

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW OF HELMUT KOBLER

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1 We are interviewing Helmut Kobler for the
2 Holocaust Oral History Project in San Francisco California.
3 It's February 11, 1993. My name is Peggy Coster and the
4 producer is John Grant. Okay.

5 Q Why don't you just tell us about going to
6 Theresien. You were there for about a week?

7 A Yes. I was taken from Ebanchitza, from the coal
8 mine I was working at, and was taken to Theresien to be
9 sent to a work -- to a slave labor camp for -- I don't know
10 what it was. Then from Theresien -- I know when I left
11 Evanchitza that I am going to Theresien. But I didn't know
12 where -- from there because I knew that Theresien was only
13 a transient camp.

14 From there I was then taken to a place called
15 Postelberg, which is in Bohemia. And that was a new camp
16 which was built for the Germans to house the slave laborers
17 or the prisoners to -- which would be working on building a
18 new airfield for them.

19 Q Let's go back and talk about Theresien. What
20 was the food like, and were you with your parents in the
21 barracks? That sort of thing. What was the logistics?

22 A In Theresien?

23 Q Theresien.

24 A Oh, no. I didn't go with my family. That was
25 the first time I was taken alone -- away from my family.

1 That was in 1944. So I didn't have my family. That was
2 the first time because I was the oldest of the family.
3 That's why I was taken away from them and sent to Theresien
4 and I was sent there strictly for relocation to a work
5 camp. And this work camp then came about -- was in
6 Postelberg. And there I was in this camp building an
7 airfield, or being a laborer where the airfield was built.

8 Q Well, Theresien was supposed to be a show camp
9 for the Red Cross. Was there any better conditions there
10 than in -- wherever else you went?

11 A No. No. No. As a matter of fact, when I came
12 to Theresien they had an area where they were relocating
13 people who were supposed to go out on the next transport.
14 So it was not comfortable -- it was -- as a matter of fact
15 we slept on the floor.

16 The food was just as bad as in the other camps I
17 experienced. And to me it was very strange because I
18 didn't know my way around, since I just arrived there at
19 night. And within about a week I was back out again on a
20 transfer to Postelberg. So in Theresien I was only in
21 transition.

22 Q Were you with a whole bunch of other people in a
23 group or did you join the group that was there?

24 A No. I was with a whole -- I was put together
25 with a whole group of other people in similar

1 circumstances.

2 Most of them were half Jews or so called
3 Mischlings like I am. There was also a few men who were
4 not Jews at all. They were gentiles who were married to --
5 had a Jewish spouse and -- where I was also there was Jews
6 who had a gentile spouse but it was mostly men and most of
7 them -- well, all of the men were young men. Let's say
8 from 15 years on to about 35, 40 who were in good physical
9 condition and were able to work.

10 So that's the group that I was in. At that time
11 we went -- when we were transferred to Postelberg, I think
12 we were pretty close to 500. For a lot of those people it
13 was the first time that they were imprisoned. It was then
14 when the Germans started rounding up mixed marriages --
15 members of mixed marriages and products of mixed marriages.

16 Q What did you notice about the difference between
17 them and their attitudes from the people who had been in
18 the camps a long time?

19 A Well, from them I noticed first of all that they
20 were well fed. They were in good physical condition
21 because -- when I met them I had already five years of camp
22 behind me, and so I could see that they were well fed.

23 They were also well dressed. When they were
24 rounded up they knew where they were going. They knew that
25 they had to go to slave labor camps and so they were

1 appropriately dressed.

2 And they had better shoes and they had civil
3 clothes. Not uniform, or camp uniforms or things like
4 that. That's what I mostly noticed.

5 Q What about their attitudes? What were they
6 like?

7 A Their attitude was what kept them together.
8 They all hated the Germans. They knew this was going to
9 come, and they missed their families very much, and most of
10 the talk between them was talking about the various
11 families.

12 They came from various places all over, from
13 Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany. And as a matter of fact
14 there was even a few Germans who were married to a Jewish
15 spouse and didn't divorce her and so on.

16 It was quite a -- and most of them were
17 professionals. There were quite a few engineers and
18 teachers and professors and lawyers and so on. So it was a
19 very good group I got in. I was very pleased about that
20 and -- because I learned a lot from them. There was also
21 some Masons in between, Freemasons in that group. And so
22 that's what I mostly noticed.

23 But during the months, you know, they were much
24 -- they could much better survive the cold because it
25 wasn't winter. And they were much better equipped because

1 they didn't spend previously any time in a concentration
2 camp, and they were still well fed and in good physical
3 shape.

4 Later on you can see the weakest falling off to
5 the side, couldn't work any more and so on. But the thing
6 I really noticed, to answer your question, was that they
7 were well fed and well clothed when I met them.

8 Q Were they treated like, you know, when you were
9 talking about your mom and you were given the worst jobs
10 and kind of mistreated because your mother wasn't Jewish in
11 these other camps, were they all mistreated in the same way
12 because their spouses weren't Jewish?

13 A No. No. Because there wasn't no majority of
14 Jews and -- no majority. We were all painted by the same
15 brush. In other words, we were all from mixed marriages or
16 products of mixed marriages.

17 So, no, there was no discrimination -- where one
18 discriminating against the other.

19 As a matter of fact, there wasn't even kind of
20 discrimination where -- which I often seen where more
21 intelligent people or the intelligencia would kind of move
22 to the side and look down at the working class people.

23 No. This didn't exist. In this particular
24 group, it didn't. And I would say this group sticks out in
25 my mind in that they were also well organized. They didn't

1 report on each other. They just weren't hungry enough yet
2 to stoop to the lowdown things which happened in the camp.

3 Q Now, you just mentioned like when people got
4 hungry they did reporting on each other and things --

5 A Well, in the other camps I was in, people
6 already spent two or three years in the camp and were
7 nearly starving and so on. They were not as dignified, and
8 not as proud. You lose that during the years. When a
9 person is hungry and knows that there is no future, they do
10 a lot of things.

11 Like I mentioned before we stole a lot from each
12 other and we did a lot of...

13 And I know people who reported to the Germans --
14 to the SS on their fellow inmates just so they get a little
15 bit more food or any kind of other favors -- where you get
16 a different pair of shoes or things like that. Yes.

17 As I say, I believe that these people would have
18 been -- if they would have been three years in a camp would
19 have sunk to the same level as we sunk in the camp. But
20 they didn't because they were still -- they were still not
21 hungry enough. And besides that, the future looked much
22 brighter because we knew that the war is going to come to
23 an end.

24 We seen the Allied bombers bombing the petroleum
25 refineries where we had to go and clean up after the

1 bombings and so we knew that it couldn't take much longer.
2 While in contrast, the other inmates who spent four or five
3 years already under these conditions, they were not as --
4 how should I say. They sunk to quite a different
5 intellectual level and moral level too.

6 Q So, were there any children in this group? Or
7 how old was the youngest child?

8 A The youngest I would say was about my age.
9 There was two more besides me who were that age. The rest
10 of them were more in the 20 to 35 group.

11 Q What happened to the younger -- of the couples
12 who had younger children at this time?

13 A Well, usually the Germans considered if the
14 child is 16 years old -- up to 16 years old it's a juvenile
15 and it was mostly out of a mixed marriage it was mostly
16 with his family. Once he became over 16 he was taken to a
17 camp, to a work camp or something.

18 Q Were the young children and their parents
19 gassed? Because these were Mischlings, they weren't
20 full-blooded Jews?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Was there a difference between how those
23 children and their parents were treated rather than the
24 full-blooded Jews?

25 A Yes. Because the Germans in their infinitive

1 wisdom or organization skill, yes, they first took care of
2 killing or decided to kill all the Jews.

3 And once that was more or less done, then they
4 went after the half Jews or as they called them Mischlings
5 first grade, second grade and members of mixed marriages.

6 I don't think that very many of these groups
7 were gassed in a concentration camp. Most of them I would
8 say survived. Some of them didn't even get into the
9 concentration camp because basically when they started
10 rounding up half Jews and half -- and mixed marriages, was
11 only about in 1944, and they were using them more for work
12 as slave laborers than to annihilate them in the camps. So
13 it was a completely different group.

14 This was the same reason we were spared in that
15 camp in Ebanchitza which was for family -- that my family
16 and the other family were not sent to Theresienstadt and to
17 Auschwitz because we were not yet on the list.

18 But, yes, in 1944 is when they did start going
19 after the mixed marriages to eliminate them. So, I
20 couldn't tell you how many of them got into Auschwitz. I
21 don't think any, or very few. Because also by that time in
22 1944 the Russians were getting pretty close to Auschwitz.

23 So I don't think -- I do know of a case of a
24 lady -- a girl who was maybe two years older than I was.
25 She was in the camp in Ebanchitza together and she married

1 -- or actually she was from a mixed marriage and came to
2 Theresienstadt and married her boyfriend and volunteered to
3 go with him to Auschwitz and -- but she didn't go to
4 Auschwitz. She went to Belsen-Belsen instead. And he went
5 to Auschwitz, but they did survive. Both of them. And she
6 is in Vienna now. I talk to her.

7 Q Did you notice that the guards would treat
8 people who looked quote looked non-Jewish like the blond
9 hair and blue eyes -- did you notice they were treated
10 better or worse by the guards?

11 A No. I didn't notice that. They were all
12 mistreated the same way.

13 Q Equally?

14 A Equally, yes. No, I really couldn't say. They
15 were all treated -- even if they are not Jewish, if they
16 were -- like I was half Jewish. They were still considered
17 by the Germans as being Jews.

18 So once you are in the camp I must say the
19 Germans didn't make any difference whether the hair is
20 blond or red or black. No. Or somebody looks typical
21 Jewish and somebody didn't. No. Naturally, for people
22 like me who didn't look Jewish at that time and looked
23 blond, it was easier to escape. If you just didn't stick
24 out.

25 While a person who is typical Jewish features

1 would have no chance, because he would get picked up right
2 away.

