Interview with Maurice Blane
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Q MAURICE, WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

A I was born July 16th, 1922 in a town called Hyange in France. It's in Lorraine, really, but it's in France. I was born in the time Lorraine was French, 1922. Prior to 1914 the Germans were there.

Q YOUR FATHER'S NAME?

A My father's name is Joseph Blankenberg.

Now, it sounds strange, but when I came to this country, my name was Blankenberg. I became a citizen of the United States in July, 1950, three years after I got here. Coming from France, being a pastry chef, I worked in the hotels where French chefs were the real people that ran kitchens. When I told them my name was Blankenberg, they said, "You're not French. You're German." That's all I needed to hear.

I got married in 1950. My wife was an American citizen. Through her being a citizen, marrying an American citizen, I was able to ask for my citizenship three years after I came here. And in

front of the judge I knew ahead of time I could change my name. So we discussed what I would change the name to. I had no relatives, really, to report or ask them, Can I do this? I was the sole survivor. So I decided Blane, which had no real reason. I can't give you a reason why. I tried different things. I tried even Blanchard, which was something like French, because my French heritage is still there. Rather, my parents weren't from there. I was more inclined to keep that. So I became Blane. My citizenship paper which I have with me show that I was born Maurice Blankenberg in France, and I became Maurice Blane.

Another reason I have to explain is, when you work in these places with French or Italian or whoever, and not knowing I was Jewish, I heard a lot of the same thing. People that are anti-Semitic that talk badly. So I had to earn a living. I was very fortunate I had a job coming from the other side. That prompted me to change my name. And I'm for 43 years Blane, and it took me just a few minutes by the judge to change it.

Now through the French government I'm still Blankenberg. In 1989 I was in France. I went to see a lawyer to have the name legally changed to Blane also. To this day it's not done yet. Because, they are very -- how would I say -- with red tape. You have to

write letters to different place where you were born and have to make all kinds of things. I'm mostly likely have to stop on this because it comes in -- as we talk you'll get to the crux of why it took so long in France. It's not finished yet.

Q WHERE WAS JOSEPH BLANKENBERG FROM?

A Born in Poland. And the way I was told as a child, my father was in the Russian army, and I've pictures of him in the uniform. And he was -- 1916 the Germans got a prison in World War I, and he came to Lorraine, not of his free will, as a prisoner. And they put him to work in the factory, which was an iron ore mill in Lorraine. It was a large company, and he worked there.

And after the War was ended, rather than go back, he stayed there, had his wife, my mother, brought from Poland there, and I was born there in 1922. And once -- and my parents had a son born in 1911 in Poland, and so he was nine years old when we got there, when they got there. And I had a sister born in 1925 and another brother born in 1933. So it's a big space between the first and the last. He was born in 1933, okay?

Q DID YOU KNOW YOUR POLISH GRANDPARENTS?

A No.

Q DID YOU EVER MEET THEM?

A No, never even -- I would say deep down, trying to remember, no. I don't remember anything.

Q DID YOU KNOW THEIR NAMES?

A No, nothing.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DID FOR A LIVING?

A No.

Q WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER. WHAT WAS HER NAME?

A Suisla. Which translated in France for the French people was Susanne. Suisla became Susanne. Hajdenberg was her maiden name. Her brother was in the service with my father, and the two of them came to Lorraine as prisoners. Both stayed there. So that's my uncle, which was in France and which I saw a few times even after the War. He was fortunate. He escaped the Holocaust.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHAT CITY YOUR PARENTS' FAMILIES WERE FROM? WHAT CITY IN POLAND?

A Warsaw is the only thing I heard, my mother. And I guess her family had a butcher shop. She had a butcher shop in Poland in Warsaw. There was no other town that I can recall that was ever brought up to my mind that I could say, Okay that's what happened. That's what I heard.

Q DID YOUR FATHER HAVE ANY BROTHERS OR

SISTERS?

A Yes. The only sister that I do know came to the United States, pre World War I.

Q AND HER NAME?

A Her maiden name I know was Blankenberg, but I don't know, I have no recollection because I didn't get close to them when I came to this country. I met her, and her children, because principally a sister of my mother made papers for me to come to this country, and the sister of my mother came to this country prior to World War I.

Q WHAT WAS HER NAME? HER FIRST NAME?

A I forget. If you give me a second, I'll try to remember. I haven't spoken or heard of her in 40 years, so it's kind of difficult to remember. It will come to me so -- because when you have an aunt who brought you over -- the husband was really the one that made papers for me -- and Tanta, Tanta something. I forgot now. Because there were Tantas all over the place from my first wife. So Tanta Tuba, Tanta this, so it's just, for the second it's kind of --

Q THAT'S OKAY. WHAT ABOUT YOUR NAMES OF YOUR SIBLINGS AND YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTER?

A Right. My older brother was Bernard. Bernard. Blankenberg. My sister was Regene, which is

Refkalia in Jewish but Regene is how I knew her. And the smallest, born in '33 -- I said the smallest, the youngest, really -- his name was Victor, and because he was the youngest in France, we called him Coco. Coco, which is really a nice name to call somebody that you like. Coco.

Q WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO FOR A LIVING?

A As we -- as I was very young, he worked for the same factory that he was brought over for. And my mother, being really a business lady, she had a butcher shop. We had three, four different businesses before I was 14.

I have to explain, because we had a -- like one time a restaurant where she did the cooking that I can recall. And she was a very good cook. And we also had a push cart, you know. We used to go -- I remember there was no transportation. We just walked, 10, 12 miles, from one place to another to sell, you know, the jeans we're talking about now. We had this type of blue clothes in denim that was sold in France at that time. And on the weekend there was fairs where they sold candy out of a stand in the street. That was basically what they were doing. And I'm talking about this, the year '32 to '36, that I can say that.

