

1 Interview with Irwin Barany
2 Holocaust Oral History Project
3 Date: 2/²⁶~~8~~/89. Place: Oakland, Ca.
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1 Q. WE'LL GO AHEAD AND BEGIN BY SAYING THAT
2 THIS IS BETH JACOB, AND WE ARE GIVING HERE THE
3 INTERVIEW FROM MR. IRWIN BARANI; AND WE'RE GOING TO
4 HAVE MR. BARANI BEGIN BY TELLING US HIS NAME AND
5 WHERE HE'S FROM AND WHAT HIS CHILDHOOD WAS LIKE.

6 A. Well, I was born in November 21st, 1920, in
7 Hungary, the city of Debrecen. I had a happy
8 childhood, because in those days it didn't have any
9 difference -- you went to Jewish schools, grammar
10 schools and high schools. After the Germans occupied
11 Hungary they put all the Jews instead of the
12 Hungarian army, they put us in a labor camp. Well, I
13 was a young kid, and in 1941 they took me in a labor
14 camp in Hungary, where you didn't wear military
15 clothes. You wear your own civil clothes.

16 Q. THAT WAS THE HUNGARIAN ARMY?

17 A. That was Hungarian army.

18 Well, we stayed in the labor camp. Then,
19 when the German army went on to Poland and Russia,
20 they took the Hungarian Jews with them as labor. We
21 worked all kinds of work. We did all kinds of work.

22 First of all, we did picking up mines
23 without mine detectors -- mine --

24 Q. LIKE BITS OF THE MINE?

25 A. Yeah. With mine detectors, you know. And

1 we build front line shooting facilities for the
2 German army; and we did all this kind of work..

3 A lot of people died picking up mines. A
4 lot of people died just of starvation. Myself, I
5 was -- I guess I call myself lucky because I made it
6 through. I was in --

7 Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU ABOUT THAT TIME?

8 A. 21. I was 21 years old.

9 And they took us -- later on the German
10 army took us to Poland, Kiev -- I mean, Russia, Kiev,
11 Pinsk, Minsk, all those areas where they made us work
12 like a slave.

13 Q. DID YOU KNOW WHEN YOU WERE WORKING IN THE
14 FORCED LABOR CAMPS WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMILY?
15 DID YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THEM?

16 A. No, I didn't have any contact. My father
17 passed away in 1941, but they didn't let me go home.
18 And my mother and my sister and brother they -- my
19 sister had a small child. They took him to lagers,
20 you know, concentration camp lagers; and probably
21 because she had a kid, they cremated them.

22 Q. WHEN DID THEY TAKE YOUR SISTER?

23 A. My sister was 1941 or '42.

24 Q. I SEE.

25 A. And my brother also was in the service as a

1 laborer.

2 Q. SO IT WAS A SMALL TOWN THAT YOU WERE FROM?

3 A. No. Debrecen is the third largest city of
4 Hungary. The population were about 100,000 or more.

5 Q. SO WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE GERMANS CAME IN?
6 DID THEY COME ALL IN ONE DAY OR --

7 A. No. The Germans come in -- if I recall
8 correctly, the Germans come in and they actually
9 occupied Hungary. There the Hungarian government did
10 what the Germans told them to do.

11 All the Jews, younger Jews, went to the
12 slave labor camp. Elderly Jews, they transport them
13 to Mauthausen or Buchenwald or who knows where.

14 Q. SO THE FAMILIES WERE SEPARATED RIGHT AWAY?
15 THE YOUNG ONES WHO COULD WORK TO THE CAMPS?

16 A. To the labor camp. And the old ones,
17 probably they send to the gas chamber.

18 Q. SO YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT
19 THAT TIME?

20 A. I didn't know what happened to my mother
21 and my sister and my brother, because once you had no
22 contact to get information. And they -- as I said,
23 they send us to Russia and Poland. I was near Warsaw
24 when the Germans moved the ghetto. I saw the Polish
25 Jews, you know, walking on the highways, and if

1 anybody couldn't make it, they shoot them right
2 on-site.

3 No such a thing as transportation. Now,
4 for instance, ourself was captured by the Anderson
5 underground army. That's the Polish underground.

6 Q. YOU WERE CAPTURED?

7 A. Yeah. No. We were captured, and when they
8 find out we were Jews, they give us something to eat.
9 Then they told us, "there is the road. You go back
10 to the German army." Even Anderson Army was financed
11 by United States and England, they still was
12 anti-Semitic, you know, those people, and they didn't
13 want anything to do with Jews.

14 Q. THEY WERE A PARTISAN ARMY?

15 A. They were partisans, you know. They
16 were --

17 Q. POLISH PARTISANS?

18 A. Polish partisans, yeah. And they lived in
19 a forest.

20 Q. HOW DID THEY CAPTURE YOU?

21 A. Well, they captured the whole -- whole
22 Jews, you know, when we were working on the road, on
23 the highway.

24 Q. LIKE A ROAD GANG?

25 A. Not only us. They captured the Germans,

1 also, who are guard us, you know. They captured
2 everybody. And after all, when they find us, as I
3 said, we're Jews, that's the only thing, they did
4 give us something to eat; and after all they sent us
5 back.

6 Q. DID YOU SPEAK ANY POLISH?

7 A. No, I didn't. At that time the only thing
8 I speak, Hungarian.

9 And we were in, as I said, Pinsk, Minsk and
10 Warsaw. Then they took us back to Prague,
11 Czechoslovakia. We were walking. There was no such
12 a thing as transportation. And you had your own
13 clothes. If your shoes, for instance, went bad, then
14 you walked barefooted; and sleep outside on the
15 field.

16 Q. ALWAYS UNDER THE GERMAN GUARD?

17 A. Under German guard. We're always with the
18 German guard. For instance, we walked back. As the
19 Russian army pushed the German army back, they pushed
20 us back with them.

21 And then in 1944 they took us to Dachau,
22 where Dachau was -- anything got left, they took away
23 from us everything and give us a prison uniform, and
24 they cut our hair. They put a stripe in your hair
25 for recognition. You see, because nobody could

1 escape from a prison camp but if, by any chance you
2 could escape, the Germans can report -- when German
3 civilians, they could report it to the army and they
4 take you back to the camp.

5 Now, you are, as I said, in Dachau, but
6 that time they didn't give us any tattoo, because
7 they felt the war probably had been lost. And I
8 worked for six or seven months, we were building an
9 underground hangar, you know, for airplanes. But
10 actually we did, we fed the cement machines with
11 cement and all day long we walked around like a
12 circle. You had to -- where you dumped one sack, you
13 came down, picked up the other sack. A lot of people
14 died during the work.

15 Q. BECAUSE IT WAS SO HARD?

16 A. Because it was hard work, number one.
17 Number two, we didn't have any -- didn't give us any
18 food. We were so hungry we went over to the garbage
19 and picked up a potato peel. We were lucky we were
20 able to eat a potato peel.