3 Q Didn't they ever pick up a non Jew by mistake if
4 they went by looks?

5 A No. No, because they knew -- they knew who the
6 Jews were, you see. At that time it was very difficult --
7 you get picked up because you didn't have papers. That's
8 why you get picked up. So, the non Jew would have papers
9 while the Jew wouldn't have papers. So -- you get picked
10 up because you had no papers. Irregardless of what you
11 looked like. I'm talking outside.

12 And the people who were sent to the camps, they
13 were not picked out because they looked like Jews. They
14 were picked out because they got notification on that day
15 you would report with two suitcases to that place and you
16 going to be repatriated. I think that's what they called
17 it.

18 And that's when they had a whole trainload
19 ready. And that's where the people went, thinking they
20 were going to be repatriated in a different country and so
21 on. And they went to Auschwitz.

22 Q So you went to Postelberg?

23 A Postelberg.

24 Q Okay. What happened when you arrived there?
25 How many people were there?

1 A Well, as a matter of fact, I think this
2 transport I was on with 500 or so men, was the first one in
3 the camp. The camp was not very well organized. The camp
4 was -- there was not enough food in there.

5 There was a lot of jobs available in the camp.
6 Like kitchen help to work in the kitchen, which always was
7 a desirable job. And to work on camp still building
8 barracks. Because not all of the barracks were built. The
9 barbed wire around the camp was not all finished and so on.

10 And so it was -- as I say we were the first
11 group of prisoners there. And then, naturally, every week
12 or so came another transport. So eventually there was
13 around 3,000 men in that camp.

14 Q All men?

15 A All men, yes.

16 Q And what was was your job there?

17 A Maybe I'm wrong. Later on I remember there came
18 a transport of about 50 women. Got in there. And they
19 were mostly Italian woman prisoners also. And they then
20 were working in the kitchen, yes. So that was the
21 exception. But mostly men.

22 My job in there was then to work on the
23 airfield. And most of it was digging ditches for
24 underground pipelines and so on. The first job I had in
25 the camp was helping building more barracks, and after that

1 I was taken out to work outside in the -- on the airfield.

2 Q What was the weather like?

3 A It was freezing cold. It was in the middle of
4 winter. It was really cold. That's what I remember.

5 Q I interviewed one survivor who said they didn't
6 even notice whether it was cold or not because everything
7 was so miserable and there was so much else going on.

8 Did you have that experience?

9 A What did he say? That he didn't notice anything
10 else?

11 Q He didn't even notice whether it was cold or not
12 because of the misery, so much misery going on, and just
13 trying to stay alive.

14 A Well, yes. Yes. That's true. But that's
15 mostly due -- I would say it's because you are so cold then
16 your blood starts flowing much slower and things don't look
17 so interesting anymore.

18 You know, you are half dead really and all you
19 have -- all a person thinks about is how to survive and
20 also about the better life they had before, like when there
21 was lots of food. And when they had to sleep in a bed.
22 You know, more daydreaming. I basically think that's
23 because of the cold.

24 So, yes, you are more like a -- how should I
25 say? An animal led to slaughter. You just follow the guy

1 ahead of you, and don't give -- don't care much about what
2 is going on around you.

3 Also you don't want to get beaten up. You don't
4 want to stick out. So you always, like they say, walk the
5 line and keep your mouth shut. Yeah.

6 But I would say the cold was the worst because
7 the barracks were not heated. They were not insulated.

8 I basically -- I wasn't properly clothed and we
9 were full of lice and always hungry.

10 Q How did you protect yourself from your thoughts
11 in this situation?

12 A From my thoughts?

13 Q Yes. What I mean is that -- sometimes when
14 conditions are so bad -- it's so hard if you can't keep
15 your mind -- I mean if your mind is always on the opposite
16 which is what would be better -- I mean did that ever
17 become like a real danger in terms of like, people who
18 might decide to go into the electric fences or things like
19 that?

20 A No. In my case my mind was always on -- ever
21 since I came in the camp, was always occupied on how to
22 escape. How to get out of it.

23 So, as I said the first thing I noticed about
24 this camp was that the barbed wire wasn't completely
25 installed. And I did use it to escape from there. And --

1 things like that. So I never was that desperate that I had
2 to go -- but I did sit around or when I went to work, I did
3 start thinking about what it would be when the war is going
4 to be over. And how nice it would be to see my father
5 again. And when the family will be all back together. And
6 we will be back in our house. And so, yes, I kept on
7 dreaming while I was working to just pass the time away.

8 But most of my mind was occupied by thinking
9 about how to get the hell out of there.

10 Q What was the food like in the camp?

11 A Miserable. Miserable. Again I got to point out
12 this was already towards the end of the war in 1944. The
13 Germans didn't have much food themselves. The whole
14 country was on rations. So the food was regular camp food.

15 Like you get about an inch of bread per day.
16 Which is about four by four inches. This type of German
17 bread. An inch thick. That's supposed to be your ration
18 for the day.

19 You get some -- what they call coffee, but it
20 wasn't really coffee. It was really just -- an ersatz
21 coffee. And you get soup, what they used to call eintopf
22 which means one pot type of soup which was mostly just
23 vegetables cooked and no meat in it or nothing.

24 And in the evening you get the same thing -- no,
25 at lunchtime usually the big meal is to get soup and a few

1 potatoes. And in the evening you get just the soup -- what
2 they call soup. It's just -- basically just water with
3 some vegetable in it. Most of the vegetables were
4 vegetables which were rotten because they were thrown
5 someplace and so they sent it to the camp. So it was not
6 very good food, no. It was barely -- the thing that was
7 good about it is that it was warm. That you got something
8 warm in your stomach and that's all.

9 But, again with me my system was so used to it
10 that I could survive on that because I was for years in the
11 camp.

12 I seen other people who couldn't. And like I
13 said, the well nurished men who came in on the first
14 transport with me, they weren't so well nourished after
15 four or five months and they were in very bad shape.

16 I could still work with this type of -- with
17 this type of food I could work ten hours a day, while they
18 couldn't anymore. So it was just a matter of what you were
19 used to.

20 Q Was thirst a problem?

21 A Pardon?

22 Q Was thirst a problem?

23 A Thirst, no. No. Specially in winter you always
24 have enough snow around that you can eat the snow if you
25 were thirsty. But I can't remember that I was thirsty in

1 the camp.

2 Q How many barracks were there eventually in this
3 camp?

4 A Oh, I would say somewhere around 50 or 60
5 barracks.

6 Q And how big was each barrack?

7 A Each barrack would be about -- house enough for
8 about 200 to 300 men. The barracks -- it's very hard for
9 me to tell. I would say they were about 25 -- about 75
10 feet wide and 200 feet long. Three tiers of beds in it.
11 So, there was -- three times three is nine. Yes, I think
12 they handled about 300 men per barrack. Naturally there
13 was also barracks like the administration barracks, and the
14 kitchen barrack, and the infirmary barracks, the punishing
15 -- the jail barracks and things like that. The guard
16 barracks.

17 Q Which bunk level was the best one to sleep on?

18 A I slept always on the top bunk. Usually because
19 I was the youngest one and I never had no problems climbing
20 up to it.

21 Usually the lower bunks were reserved for older
22 people and sick people and people who were not as agile
23 anymore. But I found the top bunk most comfortable because
24 I think the heat rises to the top and it wasn't so cold.

25 But, basically I always -- all of the time I

1 remember in the camp I always slept in the top bunk because
2 it was for me easier to get up.

3 Q What was the hygiene facilities like?

4 A The what?

5 Q The hygiene facility like? The bathrooms?

6 A The hygiene facilities were outside in this
7 place. The different camps they are different. In this
8 place they were just typical field latrines. You dig a
9 hole in the ground and you set up a five holer, you know,
10 and that's -- that would be the hygiene facilities. And at
11 the same time there was running trough for urinating, and
12 there were four or five taps for -- to wash yourself. No
13 showers.

14 Q Was it enough for that many people?

15 A Well, what you mean enough?

16 Q Well, I mean like sometimes you hear stories
17 about those camps, you know, you are only allowed to use
18 them at certain times, or else you were run through them so
19 fast you really didn't have time to do your business, or
20 else the faucets were always in use so you couldn't wash
21 your hands anyway. You know you hear these stories.

22 There is even one story I heard of one guy that
23 was called the Shit King you know he took care of it and
24 you got a few priviliges, you know.

25 A Well, as I said there were camp commanders who

1 were prisoners who would take care of these facilities, but
2 to urinate, a lot of times you just got out and pee'd
3 around the back of the barracks outside in the snow or
4 somewhere.

5 But the other one you sat on the five or six
6 holers, you know, yes there were a lot of other people who
7 had to go, and they were yelling at you to hurry up and so
8 on. But -- again you know you didn't get much food, so you
9 didn't have to do much -- do your business once a week.
10 That's what I can remember.

11 And as far as washing, you know, the water was
12 cold. There is no warm water. And I didn't care whether I
13 went to sleep with dirty hands or not because I knew that
14 I'm going to get dirty the next morning anyway so it didn't
15 matter to me.

16 And again, it's in the winter, you can always if
17 your hands are too dirty, you can wash them in the snow by
18 rubbing snow, you know, in the hands.

19 You don't take your clothes off for weeks and
20 weeks for the simple reason because it's too cold. And I
21 remember it used to be a pain for me to have to take my
22 clothes out to go and kill the lice in my shirt. Which was
23 very ridiculous. You are sitting there shivering and
24 trying to kill the lice so at least they don't bite so
25 much. You knew you never could kill all of the lice but

1 you know -- so, no, you didn't in winter take your clothes
2 off to wash or to have a shower or a bath. Everybody
3 smelled, so you didn't notice it.

4 Q Did you lose your sense of smell?

5 A Pardon?

6 Q Did you lose your sense of smell?

7 A Well, I don't know whether I lost my sense of
8 smell, but I know I must have been smelling, and I didn't
9 notice the other people smelling. They didn't taking
10 showers or baths or wash themselves too often. You know,
11 they smell. I notice smell real bad when somebody had
12 diarrhea and couldn't clean themselves and so on for days.
13 Run around with shitty pants, yes. That I could smell.
14 But the normal body odor, no.