After this I went to work. Finished in

school at the age of 14. I went to work in a bakery as an apprentice.

Q TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MOTHER'S restaurant.

A Well, the thing I do recall, it was in a small town, and it wasn't anything like a restaurant here. It was more like a coffee shop, sort of speak, with tables that were not like -- let's say you go in the restaurant. You have a table for four, table for two, this was long tables and community food. It was not kosher. Had nothing to do with that. It was strictly for working people that lived in the neighborhood. It wasn't a fancy restaurant. Now remember, I tried to recall when I was under 14, and that's what I can recall. The town was called Kautange. It was just about 10 miles from where I was born in Hyange. My schooling was in a town called Thionville.

Q YOU LIVED IN HYANGE. YOUR MOTHER HAD A RESTAURANT IN THIS OTHER PLACE?

A No. That's where I was born, but we moved where the restaurant -- there was always an apartment in the back of wherever we had a business, so we lived in the same place where we had a business.

Q DURING THIS TIME YOUR FATHER WAS STILL WORKING AT THE FACTORY?

A No. He had stopped, and we were -- my folks ran the restaurant together. He had stopped working in the factory.

Q WHAT KIND OF MEALS DID THEY SERVE?

A Very difficult to explain because I live here over 40 years. I know French food. I know American food. But I couldn't tell you what was really served, you know. You know, food, it could have been potatoes. Not steaks, because they didn't have that much food. She was preparing -- some times she would have gefilte fish, something like that, that I can recall. It was not just Jewish people that were in that town. There was very few. Some friends of my folks that I know, even Polish friends that were non-Jews would come in the place and eat. But I -- that's basically something that's way out of my mind to remember, because remember, what I'm saying now was before 1936. So we talk about almost 60 years. And so I can't remember.

Q CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOUR LIVING ARRANGEMENTS WERE LIKE IN THESE APARTMENTS THAT YOU HAD IN THE BACK?

A No.

Q ANYTHING ABOUT THE BUTCHER SHOP?

A No, I could -- the butcher shop in Poland,

no. I've never been there.

Q DID YOUR MOTHER HAVE A BUTCHER SHOP IN FRANCE?

A No.

Q HOW MANY JEWS WERE THERE. COULD YOU COUNT THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES, OR WAS IT -- 3,000? HOW LARGE WAS THE VILLAGE WHERE YOU LIVED?

A It is very difficult to answer that question. I wouldn't know. But I had -- I made my Bar Mitzvah there, and there was a situation, prior to the nazis because, at that time in France there was no nazis, but there was Jewish families. And my parents.

Now again, I don't want you to feel funny what I'm going to say, I'm just telling you what I thought at the time. My impression as a kid was that we were more or less considered like second-class citizen by the Jewish community. Now if I explain this, most of the Jewish wanted the people who lived in these towns were either (Alsatian) born, maybe three or four generations there already. And they were upper class and my folks were working people. They weren't very rich. I would say we were even poor.

And when I went for my Bar Mitzvah, I remember the rabbi and whoever it was, I remember -- we're talking about holidays which is coming next week,

there was the holiday that's usually just -- (Apura), which is before Christmas and New Years. And so I used to go at the temple. And we had these shacks, like, with food and vegetables in the back, and I remember that.

But I felt kind of funny because I was in a Catholic school because that was the only school there was, and I heard the Catholic prayers every day. It was automatic. And then I went to, became my Bar Mitzvah. It clashed. You know, when you're a young kid, you don't know which way you're going, and it had nothing to do with the Holocaust at that time. This is my background. How I had to face life. Which way am I. Who am I. My parents never really gave you an upbringing of being religious or not. It was pretty lose.

So there I am, 1936, finishing. I had a certificate in etude, it was called in French, which is the equivalent here in high school. But at 14 that's what you get. After this you go to lycee, which is to go further, like a college, afterwards. And I was told it's best to learn a trade, it's always helpful, so I went in the bakery business, in the town of Metz.

And in that town, the owner of the bakery had a contract that we signed that I was going to work for

him for three years for room and board, no remuneration, which was the norm at that time. So I went to work for him. He never knew I was Jewish. And naturally you go through times, but it didn't effect me that he knew or didn't know. He didn't ask me; I didn't tell him. That's it. And I was there for three years, and in 1939 I was going to leave and go to work on the steam ship as a pastry chef.

Now, the War broke out, changed everything. And August of '45 -- not '45, '40. No, '39. August, 1939, the War broke out. And my father naturally was too old to be drafted; and he wasn't even French, he was still Polish. I became a French citizen by naturalization in 1934, '35. Which I didn't know. I got papers which I had to -- now in the last years to find out I was born there, you're still not a citizen even though you're born there. So I found out I was naturalized in the '30's, either because my oldest brother became a French citizens or whatever. It was all a surprise to me.

Now in 1939 when the War broke out my older brother was married, and -- which she was not Jewish. Her folks came from Dijon in Burgundy. So the whole family, we had to more or less leave. We were evacuated. We were very close to the German border in

the (marginal) line. So before anything happened -- the real war really started in May, 1940, when France was invaded by the Germans. But prior to this, we all went to Dijon, Bergandy, and in September 1940 we were in Dijon -- I called Dijon my adoptive town because I -- you know, at that time I was already 18. I made friends. I was paid for what I was doing. So I thought this was more or less my youth, I had nothing to look back.

Lorraine was never a place that I would go back to say my place of birth. I've gone back. Nothing's changed. It's always been half German, half French. It's very simple. The people are either very French or German. It's a very funny situation, Lorraine. In Alsace they speak patois which is German, so they have a tendency to be more German. The Lorraine people fought in World War II, saved Jews, made a lot of patriotic gestures for France. But again, I had two strikes against me at all times. Because I was born there, I was not only French, I was a Jew. That's another strike.