21 We had to get up, as I said, around 4:00,
22 4:30 in the morning. We had apel. Apel means they
23 called everybody, not names. They made a count if
24 everybody there.

25 Q. BY NUMBERS?

1 A. By numbers, yeah.

2 Then you walked to work. You walk to work
3 was about ten kilometers. A lot of people during the
4 walk passed on and they shoot them right on-site.

5 Q. WERE THEY ALL MEN IN YOUR --

6 A. All men. Our group was only men, was a men
7 lager, yeah. I was lucky, I guess, I was a younger
8 and strong boy, able to come to.

9 Q. WAS YOUR LAGER ALL MADE UP OF HUNGARIAN
10 JEWS?

11 A. No. No. Our lager -- my lager was in --
12 the name was Muhldorf. It's near Munich. They had
13 Gree Jews, they had Polish Jews, they had all -- not
14 only -- gypsies and they had all the political
15 prisoners, you know, just like myself. I was kept
16 there because the Jews, they called the Jews
17 political enemies of German reich.

18 Q. HOW DID THE PEOPLE COMMUNICATE WITH ONE
19 ANOTHER FROM GREECE AND ITALY AND ALL OVER EUROPE?

20 A. Well, for instance, I didn't know any other
21 language but -- they were separated. Each was a
22 Greek lager, was a Hungarian and there was a German.
23 As I said, we didn't communicate with other lager
24 because you couldn't speak the language.

25 Q. SO YOU ONLY SPOKE WITH THE OTHER

1 HUNGARIANS?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. WERE THERE PEOPLE FROM YOUR HOME TOWN WITH
4 YOU?

5 A. Well, a lot of young kids with us, yeah.
6 But as the time went on, some of them, you know, were
7 sick. Some of them passed on. Some of them they
8 transferred them to different lagers. And I was
9 liberated in 1949.

10 Q. '49?

11 A. No. 1945. Pardon me. 1945, in April.
12 What actually they did with us, they -- probably the
13 German government knew the war had been lost. They
14 put all the people in the transport, a train
15 transport. They wanted to send us to Tirol, that's
16 the mountains, and get rid of us. But meantime the
17 American army came in, some part of it, where they
18 let us loose on the field and the German aircraft
19 came by and they shoot the people, anybody who --
20 they got hit. I was lucky. The guy next to me died.
21 I was alive.

22 Q. THIS WAS AT THE LAGER THAT WAS NEAR MUNICH?

23 A. Near Munich, yeah. I was liberated in
24 (Furdofen). But actually all this area is close to
25 Munich.

Spelling

1 Q. DID YOU REALIZE THAT YOU WERE BEING
2 LIBERATED?

3 A. Well, only I realize it when the American
4 army picked us up and give us some food, you see, and
5 a lot of people died during -- they eat so fast, just
6 their stomach, they couldn't take it and died.

7 Q. AFTER THE LIBERATION?

8 A. After the liberation.

9 Q. EATEN TOO MUCH?

10 A. Eaten too much, that's right. Because we
11 never had anything to eat. We was hungry all the
12 time. Myself, probably I was nothing but skin and
13 bones.

14 Q. WHEN YOU WERE WORKING, YOU HAD BEEN WORKING
15 FOR YEARS THEN ALREADY IN THE FORCED LABOR CAMP WHEN
16 THEY TOOK YOU FROM HUNGARY AND THEY TOOK YOU ALL
17 AROUND EUROPE BY FOOT. DID YOU THINK THAT YOU WERE
18 GOING TO MAKE IT THROUGH DURING ALL THOSE TIMES?

19 A. I'll be honest with you. I didn't give a
20 penny for my life. I never -- never dreamt I'm going
21 to be liberated or I'm going to be alive. The days
22 just, the hours didn't mean a damn thing to us,
23 because we knew this was a labor camp where they make
24 you work long as you alive, as long as you're able to
25 work.

1 After all, did they get rid of you or
2 medical care? We didn't have any medical care. If
3 anybody got sick, well, just one of those things.

4 Q. SO YOU WERE LIVING, THEN, IN THE THIRD
5 LARGEST TOWN IN HUNGARY AND THE GERMANS COME IN, THEY
6 TAKE AWAY YOUR FAMILY, ON ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER
7 HAND, YOU'RE PUT INTO THIS LABOR CAMP. BEFORE THE
8 GERMANS HAD COME WHAT HAD LIFE BEEN LIKE FOR YOUR
9 TOWN, FOR YOUR PEOPLE?

10 A. Well, before the Germans come, I mean,
11 in -- as I said, I can recall as a kid, we went to
12 the Jewish --

13 Q. DID YOU GO TO CHEDER?

14 A. Yeah. We went to cheder. We were Bar
15 Mitzvah. We went to the Jewish high schools and we
16 had a good life.

17 Now, when Hitler begin his propaganda, it
18 started to change a little bit. For instance, just
19 like my father, he was a insurance executive. But
20 after all the companies, you know, get rid of all the
21 Jewish executives, they made them retire.

22 Q. WHO MADE THEM RETIRE, EXACTLY? DID THE
23 HUNGARIANS?

24 A. The Hungarians. At that time probably the
25 government put the push on the big companies to get

1 rid of executives.

2 Q. SO WHAT WAS IT LIKE IN THE TOWN? YOU HAD
3 GROWN UP WITH ALL OF THESE PEOPLE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN
4 THE GERMANS ARE AROUND. HOW DID YOUR NEIGHBORS
5 BEHAVE?

6 A. The Hungarians, also, there was
7 anti-Semite. They didn't show, but once they had
8 opportunity, they didn't give us too much help.

9 Q. HAD THEY BEEN ANTI-SEMITIC AS YOU HAD BEEN
10 GROWING UP AS A BOY, OR WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP
11 BETWEEN THE GENTILES AND JEWS WHEN YOU WERE GROWING
12 UP?

13 A. When we were growing up, I didn't see too
14 much difference, you know, where the anti-Semitic --
15 the anti-Semitic movement always been there.

16 Q. RIGHT.

17 A. But it didn't show too much.

18 Q. DID YOU HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER?

19 A. We had good relationship with the gentile
20 people and -- but still, you always you see there was
21 a line there.

22 Q. I SEE. WERE YOU PART OF ANY YOUTH GROUPS?
23 WERE THERE ANY ZIONISTS IN YOUR TOWN?

24 A. Well, we used to belong to the youth group.
25 We figured, those days, when it comes to Israel, we

1 going to Israel, you know, Zionists. The children
2 was taught as a Zionist movement going to be and
3 we're going to have a homeland in Israel; and we went
4 to youth groups.