15 Q Okay. I guess that answers the question,
16 because what I was thinking of was that some people just
17 totally lost their ability to smell completely. And even
18 after the camp they never regained it.

19 A Well, I don't know. My smell is still good.
20 You know, something stinks, it stinks, You know. But I
21 know everything stunk in there, you know. The latrines
22 were not very far from the barracks so, yes, you could
23 smell that smell. But it's just a matter of what you get
24 used to, you know.

25 People are lying in their excrement for days and

1 days with diarrhea and can't even get out of it. You know.
2 They don't smell themselves. And the people who were
3 around there get used to it. So.

4 Q Were there capos in this barrack?

5 A Oh, yes. There was the same German system.
6 There were block leaders which were called blockleiter.
7 Usually each barrack had a block leader. And each block
8 leader usually had four or five capos which were the
9 trustees. The ones who carried the stick around and so on.
10 And they were sometimes -- they were -- besides that there
11 was the camp police.

12 Q Like a Jewish police?

13 A Yes, the camp police. You know. And they took
14 care of discipline in the camp. Again, I have to say even
15 in this camp there the capos and the block leaders were
16 German Jews. It was just -- this automatically -- the
17 Gestapo would say pick out these German Jews and say, okay,
18 you are block leaders and you are capos and so on.

19 Q How did they behave? How did they behave?

20 A Well, I think they were just as bad as the
21 German SS. And if you cross them, they would beat you up.
22 They would -- if you fight them or argue with them they
23 would go and whip you or beat you, or if you are big and
24 strong and you can put up a fight, they would go and get
25 two or three capos together and at night in the dark throw

1 a blanket over you and start beating you with clubs. And
2 leave you there. And you don't even know who did it.

3 So, again you come to the same thing. You give
4 a man power over another man's life, they automatically
5 will become cruel. Brutal. Brutally cruel I would say.

6 Q Was this automatic or was there some capos that
7 didn't become that way? The block leaders?

8 A I haven't seen have a good one. Because if he
9 would be too good the Germans wouldn't -- he wouldn't be
10 there very long with the Germans. Because he is the one --
11 the block leader is really the one who carried out the
12 contact with the SS or with the guards and so on.

13 And, again, this system was the system which
14 really kept the camp like this one with 3,000 -- 4,000 men
15 and I would say there was 25, 30 guards. And they kept the
16 discipline in the camp, and when they couldn't, you know,
17 when they couldn't handle it, they just handed their own
18 men over to the SS and --

19 Q When they couldn't handle it?

20 A Well, when they couldn't handle somebody, you
21 know, who was repeatedly aggressive against them and so on,
22 they would hand him over to the SS. You know, like
23 happened with me.

24 After what happened when I rammed that pick into
25 the pipe and -- so, first of all I got beaten up by the

1 capos. And then I got handed over to the SS. And the SS,
2 the guards, beat me up and -- and I would say tortured me.

3 And then they handed me over to the Gestapo. So
4 you see, one step over to another. If a guy tries to
5 escape, well, he would be handed over to the Gestapo or to
6 the SS because if a guy -- and again this happened to me.
7 If a man escapes from the camp so the block leader where he
8 escapes from is the one who is getting punished by the
9 Germans. So he will take care that nobody escaped.

10 Q What privileges did capos and block leaders get?

11 A Basically what they get, they have -- they don't
12 sleep in bunks. They have a bed. In one corner. They
13 have -- usually they have more like a room. They erect
14 some blankets around it so they have some privacy. Better
15 food. Or different, much better food. Again, in this camp
16 I was in a lot of those people got parcels from their
17 family outside.

18 So they get to steal half of the parcels or
19 quite a lot of parcels. So they always had good food.
20 They had cigarettes and -- basically they don't get hustled
21 by the Germans.

22 And they didn't have to work. That's the most
23 important thing. The capo and the block leader didn't have
24 to work at all. And they didn't have to go in
25 [] they were just like glorified guards. And

1 since work is the worst punishment for anybody -- really
2 it's hard work. It's worst than getting beaten and so on.
3 It's continually hard work and everything hurts. I think
4 that was a great privilege for them, that they didn't have
5 to go and work.

6 Q Did they take advantage of any prisoners in
7 other ways?

8 A You mean homosexual?

9 Q Yes.

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you couldn't say no? Or could you?

12 A Well, you could say no. And you could fight
13 them, but then this is the instance where -- for instance
14 he gets a blanket thrown over him and gets beaten up. Most
15 of these capos I know, not so much the block leaders -- the
16 block leaders were a little bit older people. But the
17 capos were younger, gung ho, and most of them were sadists
18 or homosexuals or things like that, yes.

19 I'm not wanting to say they were all
20 homosexuals. No. But -- yes, I have been approached,
21 since I was young boy by a couple of them to trade sex for
22 food and so on
23 and...

24 This was going on in a lot of camps, you know.
25 It was just like it goes on here in jail. And so on. Yes,

1 I have seen a few of these -- these kind of things going
2 on.

3 But again, when you see it it's -- you know,
4 it's not as bad. I have seen SS, having homosexual
5 relations with a prisoner, you know.

6 So, it goes on -- it went on with the Germans.
7 It went on with the American prisoners, with the English
8 prisoners of war. It was something that was understood.
9 It was just there and nobody talked about it, and nobody
10 made a big deal about it.

11 Q Well, if you caught SS men doing it with
12 prisoners, was it pretty open so that other SS men could
13 have seen it?

14 A No. No. Not by any means. How it -- what I
15 have seen was this one guard used to come in and get this
16 one young boy and he was taking him out behind the barracks
17 and doing it to him. But nobody else could see it. And I
18 don't even think -- some of the prisoners might have seen
19 it. You know. And this guy used to come regularly under
20 the pretext that, you know, he called him out and the guy
21 came and that was it.

22 Q What happened to capos after the war? In
23 general?

24 A I would like to know. I would like to know. I
25 don't know. They are maybe all in Isreal now, but I don't

1 know. But I have yet to see somebody who was in the
2 concentration camp admit that he was a capo or a block
3 leader. But they were. But I don't know what happened to
4 them.

5 Q Now you mentioned there were camp police.

6 A Yes.

7 Q How were they different from the capos and the
8 block leaders?

9 A Well, the block leaders and the capos were more
10 for taking care outside the workplace and inside in the
11 barracks. And the camp police was more all around like,
12 you know, taking care of overall, like, for instance, order
13 in the kitchen or in the mess hall that everybody gets in
14 line and so on. Investigating stealing. That would be the
15 camp police.

16 In that camp where I was -- the first one in
17 Ebanchitza, there was no capos. There were camp police who
18 take care. And each camp police had one floor. There was
19 two or three guys who took care of what is going on.

20 And, so I think they more or less complimented
21 each other. While the capo, he would know his own people,
22 his 15, 20 men, he knows them and he is responsible for
23 them. While the camp police would be -- in a lot of camps,
24 would take over the function of the guards.

25 And mostly stealing. Because the stealing in

1 there was going on, and you not only stole from the
2 inmates, we also tried to steal from the Germans. And you
3 try to break into the warehouses or get some dresses --
4 clothes, food. So you steal from anybody you can.

5 This would be the camp police job. The other
6 job the camp police was, for instance, keeping the
7 prisoners after working hours and after food, keeping them
8 inside the barracks. Keeping watch that nobody gets out of
9 the barracks and so. Keeping general order I would say
10 that was what -- and mind you, as far as I know not every
11 camp had capos, and not every camp had camp police.

12 I think in Theresienstadt they didn't have
13 capos, they just had the camp police. Same in the camp
14 Ebanchitza there was no capos or blockleaders. There was
15 camp police and the Jewish administration of the camp.

16 Q What was their behavior like, in general? Of
17 the camp police.

18 A You know that's a difficult question to ask,
19 what was their behavior. Most of them I know or I knew
20 they were just bullies, you know. They were just -- they
21 felt they were different from the other prisoners and they
22 make it feel you know they could do -- they could kick you,
23 they could slap you, they could take you and beat you up
24 and try to get you to confess that you stole something or
25 that you did something like that. They had no laws and

1 they had the power.

2 Q And their privileges were?

3 A Privileges were more food, cigarettes maybe.
4 Better quarters.

5 Q Did they get their more food in the same way as
6 the capos? From packages from prisoners?

7 A Well, that is not the only way they get food.
8 They get better food from the kitchen you know, because for
9 instance in the kitchen the people who work in the kitchen
10 like the cooks and the helpers and so on, they don't eat
11 the same food the inmates do. They eat better food. It's
12 still the same, but they get meat and things like that, you
13 know. So -- that's the privilege. They sit at a different
14 table at the dining room. Or wherever the food is dished
15 out.

16 Q Was the SS food cooked in the same kitchen or a
17 different kitchen?

18 A No, completely different. And there was
19 nowhere where the capo would sit with the SS. No, it's
20 completely different. Usually the SS and the guards, or
21 any kind of guards, and it was mostly SS would be on the
22 outside perimeter. Where they have their own offices and
23 they have their own quarters and they are separated by
24 barbed wire from the inmates. From the camp. So, no,
25 there was no --

1 Q And were their wives and families allowed there
2 also? The SS men?

3 A In the camps I was in I didn't see no wives or
4 children, no. But I understand that in some of the bigger
5 camps and so on that, yes, they had children and they were
6 -- or wives, but they were, again, outside of the camp.
7 They lived outside.

8 Q What about medical care in the camps?

9 A Well, every camp had -- I was in had a -- they
10 called it the camp hospital. What it was was a first aid
11 station, where usually a doctor who is a prisoner is
12 treating patients depending what he has available, what he
13 could treat.

14 Most of the sicknesses, you know -- he might
15 have asprins or so on. But most of the things that were
16 treated when somebody get beaten up too much and broken
17 bones or when he works breaks a bone or accidents and so
18 on. I don't think there was any extensive health treatment
19 in there.

20 But a good thing about this was that if you get
21 hurt and have an accident and so on, you get -- either get
22 to stay in that hospital, so called, which is just a
23 barrack with three or four -- one doctor and three or four
24 orderlies in there. Maybe ten beds. So called hospital
25 beds. At least they had mattresses and had clean sheets on

1 it. And I even think the food was a little bit better in
2 these hospitals.