Now the reason I say that, as we went on in the War and the Germans were there, our situation became kind of not either here or there, because we were in Dijon more or less like refugees. But I

worked. My father didn't work anymore. My brother worked, and my younger sister was to go to school. She was born in 1925, so she was 14 in 1939. 14, 15. You know, she was still going to school.

Now, where I get to that situation where the Germans come in, all the Jews had to -- see, in Europe, in France or so, you have identity cards. Here we have a driver's license or Social Security. That's all you have. In Europe you have identity card that gives your name and even gives your religion. So when the Germans came, they said, Okay, all the Jews have to get ration cards for food, have to register.

My folks registered; I did not. And I'll tell you why I didn't. I never thought I would have a problem with food for myself. Working in the bakery or working in the food business, I'll always have food. I never got rationed food to go in a bakery to buy bread or go to the grocery to buy butter or sugar or whatever.

And so the three years I had been gone as an apprentice, I wasn't really close to my family. The fact is that they lived a certainly life. I had three years of an owner that put in disciplining me for the work. She had a kid. Jewish kids were always very spoiled. I was spoiled. I could do what I want at

home.

My sister was the oldest girl of the three, so my father, that's his favorite. I was the favorite of my mother. My oldest brother was already gone. Then my brother, when he came he was the young one. When he came everyone liked him. He's the youngest, see. So I became more or less at the age of 17, 18 -- when I got to Dijon, I made some friends my age. I remember going out with a hat on my head. I was a -- now when you say, 17 you're a kid. At that time I thought I was grown up, a man, you know, although you learn that's not true.

So what happened is, I worked in a place that -- basically I was making cookies, and the product that was made in this place that I worked was called (panapies). (panapies) is like a honey cake, Jewish honey cake. It's the specialty of Dijon, with the mustard, and that (panapies) is strictly a Dijon specialty.

So I worked there, and I had to be there at six. In February of 1942 -- the Germans were already there since '40, you see -- they come to the house at seven o'clock and take my father. He was registered, but they knew of me and asked where I was. They said I wasn't living there, which wasn't true. I was gone,

working. So he was taken. The neighbors came to the place where I worked and told me not to go home because they were looking for me. So I don't recall exactly how it happened, but some people in the Underground put me that evening on a train that was an empty rail train that came from Germany and went to Leon, which was non-occupied. The portion of France was non-occupied, so they had sealed off wagons, empty. And they put me in there. That's it. The way I was. That's it.

I went in there to the non-occupied, where the Germans weren't. And this is February 1942. In July, '42, I was going to be 20, so I wasn't exactly 20 yet. And inside there were four or five guys. Some were in French military uniforms. Some were in civilian clothes. And there was just like a material lying on the floor, so we laid down. And as we get to the border, I could hear the boots of the Germans outside. But we went through, no problem.

We get to the other side where the line -- the French flag was flying at the railroad station, so I knew there was no Germans. Where the Germans were, there were no French flags flying. So when I got there, the logical thing was to go to the town of Leon, which is a large town, for work. As I got to the station, as I got to the town, I'm looking around. And

I see military, French military guys, and there's posters posted that the Vichy government is drafting anybody born between 1920, 1922, in their youth camp in green uniform. I have figured that's got to be the Germans.

But the military guys talked to me, and they said, "Where you from?" I said, "Born in Lorain but I come from Dijon. " And they said, "Look, if you want to escape from the Germans, enlist in the army. After you get through your training, you get a choice of where you go." So I said, "Well, I want to go to Africa." Why do I want to go to Africa? I figure from Africa to get to Gibraltar and join the French forces in England. Remember, I'm talking like a 20-year-old at that time. My destiny was not to go there, because I never made it. But I enlisted in the army for three years. The French army.

In 1942 my father was taken by the Germans. I really had no idea because the situation at that time wasn't as fluid as now with communication. You knew in Germany was the bad guys, but I didn't -- I wasn't aware there was concentration camps. Had no idea. They took my father strictly because he was a Jew, regardless of what he did in life, but they just took the people.

Now, when I got into the army in Leon and I enlisted for 3 years, I realized that I have sometime in October to be shipped to a town called Blida in Algeria. And from there, I was going to try to do something. I had no idea what. Now, my sister stayed in Dijon, and she married a non-Jew, a pastry chef who was a friend of mine. Non-Jew. My mother always complained to me, "Why don't you take your sister. You go out with your buddies -- although there was a war -- and your sister is always in at home. She never goes out." So one time I took her with me, and she met this fellow Marshall, and at 16 and a half she got married to him.

Now, when they took my father, my mother lived with my little brother. Remember he was born in '33, it was '42, so he was 9 years old. I go in the army, and the only communication we had between the two zones was open post cards for the censure. You couldn't write letters. You could have a postcard, and the censure could read what you wrote. So I got this in July in the army from my sister that they took my mother and she took the little brother with her. So that was another shocker. See the father, I figured he was in the army. If they took him to work in Germany, he might survive. Unknown to me, he never lived 24

hours, because when you reached a certain age, they were automatically eliminated. So when they took my mother, it was a greater shock because it's a woman. You don't realize the way the mind of the Germans work, those particular nazis that do this work.

So here I am, ready to go to Africa. One day in September of 1942, the American troops land in Africa, which is in, not Algeria, but in Morocco. As soon as that happened, the Germans crossed the non-occupied zones, go all the way down to the Mediterranean, and the French fleet in Turin scuttled. We in the army at that time in Leon had to go. They send us to guard against the Underground, the basic post office, gas factory and everything, that there were no terrorist acts. But when we went, that was before even the Germans came down.

And here we were, a group of 12 guys in this factory, gas factory, like (P. C.), let's say; and they, the people come to us and say, "Listen, the Germans are in our depot. You better not go back. You'll be taken as prisoners." And they gave us those jeans-type long thing like mechanics, you know, and we wore this. The sergeant and the corporal had families in town. They left us flat. We were some guys, and that was September, October of 1942.