5 Q. WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS THINK ABOUT THAT
6 IDEA?

7 A. Well, my parents they let us -- they
8 believed, you know, we should have a safer place to
9 live than Hungary or any other place. Maybe, in what
10 was it, 1941, or '42, we hope we're going to have a
11 Jewish state. Then we going to go from Hungary to
12 Israel.

13 Q. HAD YOUR FAMILY BEEN LIVING IN HUNGARY FOR
14 A LONG TIME?

15 A. Yeah. My family was raised and born there.
16 And my mother, her parents also, for generation and
17 generation, lived in Hungary.

18 Q. BUT IN ALL OF THOSE TIMES PEOPLE HAD BEEN
19 ABLE TO GO TO SYNAGOGUE AND HAVE THEIR OWN LIFE AND
20 THEY HADN'T HAD TOO MUCH TROUBLE BEFORE IN HUNGARY?

21 A. They had no problem to go to synagogue.
22 They had no problem to -- for religion, you know, if
23 you wanted to practice your own religion. Nobody
24 stopped you for that.

25 Q. COULD THEY SERVE IN THE HUNGARIAN ARMY, THE

1 JEWS?

2 A. Before. Before the Germans came in, yes,
3 the Jews served in the Hungarian army.

4 Q. THEN, WHEN THE GERMANS CAME, THAT CHANGED?

5 A. When the Germans came that changed, yeah.
6 You see, I mean, just like anybody else, that wasn't
7 a volunteer army. You must go to the army when you
8 20 or 21 years old. And then you are in the service.
9 That changed when the Germans come in. As I
10 mentioned, they made a labor battalion out of the
11 Jewish people.

12 Q. DID YOU SAY YOUR BROTHER ALSO WENT TO SUCH
13 A LABOR BATTALION?

14 A. Yeah. My brother went also, yeah.

15 Q. BUT TO A DIFFERENT SECTION OF IT, OR DID
16 YOU KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM?

17 A. No, I didn't know what happened to him. I
18 didn't know.

19 Q. DID YOU FIND OUT AT THE END OF THE WAR WHAT
20 BECAME OF YOUR BROTHER?

21 A. At the end of the war I find out my brother
22 got killed; and my sister, as I mentioned, had a
23 small child, they separate them from working people
24 to the people who cannot do any work.

25 Q. I SEE. SO AS SOON AS YOU WERE SEPARATED

1 FROM YOUR FAMILY, THEN THAT WAS THE END OF
2 INFORMATION?

3 A. That was the end of information, yeah. We
4 never able to go back to our city. No such a thing,
5 furlough. Because it's just, you are a slave.

6 Q. SO WHEN THEY TOOK YOU TO THE LABOR
7 BATTALION, WERE THEY ALL JEWS IN YOUR BATTALION?

8 A. Our battalion was all Jews, yeah. They had
9 the separate battalion for -- at that time they took
10 the gypsies, also, and the Communists. They took
11 them from Hungary, from all over the world.

12 Q. WERE THEY IN YOUR BATTALION, AS WELL?

13 A. No. It wasn't in our battalion. It was a
14 separate groups.

15 Q. SO WHEN YOU GOT IN THERE, THEN YOU SAID
16 THEY DIDN'T GIVE YOU A UNIFORM. YOU WERE JUST
17 WORKING. WHAT WAS THE EVERYDAY LIFE LIKE WHEN YOU
18 WERE IN THE BATTALIONS?

19 A. Well, every day, I mean, you had to use
20 your own clothes. Now, the everyday life just like
21 if you in the service. You know, you get up four
22 o'clock, 4:30 in the morning. Then they make a
23 count, if everybody there. Then they send you out to
24 work in your clothes. It was hard to get clean
25 clothes, because just was no facilities.

1 Q. BUT IT WAS THE GERMANS WHO WERE RUNNING
2 THINGS?

3 A. Oh, the German army run the whole thing,
4 because the Hungarians let them to take over this
5 labor battalions.

6 Q. WHY DID THE HUNGARIANS LET THEM TAKE OVER
7 LIKE THAT?

8 A. Well, I guess from the top, just like
9 anything else, you know. Hungary was occupied by the
10 Germans and they dictated the policy.

11 Q. I SEE. WERE THE OTHER HUNGARIAN MEN HAVING
12 TO DO THE SAME THING?

13 A. Christian?

14 Q. WERE THEY BEING TAKEN INTO WORK BATTALIONS,
15 AS WELL, OR WERE THEY ONLY TAKING THE GYPSIES AND THE
16 JEWS?

17 A. Only just the Jews. Only -- was no
18 Hungarian labor battalion. Christians, I mean.

19 Q. NO CHRISTIANS DOING THE SAME KIND OF WORK?

20 A. No. Only just the Jews, yeah.

21 Q. THERE WAS NO ESCAPE? DID ANYBODY EVER GET
22 AWAY FROM THOSE LABOR BATTALIONS?

23 A. Well, possibility always for somebody
24 escape. But not too many. I can't recall anybody
25 missing from our labor battalion.

1 Q. HOW COULD YOU UNDERSTAND THE GERMAN ORDERS?
2 DID THEY USE A HUNGARIAN TO GIVE THE ORDERS?

3 A. Well, the German probably used the
4 Hungarian people, you know, to -- they give them the
5 order and they make sure, you know, everything been
6 done the right way.

7 Q. I SEE. SO THROUGH TRANSLATORS?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. LET'S TAKE A LITTLE BREAK HERE FOR A SECOND
10 AND COLLECT OUR WITS HERE.

11 (Thereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

12 Q. I WANTED TO ASK YOU, THEN, IN YOUR LABOR
13 BATTALION, WERE YOU YOUNG MEN FROM BUDA AND PEST AND
14 FROM ALL OVER, THE DIFFERENT CITIES AND AREAS, OR
15 WERE YOU JUST FROM YOUR OWN HOME TOWN?

16 A. As far as I know, Hungary had 600,000 Jews.
17 Now, a lot of young kids were in the labor battalion.
18 From my own area I know I had -- for different areas
19 also, they had different battalions.

20 Q. SO YOURS WAS FROM YOUR OWN AREA?

21 A. Our area, yeah.

22 Q. SO THEY HAD YOU WORKING, FIRST OF ALL,
23 PICKING UP THE MINES, RIGHT?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. YOU SAID THE FIRST --

1 A. What they did with us, dead or alive didn't
2 mean anything to them.

3 Q. RIGHT.

4 A. They send us -- They said to us, "there's a
5 mine field. And go, try to get it. Pick them up."
6 Well, a lot of guys blow up right on the spot,
7 because we had no equipment. We had to, you know --
8 they had to do it the best you could do.

9 Q. YOU MUST HAVE BEEN A MIXED GROUP, SOME
10 FELLOWS RELIGIOUS, SOME SECULAR, EVERY KIND OF
11 BACKGROUND, I IMAGINE; IS THAT TRUE?