3 So, if you are lucky enough to get in there as a
4 patient you can get a week of relaxation -- rest. At least
5 lie in bed and so on. If it's a matter of a broken bone or
6 broken leg and so on, you are there for a while and you
7 don't have to work. If you get injured on the job the
8 doctor -- and you can't work, the doctor had the authority
9 to give you a slip saying that you cannot do any heavy work
10 for three days or whatever. Or if you are injured more,
11 the doctor can say -- if you had diarrhea for instance
12 badly, the doctor can go and say, well, you don't have to
13 work for two days or one day or so.

14 So, yes, the hospitals were I would say a God
15 given gift and I made full use of them. As a matter of
16 fact, in this one camp it was quite widespread where
17 prisoners used to go and mutilate themselves, cut
18 themselves with a nasty wound and you get there and you can
19 go and stay there for two or three days or a even a week.
20 And I have done that myself.

21 When the work gets so bad and so hard and you
22 can't do it any more, and so you have another prisoner give
23 you a flesh wound which requires some stitches or something
24 like that. Very common was to cut yourself here between
25 the thumb and forefinger and just chop this like that.

1 Like I have got it on here. And when you do that what
2 happens this thumb just hangs down. It looks awful.

3 But really it's nothing. When they sew it back
4 together it's all right. But when this happens you have
5 your thumb hanging down like that. So that was good for --
6 I would say about four or five days you know.

7 The doctor would stitch it up and it's usually
8 -- the left hand or we did it on the knee. We take -- I
9 can show you the scar. See this here (indicating). You
10 take the skin like that and you cut it and it gives you a
11 bad cut. But see the scar is still here. It gives you a
12 bad cut but it's really nothing that hurts you, you know.
13 It's not permanent.

14 I heard from other people who go and chop a
15 finger off or something like that, you know, so they don't
16 have to work. But I never seen that. But I know that most
17 of the wounds which were self-inflicted were wounds --
18 flesh wounds which were good for a few stitches and good
19 for about a week off work.

20 Q Did the doctors have enough -- you know,
21 antiseptic type stuff to keep it from developing into
22 worse?

23 A Well, if it developed into something worse, you
24 know, if it would be pussing or so on that -- or infected
25 that would be good for a few more days. So, no, the doctor

1 usually what they had, they had a lot of Iodine, you know,
2 and they would put -- there was no antibiotics or anything
3 like that. So like these things they would just bandage it
4 up and hope it doesn't get infected.

5 But that was one thing, if you are careful not
6 to get blood poison because if you get blood poison you
7 know that you lose an arm or leg or whatever. But these
8 were just wounds -- you were just out to get a few days off
9 work.

10 Q And did people get typhoid there?

11 A Typhoid in this camp -- that was in the first
12 camp, Ebanchitza, there was a outbreak of typhoid and a few
13 died. But they licked it. I don't know how, but I
14 remember that there was typhoid.

15 Q What happened when people died in this camp?
16 There was no ovens or anything right?

17 A Well, in this camp, in the one I'm talking right
18 now, in Ebanchitza, when they died they were just taken out
19 on a -- kind of a two-wheeled cart and were buried in a
20 Jewish cemetery, you know.

21 Q And at Postelberg?

22 A In Postelberg I don't really know what happened
23 to people who died. They were taken out of the camp. I
24 don't know. Most likely taken to the nearest crematorium
25 or something like that, or buried somewhere. I don't know.

1 Q What happened if someone got so sick they
2 couldn't continue working?

3 A Then he dies.

4 Q They didn't ship them to another camp or --

5 A No. No.

6 Q Was the medical barrack warmer?

7 A Yes. It was warmer. As I said the meals were a
8 little bit better. You were better treated. It was like
9 going on a vacation.

10 Matter of fact, I remember that -- I don't know
11 what it was, but I had a rash with boils on my arms and my
12 feet. And this camp doctor -- it was in Postelberg, he
13 thought it was very contagious and I should get out of
14 there so the guard took me to the hospital in Saats, you
15 know, and left me there. And I was overnight in the
16 hospital.

17 And I was about two days in that hospital and
18 then they took care of it. And they lanced a few and
19 bandaged it up and so on. And did a little bit better job
20 than they would -- they could at the camp.

21 Then they said, you are all right. You can go
22 now. And here, all of a sudden, I was a free man. And
23 they didn't call the camp, and didn't tell the camp, you
24 know, to come and pick me up and so on. And I bummed
25 around the town for another day, and then I went back to

1 the camp. Because I couldn't get any food or anything in
2 the town.

3 I went back and said, okay, here I am. How
4 come? Well they sent me back. They finished with me. So
5 the doctor let me in another couple of days in the hospital
6 in the camp and then I went back to work.

7 Q What did you do when you were bumming around the
8 town?

9 A Oh, I was looking for things I could steal, you
10 know, and eat and so on. And by that time I was 17 years
11 old or -- yes, I was 17 years old or very close to being 17
12 and admiring the girls. Because I haven't seen girls for
13 such a long time so -- that's basically what I remember.

14 Q What were you wearing? Did it give you away as
15 being from the camp?

16 A No, it didn't, because I was wearing civilian
17 clothes. I was wearing the clothes I came into
18 Theresienstadt with, you know. It wasn't good clothes but
19 it was not a uniform.

20 Q When you think of guards at Postenberg --

21 A Postelberg.

22 Q Postelberg. Or maybe anywhere just in general.
23 Like when you think of the typical German SS man, what do
24 you think of? And I'm not talking about necessarily like
25 blond hair and blue eyes which the early ones had. I'm

1 talking about like facial expressions, body expressions,
2 attitudes, behavior?

3 A Well, to me all of them were arrogant bastards.
4 Just -- their behavior puzzled me. It didn't puzzle me for
5 a long time till I had an experience at the Gestapo prison
6 in Karlsbad. Until then they were something you feared.

7 You get -- you stay out of their way. You don't
8 want to be noted by them. You do everything to just don't
9 have to have anything to do with them, because you know
10 that once you have something to do with them you will be in
11 deep trouble.

12 And so they were -- don't forget they were the
13 supermen. They were the -- they had the power over your
14 life. So as a kid and I knew that, and I stayed out of
15 their way as much as possible.

16 But I never wondered -- I never thought about
17 their life or their family life or so on. But then in the
18 later years when I was at the Karlsbad Gestapo -- and by
19 that time it was March 1945. The war was getting to an
20 end. The Reich was getting bombarded from all over the
21 place, from all sides.

22 And there was an SS Gestapo officer, and about
23 two days before he shot a Russian prisoner right in front
24 of a whole bunch of us. Right in the yard. Just made him
25 kneel down and shot him. That was it.

1 it was just as cold as anything you can imagine.
2 And two days later I get hauled out of my cell, and so does
3 another prisoner, and we were led outside.

4 And I said -- I'm going to get shot. Because
5 usually in that yard that's where they were -- most of the
6 executions going on. And I also -- and I see this same SS
7 or Gestapo officer standing by a car, which was an SS car,
8 and his driver...

9 And I said, well, that's it. That's the end.
10 No?

11 And we both were scared like hell. Because we
12 know how vicious this man was because of the beatings and
13 so on.

14 And he had a driver. He sat next to the driver.
15 And he put us in the back of the car. And they drove out
16 of the prison.

17 And we drove into an area where there was nice
18 villas and nice houses in Karlsbad. And he told us that he
19 needed us to help him carrying the boxes to move, help him
20 to move. All the Gestapos were starting to move their
21 families way back into Germany. And so our job was to
22 carry the heavy boxes down about three flights of stairs
23 and load them onto a truck. And the boxes were in his
24 house, upstairs and downstairs. And we both spoke German
25 so we could do it.

1 And this man had two children, two little girls.
2 One I would say about two or three years old, and one about
3 four or five years old. And they were very nice.
4 Beautiful wife. And the wife was crying. And he was so
5 tender with his wife and with his children, because she was
6 crying. Because she has to leave him now. And he was
7 telling her, don't worry. I will be there soon. And he
8 was hugging her and hugging his children and kissing and --
9 you know, really being as tender as you could imagine.

10 And I think -- that son of a bitch -- that
11 killer. That was a conflict. And I just couldn't
12 understand that a man like that could be, in the same life,
13 be a tender loving husband and father.

14 So there, to me, is a whole complexity of the
15 German nation. Because they are all very nice now, but
16 when you let them loose, or when they ever get loose again
17 then they are just going to change like that.

18 So, the cruelty to me -- the cruelty and the
19 brutality of a German is inbred. It's not something you
20 acquire. It's in every German. And it will come out in
21 different situations.

22 So this is what I think about the SS. And I
23 don't think they are -- they have human sides to them, but
24 the cruelty is in them. They know how to disguise it and
25 they know -- and they don't have to be even SS you know,

1 because they were just as cruel to their own people.

2 I have seen a German hang from the lamp post
3 German officers and German soldiers who were caught without
4 papers away from the front lines. They are picked up.
5 They are hanged. No court, nothing. Because -- by their
6 own people.

7 So it's something inbred in the Germans. And
8 I'm glad I'm not going to be here to see it again, but the
9 younger generation will.

10 Q When did you see them hanging from poles?

11 A I have seen them in Karlsbad. And I don't know
12 whether I have told you, but I was in a cell in the
13 Karlsbad Gestapo prison with a bunch of German officers who
14 were caught as traitors -- who were caught away from the
15 front lines like -- the wife was sick, or giving a baby,
16 any kind of reason. And they just left for a day or so and
17 were caught.

18 They were -- most of them, I was in there with
19 were shot in the yard in the Gestapo prison. But sometimes
20 when we went -- after a bombing raid we were taken out of
21 this prison and -- to clean up some unexploded bombs and
22 things like that. Clean up after a bombing raid. And I
23 have seen them hanging from lamp posts with a placard.
24 Some of them had placards, you know, forieter, traitor. Or
25 things like that.