So what happened at that time -- I forgot to mention one more thing. When I got to the army, maybe three weeks later, one of my buddies in Dijon which was non-Jewish came and wanted to enlist with me, because we were close friends. He went to the air force. He had flat feet so he went to the air force. But we stayed buddies. Naturally he had his family in Dijon. He went back. Where was I to go? I went back to Dijon to get my sister to tell me what happened.

So what happened, I get back, and I recall that at that time the ~~(Laffol)~~ LAVAL government -- now we get back just before Christmas, and we got a thousand francs for a premium for enlistment. And a thousand francs at that time was pretty good money so we had a good party. And right after the first of year, '43, we get a notice from the government: "You didn't finish your enlistment. You have to go to work in Germany to finish off your enlistment. You go as a laborer in Germany." Now, I wasn't that stupid. I realized where I was born. Automatically they put me in a German army, if I'm not Jewish. Being Jewish, I go to the camp.

So I had met a fellow in 1940 when we got there, 1939, we got to Dijon. I was already telling you the type of person who wanted to go to Gibraltar to

join de Gaul, and I was already taking "preparations" which means preparing me, because I wasn't stupid. If I knew something ahead of time, I might become an architect or sergeant or officer rather that a regular soldier. So I learned the Morse code, the gun they had at the time. It was just preparation, in case I was going to get drafted.

I was 17 in '39, so I didn't get drafted until 18, but the Germans came, I wasn't drafted. So I called that guy, and he was working. While the Germans were there, he was working at a place called "prefecture". Prefecture is not a city hall, it's above. It's not the capitol, but it's -- each section had a prefecture. And the prefecture was working there, and I went to see him, and I simply told him, "This is the case. I'm born in Lorain. They don't know I'm Jewish. They took me in the German army, but being Jewish, they will put me in a camp."

So he said, You can be very useful to me. We have a way for you to work. We're going to -- instead of taking into Germany we're going to put a requisition for you to work in a restaurant strictly for the German soldiers, which was near the railway station. And it was a town -- coming from Germany, going to the African corps, the Germans had to stop there. They didn't have

to stop there, but they did stop there, and the only place they had for French money. They had to eat at that particular place.

By the way, I worked there, and what we used to do -- the cooks, we ate better than the Germans because we could fix what we wanted. And for them, used to be one dish. For each dish they had a ticket. They gave me the tickets. I put them in the office. But I counted them, and I reported to the guy how many dishes we served that day. That's all I had to do.

Somehow, I don't know, there was somebody that worked there who was a girlfriend of mine. She had nothing to do with this, but I mention I had a girlfriend. But you know, when you're that age you're a little cocky. I might have said something, somebody heard, and one morning my brother, the oldest brother, was hidden. He didn't register either, so he was with his wife who was Catholic when they had two children at that time. One born in '40, one born in '41. There was 11, 12 months difference between the two.

So before going to work -- I have to explain. In those days in this particular kitchen I worked from 7:00 in the morning till 1:00 then I came back at 4:00 o'clock and worked a few hours for the evening. And so, before going to work, I went to see

him. And from his window where he lived, like on the third or fourth floor, he would see a train filled with French guys my age going to Germany as working people. You know, they were either drafted or on their free will. They had no other way to work. And he says, "Watch out where you are. It's kind of dangerous. You shouldn't do that."

You know, that was the last message I had from my brother. I went to work. Maybe 50 minutes later, some field German armory with his big dog tags, they picked me up and I'm taken to the Gestapo. Naturally, I didn't know where it was, the Gestapo, but I found out was the Gestapo. And I heard some guys scream. They were being beaten. And here I am. I get into an office, and there's a guy behind a desk, an officer. And he looks at me and he says, "Siend se uda?" What was I going to say, no? He asked me -- he knows. Otherwise he doesn't arrest me. I says yes.

Nothing happened to me. They took me to the jail in this town, in that jail for the purpose of shipping me to Drancy, which was the departure port for people going to Germany, the Jews. I was in the prison that was loaded full, and we were in a workshop. They put up beds three high, and it was in that workshop. And I guess I was there but a couple of weeks. And

then some civilian French guys, police, picked us up to take the train, like at midnight, that was going to Paris, and from Paris, somewhere in Paris, was a place where they put older Jews together to be sent to Germany.

The French didn't know where they were going. They knew they had to take me to that particular place with another fellow they picked up in the Underground. He was in the woods. They picked us up, and he was put into prison, and the two of us went to Paris. What I did-- because even then I was already thinking, before I leave, whoever I knew should know what happened to me. So I asked a French police guy, could you have my girlfriend, she lives just in this place, tell her that I'm leaving for Paris. And she came with her brother. She wasn't Jewish, naturally.

The reason I bring her up, because it's very important to realize, when I got to Germany -- and I got first to Grasse and there was hundreds of people. And the first thing the Germans did, they said -- they gave us a paper, and they said, You give us your money, and we're going to convert it into zloties because you're going to work in the factories in Poland. My mind was working already. I'm going to be underneath

in the mines. I'll be warm. The winter cold wasn't for me. I'll be fine. You know, I always took this lighter than it really -- I never looked at the danger because when your a young guy, the family's gone, what do you have to lose more than one life? That's it. So I never worried too much.

Before we left the Germans, I said to every -- there was wagons that had 12 horses and 40 people. In World War I, they used this for transporting troops. And this opened doors like this, and they put people in there. Before leaving, they assembled in front of every wagon. There was a German and an interpreter that said, Whoever escapes from this we want -- this man and his wife and his children will be shot if somebody tries to escape. Naturally the biggest worrier was the guy with his family. He didn't let anybody escape. He screamed, if anybody tried to escape. Anyway, we had nobody that escaped.