12 A. We had a lot of orthodox Jews and reformed
13 Jews and, no, you couldn't pray. I mean, you
14 couldn't go to temple or something like that. They
15 wouldn't let us do it.

16 Q. SO YOU COULDN'T DAVEN OR ANY KIND --

17 A. You couldn't daven, no. No such a thing,
18 for you practice your religion.

19 Q. AND NO HOLIDAYS?

20 A. No holidays.

21 Q. NOTHING YOU COULD DO?

22 A. No. No days off. No day off. When you
23 had to work, you worked.

24 Q. SO DID PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT SORT OF
25 PHILOSOPHIES ON HOW TO GET THROUGH? SOME OF THE

1 RELIGIOUS ONES WERE THINKING ABOUT GOD AND SOME
2 THINKING ABOUT THEIR FAMILY? DID EVERYONE HAVE A
3 DIFFERENT --

4 A. You never lost your -- you knew you were a
5 Jew but you never lost your belief as a Jewish
6 person. And a lot of guys, a lot of orthodox, they
7 prayed among themselves, if they could. But no such
8 a thing, you go Friday night, you go to services or
9 something like that, no. There was no services.

10 Q. WHAT WAS YOUR FAMILY BACKGROUND LIKE, AS
11 FAR AS RELIGIOUS TRAINING?

12 A. Well, as I mentioned, we went to the Jewish
13 elementary school. We went to Jewish high school.
14 And we went to cheder and we were bar mitzvah. I was
15 bar mitzvah. My parents was religious people. I
16 mean, they kept all the holidays and went to the
17 temple.

18 Q. KEPT KOSHER?

19 A. Well, we did what we could. Kosher is --
20 No. My parents wasn't 100% kosher, but my
21 grandparents was really, really a hundred percent
22 kosher, because I remember when I went to school and
23 during the vacation, went to my grandparents come
24 Friday night, then you empty your pockets and you go
25 to temple and Saturday you go to the Yeshiva for

1 Talmud learning. Saturday afternoon, and Saturday
2 night, when the shabbos is over, then you made a
3 brucha and a kiddish cup and everything else.

4 Q. WAS THAT FUN FOR YOU OR KIND OF REPRESSIVE
5 AT THE TIME?

6 A. Well, it was different. No. It was
7 different from my -- from what our parents did.

8 Q. I SEE.

9 A. But during the three months vacation I
10 always went to my grandparents.

11 Q. WHERE DID THEY LIVE?

12 A. They lived near -- the town number -- near
13 Tokoi, the wine country, Scerencs. There was a big
14 chocolate factory there, and they lived there. As I
15 said, they was -- and the gentiles respected some of
16 those Jewish people. I remember when my grandfather
17 passed away, then all the businesses was closed. All
18 the businesses closed down there, the doors, while
19 the ceremony.

20 Q. FOR RESPECT?

21 A. For respect, yeah.

22 Q. BUT ALL OF THAT ENDED, THEN, WHEN YOU GOT
23 INTO THE WORK BATTALION?

24 A. All of it ended for everybody, not only the
25 younger people, the elderly people. The elderly

1 people actually -- with the younger people, they took
2 them to work. The elderly people, they deport them
3 to different -- Auschwitz or Buchenwald or all these
4 different camps; and there they separated who
5 could -- in middle age you could work, in elderly you
6 couldn't do anything.

7 Q. WHEN THE GERMANS CAME IN, DID THE PEOPLE
8 REALIZE RIGHT AWAY WHAT SERIOUS TROUBLE IT WAS OR DID
9 IT TAKE SOME TIME TO KIND OF REALIZE IT?

10 A. Well, we heard about it, you know, what
11 went on with Austria, because the Germans occupied
12 first Austria and Poland, some part of Poland. We
13 knew about it, what they did there.

14 Q. WHAT DID YOU KNOW, ACTUALLY?

15 A. Well, we read in the paper, the Germans
16 rerouted the Jews and sent them to different camps.

17 Q. REROUTED THEM?

18 A. Yeah. Just like when I was Italy, about
19 four, five years ago I drove by a temple where they
20 celebrated, was a 40th anniversary of the displaced
21 persons who was rerouted in Rome and sent them to
22 camp.

23 Q. WHEN YOU READ IN THE NEWSPAPER, YOU DIDN'T
24 REALIZE THAT THEY WERE BEING REROUTED TO DEATH CAMPS?

25 A. We didn't know that, no. We didn't know

1 that. We didn't know that they rerouted to death
2 camps. The only thing we know was they sent them to
3 reroute them and send them to camps.

4 Q. WHAT DID YOU THINK? WHAT KIND OF CAMPS DID
5 PEOPLE IMAGINE THEY WERE BEING SENT TO?

6 A. As far as I figured, it was the labor
7 camps.

8 Q. LABOR CAMPS?

9 A. Yeah. Labor camps, yeah. I figured
10 they're sending my parents, my mother or my sister or
11 my brother, sending to labor camp. But they made a
12 difference between working and the non-working
13 people.

14 Q. AND THEN, PEOPLE WEREN'T REALLY THINKING
15 ABOUT ESCAPE BECAUSE THEY ASSUMED IT WAS JUST SOME
16 KIND OF A LABOR CAMP?

17 A. Well, you know as well as I do, escaping,
18 where can you go? You have no place to go because
19 you surrounded with the Germans or Hungarians who
20 followed the German -- German occupation. And if you
21 go, where you go? Maybe they had some -- a few
22 people who hide you, who would give you-- you know,
23 give you place to stay. It was those kinds of
24 possibilities always occurs.

25 Q. YOU HEARD ABOUT A FEW OF THOSE?

1 A. We heard about a few. You know, just like
2 different countries, people hide some Jewish kids or
3 some Jewish persons.

4 Q. BUT IT WASN'T POSSIBLE FOR THE --

5 A. It wasn't too many, no.

6 Q. SO WHEN YOU GOT IN THE LABOR BATTALION,
7 THEY STARTED SENDING YOU AROUND TO -- IT SOUNDS LIKE
8 YOU WALKED ALL OVER EUROPE. YOU WERE IN MINSK AND
9 PINSK.

10 A. Actually, they send you out -- as I said,
11 we moved with the German army. The German army,
12 wherever they were stationed, you know, we were with
13 them as a working battalion. When the army moved
14 back, then we moved back with them, because of the
15 push of the Russian army.

16 Q. YOU KNEW EXACTLY HOW WELL THE GERMAN ARMY
17 WAS DOING BECAUSE YOU WERE WITH THEM?

18 A. We didn't have too much information but we
19 had our own idea, you know, what's going on.

20 Q. WHAT DID YOU TALK ABOUT AMONG YOURSELVES?
21 HOW DID YOU KEEP YOUR SPIRITS UP?

22 A. Well, I'll be honest with you. We worked
23 so hard all day and when it came to -- no such a
24 thing as social life or talk among themselves,
25 because they had some of these capos who watched over

1 the people, you know.

