969  
01:45:57,215 --> 01:45:59,400  
We're a terrific machine.

1970  
01:45:59,400 --> 01:46:02,430  
It's tremendous built-in  
instincts and feelings

1971  
01:46:02,430 --> 01:46:03,480  
and all that.

1972  
01:46:03,480 --> 01:46:07,770  
And you just somehow, naturally,  
instinctively, intuitively keep

1973  
01:46:07,770 --> 01:46:09,030  
on going and adjust.

1974  
01:46:09,030 --> 01:46:13,360  
Or as they say, [INAUDIBLE],,  
you roll with the punches.

1975  
01:46:13,360 --> 01:46:18,330  
To give up hope, I would  
think some people did, yeah.

1976  
01:46:18,330 --> 01:46:19,560  
I don't think--

1977  
01:46:19,560 --> 01:46:25,890  
I cannot-- I am somewhat  
of a extroverted person.

1978  
01:46:25,890 --> 01:46:32,170

And I've always had a  
certain drive in me.

1979  
01:46:32,170 --> 01:46:34,020  
I don't know what it is.

1980  
01:46:34,020 --> 01:46:37,990  
And I felt that I would  
probably make it through, yes.

1981  
01:46:37,990 --> 01:46:43,800  
Yeah, probably it's very  
vague, but I had a certainty

1982  
01:46:43,800 --> 01:46:45,510  
that I will make it through.

1983  
01:46:45,510 --> 01:46:46,320  
Why?

1984  
01:46:46,320 --> 01:46:48,443  
It's difficult to answer  
why I had this feeling.

1985  
01:46:48,443 --> 01:46:50,610  
And there were many others  
that had the same feeling

1986  
01:46:50,610 --> 01:46:57,475  
that I did, but it was  
there, and it's still there.

1987  
01:46:57,475 --> 01:47:00,132  
Did that answer your question?

1988  
01:47:00,132 --> 01:47:00,960  
Mm-hmm.

1989  
01:47:00,960 --> 01:47:05,160  
Could you describe your physical  
state or how your health was?

1990

01:47:05,160 --> 01:47:08,250

My health probably was  
poor, but to my advantage

1991

01:47:08,250 --> 01:47:10,050

was that I was young.

1992

01:47:10,050 --> 01:47:11,010

I remember one thing.

1993

01:47:11,010 --> 01:47:18,630

There must have been quite  
a deficiency of minerals,

1994

01:47:18,630 --> 01:47:20,670

of vitamins and  
nutrients in my body.

1995

01:47:20,670 --> 01:47:27,540

Because I remember that my gums  
completely retracted upward.

1996

01:47:27,540 --> 01:47:30,210

And you can see part of my root.

1997

01:47:30,210 --> 01:47:33,390

You could see roots actually.

1998

01:47:33,390 --> 01:47:38,980

Half the roots were exposed,  
and my cheeks were hollow.

1999

01:47:38,980 --> 01:47:43,230

Of course, I was shave bald.

2000

01:47:43,230 --> 01:47:45,900

And it wasn't a pretty  
sight to look at me

2001

01:47:45,900 --> 01:47:48,810

or look at anyone else.

2002

01:47:48,810 --> 01:47:51,450

But despite that, somehow  
there was a certain drive

2003

01:47:51,450 --> 01:47:56,430

in a person, and you can ask  
yourself that question, why?

2004

01:47:56,430 --> 01:48:01,140

And you somehow end  
up wondering what

2005

01:48:01,140 --> 01:48:04,120

is it that keeps you going.

2006

01:48:04,120 --> 01:48:07,050

And there's a certain  
stamina instinct, whatever

2007

01:48:07,050 --> 01:48:09,840

the conditions might be.

2008

01:48:09,840 --> 01:48:11,820

Wherever danger  
lurks, somehow there's

2009

01:48:11,820 --> 01:48:16,955

a certain instinct that  
seems to pop up and say--

2010

01:48:16,955 --> 01:48:20,370

and it comes right in, and  
it's like an immune system, so

2011

01:48:20,370 --> 01:48:22,830

to speak, a defense system.

2012

01:48:22,830 --> 01:48:26,010

And it's somehow--  
and you if you're

2013

01:48:26,010 --> 01:48:31,200

blessed with that type

of attitude, perhaps.