1 Q Did you see many?

2 A I would say about four or five.

3 Q In how long of a space of time?

4 A In about a week's time. But that was standard
5 practice. You know, this was not something out of the
6 ordinary. I knew they were doing that, you know. And
7 naturally I had seen pictures of it too and I had read
8 about it. But I have seen it with my own eyes.

9 So there comes this cruelty -- this brutality
10 comes in here. It comes into play with the Germans when
11 they have the power. You can even see right now. In this
12 particular time when they were separated, east and west
13 Germany they were very docile, very quiet.

14 Now, you can see already now they are united you
15 see the Nazis starting getting up. And you see people
16 saying, well, they weren't so bad. Now, we are united, now
17 we can show the world, you know. So it's going to happen
18 again.

19 Q When you were in this prison, you said that you
20 were with some German officers. Were you in the same cell?
21 Is that how you had contact with them?

22 A Well, I was in that cell because they thought
23 that I was German and so -- and all my conversations with
24 them were in German.

25 And so I was just caught because I didn't have,

1 you know, they didn't know where I came from. So when I
2 was transferred to this prison, I was put into a German
3 speaking cell, you know. And there were in that cell, I
4 think, about eight, ten German officers.

5 Q So did you talk with them?

6 A Oh, yes. Yes. they were -- I was later on
7 taken out of that cell and I was put into a cell with some
8 Jews, you know, when they found out that my father was
9 Jewish and so -- but at the time that I was in there I was
10 talking with them and they were talking to me.

11 And they knew that they were going to get shot
12 or -- but some of them thought, you know, they can talk
13 themselves out of it and so on.

14 And I know there was one, he was a Captain. In
15 full uniform. And I think his story was that -- and he was
16 not very far from the front. That he went to see his wife
17 who was having a baby, you know. He was married. Maybe
18 100 kilometers or so, 100 miles from this wife. So he just
19 went and took a car, you know, his car and went to see her.
20 And on the way back he was stopped by military police and
21 asked, where is your regiment. And it was up at the front.
22 And so they took him and they declared him a traitor.

23 Q How did these officers talk when you talked?
24 What did they talk about? What did they say about Germany,
25 about the war, about Jews?

1 A Well, about Jews, again I'm just talking from my
2 own experience. About Jews, they never talked about that.
3 About the war, what they talked about, the war is lost.

4 I remember when I was in this prison that during
5 that time the Americans went and bombed Theresien. And
6 Theresien was about 200 miles away from that prison where I
7 was in. And we could see out of the cell window which was
8 on the top, you could see at night during the night the sky
9 being lit up on the horizon. And even felt the tremor, you
10 know. So that was a point for discussion with them,
11 between themselves, that the war is lost, because the
12 Americans come even so close into Theresien and do the
13 bombing. All these bombing raids all around. Karlsbad was
14 bombed.

15 I would say in the last six months, even while I
16 was in Postelberg, very often, quite a few times half of
17 the camp had to go and start cleaning up the rubble in
18 these oil refineries they bombed -- the American or the
19 English bombed during the night. And so you can see the
20 whole thing is ending.

21 And, you know, these were quite human beings.
22 They were worried about their families and so on. But what
23 atrocities they had done at the front, I don't know. All I
24 know is to me the worst was the Gestapo and the SS.

25 Q Didn't these officers talked about the Gestapo

1 and the SS? How they were behaving?

2 A Oh, yes. By that time they hated them because
3 they were in their power. They got caught, you know, and
4 they knew nothing nice was coming out of them.

5 So, yes, they hated. And there was no more
6 fellowship between them. Maybe they were treated a little
7 bit better. They were not slapped around or beaten around.
8 But the end result was the same. They were executed.
9 Unless they would a real good reason.

10 Because from the Gestapo, where do you go, you
11 know? They sentence you to a concentration camp? There
12 was no concentration camp for German officers so where --
13 most of them got executed. Or the ones with the good
14 reason got let go.

15 Q What were they saying when they were talking?

16 A Wht would they say. Well, most of them were
17 concerned about their families, you know. Tell each other
18 how many children they got, how big the children are, and
19 so on, you know.

20 They couldn't show pictures, because they didn't
21 have photographs. Because all that was taken away from
22 them. Most of them the belts were taken away and -- so. I
23 think the boots were taken away too. So, they were just
24 talking about their misfortune. How they got caught. Why
25 they got caught, and so on.

1 Q Did you tell them you were half Jewish?

2 A No. No.

3 Q How did the Gestapo eventually find out that you
4 were half Jewish?

5 A Well, for them it was very easy to find out
6 because I was sent from that camp which was the camp for
7 half Jewish -- for Mischlings. That was the camp in
8 Postelberg. And I was sent to the Gestapo in Saats. And
9 then from the Gestapo in Saats I was sent to the Gestapo in
10 Karlsbad, so they knew.

11 But the people in the cell didn't know. And so,
12 you know, for them I was just a kid who was found without
13 papers. When they asked me what are you in for, I had no
14 papers. So that was -- if you got no papers, you know --

15 Q Now, how long were you in this prison in -- in
16 the Gestapo prison?

17 A I was in that Gestapo prison for about -- from
18 about January 4th until March 25th when I escaped from
19 there.

20 Q In 1945?

21 A In '45, yes. And in between I was out for about
22 ten days when they were taking me to Dachau and then back
23 again because Dachau was full and wouldn't take any more
24 prisoners. I was back and afterward I escaped. So that
25 was --

1 Q What was food like in this prison?

2 A Well, the same as any other prison. Again, it
3 was towards the end of the war and there was very little
4 food. You get that one inch piece of bread in the morning
5 with the coffee. That was your daily ration of bread. And
6 you get that soup and the potatoes for lunchtime.

7 Now, sometimes there might have been a little
8 bit of barley or something else with substance in the soup.

9 Sunday there might be a few pieces of meat, you
10 know. Small pieces maybe the size of a thumbnail in the
11 soup. And in the evening the same thing. It's also --
12 pretty well the same food. I think they had it rationed
13 out. They said that you had to have so many calories to
14 survive, but in the Gestapo prison it was also that there
15 were prisoners who had family outside. So they also were
16 able to -- some of them, not all them, to get some food in
17 from relatives outside.

18 Q Did they share?

19 A Some did, and some didn't, you know. They said
20 -- the ones who had some extra food they slept on it
21 practically. They put it under their pillow and so on.
22 Usually when somebody had some food they shared a little
23 bit, you know, with -- you know around and kept the rest.

24 Q Did you get any when they shared?

25 A Oh, yes. Yes.

1 Q Was half of the food taken out of the these
2 packages like in the other --

3 A No. No. Not in the Gestapo prison, no. I
4 don't think so. This was something that the person brought
5 and they said, here this is for this prisoner and they
6 would go and take a look and make sure there is no weapons
7 in it or anything in it and they give it to the prisoner.

8 Q Okay. Were there both men and woman in this
9 prison?

10 A Only men I know about. I didn't see any woman,
11 no.

12 Q How big was the prison?

13 A Well, that was -- I would say there was about
14 100 prisoners in there, maybe 100 or 200 prisoners.

15 Q And were there torture chambers?

16 A There was a place downstairs where they were
17 torturing prisoners, yes. But these were torture, you know
18 -- for people who didn't confess yet. And so -- but once
19 you confessed your crimes and so on, then there was no
20 tortures. Then you were in an ordinary cell. But I know
21 there was a torture chamber because I have seen prisoners
22 coming out of there all beaten up and broken up and so on.

23 Q Were you ever tortured?

24 A Not in that prison, no.

25 Q What did they do with you once you were in

1 there?

2 A Well, when I came in there I was, out of
3 principle, just beaten up, you know. And I was put in a
4 cell. And then I was -- after about two or three days I
5 was brought down to an office to a Gestapo officer and he
6 started to ask me questions.

7 And basically question was what group did I
8 belong to. Who told me to break that pipe. Who else was
9 involved with it, you know. And while he was questioning
10 me I got beaten up, you know. And that went on for about
11 four or five days.

12 I had nothing to hide, you know. He just
13 couldn't believe that I was so stupid to do that, you know.
14 I was telling him that it was an accident. You know, that
15 I tried to hit the ground next to that and my pick slipped
16 and that's how I punched a hole in it. Well, he didn't
17 believe that. And so it took about four or five days of
18 every day two or three hours -- they took me, and they beat
19 me up. Some other guy beat me up. There was usually two
20 guys in there. Until finally, you know, I told them that I
21 was just fed up with it and that I did it on purpose. So I
22 got beaten up more and -- you know, for a couple more days
23 and then that was it. And then I was just in that cell
24 waiting to be sentenced for a crime -- for sabotage.

25 And usually sabotage is -- you know, you pay you

1 -- if you are a sabotour you get shot. And I expected
2 that. But my sentence apparently was to be sent to a
3 concentration camp with a remark on my file was stamped R U
4 which meant RECOUR UNNERVISHED RETURN, NOT DESIRED on it.
5 So that meant life sentence in Dachau if I survived it.

6 But it didn't mean very much anymore because the
7 war was being over in two or three months anyway so -- but
8 that's the way it was.

9 And I got also in this Gestapo prison I was let
10 out of the cell quite often to wash the stairs and the
11 hallways on my knees and so on. And very often the Gestapo
12 just walk by and just give me a big kick in the rib or in
13 the ass or something, you know. Just for nothing. No
14 reason at all.

15 I remember I was bent over washing the floor and
16 I was listening to what was going on in that one room you
17 know, and this one Gestapo officer came out and kind of
18 seen me that I was listening. And he just stepped right on
19 my head and pushed my face into the stone floor in the
20 hallway.

21 So this was without provocation. That was the
22 kind of life there. And then I escaped from there. I told
23 you the story of how I escaped.

24 Q Was this a pretty notorious Gestapo prison?

25 A No. Not too notorious because it was -- most of

1 it was in the Sudetenland. Karlsbad was part of Germany
2 and so they were not dealing with a heavy terrorist or heavy
3 partisan organizations and so on. They were more dealing
4 with smaller things. And mostly Germans, you know. They
5 were dealing with prisoners of war who escaped and things
6 like that, you know.