I went from Paris to Germany through the hometown where I was born. I could see it. I realized where I was. We went on the train for three days and three nights. All we got was some bread from the Red Cross. We had nothing to drink. There was some older people. They got sick.

When we reached a place that was called

Hindenburg, there was the border between Germany and Poland. We got to -- we left December the 7th, and we reached there December the 10th, 1943. And really sometime in October I was taken by the Germans. So between October and December the 10th, I was in custody left and right.

My sister at that time was pregnant. And I didn't know when I left if I ever would know if she had a boy or a girl. Okay, so I get to this camp, and then the reality hits you. There's German green uniforms opening the door and starting with the whip to whip the people off the train, and you get to -- there's snow on the ground. And naturally as I said before, I -- language was part of my life, because even where I was born, we took two hours of German every week in school. So I could understand German. They were saying, Women and children one side, and the men on the other side. So we had a line, there was a guy on a little butte, a little hill, not high, maybe 10 feet above, that he could see down in front of the cattle that was coming to him. And all they wanted us to say is the age and the profession. So I got to the place, and I said, "Cook, 20." "This way". There was 1100 people on this thing. The whole train had 1100 people. By that evening there was 300 that went to

work.

At that time they took us on trucks and drove us to -- which became (Bruna) Monowits. And there the reality of the atrocity really hit me, because we got there, in the back of a barrack, and we had no baggage or nothing. We just had clothes, and it's winter. There's a young guy couldn't have been more -- a soldier, military, with a whip. And he starts to holler and whip around. "Take all your clothes off, take your shoes and your belt." Naked, in the snow. You know, it takes a little thinking.

We did this, and we went into the barrack, and they clipped every bit of hair we had on our body. And it smelled like petroleum, because the biggest thing, the fear of the German was typhus, which had to do with lice. And as you got in there -- and I had been in the army, so I look at some of these guys. The polish guys. The people that have been hardened already, they start laughing at seeing these new recruits coming in, and say, "Where you from, where you from?" And when they clip and they did this, we had to go in the shower, hot water, and out in the snow, completely wet.

Now, I didn't see, I have no mirror. When I saw the guys around me with no hair, and some of them

had wives and children -- I have been expressing my feelings. On the face of these guys, like -- did you ever look in the eyes of a cow? A human being has emotions. When you're sad, you see it in the eyes. If you're smiling, you're happy, you see them. In the cow, there's no expression. That's how these guys became. Expressionless. The eyes were dead. Because they realize, if they did this, if they did the same thing to the children and the women -- what we know since, that they put them instead in the shower with gas, and when they were finished, into the ovens. Where I was, there was no ovens.

We were like a distance of Mill Break to San Francisco. Between -- let's say San Francisco is Auschwitz, (Beunmill) Auschwitz was like Mill Break. So we could see the smoke stacks. And naturally with the people that were there, you get to know a lot of things that you don't realize that you have. Everybody like mixed from all over the world that are there. There was even an American.

There was in the streets of Nice, there was a raffle. A raffle is where they pick up young guys. And this particular guy, they put him in the hallway, had his trousers down, he was circumcised. He wasn't even Jewish, was circumcised. Oops, they sent him to

Auschwitz. And I met him there. And this is an aside, just a commentary of how you get to see different situation.

The particular camp that I was in, in Bruna Monowits, there must have been at least 80 barracks that held 120 people. It was three lines of beds, three high. So there was 40 here, 40 here, and 40 here. Now, the figure is approximate. I don't know. I was in the middle. Now, every week, once a week, they clipped your hair, clipped you under the arm. And whoever did this got a soup, extra soup. Extra food. So. And also the ones that went to the kitchens, there was thermos, a high thermos with soup in it. That's all we got. Soup and some dark bread.

So I used to go and pick up the soup, clean the kettles, just to have a little more to eat. Because I was strong enough and I have a bone structure that was big, so I didn't show a skinny situation right away. But every month or two, a German officer would come, and you had to parade in front him from one aisle naked to another aisle, show your back to him, and go up. Whoever you could see the bones of your behind sticking out, they were taken away to the ovens. Now, that never occurred to me, because, as I said, I always had thick bones, and it did help me.

I happened to get an abscess from the guy that clipped me, and it wasn't very clean so I couldn't work. I had -- I couldn't lift my arm. We had to make the beds in the barracks and there was -- the head of the barrack can was called Kapo and the Kapo usually, I say usually, was either a criminal or conscientious objector that didn't want to go in the army. Anyway, it was a guy that used to be in jail was in charge there, so some were pretty mean. And so when I had this, and I was in the middle, I had some friends that helped me make the bed, but they said they can't. They're also very tired. So finally I decided I had to go to the -- and my job was to work outside in the snow in the winter. We had to dig holes.

They were making holes to put (sen tannic) gas, they were making (sen tannic) gasoline like with coal. And they wanted to make some containers into the ground. We couldn't work. There was no way, with a pick and shovel, to make holes in the snow. So you did this to keep warm. By noon, when it thawed out, the hole closed up again. So we were not very useful in work.

Anyway, I get to this situation where this is bothering me. I cannot lift my arm, and I go to the infirmary. And I was always told, You go to the

infirmary, we're never going to see you again. They don't want to take care of you. They give you a needle, and you're dead. I had no choice. So I went. And you know, to this day, I hate hospitals. I can't see sick situations. But I went in, and there's a German prisoner that talked to me. And he gave me some black stuff to put on. And the next day, instead of going to work, I went back. He was one of the greatest surgeons of Berlin. Jewish. He told me so. And so he put me on a table, and he said to me, (German phrase), to grit my teeth. And look. He cut it. There's no bandage. He gave me what we have as toilet paper here. You know that band, he put this around, the paper, and I didn't stay in the infirmary. I didn't want to. I went back to the barracks.