2014

01:48:31,200 --> 01:48:34,230

I don't know what  
to call it, really.

2015

01:48:34,230 --> 01:48:40,352

And then you just keep  
on going, you know?

2016

01:48:40,352 --> 01:48:42,560

Where do you think that came  
from in you, personally?

2017

01:48:42,560 --> 01:48:43,352

That sort of drive?

2018

01:48:43,352 --> 01:48:45,680

That's very difficult to say.

2019

01:48:45,680 --> 01:48:50,400

My question is, why  
did I make it and--

2020

01:48:50,400 --> 01:48:50,900

let's cut.

2021

01:48:50,900 --> 01:48:55,090

2022

01:48:55,090 --> 01:48:55,590

OK.

2023

01:48:55,590 --> 01:49:00,700

I really cannot give  
you the answer to that.

2024

01:49:00,700 --> 01:49:02,980

It's, I guess,  
each individual is

2025

01:49:02,980 --> 01:49:07,100

endowed with different  
qualities of this person.

2026  
01:49:07,100 --> 01:49:09,640  
And I think this applies  
in this case, too.

2027  
01:49:09,640 --> 01:49:12,700

2028  
01:49:12,700 --> 01:49:19,810  
Do you remember any intercourse  
or discussions with the camp

2029  
01:49:19,810 --> 01:49:22,630  
police other than  
being yelled at

2030  
01:49:22,630 --> 01:49:24,220  
or anything more  
extensive than--

2031  
01:49:24,220 --> 01:49:26,370  
That's the last thing  
that you wanted to--

2032  
01:49:26,370 --> 01:49:29,350  
would have wanted to do is  
have a discourse with the camp

2033  
01:49:29,350 --> 01:49:34,150  
police or anybody else  
that was in charge.

2034  
01:49:34,150 --> 01:49:37,420  
There was no commonalities,  
no commonship.

2035  
01:49:37,420 --> 01:49:41,060  
You couldn't relate to sport  
events or business events

2036  
01:49:41,060 --> 01:49:41,560

or whatever.

2037

01:49:41,560 --> 01:49:43,360

You know, what would  
you talk about?

2038

01:49:43,360 --> 01:49:45,820

I guess I mean not so much  
conversation, but I mean,

2039

01:49:45,820 --> 01:49:48,380

did they try to exploit  
any of the workers

2040

01:49:48,380 --> 01:49:50,990

or any of the prisoners?

2041

01:49:50,990 --> 01:49:57,280

I would say they were in the  
same risk as we were, as I was.

2042

01:49:57,280 --> 01:50:00,632

Except they were assigned--  
they probably got more food.

2043

01:50:00,632 --> 01:50:01,840

They got some better clothes.

2044

01:50:01,840 --> 01:50:04,257

You know, maybe they had a  
sweater underneath their jacket

2045

01:50:04,257 --> 01:50:05,140

or better shoes.

2046

01:50:05,140 --> 01:50:06,432

You know, we have wooden shoes.

2047

01:50:06,432 --> 01:50:07,990

They might have  
had leather shoes.

2048

01:50:07,990 --> 01:50:10,264  
Which came also from the  
transport that arrived,

2049  
01:50:10,264 --> 01:50:11,920  
you know.

2050  
01:50:11,920 --> 01:50:13,600  
They had access to more food.

2051  
01:50:13,600 --> 01:50:15,820  
That was their prize.

2052  
01:50:15,820 --> 01:50:16,810  
We did not.

2053  
01:50:16,810 --> 01:50:20,860  
Basically, they're  
related commands to us.

2054  
01:50:20,860 --> 01:50:24,380  
And they inspected our bed, if  
it's neat, and clean, and nice.

2055  
01:50:24,380 --> 01:50:30,940  
And if we messed up, or  
if we can't see grooming.

2056  
01:50:30,940 --> 01:50:32,920  
I remember the older  
people that shaved,

2057  
01:50:32,920 --> 01:50:34,240  
there was a common razor.

2058  
01:50:34,240 --> 01:50:35,875  
There were several  
common razors there,

2059  
01:50:35,875 --> 01:50:38,950  
and they just shaved,  
and you left it later,



2060

01:50:38,950 --> 01:50:42,650

and the next guy would come  
along and use the same razor.