7 While the other prison -- Gestapo prison I was
8 in in Brenau that was a bad notorious Gestapo prison.
9 Because in that one they killed over four thousand people.
10 Executed I mean in there which I have seen myself right to
11 the last day. And the people who were in it were -- most
12 of them were underground fighters, partisan fighters they
13 caught. And torture was every day because they wanted
14 information and so on. Russian partisans were caught and
15 mostly were some people who fought actively against the
16 Germans and got caught at it. So there were much -- as I
17 said executions in that one were steady, daily. You know.
18 Where the other one was maybe once or twice a week. And
19 that only towards the end.

20 Q What did they do before the end?

21 A Pardon?

22 Q What did they do before the end?

23 A Well, in Karlsbad they were shooting people who
24 they couldn't sentence any more, you know. But they wanted
25 to get rid of them before they have to give up to the

1 Americans. Because the Americans were coming. So -- there
2 was -- as I said there was some Germans in between and some
3 people who really got caught as saboteurs or underground
4 fighters.

5 Q And then they were sentencing them. What would
6 they tend to sentence them to?

7 A Well, the only sentence you can get from them --
8 and it's not like a court, you know. The same officer
9 decides what is going to do. Most of the time before the
10 war got so close they were sentenced to a concentration
11 camp. What they call the fenichtunslager where they were
12 executed. But then when there was no more of that they did
13 the executions themselves.

14 Q So the sentence was execution but they wouldn't
15 carry it out themselves?

16 A Yes. That's right. But then when they couldn't
17 send them to these camps anymore they carried them out
18 themselves.

19 Q Okay.

20 A Well, in Brenau they did it year in year out,
21 you know. They executed them right there. But in Karlsbad
22 it was not a rule of execution. They did execute them but
23 not as a rule all the time.

24 Q I just have a couple more questions about
25 Karlsbad. What were the sanitary facilities there?

1 A In Karlsbad, it was pretty good. It was a
2 regular jail so they had a water toilet which you could
3 flush. And they had a sink to wash. There was no showers
4 again or anything like that. But I would say they were
5 pretty good. Just like a regular jail. The fact is that
6 the same facilities are being used today by the Czech
7 police in Karlsbad. So it wasn't bad.

8 Q Now you said something about having rocks
9 thrown? It had to do with the Germans or the Gestapo or
10 something.

11 A Rocks thrown?

12 Q Maybe it was so long ago you don't remember the
13 context exactly.

14 A Not rocks thrown. In Karlsbad it was not rocks.
15 Well, we were led -- a bunch of prisoners, Gestapo
16 prisoners, to clear up after a bombing raid. And we were
17 handcuffed together and we were led to this place which was
18 bombed which we were supposed to clean the rubble and so on
19 and look for survivors.

20 And as we were led down that street in Karlsbad
21 of course we were very hungry because food was very scarce.
22 And I noticed a woman looking from -- down at us from one
23 of the apartment buildings and I pointed -- I looked at her
24 and I pointed to my mouth like with my finger. To give me
25 something to eat, you know. To throw down something to

1 eat. And she motioned to wait. And I tried to hold the
2 rest of them back to wait. We are going to get some food
3 from her. But she came back to the window and she throw
4 down the contents of a piss pot. In other words, all kinds
5 of, you know, what they used at that time piss pots. No
6 food. That's the only thing I remember about throwing
7 rocks in Karlsbad.

8 Q When you were out, you know. All these escapes
9 that you made. When you were out, did you ever see people
10 -- you know, townspeople expressing attitudes like that
11 towards Jewish people and towards prisoners?

12 A Oh, yes. As I said there were people who helped
13 us. Who knew us. But all through the time ever since we
14 left our own town, I have heard this kind of expression
15 what are these people doing here. What are those Jews
16 doing here. We have enough people to look after. Why do
17 they have to come here. And then I heard the same thing
18 when I was in the camp in Ebanchitza where the people were
19 -- not hostile, but were very intolerable you know. Saying
20 don't come begging in here, you know. Stay in the camp.
21 So it was basically -- it was always, what do we have to do
22 with the Jews. Yes. There was an attitude like that.

23 Q Did you ever see people do anything like this
24 woman with the pot?

25 A No. No. No. Mostly after the Jews -- after it

1 was known that they were persecuted I didn't see anybody
2 going out of his way to additionally hurt them. No. But I
3 didn't see much sympathy neither, you know, for the
4 situation.

5 Q Now, when you escaped from Karlsbad -- I have
6 some questions that are more detailed about the escape.

7 A Sure.

8 Q Did you ever know of anybody else escaping?

9 A No. As a matter of fact I understand I was the
10 only one who ever escaped from there.

11 Q When did you find that out?

12 A I found that out just recently when I was --
13 when I was over there to take a look.

14 Q How did you discover that?

15 A Well, I went there. I went with my wife there
16 and I showed her the prison. L and it was -- it is a police
17 prison now. And the police station in Karlsbad. And it's
18 very difficult to escape from there. Unless you can get
19 out with a truck or something it's just like a fortress in
20 there because the cells were in the top three floors, so
21 there was no way you could jump out the window. The gate
22 is a heavy steel door -- big steel door.

23 There just was no way of escaping. The only way
24 I escaped was that I told the Germans that -- when I find
25 out that they are building this air raid shelter for

1 themselves, that I'm an experienced miner and I would like
2 to work on it. So I got taken on the detail and that's how
3 I escaped. I did not escape out of the prison proper. I
4 escaped from that -- building this air raid shelter for
5 them. So I was out -- I was out of the prison, but still
6 the only one who ever escaped. And I understand there was
7 others who escaped but they were caught and shot. Or who
8 escaped, you know, when they were let out to work detail
9 and tried to run away from them and they were shot.

10 But I was the only one who ever made it good.
11 Made it good. I got caught too, but much further away from
12 there.

13 Q How did you discover that you were the only one?
14 Were there records or --

15 A No. When I was in Czechoslovakia before that --
16 before this last time after the war I talked to some people
17 who were there too and this man told me that I was the only
18 one who ever escaped from there.

19 Q How did you plan this? And did you plan it with
20 anybody else? Tell anybody about it?

21 A Yes. I talked about it with another guy there.
22 But, as a matter of fact, I thought of doing something
23 else. I thought of escaping while we were being led to one
24 of these bomb sites to clean the rubble up. And just to --
25 when the guard isn't watching, to get away. And he talked

1 me out of it. He said, it's not workable. And they will
2 shoot you anyway and so on. So I didn't do it. And this
3 escape from the air raid shelter I didn't talk to anybody.
4 Was just planned. I know once I'm out that I can escape
5 and so -- but basically it was not very -- it was not very
6 well planned because I didn't even know -- even know the
7 direction to run.

8 You know, I didn't know whether I was running
9 into Germany or getting out of Germany. I just knew from
10 seeing that there is a roadway above the Gestapo prison
11 which was well traveled and I took that as a highway. And
12 that's where I got to and walked along that highway and
13 brought me into Czechoslovakia proper. And I think it took
14 me about two weeks to get to Bernau. Most of it was just
15 walking.

16 Q How did you get food along this time?

17 A Well, food was very hard to get. What I -- as I
18 said it was in March and -- I remember it was the 25th of
19 March, so it was still pretty cold in that area. It was
20 just starting spring and mostly what I -- since I couldn't
21 travel the highway I was travelling more or less on the
22 side of the highway where I could still keep the highway in
23 sight. And I was walking along fields and ravines and
24 little forests along there. And most of the food or
25 practically all of the food that I was eating was sugar

1 beets. Where these fields were fields where they grew
2 sugar beets and when the beets were ripe in the fall they
3 cut the green off and leave it in the field. And so this
4 was during the winter and it was very well preserved. So
5 that's what I was eating was the leaves of the sugar beets
6 and little pieces of sugar beets which were left.

7 Q How come you tried to escape this time? I mean
8 considering every other time you escaped you always turned
9 yourself in because you didn't have ID. You didn't have
10 what it took to be able to live and not get caught.

11 So how come this time -- you think it didn't
12 matter too much?

13 A Well, this time my life depended on it. All the
14 time before it I had dealings with the Gestapo and the SS,
15 but never was I accused of a crime against the Reich, you
16 know. I had dealings with them indirectly. This time it
17 was directly. I was accused of sabotage and I expected to
18 be shot or executed for it.

19 So I felt that I was really in danger in that
20 prison since I was sent back from Dachau and I knew that
21 the Germans were executing them now in the prison. And I
22 thought my turn is going to come too. So that's why I
23 escaped. On these other escapes I know when I get caught
24 there was -- the worst thing that will happen to me is to
25 get beaten up and punished and so on. But never lose my

1 life for it. But this time it was very serious. It was a
2 very serious matter. And so I was afraid of being shot.
3 And so that's why I escaped. Where it became a matter of
4 life and death, and the other ones it was never life and
5 death so --

6 Q Okay. Now, how did you -- at this time when you
7 were travelling back to Bernau, how did you get by without
8 papers?

9 A Well, as I said most of the time I traveled at
10 night, you know. And I slept during the day in forests
11 under trees and most of the forests were pine trees and so
12 on. Little pine trees, I slept under them. And that's how
13 I survived is -- that's how I traveled. During the night.
14 And where I knew there was no papers and -- you know, I
15 couldn't be seen by anyone.

16 So during the night I was more walking close
17 towards the highway, towards there and along there. And if
18 I could hear or see a car coming, I just ducked and jumped
19 into the ditch and wouldn't be seen. So there I could
20 travel and walk much faster. During the day, as I said, I
21 was hiding in the fields where nobody could see me, or was
22 sleeping in barns and things like that.

23 Q Now, if you were walking along the road at night
24 you saw a car coming, was it pretty certain to be Germans?

25 A Oh, yes. Yes. You know, since I didn't know

1 who it was, or who it could have been -- could have been
2 anybody for that matter. So I just jumped into ditch and
3 hid there. And yes, I would see a lot of German cars going
4 -- you know, army troop cars and so on going by, yes.