2 Q. SOME OVERSEERS?

3 A. Oversee the whole program there, what went
4 on. And we were -- as I said, we didn't have too
5 much to eat and we had nothing to worry about
6 anything else. Only thing you were worried about,
7 what we going to have something to eat the next day.

8 Q. A LITTLE SLEEP AND A LITTLE FOOD. THAT'S
9 ALL.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. SO THEN, THERE WAS NO KIND OF DIVERSION OR
12 TALK BETWEEN PEOPLE?

13 A. Very little, very little. No social
14 activities, no.

15 Q. YOU NEVER GOT TO SEE ANY WOMEN?

16 A. No.

17 Q. I SUPPOSE YOU WERE ONLY THE MEN.

18 HOW MANY MEN WERE YOU IN YOUR WORK CAMP,
19 MORE OR LESS?

20 A. That's hard. Somewhere around thousands
21 and thousands. I mean, I can't even mention how many
22 thousand people were around because there was so
23 many -- for instance, there was so many barracks or
24 lagers, and we had 250, 300 in one barrack and they
25 didn't let us move around.

1 Q. DID YOU ALWAYS STAY WITH THE SAME GROUP
2 OF --

3 A. We always stayed with the same group of
4 people. No, we didn't associate with nobody.

5 Q. SO YOU GOT TO KNOW A FEW OF THE PEOPLE?

6 A. That's about all. You got to know people
7 who was in your barrack.

8 Q. DID YOU KEEP UP WITH ANY OF THOSE PEOPLE
9 THROUGH TIME? DID YOU FOLLOW UP WITH WHAT HAPPENS TO
10 ANY OF THEM?

11 A. No. Not -- because after you are
12 liberated, then I went back to Hungary looking for my
13 mother and my brother and my sister. Then it was
14 1945. Then I came -- I didn't find anybody. Then I
15 went back to Germany and I stayed near Munich, in the
16 UNRA lager.

17 Q. WHAT DOES IT MEAN, UNRA LAGER? IS THIS THE
18 NAME OF THAT LAGER?

19 A. Well, UNRA, was a United Nations lager,
20 where you actually you waited until some country give --
21 admit you to the country. Now we had opportunity to
22 go to -- I had opportunity to go to Australia or New
23 Zealand or United States. Well, I picked United
24 States. I came over here in 1949.

25 Q. WHERE WHY DID YOU PICK THE UNITED STATES?

1 A. I don't know. I just -- I figured, well,
2 if I'm going to start the new life, I have nobody
3 back in Hungary to start a new life; and heard about
4 United States is a beautiful country and you have a
5 freedom of religion.

6 Q. HOW DID YOU HEAR ALL THOSE THINGS ABOUT
7 AMERICA?

8 A. Well, at that time it was after the war,
9 you know. We heard about it because a lot of Jewish
10 American soldiers was in the occupation army and some
11 of them could speak Yiddish or German.

12 Q. DID YOU SPEAK YIDDISH?

13 A. I learned after, where I was -- yeah, I
14 learned Yiddish, I learned German. And after the war
15 they told us the life of in United States. Then I
16 says I take a chance. I came to Oakland.

17 Q. WHAT KIND OF SHAPE WERE YOU IN WHEN YOU
18 WERE LIBERATED, WHEN YOU WERE MAKING THESE DECISIONS,
19 WHEN THEY LET YOU OUT OF THE CAMP?

20 A. Actually, as I mentioned, the American army
21 liberated us; and at that time I was nothing but skin
22 and bone. Now, then, later on they feed us very
23 well.

24 Q. DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH YOU WEIGHED, ACTUALLY?

25 A. Oh, probably I was about 80 pounds.

1 Q. 80 POUNDS?

2 A. Just skin and bone.

3 Q. WAS THERE A LOT OF DISEASE ALSO GOING
4 AROUND?

5 A. This is why a lot of people passed on,
6 because they had diseases, you know.

7 Q. TYPHUS?

8 A. Typhus and --

9 Q. HAD YOU BEEN ACTUALLY ABLE TO WORK UP UNTIL
10 THE VERY END, WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR LAGER?

11 A. I was working up to almost -- almost to the
12 end, yeah.

13 Q. TO THE VERY END?

14 A. To the very end, yeah.

15 Q. SO THEN, YOU WERE DESCRIBING A LITTLE
16 EARLIER WHEN THE END CAME YOU WERE IN THIS LAGER NEAR
17 MUNICH. AND HOW DID THE GERMANS KNOW IT WAS THE END?
18 THEY WERE TRYING TO TAKE YOU TIROL?

19 A. They tried to take us to the mountains,
20 Tirol, to get rid of us. They already --

21 Q. WHY DID THEY WANT TO GET RID OF YOU?

22 A. Because they didn't want to feed us
23 anymore; and 1945, by April the war just about ended,
24 you know, European front. Well, they figured --
25 probably, they got their orders from high up to get

1 rid all of -- just all the persons.

2 Q. HOW HAD THE GERMANS BEEN TREATING YOU ALL
3 ALONG? DID YOU EVER MEET A KIND ONE OR WAS EVERYBODY
4 JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS? WHAT DID THEY TREAT YOU LIKE
5 IN EVERY DAY?

6 A. Well, according to them, they followed
7 orders. Some of them was saying they didn't even
8 know about it, what Hitler did to -- not to the Jews,
9 and what Hitler did to the different nationalities.
10 They did the same things to Russians. How many
11 million Russians got killed and how many million --
12 six million Jews got killed during the war. Some of
13 them didn't know anything about it. Maybe they
14 didn't want to know about it or they know about it
15 and didn't want to say it and you never find out.

16 Q. DID THE GUARDS THAT WERE OVER YOU, DID THEY
17 EVER TALK TO THE PRISONERS OR HAVE A CONVERSATION?

18 A. No. No. We didn't have any conversation
19 with the German guards. Most of the German guards
20 was SS troopers, you know. The worst was in the
21 German army. The only thing they did, you know, just
22 push us to work and hit you if you don't do your work
23 and they shoot you, if you are unable to work.

24 Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE BIT HOW YOU CAME
25 FROM BEING IN THE FORCED LABOR BATTALION, WHICH WAS

1 UNDER THE GERMANS, OF COURSE --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- BUT YOU WENT STRAIGHT FROM THERE TO THE
4 CAMP TO DACHAU; IS THAT RIGHT? OR EXPLAIN THAT.

5 A. As I said, we were slave labor, okay? As
6 the Russians pushed the front back, then the German
7 army moved back with us. I mean, we were moved back
8 with the German army. Now they took us to Germany.