2061

01:50:42,650 --> 01:50:44,110

You know, something like that.

2062

01:50:44,110 --> 01:50:47,650

But other than that, and  
maybe once a month as

2063

01:50:47,650 --> 01:50:53,520

we came in, hats came off,  
and a little machine--

2064

01:50:53,520 --> 01:50:57,550

and barber clippers would  
go through and cut your hair

2065

01:50:57,550 --> 01:51:02,350

again short to the scar--  
to the bare skin, you see.

2066

01:51:02,350 --> 01:51:08,230

But other than that, you were  
just a number, and that's

2067

01:51:08,230 --> 01:51:10,810

how you existed, by a number.

2068

01:51:10,810 --> 01:51:13,570

And you had one  
function to achieve.

2069

01:51:13,570 --> 01:51:17,350

It's to fulfill the  
order that they demanded.

2070

01:51:17,350 --> 01:51:23,140

Their demand is work, work,  
work, get the most out of you.

2071

01:51:23,140 --> 01:51:27,070  
If you dropped the next minute,  
it didn't matter to them.

2072  
01:51:27,070 --> 01:51:30,250  
They'd get someone else to  
replace you immediately.

2073  
01:51:30,250 --> 01:51:34,960  
And so the determination  
became intensified

2074  
01:51:34,960 --> 01:51:37,510  
to do well, to be  
good, not to have

2075  
01:51:37,510 --> 01:51:39,610  
any conflict with any superior.

2076  
01:51:39,610 --> 01:51:44,710  
There were occasionally fights  
on the block or in the camp,

2077  
01:51:44,710 --> 01:51:48,460  
amongst prisoners,  
disputes, fights.

2078  
01:51:48,460 --> 01:51:52,045  
But you had hoped  
that no superior capos

2079  
01:51:52,045 --> 01:51:55,690  
would get involved, because  
they both would be punished.

2080  
01:51:55,690 --> 01:51:58,660  
Once you're punished  
in the holding cells,

2081  
01:51:58,660 --> 01:52:00,850  
you could end up coming  
out through the chimney,

2082

01:52:00,850 --> 01:52:03,920  
you know, so to speak.

2083  
01:52:03,920 --> 01:52:08,200  
So that of course,  
I was quite young,

2084  
01:52:08,200 --> 01:52:10,300  
and I did what I was told.

2085  
01:52:10,300 --> 01:52:12,190  
And most of the people did.

2086  
01:52:12,190 --> 01:52:13,370  
There was no other choice.

2087  
01:52:13,370 --> 01:52:18,750  
There was no other  
alternative to do.

2088  
01:52:18,750 --> 01:52:20,190  
You had no other idea, even.

2089  
01:52:20,190 --> 01:52:22,650  
Nothing would even  
pop into your mind,

2090  
01:52:22,650 --> 01:52:26,710  
because it's an impossibility.

2091  
01:52:26,710 --> 01:52:29,582  
Did you expect-- did you--  
were you ever hit by a capo,

2092  
01:52:29,582 --> 01:52:30,910  
or did you ever have a problem?

2093  
01:52:30,910 --> 01:52:32,270  
Yes, I was hit.

2094  
01:52:32,270 --> 01:52:36,130  
Yeah, I picked up

some wood one time.

2095

01:52:36,130 --> 01:52:37,120

OK, there were--

2096

01:52:37,120 --> 01:52:44,470

OK, towards the end, we had  
a big bucket, a water bucket.

2097

01:52:44,470 --> 01:52:46,030

And we thought if  
we can make a fire

2098

01:52:46,030 --> 01:52:48,880

and put this water bucket on  
some rocks, some big rocks,

2099

01:52:48,880 --> 01:52:52,620

we can make a fire underneath  
and boil some hot water

2100

01:52:52,620 --> 01:52:54,280

and maybe cook something.

2101

01:52:54,280 --> 01:52:57,520

Some people from  
different kommandos--

2102

01:52:57,520 --> 01:52:59,350

I couldn't bring in  
anything from where

2103

01:52:59,350 --> 01:53:02,620

I worked, other than a  
piece of metal, you know.

2104

01:53:02,620 --> 01:53:04,630

A piece, a hunk of  
steel, which was useless.

2105

01:53:04,630 --> 01:53:08,780

But people worked in the  
German kitchens, for instance.