Now, you see people in authority that have to show meanness for one reason or another for discipline. When I got back there and all the people were gone, It was just me and him, that guy that was a criminal, was very nice to me. He talked to me, and he said. "Don't worry. When you get better, you won't be going to go outside to work. I'll put you to work in the factory. You'll be away from the cold." Fine.

I worked with a German civilian that had a long white face, pale, his name was Schultz. I know,

you're going to say, How do you know it was Schultz. Well you know, because Shultz, you got the former guy in the government here was Shultz. Eisenhower, General Eisenhower, before he was president, I made ice cream for him in New York. And his aide-de-camp, his captain was Shultz. So the name Schultz stayed with me. You know what this Schultz did for me? His kit, with the tools -- he brought me boiled potatoes that he, during the night got in the field, and boiled them for me. But he never let me eat in front of him. He had to go in the top -- you know that the job we did was insulate pipes so the insulation was glass wall. And that pretty much was rough.

So I hid up there, and one day we got to talk, and he said says to me, "Do you know why I gave you the potatoes? I don't know you. But, you know, when I was in occupation in France, I had some French farmers that invited me to their house to have a good dinner and some wine. That's how I want to repay them." That's how I got potatoes from him.

So you see, in the worst of situation there are some people that you cannot say everybody's 100 percent bad or 100 percent good. Now, I came to that situation because my setup in the camp was such that every day was a day you survived. People disappeared

because they were skinny, and they couldn't work anymore. The hunger was something. You dream about food. You couldn't -- there was nothing else. What are you going to think of? Survival? You just have to.

You know what they called, the Germans, called people that were very skinny? Musulman. In French, musulman means Muslim; but in German, musulman means a person that is near death or so skinny they call him a musulman. I had a situation where I was in the middle of three beds. Above me was a Russian soldier, prisoner that was there. On the bottom was a professor, Jewish professor, from Salonika, Greece. I don't speak Russian. I don't speak Greek. But like I talk now, I think of talking of recipes of bakery goods I was making.

So I got to talking, and I find out this professor from Greece speaks French, and he speaks Spanish. The soldier that's above, in 1936 was in Spain during the revolution with the Russian army in the brigade that went to Spain. So he understood Spanish. Now, I made rum baba in my mind and talked to that guy. He talked to the Russian. The Russian said to the guy, "Tell him after the War I'll come to work for him in Paris." You know, this is an anecdote of how you try to survive by saying or doing.

And sometimes you have people that used to smoke. They would give up the piece of bread to get a cigarette. I had no problem with this, but you know I didn't see a piece of soap for 22 months. How we got up in the morning, we washed, we picked up sand. We had no hair so we (Mr. Blane demonstrates rubbing) the skin.

Which my worst situation was on New Year's Eve, must have been '43, Christmas, New Year's Eve. We're supposed to go to work, and the guys, the guards, were all drunk. And here there was some French guys that were Jewish guys who were with me, and we got to sing because what are we going to do? They were gone, so we sang to keep our moral up. In the snow, we're walking from the work. Back to the camp. We're walking to camp. So this is the low point where you're so sad. I had many a days where I saw people laying dead. And I looked up in the sky, and I said, "If there's a god, why? Why? Why? Why is this?"

Now again, I'm out of context, really, if you want to look at it. I just speak as things come to my mind. All these things are kept and never really talked about. I was lucky. When I got back in 1945 -- first of all, before I got back, I have to explain. We were so close to the Russians that we could hear the

artillery in (Brezlow). They were bombarding the town. And so I always say, union makes force. I never was alone. There were always buddies around me. So there were some French guys together. I have with me maybe a dozen names of people in the camp. Hoping if that -- while we're in the camp, hoping we come back, if somebody comes around back, you have the name to inform the family that they were there. And if they didn't come back we were the last one that saw them. But I have these names. I wrote them out.

The worst part of the camp came towards '45, end of January, February, '45. The Russians were approaching, and we had to evacuate. Now, you see a bunch of guys say, Well, we're going to play sick and we're going to stay here, and the Russians are going to free us. But then we say, Wait a minute. Maybe the Germans don't want to see any survivors, and they're going to shoot everybody. So we went with the whole, like cattle. We left. We walked.

At that time, the able men, Germans, are already gone. We had the old guard, people in their 60's guarding us. And they put a sack with food to carry and we walk. Pitch black, you know. It's the Russian plane would come and bombard around there, so there was no light. And we're walking, and some of the

old guys couldn't carry it; so they said, You carry it for me. So that's how I got it. The guys next to me took it away. We took all the food out. The guy didn't know who he gave it to. We all looked the same. He never knew who he gave the sack. But I said, they were old guys.

We arrived to a place, like a station, where there's a railroad. And there's a station. So it's so cold in January '45. Remember I had no underwear, no socks, wooden shoes with material, and we are going -- we try to go to a door. It's locked. It's full of people from the camps. We go to a window, try to open it. A fist comes out and hits you so you don't get in there. So we were three guys in the dark. We saw like a little hill to protect us from the wind. We laid down in the snow. When we woke up in the daytime, we realize we're laying on a pile of coal that was for the engines. We slept on the coal, and I survived this.

Now, in January of '45 they're evacuating us, and we're leaving. Here's where we were, (Bernawits). We go to Czechoslovakia, Austria, back into Germany. It took us one week before we could get off that train, because most of the camps wouldn't accept us. There was no room. No food. And here we are. Nothing to eat. Now, the union is the strength. We were on the

side -- say this is the wagon, and the height was about 6 1/2 feet. Open. Now, against the wall, the three of us were protected. The guy, the weak guys fall asleep. Three, four guys fall on top. Every morning we peal the dead, throw them overboard. All over Germany. All over the place.