9 Q. WHY WAS THE GERMAN ARMY GOING BACK THE
10 GERMANY?

11 A. Because the Russians took over the front,
12 you see. Now they took us back and they put us in
13 Dachau lager, where they made us wear -- took us to
14 Dachau where they took away all our clothes and
15 everything else and made us work in Germany.

16 Q. I SEE. BUT DID IT FEEL DIFFERENT TO BE IN
17 DACHAU OR WAS IT JUST LIKE ONE MORE CAMP FOR YOU?

18 A. Well, we didn't know what is Dachau.
19 Myself, I never heard about it. All the time when we
20 went in there, the hall where they -- the prisoners
21 told us "they going to take away all your clothes and
22 they're going to give you just like prison uniform,
23 and you never going to have anything but the prison
24 clothes."

25 Q. OLDER PRISONERS TOLD YOU?

1 A. The older prisoners, yeah.

2 Q. DID THEY TRY TO TELL YOU WHAT LIFE IS LIKE
3 IN THAT LAGER?

4 A. Well, if you stayed there for a couple of
5 hours, you can tell, you can tell, you know, when
6 there is some people got tattooed. I saw some people
7 had tattooed. We don't get tattooed because it was a
8 late of the war, 1944, when I got to Dachau.

9 Q. DID THE PEOPLE SAY, THE ONES WITH TATTOOS
10 WHO HAD BEEN THERE FOR A LONG TIME THERE, DID THEY
11 TELL YOU WHAT WAS GOING ON?

12 A. They told us, "the only thing you're going
13 to do, you stay there in Dachau for a few days. Then
14 they transfer you to different lagers, to work
15 lagers." You see, because Dachau was a center area
16 where prisoners who came back from the labor, slave
17 labor battalions, put them to Dachau where they --
18 after war they send them out to different lagers to
19 work. You didn't work in Dachau.

20 Q. IT WAS A TRANSITION POINT TO GET TO YOUR
21 NEXT WORK STATION?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. SO YOU WERE STILL DOING ALL DIFFERENT KINDS
24 OF MANUAL LABOR?

25 A. Whatever they wanted me to do.

1 Q. WHAT KIND OF FOOD WOULD THEY GIVE YOU FOR
2 SUCH WORK IN THE COURSE OF A DAY?

3 A. Well, the food -- for instance, if I
4 recall, the food was -- I mean, we just couldn't live
5 on it. This is why a lot of people lost the weight
6 and everything else. We worked hard and they give
7 you some bread, you know, they -- potatoes, sometimes
8 with some soup, but actually no -- no regular food,
9 what you call regular food.

10 Q. SO YOU WERE YOU HUNGRY ALL THE TIME?

11 A. Yes, I was. I knew what was to be hungry.

12 Q. WHAT KEPT YOU GOING WHEN YOU WERE SO HUNGRY
13 AND TIRED?

14 A. Well, what kept me going? As I said, I
15 just plain luck. I came through. Because for maybe
16 I was a younger boy and a strong boy.

17 Q. YOU HAD ALWAYS BEEN STRONG?

18 A. I had always been strong, you know, and I
19 was young and I was thinking, maybe -- maybe I'm
20 hoping what one percent chance I came through.

21 Q. SO YOU WERE BETTING ON YOUR ONE PERCENT?

22 A. One percent, yeah.

23 Q. BUT YOU NEVER LOST SIGHT OF YOUR ONE
24 PERCENT?

25 A. Well, sometime I did, because we were so

1 disappointed and every -- Life didn't mean anything
2 to anybody.

3 Q. YOU HAD SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE DIE.

4 A. I had seen so many people, their life
5 didn't mean anything to them anymore.

6 Q. SO THERE YOU WERE, LIFE DIDN'T MEAN
7 ANYTHING, YOU WERE SO THIN AND TIRED AND ALL THE REST
8 OF IT; AND FINALLY THE GERMANS HAVE REALLY LOST, AND
9 THE TIME COMES WHEN THEY'RE TAKING YOU UP TO THE
10 MOUNTAINS AND YOU EXPLAINED A LITTLE MORE ABOUT
11 BOMBING AS YOU WERE STARTING TO ESCAPE, STARTING TO
12 LEAVE THE LAGER?

13 A. Not the lager. We started to leave the
14 train.

15 Q. THE TRAIN?

16 A. The train. Because they had all this --
17 all this people in a train. Maybe they had a hundred
18 people in one train, to send us, you know, to the
19 mountains to get rid of us. Well, probably they
20 had -- then the train stopped one day on a field and
21 let us go. Then everybody was running, and the
22 German Air Force came by and just machine gunned the
23 people.

24 Q. SO YOU WERE LUCKY. THE MAN NEXT TO YOU
25 DIED BUT YOU LIVED.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. WHERE DID YOU RUN TO? WHERE DID YOU GO?

3 A. I just run. The American army just
4 liberated us.

5 Q. WERE THEY RIGHT THERE?

6 A. Was close, yeah.

7 Q. CLOSE?

8 A. This is why, probably, they let us loose,
9 because the American army were close to that area.

10 Q. I SEE. SO YOU, MORE OR LESS, RAN INTO THE
11 ARMS OF THE AMERICANS.

12 A. More or less, ran into the arms of the
13 Americans, that's right. And once we were in the
14 American army, we knew we were free.

15 Q. YOU KNEW RIGHT AWAY YOU WERE SAFE AND IN
16 GOOD HANDS?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. WHAT DID THE AMERICANS SAY WHEN THEY TOOK A
19 LOOK AT YOU, 80 POUNDS?

20 A. Well, the Americans, what they did, they
21 give us right away, as I mentioned, food.

22 Q. WHAT KIND OF FOOD DID THEY GIVE YOU?

23 A. What they have, what the rich American
24 soldier eat, you know, eggs and pancake, what we
25 never heard of it, pancake, you know.

1 Q. NOT LIKE A HUNGARIAN PANCAKE?

2 A. Not the Hungarian pancake. And we eat and
3 ate and ate.

4 Q. INCLUDING YOU --

5 A. Including.

6 Q. -- EAT AND EAT, TOO?

7 A. I was so hungry. You never think about it,
8 you, you know, overeat yourself and just your
9 stomach -- your stomach cannot take it.

10 Q. SO YOU WERE KIND OF LUCKY, THEN, THAT YOUR
11 STOMACH --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- THAT YOU GOT THROUGH THAT PERIOD?

14 A. Yeah. But once they explain it to you, you
15 know, after the war, you ate a normal meal, normal
16 food, because the army then took us in the hospitals,
17 you know, and check us out.

18 Q. FOR INFECTION DISEASES?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. SO YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY INFECTIOUS DISEASE,
21 THEN? YOU WERE OKAY?