2106  
01:53:08,780 --> 01:53:13,750  
They would maybe bring in  
some potatoes, some carrots.

2107  
01:53:13,750 --> 01:53:17,020  
And if we could cook  
it in that bucket?

2108  
01:53:17,020 --> 01:53:19,980  
You see, one thing  
leads to another.

2109  
01:53:19,980 --> 01:53:22,760  
When you have the  
potatoes and the carrots,

2110  
01:53:22,760 --> 01:53:26,720  
maybe some beets, and you  
need a bucket to put it

2111  
01:53:26,720 --> 01:53:29,180  
somewhere to cook  
it, you improvise

2112  
01:53:29,180 --> 01:53:31,550  
by getting rocks, stones.

2113  
01:53:31,550 --> 01:53:34,730  
Then you need wood to  
make fire, you know.

2114  
01:53:34,730 --> 01:53:36,110  
This was not in Auschwitz.

2115  
01:53:36,110 --> 01:53:38,030  
This was already  
towards the end,

2116  
01:53:38,030 --> 01:53:42,530  
where there was no  
order really existing.

2117

01:53:42,530 --> 01:53:46,160

And so we were looking for wood.

2118

01:53:46,160 --> 01:53:48,455

I was to go get some wood.

2119

01:53:48,455 --> 01:53:50,540

I Was assigned to get some wood.

2120

01:53:50,540 --> 01:53:53,810

Wood was basically  
branches from trees.

2121

01:53:53,810 --> 01:53:55,430

And I was picking them up.

2122

01:53:55,430 --> 01:53:59,950

And this German soldier who was  
not an SS-man at the time says,

2123

01:53:59,950 --> 01:54:00,950

what are you doing here?

2124

01:54:00,950 --> 01:54:02,690

How did you get out?

2125

01:54:02,690 --> 01:54:04,100

I said-- I lied to him.

2126

01:54:04,100 --> 01:54:06,860

I said, I'm cleaning  
up the branches.

2127

01:54:06,860 --> 01:54:08,930

And he started shouting  
at me in German.

2128

01:54:08,930 --> 01:54:11,930

I didn't know what in the  
word he was saying to me.

2129

01:54:11,930 --> 01:54:14,360

Before you know  
it with a rubber--

2130

01:54:14,360 --> 01:54:18,800

not a whip, but a  
very rigid club-like,

2131

01:54:18,800 --> 01:54:22,430

maybe as thick as this mic  
stand, thicker perhaps,

2132

01:54:22,430 --> 01:54:24,380

he whacked me.

2133

01:54:24,380 --> 01:54:26,810

He told me to lay down on  
the floor, on the ground.

2134

01:54:26,810 --> 01:54:29,810

And I lied down on the  
ground, and he whacked me

2135

01:54:29,810 --> 01:54:32,090

about a dozen times right  
on my rear end, You know.

2136

01:54:32,090 --> 01:54:33,590

My buttocks, you know?

2137

01:54:33,590 --> 01:54:35,210

And I knew it was--

2138

01:54:35,210 --> 01:54:39,143

I had welts as thick  
as you can imagine.

2139

01:54:39,143 --> 01:54:41,060

And it was quite really--  
and I couldn't walk,

2140

01:54:41,060 --> 01:54:43,400

but I had to walk.

2141  
01:54:43,400 --> 01:54:45,440  
I walked.

2142  
01:54:45,440 --> 01:54:49,400  
But somehow I made through it.

2143  
01:54:49,400 --> 01:54:51,510  
I think my skin was  
even broken as well.

2144  
01:54:51,510 --> 01:54:52,010  
Yeah.

2145  
01:54:52,010 --> 01:54:56,130

2146  
01:54:56,130 --> 01:54:58,380  
You've touched on  
this in various ways,

2147  
01:54:58,380 --> 01:55:04,260  
but can you describe fundamental  
or base emotional state?

2148  
01:55:04,260 --> 01:55:05,250  
Was it fear?

2149  
01:55:05,250 --> 01:55:06,930  
Was it apprehension, awareness?

2150  
01:55:06,930 --> 01:55:09,480  
Was it--

2151  
01:55:09,480 --> 01:55:10,440  
Very good question.

2152  
01:55:10,440 --> 01:55:12,810  
The fear was continually.