Now, before we left that camp, we got from the warehouse -- we found some cans of Argentine beef. It's called (beuliabever). It's like corned beef and cabbage. So we ate that before we left, and we kept the cans. I had no belt. I had a string. I took the string with a hole we made in the can, and whenever the train slowed down, I went on the shoulder of a guy, and I was there like this. I went fishing for snow. Food, after three days your stomach close. There's no way you're going to be feeling hunger. The stomach is closed. But your body requires water. So what we did, we ate this. And I remember saying to the guy, "This is better than whipped cream," because the snow looked like whipped cream, and we ate this until maybe three or four days after we passed Austria.

I am going fishing, and I didn't throw it very far. Now, in my mind I'm looking here, and I said, Well I don't want to be greedy. I'm going back. I look back, and there's a gunner three feet from me

like this with a gun at my head. (Mr. Blane indicates gun pointing at him). I grabbed the thing on top. He shot, and he missed me. Now, if I was greedy, if I had leaned, I never would have known what hit me. I shook for a good 10 minutes. We had no more can. And we continued.

Now this is the -- at that time there was a story about the people that were off a ship, and they were on a raft. And they got so bad, they had nothing to eat, nothing. So I'm thinking about this. That's what happened to us. We reached a place, I don't remember where it was, some place in Germany. And there was a railway station, and there's four lines of trains. We're the extreme outside. Here's the German Red Cross. We they see us. They don't give a damn because they're feeding soldiers at this time.

On the other side there's a field and like a ravine. So they go around, they say, we want to take all the dead bodies off of train. We need volunteers to carry out the dead bodies to the ravine. My legs are so bad I decide well maybe I should go down. And you see it's about 6 1/2 feet, and I can't lift myself. I can't get out. So I stayed. The ones that went out, they put one guy here, one guy here, and the other guy lifted by the legs. They threw this guy in.

When they were all in, they shot everybody that went out, and they threw them in. So you see, on that train I escaped death twice.

Now, okay, we go on, two weeks in that train, we finally reached a place called Dora. And they had non-Jews, 90 percent. They had a lot of French and Russians. And they were making the V1 rocket in this place, the shell. And they were in the pine trees, inside all the barracks, all the guys were inside the pine trees. And the factory was horseshoe-shaped inside the ground. And it was covered with fake trees, rubber trees. And when a train came to pick up the shells, they lifted it, and the train would go in and go out some place else. Now, with this U2 plane, they would have gotten it right away. But at that time, they never knew where the factory was, the Allied forces.

So I'm going in there, the three guys together, and we're so weak we hardly can move. But as I get off, I go, and I eat snow from the ground. And as we're walking up a hill into the pine trees, I hear -- I said -- I thought I was hallucinating. I heard French. French? What's going on? Where am I? I went to the barrack. The head of the barrack was a French, from the Underground from France. And we tell him who

we are. "We're Jews from Auschwitz, and we're here." He says to us, "Don't follow. Where you go now, they're going to exterminate you." Somehow he incorporated us three into that barracks. And we stayed in that barrack, and we had to go to work. And we stayed there, and we never went to -- no, they said we were going up to a shower place. It turned out everybody that went up there was liquidated, because they had no food for them. That's why I stayed with the French, because my life was saved there.

So what happened is, we went to work in the factory and it was tool machined. They were making pieces to get that rocket. I'm not a mechanic. I don't know anything, so the guys told me, "Look. You take a rag, and you just go around and clean." To keep busy, I was looking what kind of machine. You know, like you look at the cars -- called a Renault, this is call a Chevy. On the machine, they have the place where they were from. There as a machine from America, England, from Italy. That was my way of not getting board.

We're going into January, February, March, early April. All of a sudden we see maybe hundreds of planes coming by, Americans. And they're coming to bomb into Germany. The next day we're at work.

There's a whole bunch of Germans that come. So the aisles in that horseshoe were this way, and the rail track were here. They put a platform. All kind of big shot Germans, military, were there. And they picked up maybe 40 Russians, and they read a list, blah, blah, blah, sabotage. There was some sabotage. And what they do, there's a crate with wood this thick. And they put four guys with a noose, and they lifted the crate. And the 40 guys got, not really hung, strangled.

And as we're standing here, the entrance was over there, and they were here. They say we have to parade in front. And as we go back, they are hitting us. Saying this was for sabotage. This is for sabotage. We go on the other side, maybe a couple hundred. Then they say, "Everybody back to work except the first 50 stay there." I was among the first 50. I felt maybe it's our turn now. Turns out we had to take the bodies off the nooses and carry them to the trucks out. You know, there's in France a superstition: Hang man's noose brings good luck. I'm holding a body that's still warm. All I'm thinking is the noose is going to bring me luck. It just shows you, you dehumanize to the point that you do things you don't realize, or think about things that are not human,

even.

So what happened, sure enough, we had three guys getting this, and we went back to work. They didn't bother us. You have to realize, that's April, 1945. All of a sudden the Allied forces are approaching. I don't know if they're Russian or American. I don't recall, except we have to evacuate. So there's a hill this way and on this side, and there's another side this way. We had no choice. We're told to go up the hill. Remember, at that time all the able army guys were not there any more. It was all home guard, older guys. They couldn't care less. They were German, but they knew the end was near. The ones that were in the valley were liberated within 24 hours by parachutes, American.

We went on the hill, and we walked, the three guys together. And we're walking, and all of a sudden there's no more guards around. They disappeared. So we figure, well, what we're going to do? So we get to a couple of houses, farmhouses, and among the German countryside with pine trees, we ask for food. They had a silo. Not a silo, barn. And there was potatoes and there was smoked ham hanging. So you know the three of us, we built a fire with wood, and here we are. We put in potatoes and we were fixing potatoes. And we eat

that stuff that is very salty. And I happen to have a scar that I collected in another place from the Germans, and so it was never properly taken care of. All of a sudden I get edema which is my forehead starts to swell up. My eyes were almost closed. And for three days I was like delirious.