22 A. I made it.

23 Q. SO YOU THEN GET A LITTLE FOOD AND YOU HAVE
24 BEEN SAVED. YOU WENT RIGHT BACK TO HUNGARY TO TRY TO
25 CHECK --

1 A. No. We stayed in Germany -- we stayed in
2 Germany for a while, in occupied territory. Then we
3 went back to -- I went back to Hungary, looking for
4 my mother and my brother and sister.

5 Q. HOW DID YOU GET BACK? YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY
6 MONEY. HOW DID YOU --

7 A. Well, they had those transport. Well, just
8 like hitchhiking or whatever, or you took a chance.
9 You went through the border, you know.

10 Q. SO WHEN YOU GOT BACK TO YOUR HOME TOWN AND
11 YOU ASKED, "WHERE IS MY FAMILY," WHAT DID THE PEOPLE
12 SAY?

13 A. The people, they don't know. They just
14 like anybody else. They didn't want to know.

15 Q. WHO WAS LIVING IN YOUR HOUSE?

16 A. Well, we were living in an apartment.

17 Q. AN APARTMENT?

18 A. Apartment house, yeah. Somebody else took
19 over the apartment because we were absent four or
20 five, four years.

21 I hardly have any of my parents or myself
22 property, you know, what we had. Probably they --
23 who knows, they give it to somebody.

24 Q. SO YOU DIDN'T ASK THEM FOR ANY PERSONAL
25 THINGS, MAYBE, THAT YOU'RE FAMILY LEFT BEHIND OR

1 SOMETHING?

2 A. Well, I asked but I haven't -- I didn't
3 find anything.

4 Q. SO YOU FOUND OUT THEN. SO THEN YOU WENT
5 STRAIGHT BACK TO GERMANY?

6 A. I went back to Germany and stayed there
7 until 1949.

8 Q. UNTIL '49?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THOSE YEARS?

11 A. Well, what I did actually was, I went to
12 Belgium, working in a coal mine. I was a young kid.
13 I said "what the hell. I got to do something." I
14 signed up a contract working in a -- the only way you
15 could go into Belgium, if you work in a coal mine.

16 Q. WHY DID YOU WANT TO GO TO BELGIUM?

17 A. I wanted to leave Germany.

18 Q. JUST TO GET OUT OF GERMANY?

19 A. Just to get out of Germany.

20 Well, anyhow, I worked in a coal mine for
21 six months. Then I says, "This work is not for a
22 Yiddisha boy."

23 They locked me up in a petit chateau in
24 Brussels. Not only me, everybody else.

25 Q. WHO LOCKED YOU UP?

1 A. The Belgians; because I had a contract with
2 them to work in a coal mine. Then they locked us up.

3 Q. BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T WORKING ANYMORE?

4 A. Because I didn't want to work anymore.

5 Then the Jewish Welfare Federation got us
6 out.

7 Q. SO THE WORK WAS JUST TOO HARD?

8 A. Well, it was too hard. I didn't want to do
9 it. It was too hard.

10 Q. BUT ALSO AFTER THE WAR YOU DIDN'T HAVE YOUR
11 NORMAL STRENGTH AT THAT POINT. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE
12 YOU TO GET YOUR STRENGTH BACK?

13 A. Well, it took at least -- I was liberated
14 in 1945, in April, and I went back to Hungary and I
15 come back. But it took about eight months or a year
16 to get back, you know, that normal life. But we
17 didn't do anything in Germany, just waiting for
18 opportunity to leave Germany.

19 Q. HAD YOU SIGNED UP TO TRY AND LEAVE?

20 A. Yeah. We signed up a long, long time ago.
21 But just like the Congress had to pass a law to let
22 displaced persons into United States.

23 Q. WERE YOU ON A HUNGARIAN QUOTA LIST?

24 A. No, it wasn't quota. We were just
25 displaced persons. And the Congress had to pass a

1 law to let us in.

2 Q. THE AMERICAN CONGRESS?

3 A. Yeah. Once it went through, then we get
4 the opportunity to go anywhere, United States. Well,
5 I don't know. They probably -- probably Oakland
6 Jewish Center, or I don't know, New York or some of
7 those places, give how many Jewish people can come to
8 this area.

9 Q. HOW MANY THEY'LL SPONSOR?

10 A. Yeah, on sponsors, yeah.

11 Q. BEFORE I FORGET, I WANTED YOU TO SHOW THE
12 PICTURE THAT YOU HAVE OF YOURSELF FROM DACHAU, SINCE
13 WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT TIME NOW.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. MAYBE EXPLAIN WHAT IT IS THAT YOU'RE
16 HOLDING UP, WHO IS THE HANDSOME YOUNG MAN IN THE
17 PICTURE AND WHAT YOU GOT THERE?

18 A. This handsome young man is Irwin Barani.

19 Q. GO AHEAD. EXPLAIN WHAT THIS IS, THEN.

20 A. This handsome Jewish kid, who was in
21 concentration camp and slave labor camp for four
22 years, came to United States and --

23 Q. AND WHAT ARE YOU HOLDING? WHAT IS THAT A
24 CERTIFICATE OF?

25 A. This certificate of a proof you been in a

1 concentration camp.

2 Q. I SEE. SO IT'S FROM 1945 OR SO, OR WHAT --

3 A. This is proof I was in Dachau, in
4 concentration camp, in 1944 to 1945, until
5 liberation.

6 Then I came to United States and I got
7 married here, met my wife, Annette, and a beautiful
8 woman, and I have two children, by name, Steven and
9 Gisele.

10 Q. SO THE ARMY ISSUED THIS TO YOU?

11 A. Yeah. The army issued it. Before you left
12 Germany the army give you this certificate, proof of
13 concentration camp.

14 Q. SO THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN --

15 A. This picture was --

16 Q. -- SOMETIME AFTER THE LIBERATION?

17 A. This picture was taken before I came, 19 --
18 let's see. It was taken in 1946.

19 Q. SO YOU ALREADY HAD A YEAR TO RECOVER OR SO?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. SO THAT'S PART OF YOUR PAPERS, THEN, TO
22 HELP YOU EMIGRATE TO AMERICA?

23 A. Here's concentration from 11/11, 1944. You
24 see here, I got my number, what number, concentration
25 camp number.

1 Q. THIS IS THE NUMBER THAT YOU WERE, 124487?

2 A. Yeah. That was my concentration camp
3 number.

4 Q. I SEE. SO THEN SOMEHOW YOU DECIDED FROM
5 THE GOOD THINGS YOU HEARD ABOUT AMERICA TO COME. AND
6 WHERE DID YOU LAND? WHERE DID YOU WIND UP IN
7 AMERICA?

8 A. Well, I left Bremerhaven, and came direct
9 to Oakland.

10 Q. DIRECT?

11 A. Yeah. Well, we stopped -- we came through
12 the Panama Canal. We stopped in New Orleans and Los
13 Angeles; and from Los Angeles to Oakland.