2153  
01:55:12,810 --> 01:55:16,920



But your conditioning becomes,  
you can live with fear.

2154  
01:55:16,920 --> 01:55:20,510

2155  
01:55:20,510 --> 01:55:23,040  
You can live with it.

2156  
01:55:23,040 --> 01:55:26,270  
And again, roll with  
the punches, you know?

2157  
01:55:26,270 --> 01:55:29,440  
Fear was continuous.

2158  
01:55:29,440 --> 01:55:31,450  
There wasn't a day,  
a minute, an hour

2159  
01:55:31,450 --> 01:55:33,970  
that there was no  
fear for someone.

2160  
01:55:33,970 --> 01:55:37,598  
If it wasn't for the superior,  
of someone taking your coat,

2161  
01:55:37,598 --> 01:55:38,140  
for instance.

2162  
01:55:38,140 --> 01:55:39,130  
Because he's cold.

2163  
01:55:39,130 --> 01:55:42,010  
Someone within the camp.

2164  
01:55:42,010 --> 01:55:44,020  
Even to take your shoes.

2165  
01:55:44,020 --> 01:55:46,090  
Because everyone

wanted to survive.

2166

01:55:46,090 --> 01:55:48,190

Survive was the main thing.

2167

01:55:48,190 --> 01:55:51,640

It's an animal  
instinct that also

2168

01:55:51,640 --> 01:55:55,840

appears in a person  
in moments like that.

2169

01:55:55,840 --> 01:56:00,460

So those things did happen.

2170

01:56:00,460 --> 01:56:05,140

And usually the weaker  
suffer, and mostly the Jews

2171

01:56:05,140 --> 01:56:10,280

were attacked by the  
non-Jews within the camp.

2172

01:56:10,280 --> 01:56:13,180

Especially-- I don't want to  
make this a political issue,

2173

01:56:13,180 --> 01:56:15,730

but the Ukrainians were  
just brutal to the Jews,

2174

01:56:15,730 --> 01:56:20,140

these sort of former soldiers  
or former Ukrainians that

2175

01:56:20,140 --> 01:56:22,600

were shipped into the camp.

2176

01:56:22,600 --> 01:56:26,050

They were absolutely  
brutal to us.

2177

01:56:26,050 --> 01:56:29,645

One would give you a push  
from the back, a shove.

2178

01:56:29,645 --> 01:56:32,020

And you dropped the bread,  
another one would kick it away

2179

01:56:32,020 --> 01:56:32,890

from you, you know.

2180

01:56:32,890 --> 01:56:36,860

And there goes your  
ration for the day.

2181

01:56:36,860 --> 01:56:40,600

So fear was there all  
the time, what it was.

2182

01:56:40,600 --> 01:56:44,050

But you feared more  
the uniformed person,

2183

01:56:44,050 --> 01:56:48,940

the uniformed SS-man, the  
uniformed soldier or policeman.

2184

01:56:48,940 --> 01:56:50,290

Because they were totally--

2185

01:56:50,290 --> 01:56:54,130

you were just like  
an ant crawling.

2186

01:56:54,130 --> 01:56:58,581

You were meaningless to  
them, absolutely meaningless.

2187

01:56:58,581 --> 01:57:01,170

2188

01:57:01,170 --> 01:57:02,010

One last question.

2189

01:57:02,010 --> 01:57:08,117

Do you hear any people who  
survived the whole time

2190

01:57:08,117 --> 01:57:08,950

that you were there?

2191

01:57:08,950 --> 01:57:12,535

Were there any familiar faces  
that were there pretty much as

2192

01:57:12,535 --> 01:57:13,560

long as you were there?

2193

01:57:13,560 --> 01:57:14,220

Yes.

2194

01:57:14,220 --> 01:57:15,637

And there were  
some people perhaps

2195

01:57:15,637 --> 01:57:18,958

that were longer than me  
that have survived, yes.

2196

01:57:18,958 --> 01:57:19,458

Yes.

2197

01:57:19,458 --> 01:57:23,520

Did you begin to look for those  
faces as like a stabilizing

2198

01:57:23,520 --> 01:57:24,058

force?