5 Q What was the weather like?

6 A It was cold. But it was starting to get warmer.

7 Q So it wasn't freezing?

8 A It was maybe freezing at night, during the
9 night. But usually spring comes there about middle of
10 March. And so, yes, it was cold at night for sure, you
11 know. But again, since I was during the night walking, I
12 didn't feel the cold so bad. During the day it usually was
13 warmer so I slept. So it was not as bitter cold as January
14 and February was, you know. It was already springtime.

15 Q Okay. I would like to go back now to finish up
16 Postelberg. Mostly what is left is your escapes. Although
17 I did want to ask about -- you said they had a jail there
18 or a torture barrack there?

19 A In Postelberg?

20 Q Yes?

21 A Oh, yes. Again all these camps have, you know,
22 camp administration which is where all of the
23 administrative offices were there and they also have a jail
24 for prisoners who misbehaved. And when I say misbehaved is
25 anything which is not very bad that the Germans -- the

1 official Germans had to take care and step into it like the
2 S.S. or Gestapo. Mostly it was camp discipline -- was run
3 by the camp police and had little cells in there. Torture
4 chambers in that camp; there was none. I don't remember
5 them, but there was these cells where you get beaten up and
6 locked up for, you know, maybe a week without food, without
7 anything just bread and water. But most of those offenses
8 were offenses carried out in the camp. Basically stealing.
9 Maybe fighting. Cheating. You know -- anything small.
10 Not a crime against the Germans. Once it is against the
11 Germans then it's serious. Then the S.S. and Gestapo came
12 in.

13 Q Were you ever in a camp where there were both
14 women and men who were tortured or beaten or anything? I'm
15 talking about torturing more than beaten here.

16 A Well, no. Well -- in a camp, no. In a Gestapo
17 prison, yes. I seen and I personally was tortured a few
18 times. Women, I don't know. I can't tell you.

19 I have seen my mother being beaten up by the
20 Gestapo. I have seen other ladies being beaten up in camp
21 for small things but purposely tortured only Gestapo, I
22 have seen in Gestapo prisons I have seen it. And I have
23 had it done to me and I knew about that. In these camps
24 the only one where there was women was Ebanchitza with the
25 family and in this camp where I told you in Postelberg

1 where they brought in the Italian women for cooking and so
2 on. And that's all the women I have seen. But direct
3 torture of women, I haven't seen.

4 Q Did you ever hear about it?

5 A After the war, yes.

6 Q One time I read that in some ways women were
7 tortured -- they were more often tortured sexually and more
8 often without clothing only. Did you ever hear about woman
9 in some places that were tortured in a worse way?

10 A Yes, I have heard that they were torturing women
11 for instance, when they were caught as underground fighting
12 belonging to an underground group -- opposition group that
13 were caught -- underground partisans that they were
14 tortured and even to a point of death.

15 The other thing, rape. I would say any
16 good-looking woman in the camp was raped by the Germans.
17 But at that time that was no big deal because everybody
18 else did it you know. The Russians did it and it was no
19 big deal. But I have seen where they come and took -- take
20 a woman out and the woman comes back not so much beaten up
21 like from a beating, but you could see and you knew that
22 she was sexually molested and so on. And -- but you know
23 by that time in the camps, these women I have seen they
24 were molested from both sides. They were molested by their
25 own people, you know, and they were molested by the

1 Germans.

2 This camp we were in was a mixed camp and so any
3 woman in there was free game if she was alone, without a
4 husband or a boyfriend to protect her. And these women
5 were not -- how can I say, were not resisting rapes. They
6 were so beaten down by that time already, you know, that
7 they just thought, well, the best thing is not to put up
8 any resistance and just be quiet about it and so on, you
9 know.

10 But I know that in this camp I was in this
11 happened quite a few times. And it happened by the Germans
12 and it happened by the -- as a matter of fact I can show
13 you. I have a picture which came to my mind where my
14 sister, that time was two years older than I, she was a
15 good looking girl. I know that she has been raped, you
16 know. What you call rape today. It is different. For
17 them, being raped was preferred than being killed or
18 disfigured.

19 Q Disfigured?

20 A Well, disfigured I mean, you know, when you get
21 hit in the face and they break your nose and -- you know,
22 things which leave permanent scars. I talked to a few of
23 those girls who were in the camp with me that when this
24 happened to them, that they would prefer that than being
25 cut up or things like that, yes.

1 But this was going on in -- now I also seen very
2 often, to be fair, where women offered themselves to the
3 German guards just to get some favors. And there were
4 women who were inmates in the camp and regularly slept the
5 night with the guards because -- for better food, better
6 conditions. And they were known. Everybody knew about it
7 because -- it was no secret. The ones who didn't know
8 about it were the Germans. Because they had it -- it was
9 forbidden for them to fraternize with inmates you see.
10 That's why it was kept secret. But we knew. We knew about
11 it in the camps.

12 And so -- and you know as things like -- well,
13 this woman had to go and see a dentist or see a doctor in
14 town you know, and this guard had to take her there. So
15 you knew when she came back she didn't see a dentist or --
16 you knew where they went. And we were kids and we knew it,
17 you know.

18 So -- it is very hard to describe to you what
19 miseries in a camp like that would do to a person, to
20 people. To a woman. Especially what it would do to her
21 pride and what it would do to her outlook on morality and
22 so on.

23 I have seen women who sold themselves for a few
24 pieces of bread for their children and things like that you
25 know it will would do terrible things to you. Things you

1 couldn't dream today of doing. And I have seen them done.
2 And they were done strictly out of necessity. Out of
3 getting food or getting something -- even medicines for the
4 children.

5 Yes, a lot of these things was going on in this
6 one camp, you know, where I was in there -- where I was
7 there four years. But then I know this one family that I
8 was telling you about -- this other one where this Neicell
9 family when the war was over and the Russians came and she
10 was raped by the Russian soldiers. And quite a few woman
11 from the same camp which was liberated by the Russians were
12 raped by the Russian soldiers you know. That was
13 considered at that time, you know, a reward for them.

14 And I also know -- in fact when I was liberated,
15 I myself was liberated where quite a few of my fellow
16 prisoners and so on got themselves girls and resolved to
17 rape. Maybe not at that time -- it was not -- forced
18 themselves onto the girls where the town pretty soon didn't
19 want anybody from that camp around.

20 They just said, hey, stay away from our women
21 and get out of here. You know, we don't want -- and again
22 these people haven't seen a woman, haven't been with a
23 woman for maybe -- for years. And all sudden they are free
24 and they can talk to a woman and so on and these woman felt
25 sympathy for them for being so long, and so they showed the

1 sympathy and they misinterpreted it for something else and
2 boom the woman was raped. Yes, a lot of this was going on.
3 It was going on on all sides.

4 Q Was that what you meant when you said some of
5 you resolved to rape some women?

6 A When I said what?

7 Q You said something like some of you had gotten
8 together and resolved to rape some women or something like
9 that. Was that what you meant that you got with the women
10 and you misinterpreted their sympathy?

11 A No, I'm not saying that I was involved in it. I
12 was saying that when we got liberated in the camp there was
13 for two or three weeks -- no place to go. Nobody knew
14 where to go and what to do. The camp was still there. It
15 was open. Now there was no guards in it and so on.

16 And so the inmates or the ex-inmates were able
17 to go into town. And the townspeople helped them a lot,
18 you know. Bringing food and so on and showed sympathy and
19 so on. And a lot of -- or it happened many times where I
20 know where some of those guys, you know, were even taken in
21 by families and raped, what you would call today, raped the
22 wives or their daughters. And it was not a gang rape. It
23 was nothing like that. It was just -- you know, they
24 became part of the family and they mistook the kindness
25 these people showed by being -- forcing themselves on them.

1 And on the women.

2 And that talk was talking around the town. And
3 so pretty soon these townspeople got just as fed up with
4 the ex-inmates as they were fed up with the Russians
5 because the Russians liberated them but they still raped
6 the women. You know, it was going on. Yes.

7 The German normally didn't resort to rape. They
8 didn't have to because they could always buy them for some
9 cigarettes and so on. Get themselves a woman. You know,
10 that was no big problem. But with the Russians and the
11 inmates from these camps, and I'm talking about this
12 particular place that was quite different. After a while
13 they were looked on as part of the problem.

14 No. Where I was talking about -- where I was
15 talking about I think that you misunderstood, was in this
16 same camp I was in. And I was maybe not quite 14 years
17 old. Where in that camp came again a bunch of new guys
18 from -- also from mixed marriages, you know. From -- not
19 mixed marriages, but results of mixed marriages. They were
20 Mischlings, Czechs, mostly Czechs. And they were put into
21 that same camp with us and they were working in the nearby
22 coal mine. And so they were there and there was this one
23 girl -- one woman. She was older, about 28 or 29. And she
24 was not mentally -- she was a little bit mentally --

25 Q Deficient?

1 A Yes. Deficient. Right. She was not very
2 bright let's say. But she was not bad looking. And so she
3 was -- not in love, but she liked this one guy who was a
4 good-looking guy. This younger fellow who worked in the
5 mine. And he made a kind of a date with her to meet her at
6 night underneath the stairs. And he brought his buddies
7 along with him. And so they were all there in the dark and
8 they took me with them. They were going to show me how to
9 do that, you know. How to have sexual intercourse with a
10 woman. And so they had her there and against the wall in
11 the dark. And they were all taking turns with her, and
12 then they pushed me in the foreground. Now let's let him
13 try it, you know, and let him. And they pushed me.

14 And this girl said -- kind of said, no. No.
15 Not him. He is too young. He is too young. I don't want
16 him. And so that was it. But that's how I see it today.
17 This girl leaning against the wall, and her skirt hiked up
18 and there she was. And they all took turns.

19 She wasn't raped. It was voluntary. But she
20 was not very bright. But she was bright enough to say not
21 me because I was too young. That's why she -- where she
22 made the difference.

23 Usually I noticed in all of these camps, you
24 know, the closer you are to death the more sexually aroused
25 you can become. I have seen men who were skin and bones

1 and they were -- where all they could talk about was sex
2 and sex and women, you know, and so. Well, at this camp,
3 you know, we used to say this was one great big whorehouse,
4 you know. That's really what it was. And most of those
5 things were going on at night where nobody was watching.
6 Yes. Okay. What else?