14 Q. SPEAKING HUNGARIAN, A LITTLE YIDDISH, SOME
15 GERMAN, BUT NO ENGLISH?

16 A. But no English. Then I came to the land of
17 the free, where I'm really very happy and just --

18 Q. SO YOU CAME. AND DID THEY HAVE SOMETHING
19 SET UP FOR YOU, A PLACE FOR YOU TO LIVE?

20 A. Well, the Jewish Welfare Federation had
21 made arrangement for me to stay in a private family.

22 Q. I SEE. A HUNGARIAN FAMILY OR --

23 A. No, it wasn't a Hungarian family. It was a
24 Jewish family. It was Mr. and Mrs. Fass who gave us
25 opportunity to stay with them.

1 Q. SO JUST YOU, YOURSELF, LIVED WITH THEM?

2 A. I, myself, yeah.

3 Q. WHEN YOU CAME TO LIVE WITH THEM, DID THEY
4 WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO
5 YOU OR --

6 A. Well, when I first came over here, as I
7 said, my name was a Hungarian name, Imre, and they
8 thought, Irma. They expected a girl. They were
9 surprised when I walked in. "Here I am." And well,
10 certainly they wanted to know right away, you know,
11 where I'm from and what my life had been during the
12 war. And they introduced me to different
13 organizations. And through that person I met my
14 wife, on a blind date.

15 Q. A LUCKY BLIND DATE?

16 A. A lucky blind date. Lucky for her.

17 Q. Did they set you up with work?

18 A. Yes. They -- No. For instance, they give
19 us -- the Jewish Welfare Federation give us money to
20 live on it. But we promised we'd pay them back, and
21 they --

22 Q. SO IT'S REALLY A LOAN?

23 A. It was a -- Well, if you wanted to, you
24 paid them back. If you didn't want to you-- I paid
25 them back. But also, they searched for a job.

1 Q. AND THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY COAL MINE JOBS, I
2 HOPE?

3 A. No. They search for a job. And well, I
4 had hard work when I first came over here, but I
5 improved myself.

6 Q. WHAT DID YOU DO AT THE BEGINNING?

7 A. Well, actually when I was in Hungary, I was
8 a linotype operator, I was a printer, working for a
9 newspaper. When I first came over here, after I got
10 married I went to learn in a trade school, refresh my
11 linotype operating; and two years later I took out my
12 citizenship paper because I married to American girl.
13 Lucky for her.

14 Q. I SEE. BUT ALREADY YOU COULD SPEAK
15 ENGLISH?

16 A. Well, I went to school. I went to learn a
17 trade school and I could express myself pretty well
18 in English.

19 Then I started to work for a company, Lutz
20 Tire Company. I worked for them for 36 years, and I
21 wind up to be a sales manager for the company; and I
22 just retired three years ago.

23 Q. I SEE.

24 A. No. I didn't retire. The company, they
25 sold the company and they went to Chapter 11, with an

1 investment company, and just closed down the place.

2 Q. SO YOU CAME AND GOT RIGHT TO WORK WITH
3 BUSINESS AND SCHOOL AND TRADE AND ALL OF THAT,
4 MARRIAGE AND ALL THE REST. DID YOU JUST PUT THE WAR
5 AND THE HARD YEARS BEHIND YOU OR HOW DID YOU KEEP IN
6 YOUR MIND --

7 A. Well, you never can forget what happened to
8 you. As I said, even my daughter went to holocaust
9 reunion, to Israel. And I was in Israel myself. Yad
10 Vashem, you see all those history what happened to
11 the Jewish people, you never can forget what they did
12 to you. You maybe try to forgive but never forget.

13 Q. WHEN YOU HAD CHILDREN, DID YOU TELL THEM
14 ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOU WHEN YOU WERE IN THAT
15 PORTION OF YOUR LIFE?

16 A. No. I never -- never give anything them.
17 I never said anything to my kids. They find out
18 themselves, and this is my -- you know, my daughter
19 wanted to go to Israel to find out my background.
20 And when she saw Yad Vashem and all those places,
21 what they did, the Germans to the European Jews, and
22 just really made her sad about it.

23 Q. SO SHE CAME TO FIND OUT A LITTLE BIT LATER?

24 A. Yeah. She came to find out.

25 Q. FOR YOURSELF, YOU JUST KIND OF WENT AHEAD

1 WITH YOUR LIFE. YOU DIDN'T LET YOURSELF DWELL ON IT
2 TOO MUCH.

3 A. Well, I went along with my life, you know,
4 and tried to forget. But you cannot forget.

5 Q. DO YOU EVER DREAM ABOUT IT OR DOES IT COME
6 UP SOMETIMES?

7 A. Sometimes when you come about it, you know,
8 and fear how could human beings do things like that
9 to other human beings. When those people, just like
10 Hitler and their regime was nothing but animals, what
11 they did to the human race.

12 Q. SO YOU THINK THEY WERE KIND OF DIFFERENT,
13 THAT IT WASN'T A REGULAR KIND OF HUMAN BEINGS?

14 A. I don't think so.

15 Q. SO NOW THAT YOU'VE LIVED THROUGH SO MUCH
16 AND YOU'VE MADE A WONDERFUL LIFE FROM ALL OF THOSE
17 HARD THINGS, WHAT KIND OF THINGS DO YOU THINK ARE
18 IMPORTANT FOR THE REST OF US TO REMEMBER AND KEEP IN
19 MIND ABOUT THAT TIME?

20 A. Well, the rest of us, and the younger
21 generations, as far as I can see, the most important
22 thing to teach the younger generation what happened
23 to the older generation and it could happen again if
24 we don't watch -- or we don't watch out for ourself,
25 watch out for ourselves; just like they have all

1 these skinheads, they had an election in Germany,
2 where they outlawed that party after they won
3 election, and what happened in Louisiana, where the
4 KKK was elected, that should never happen, those kind
5 of things, for hate groups to teach the younger
6 generation to hate different religion or any other
7 people.

8 Q. DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THIS
9 GENERATION UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE WAR AND WHAT
10 HAPPENED, EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED?

11 A. As far as I can tell, they should teach in
12 school to the younger generation, for junior high and
13 up, to have idea what could -- what happened and what
14 could happen again.

15 Q. WELL, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU CAN
16 THINK OF THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE IN THE WAY OF A
17 MESSAGE ON THIS TAPE? YOU TOLD A WONDERFUL STORY.
18 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

19 A. The only thing I would like to add, I'm
20 grateful for being here in United States and my
21 family, and the people who are associated should
22 understand us; and I leave that way.

23 Q. THAT'S A GOOD WAY TO LEAVE IT. LET'S STOP
24 RIGHT THERE.

25