2199

01:57:24,058 --> 01:57:24,600

Or was that--

2200

01:57:24,600 --> 01:57:28,320

Well, you look for a

commonship, something

2201

01:57:28,320 --> 01:57:34,110  
that you have a greater  
understanding when you had

2202

01:57:34,110 --> 01:57:36,090  
the same experience in life.

2203

01:57:36,090 --> 01:57:39,810  
And there's a  
camaraderie develops.

2204

01:57:39,810 --> 01:57:41,370  
And there's a great fellowship.

2205

01:57:41,370 --> 01:57:45,000  
And yes, I have  
friends till today,

2206

01:57:45,000 --> 01:57:47,910  
a friend that lives in Ohio.

2207

01:57:47,910 --> 01:57:50,580  
He's an attorney for  
the federal government,

2208

01:57:50,580 --> 01:57:55,050  
that we just went through  
from the beginning.

2209

01:57:55,050 --> 01:57:57,720  
Not quite the beginning,  
but we met later on in camp,

2210

01:57:57,720 --> 01:57:58,320  
and we just--

2211

01:57:58,320 --> 01:58:01,260

2212

01:58:01,260 --> 01:58:03,210

And he just retired, you know.

2213

01:58:03,210 --> 01:58:09,040

And so we-- yes, we used to  
call each other once a week,

2214

01:58:09,040 --> 01:58:10,457

perhaps, or write  
to one another.

2215

01:58:10,457 --> 01:58:12,540

I was invited to his  
daughter's his wedding, which

2216

01:58:12,540 --> 01:58:14,123

was in Florida, which  
I couldn't make.

2217

01:58:14,123 --> 01:58:15,540

Yeah.

2218

01:58:15,540 --> 01:58:18,390

And we visit each other, too.

2219

01:58:18,390 --> 01:58:20,640

And there were quite others.

2220

01:58:20,640 --> 01:58:24,450

There was-- you heard of a  
famous cosmetic manufacturer,

2221

01:58:24,450 --> 01:58:26,790

Max Factor?

2222

01:58:26,790 --> 01:58:32,340

His nephew was a very  
close friend of mine.

2223

01:58:32,340 --> 01:58:35,100

And we came at the same  
time to the United States.

2224

01:58:35,100 --> 01:58:39,150  
Just like my aunt made papers  
for me, his uncle, Max Factor,

2225  
01:58:39,150 --> 01:58:40,610  
brought him here.

2226  
01:58:40,610 --> 01:58:45,270  
And we had a reunion in  
Beverly Hills in '49 or '50.

2227  
01:58:45,270 --> 01:58:47,520  
I think it was '49.

2228  
01:58:47,520 --> 01:58:53,430  
And there were some young  
people, girls and boys we met.

2229  
01:58:53,430 --> 01:58:54,480  
Some from France.

2230  
01:58:54,480 --> 01:58:56,880  
Some were from other  
parts of the world that

2231  
01:58:56,880 --> 01:58:59,340  
came to their relatives.

2232  
01:58:59,340 --> 01:59:02,010  
And we thought we were  
going to make a club.

2233  
01:59:02,010 --> 01:59:04,320  
But as you know, you grow older.

2234  
01:59:04,320 --> 01:59:07,890  
You marry, and you  
go your own way.

2235  
01:59:07,890 --> 01:59:12,420  
But nevertheless, you  
stay in touch with someone

2236

01:59:12,420 --> 01:59:14,520

that you've made  
a close contact.

2237

01:59:14,520 --> 01:59:20,540

2238

01:59:20,540 --> 01:59:23,300

Did you have the same  
job the whole time

2239

01:59:23,300 --> 01:59:24,350

you were in Auschwitz?

2240

01:59:24,350 --> 01:59:25,183

In Auschwitz, yes.

2241

01:59:25,183 --> 01:59:26,850

So you were always  
with the same person?

2242

01:59:26,850 --> 01:59:29,300

Yes, yes.

2243

01:59:29,300 --> 01:59:31,040

I was very fortunate  
to have that job.

2244

01:59:31,040 --> 01:59:33,440

It was an indoor job.

2245

01:59:33,440 --> 01:59:36,320

It was well heated, the factory.

2246

01:59:36,320 --> 01:59:38,870

It was immaculate.

2247

01:59:38,870 --> 01:59:44,660

We were perhaps well  
treated by the supervisors,

2248



01:59:44,660 --> 01:59:46,550  
which were German civilians.