7 Q Did any of the women get pregnant?

8 A Did any women get pregnant in camp. Oh, yes. A
9 few got -- yes.

10 Q What did they do with them? Did they have
11 abortions or did they have --

12 A No. No. Abortion was not even -- you know, it
13 was not even done. They had their babies.

14 Yes, I would say about three or four, you know.
15 Most of them ended up eventually in the gas chambers in
16 Auschwitz. But this lady I was talking about, that Mrs.
17 Neicell who was raped by the Russians, she had a baby and
18 she carried it through. She had five in the camp and one
19 outside after the liberations. This is really my family
20 now because the youngest daughter was Lilly -- not the
21 youngest, second youngest, Lilly. And she is now a married
22 woman and she is out in -- lives in Vienna and has a family
23 and so -- and her two brothers died. So she says I'm her
24 only family left. And I remember when she was that
25 (indicating) high in the camp. And the lady I'm talking

1 about was her mother.

2 Q Do you recall any little girls, really young
3 girls being --

4 A Being raped? No. No. Even I don't think -- if
5 I knew about it -- if it happened I wouldn't know about it
6 because this kind of thing would be kept secret and nobody
7 would talk -- most of these things I know about I have
8 either seen or my mother told me. And I know my mother's
9 biggest worry was getting raped or getting taken under
10 protection by a man in there. So -- and her second worry
11 was that my sister doesn't get raped.

12 But, no. You know I don't -- I'm trying to
13 think whether there was some incident I knew about or saw,
14 but -- no. And there was a lot of little girls, you know.
15 I can't think of anybody. And not by the Germans. That
16 I'm sure of because -- no.

17 Q So, when you were escaping from Postelberg --
18 now you escaped four times?

19 A From Postelberg?

20 Q Yes.

21 A No. From Postelberg I only escaped once.
22 Postelberg I went to the Gestapo and I never even told you
23 that I escaped from Postelberg.

24 I really escaped once from Postelberg, but I
25 never mentioned that. Because Postelberg was my last, as a

1 slave labor, my last camp. After that I went to the
2 Gestapo in Postelberg and then in Saats and then in
3 Karlsbad.

4 But I did escape from Postelberg, and as I
5 mentioned to you that this -- when I got to the camp the
6 camp wasn't quite ready or quite secure and so on. And
7 when Christmas came along and most of the guards were --
8 went home to their family, there was just a skeleton crew
9 -- a skeleton guard crew in there.

10 I escaped from there and right on the edge of
11 the camp, outside camp, a railroad went by. A railroad
12 went by. And so I escaped on that one and got onto a train
13 which went to Bernau. And my biggest desire was to be home
14 for Christmas. And so Christmas eve -- no, it was day
15 before Christmas eve that I escaped from there and I went
16 through the barbed wire, which was not very bad. I got
17 there in the train station and I caught a train. And I got
18 to Bernau on the train.

19 And I was able to avoid the patrols and so on.
20 And it was Christmas eve. Just about six o'clock in the
21 evening. And I wanted to get home to Ebanchitza which was
22 about 25 miles away from Bernau. But that's where the
23 train I was on stopped and everything was starting to shut
24 down. And it was snowing.

25 And so I caught this train to Ebanchitza which I

1 knew very well how to get on it. And I knew it was
2 Christmas. There was not too many patrols on it. And I
3 got to Ebanchitza and I was walking home, you know, to
4 where my mother lived and so on. And I sneaked in. And my
5 mother had this little Christmas tree on the table. And
6 she and my sister and my brother were decorating it, you
7 know. And she was hanging all kinds of little ornaments
8 and little candy -- wrapped up candy on it. And I sneaked
9 in and she didn't even hear me, you know, in this little
10 room that they were dressing up the Christmas tree.

11 And my brother snitched one of those candies and
12 she kind of slapped him on the hand and told him not to do
13 that. And he looked up and he seen me standing in the
14 doorway. And he smiled, you know. And she got angry at
15 him for smiling. She thought he was laughing at her. And
16 he said, turn around and take a look. And there I was.
17 And my mother just hugged me and kissed me. And so it was
18 just -- so great.

19 She thought I was dead by that time and to see
20 me -- you know. And how come you are here, you know. And
21 so on. And I told her that I escaped, you know. And you
22 know, you could see the whole thing -- the whole pleasure
23 went out of her and everybody else, my sister and my
24 brother. And you know, all of a sudden that great pleasure
25 to see me was turned into fear about -- usually when

1 somebody escaped and they catch you, they all get punished,
2 you know, as shot or put in a camp.

3 And so they tried for a while, you know, to
4 still make like to keep the Christmas atmosphere. And
5 finally I could see that this wasn't going to work. I
6 spoiled Christmas for everybody. And so I said, well, I
7 have to go, you know. I have to go. And I told them that
8 I was going to join the partisans and that I can't stay
9 very long with them.

10 And so they understood. And I went out and
11 there was nobody outside in the streets. Nothing. And it
12 was snowing and I could see my tracks going from the house
13 walking down in the street. And I got scared thinking that
14 now the Gestapo when they come looking for me they can see
15 my tracks. And so I backtracked and I had this old jacket
16 on. And I took the jacket and I dragged it behind me so
17 not to show the tracks.

18 And to make a long story short, I hopped a train
19 again and two days later I was back in the camp. And they
20 didn't even know that I escaped.

21 So there was -- that was the one out of
22 Postelberg and that was at Christmas. I think that was
23 terrible, you know.

24 So. But I will never forget as long I live -- I
25 have been living already a long time, was the -- how fast

1 it turned when they realized, you know, that now they are
2 all going to get it. And they didn't want to show it.
3 They still artificially -- come here and -- say, come here.
4 Have a piece of bread. Stand here by the stove and warm
5 yourself up a little bit. And still trying to be
6 Christmasy, you know. And just thinking and listening and
7 waiting -- every time somebody will come and knock on the
8 door and take us away. So that's why I seen a need to get
9 out and get back to the camp. Because I realized that from
10 then on anything that I do, it would go on to my family.

11 So you were saying. So that's when I escaped.
12 So when I got back from Postelberg shortly thereafter that
13 was a very bad time for me with what happened when I
14 escaped. I finally realized even if I escaped and was
15 outsmarting the Germans, I got no place to go. They got
16 me, you know. If they don't get me, they get my mother and
17 my brothers and so on. And so I was pretty -- how should I
18 say, pretty depressed.

19 And so then shortly thereafter I think January
20 5th or so is when I punched that pipe, that hole in the
21 pipe. And from then on I was in the hands of the Gestapo.

22 And then as I got back again, you know, on the
23 train I already described that, and I got caught in Bernau
24 and was sent to the Gestapo prison in Konigs we call it.
25 As a matter of fact they found in this -- after they

1 liberated this Gestapo prison --

2 Q Where was that?

3 A In Bernau where I told you that all of the
4 execution was going on and so on. And so they went in and
5 this prison was a student dormitory at one time before the
6 war. And then the Gestapo took it over and made a prison
7 out of it. And after the war it reverted again back to a
8 college dormitory. But before they changed it back they
9 took pictures. And a lot of prisoners wrote their name
10 into the bunk beds because the bunk beds were out of board,
11 you know. And scratched the name into the walls and so on.

12 And I did the same thing. And they took
13 pictures of the whole thing after the war, you know,
14 because some wrote the names and some wrote other things.
15 I'm going to be executed tomorrow, or things like that.
16 And my brother just showed me -- and they wrote a little
17 book about it. And they showed me where in one of
18 pictures, was my name on it, and the date and the town from
19 where I came from. I remember doing that, you know, when I
20 scratched that in just to let somebody know that you were
21 there.

22 Q How did your mother and siblings get out of that
23 camp and back into the town?

24 A Well, as I said before, this camp in 1942, all
25 the Jewish inmates in that camp were sent to Theresienstadt

1 and from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz and to various other
2 concentration camps for -- camps which had for gassing and
3 so on. And these two families, my family and -- well
4 actually three families mixed left there because it wasn't
5 our turn yet to go. And so I at that time just completed
6 14 years -- to be 14 years old and I was ready to go and
7 work in the coal mines. So I was sent to work in the coal
8 mines, and my brother was sent to work in a textile factory
9 with my sister. And we were given quarters in the same
10 town where the camp was. And which again was very close to
11 that coal mine. And then -- when I say quarters it was
12 just -- housing. I wouldn't have -- my dog has better
13 housing now than we have had in there. But we lived there
14 for -- or my mother and we lived there from 1942 -- it was
15 condemned housing. Can you imagine when the Czechs at that
16 time condemned something you know that's where we were put
17 in.

18 And that was about four miles from that coal
19 mine. And so I had to go and work in the coal mine. To
20 walk every day eight miles, four to work and four back.
21 And then after about six months they erected barracks again
22 right at the coal mine for prisoners. And so I was taken
23 there and I was working in that same coal mine. And I was
24 living in this barracks. But I was able to just get away
25 every weekend and get to my mother. Not officially, you

1 know, but since that was in the area where I used to live
2 -- and so I knew my way around there and I knew the guards.

3 And so -- but as I said from there it was very
4 hard to even escape because you had no papers. And so
5 that's where we came out of that camp, my mother was
6 washing laundry for a German company of soldiers, you know.

7 I was in the coal mine, my brother was in the
8 textile factory and -- as a matter of fact the textile
9 factory is now -- that's where the textile faxytory is now
10 -- is where the camp was before. And so my other brother
11 -- two brothers were too small to work. And then in '44
12 when the time came to go after the Mischlings, after the
13 mixed breeds or half breeds or whatever you call them,
14 that's when I got my marching orders to go to
15 Theresienstadt and from Theresienstadt then I got to
16 Postelberg. And that's when this happened where I was in
17 custody of the Gestapo.

18 Q How long were you in Postelberg?

19 A It was summer when I got there so it was --
20 later summer '44 so -- and in January I was taken to the
21 Gestapo. About five or six months after that.

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