2249  
01:59:46,550 --> 01:59:51,270

2250  
01:59:51,270 --> 01:59:52,110  
Yes.

2251  
01:59:52,110 --> 01:59:54,810  
Others had outdoor jobs.

2252  
01:59:54,810 --> 02:00:02,280  
They had to work in quarries,  
where you make rocks pebbles.

2253  
02:00:02,280 --> 02:00:03,330  
OK.

2254  
02:00:03,330 --> 02:00:06,330  
Outdoor is snow,  
wind, rain, whatever.

2255  
02:00:06,330 --> 02:00:07,320  
You know.

2256  
02:00:07,320 --> 02:00:10,410  
So I was more fortunate  
than others there.

2257  
02:00:10,410 --> 02:00:17,590  
Or warehouses for the  
German supplies, you know.

2258  
02:00:17,590 --> 02:00:22,280  
And where it's cold in the  
winter months, freezing.

2259  
02:00:22,280 --> 02:00:26,310  
I have my big toe in  
marching, just from work

2260

02:00:26,310 --> 02:00:31,567  
and back to work, one  
of my toes was frozen,

2261  
02:00:31,567 --> 02:00:32,400  
one of the big toes.

2262  
02:00:32,400 --> 02:00:35,310  
Yeah, because all you  
had was a wooden bottom

2263  
02:00:35,310 --> 02:00:36,990  
with a canvas top.

2264  
02:00:36,990 --> 02:00:41,040  
And you had like two eyelets to  
hold that thing on your foot.

2265  
02:00:41,040 --> 02:00:44,280  
And nothing, not even a sock.

2266  
02:00:44,280 --> 02:00:46,770  
Well, we had-- we took  
paper and would wrap--

2267  
02:00:46,770 --> 02:00:48,780  
if we could get a  
hold of some paper,

2268  
02:00:48,780 --> 02:00:52,060  
we wrapped our  
bare feet in paper

2269  
02:00:52,060 --> 02:00:54,000  
and stuck our foot  
into the shoe,

2270  
02:00:54,000 --> 02:00:56,760  
if you want to call it a shoe.

2271  
02:00:56,760 --> 02:00:59,760  
And I don't even remember  
ever having underwear.

2272  
02:00:59,760 --> 02:01:00,900  
I don't really recall.

2273  
02:01:00,900 --> 02:01:02,910  
I don't know if I did or not.

2274  
02:01:02,910 --> 02:01:06,615

2275  
02:01:06,615 --> 02:01:10,872  
And the survival  
phenomenon is great.

2276  
02:01:10,872 --> 02:01:13,080  
So that's probably what kept  
your health up somewhat.

2277  
02:01:13,080 --> 02:01:13,820  
Yeah.

2278  
02:01:13,820 --> 02:01:15,660  
Oh, I'm sure, yeah.

2279  
02:01:15,660 --> 02:01:16,530  
Yeah, yeah.

2280  
02:01:16,530 --> 02:01:21,120  
What was the texture of  
your uniform, the clothing?

2281  
02:01:21,120 --> 02:01:27,450  
It was just like a potato sack  
cloth, or hopsack, the best.

2282  
02:01:27,450 --> 02:01:28,650  
You know, a very--

2283  
02:01:28,650 --> 02:01:32,490  
you can look through the weave  
actually, in the clothes.

2284

02:01:32,490 --> 02:01:36,960

That's why there were eager  
to grab someone else's, to put

2285

02:01:36,960 --> 02:01:40,795

two or three on, you know.

2286

02:01:40,795 --> 02:01:45,630

It's really-- yeah,  
it was a problem.

2287

02:01:45,630 --> 02:01:48,070

There was no cashmere  
sweaters, I assure you.

2288

02:01:48,070 --> 02:01:49,590

Yeah.

2289

02:01:49,590 --> 02:01:52,620

Or there might have been some  
in the transport brought,

2290

02:01:52,620 --> 02:01:54,390

but we didn't get them.

2291

02:01:54,390 --> 02:01:57,400

Did you develop any  
kind of closeness,

2292

02:01:57,400 --> 02:01:59,850

or can you describe  
some of the relationship

2293

02:01:59,850 --> 02:02:02,390

you had with the man  
you worked under,

2294

02:02:02,390 --> 02:02:04,410

that you were friends to?

2295

02:02:04,410 --> 02:02:05,340

Oh, yes.

2296  
02:02:05,340 --> 02:02:06,130  
Definitely, yes.

2297  
02:02:06,130 --> 02:02:06,630  
Oh, yeah.

2298  
02:02:06,630 --> 02:02:07,470  
We were in the same camp.

2299  
02:02:07,470 --> 02:02:08,553  
We were in the same block.

2300  
02:02:08,553 --> 02:02:10,200  
Yeah, he was a Czech Jew.

2301  
02:02:10,200 --> 02:02:12,300  
Oh, I thought it was  
someone from the outside.

2302  
02:02:12,300 --> 02:02:13,140  
No, no, no.

2303  
02:02:13,140 --> 02:02:15,960  
There were supervisor  
from the outside,

2304  
02:02:15,960 --> 02:02:19,470  
but the fella that worked on  
the lathe and I assisted him,

2305  
02:02:19,470 --> 02:02:22,830  
eventually I got a lathe,  
too, because it was all,

2306  
02:02:22,830 --> 02:02:24,300  
you might say, automated.

2307  
02:02:24,300 --> 02:02:26,850  
You just-- the way  
the lathe works

2308

02:02:26,850 --> 02:02:31,470

is, it goes in so far and  
exits once it bores the hole.

2309

02:02:31,470 --> 02:02:35,970

So it's more or less  
to set and see that.

2310

02:02:35,970 --> 02:02:39,810

So after several months, I just  
was operating a lathe myself.

2311

02:02:39,810 --> 02:02:40,830

Yeah.

2312

02:02:40,830 --> 02:02:43,020

Yeah, it's all preset.

2313

02:02:43,020 --> 02:02:48,390

It's no-- well, you do measure  
with a caliber the opening.

2314

02:02:48,390 --> 02:02:51,090

You know, you stop the lathe,  
the turning of the lathe

2315

02:02:51,090 --> 02:02:52,440

and then you measure it.

2316

02:02:52,440 --> 02:02:55,920

And you see, and the  
steel spins off the like--

2317

02:02:55,920 --> 02:02:59,450

2318

02:02:59,450 --> 02:03:01,720

but yes, also was a prisoner.

2319

02:03:01,720 --> 02:03:02,690

Yeah.

2320

02:03:02,690 --> 02:03:09,230  
And he was a skilled metallurgic  
worker from the Skoda factory

2321

02:03:09,230 --> 02:03:10,730  
of Czechoslovakia.

2322

02:03:10,730 --> 02:03:12,680  
He was a Czech Jew.

2323

02:03:12,680 --> 02:03:17,720  
And I thought Elie Wiesel,  
I thought was a Czech Jew,

2324

02:03:17,720 --> 02:03:19,940  
because they spoke their  
native language together.

2325

02:03:19,940 --> 02:03:22,710

2326

02:03:22,710 --> 02:03:28,830  
But I think Elie Wiesel was  
not from Czechoslovakia.

2327

02:03:28,830 --> 02:03:32,130  
He was-- OK, I can't  
think of the name of the--

2328

02:03:32,130 --> 02:03:34,340  
yeah.

2329

02:03:34,340 --> 02:03:37,370  
You said you spent five--

2330

02:03:37,370 --> 02:03:41,165  
about five months that  
you were in Birkenau?

2331

02:03:41,165 --> 02:03:42,440  
In Birkenau?

2332  
02:03:42,440 --> 02:03:45,770  
No, Birkenau was  
about two weeks, yeah.

2333  
02:03:45,770 --> 02:03:46,270  
Buchenwald.

2334  
02:03:46,270 --> 02:03:46,990  
I'm sorry.

2335  
02:03:46,990 --> 02:03:47,615  
Oh, Buchenwald?

2336  
02:03:47,615 --> 02:03:49,365  
About five months from  
the time you were--

2337  
02:03:49,365 --> 02:03:50,342  
Yes, I--

2338  
02:03:50,342 --> 02:03:51,800  
What did you do  
during that period?

2339  
02:03:51,800 --> 02:03:52,860  
Just nothing.

2340  
02:03:52,860 --> 02:03:57,010  
At the very beginning, we just  
were carrying big rocks and--