And this was the end of April of 1945, and it was unusually warm in Germany at that time. And sure enough, where do we land? Ravensbruck. You see German -- I mean women -- well, I thought I saw ~~muselman~~ muselmen, men skinny. But the women's legs were almost like this. (Mr. Blane indicates arm). Almost like this. And if you didn't know, nobody told you, you didn't realize it's a woman. There's nothing that shows it's a woman. There's nothing feminine in the body that's walking. And we get the Red Cross in. They give us packages.

Well, we know the end is near. Most of the buddies I had, passed away. They disappeared in the last three months. From the time we left Auschwitz, I would say 50, 60 percent of the people that survived everything were finished in that period of time, either because of the hunger or because of something happening to them.

Now, in my story there are some parts that I

missed because I'm not like going through where I was at the particular time. In that period of time we got the Red Cross packages, and I had that edema, we were in a place called Adolph Hitler Castle. There were no Germans around. That was a depot called Adolph Hitler, but there were no Germans. It was all prisoners. The three guys were resting there, and all of a sudden we hear somebody holler in the hall way, "Everybody from the western zone, out. The rest stays here." The other buddies are sleeping, and I said, "Look. We are supposed to go to France. We are western." Sure enough, big black G.I.s on trucks pick us up, and we are brought to a particular place near the Holland border. And that's where we get Red Cross packages.

And the first thing I look at the package is it has margarine, it has cigarettes, it has sugar, milk, powder. Being a baker -- there was rice. I was going to make a rice pudding. Milk, rice, sugar, milk, powder, and here I am fixing. While I'm doing this, someone's stealing my package. I started crying like a baby: "My package was stolen by those guys that were in the camp." You know. You know what? Maybe a dozen guys of that group died from diarrhea. Within 48 hours they were dead. The intestines are not lined anymore. I couldn't even -- I never got anything in the

package. In other words, to say I was saved again. I would have maybe gorged myself with that food, and who knows what would have happen to me. But I was very unhappy that it happened to me.

Sure enough, they got us to the border of Holland, and before we went on the train, we stayed one night in this particular camp. And at that time they would be afraid of lice, too. They put DDT under the arms, Red Cross. I'll have to explain. That was after May the 8th where the War had already stopped. And sure enough, the last guys in 1945 from that camp, guys that went off to fight, was a brigade Charlemagne speaking French that enlisted with the nazis. So we heard the French go up fighting the Russians.

Now, when we got to the border of Holland, everybody that was not German that enlisted, they put a swastika tattooed here. So when the Red Cross had us put up the arm, there wasn't a swastika, they started to hit because the nurse would give a signal, they would start to hit that guy who was trying to sneak back into France or to Europe with the non-nazis, so they had him in the barrack. They were like prisoners. Now, what happened is, the next morning they all disappeared. The guys that were around me were saying, "Well, the Americans let them go." It

made no difference to me. I would have never known that they put swastikas under there, the ones that enlisted in the German army. But they were from Spain and France. There's always mercenaries that go fight for one cause or another.

Anyway, here I am. The War's over. I get back to France, and at the border, the French had strict control of everybody. So I got a paper where I was, and they gave us like a khaki clothing and 200 francs. And I was in the town of Lille, the north the France, and my first purchase was, there was a pushcart with cherries in the street. I bought a kilo of cherries. That was my first purchase. Where do I go? I go back to Dijon. I find out that my youngest brother was taken in '44, and my sister had a girl. And they picked her up while she was nursing the baby, and the husband was Catholic. He went to the Germans and said, "At least let her stay here until she feeds my child." So when they let her go -- they took my little brother in '44 who was 11 -- and her, the baby, and the husband escaped into the farmland. And they never were taken. She was never taken. Neither was her daughter.

When I come back and I hear that they took my little brother, the buddy that enlisted in the French

army with me and was in the Air Force -- we were like brothers, to this day. To this day we're still friends. His mother -- when I got to his place, his mother saw me and said, "We never expected you back any more." Anyway, from him I found out there was an office, I think it was HIAS that took care of these things. And we found out a guy was taken, 40 years old that was taken with him, was in the hospital. Came back. So I went to see him, and I said, "Where were you? " The same camp where I was. If I was barrack number 20, he must have been barrack number 48. He was that close to me, and I never knew. He never came back. Never came back.

And so I found out my sister had a daughter, and the French government got me the -- now we're looking at -- after the War, where, you know, what is the future? You have to become steel, not to be emotional. You're all alone. The sister that escaped with her husband was in the French army in the post office in Germany, in the center in Germany with her daughter. And the husband was in the army, too.

And so I was in Dijon, that friend of mine Paul was all I had. And my brother, the older one, when I saw him and I got taken a few hours after, he decided to leave the city and went to a village, a

small village. Everybody is nosey, wants to know who he is and what he was. It was announced by the farmers, and the Germans came in to where he lived to the apartment and shot him in front the two kids that were three and four. Two daughters, alive in France, the wife passed away at the age of 80 something two years ago.

Now she -- this is a chapter that I had even skipped over because I was talking of what happened to me. But in-between that brother was all except my sister. 1947, everything happens by accident to me. My destiny is written, why I'm here.

When the French government after the War realized I needed to get rehabilitated physically and everything else, they put me in a town call (Labubul) which is the center not far from Vichy. It's a place where you drink certain water, and it helps you. I get to this place, and it has maybe 50 to 80 people, I can't recall exactly, from Hungary, from Poland, from Spain, not from Spain, from Greece. All refugees that eventually are not going to stay in France. They go either to Israel or the United States. I met this guy going to the United States, and we got friendly.

What happens to me, it is, I have no way to find work. What am I going to do? So I recall in the

30's when we in Hyange my mother's sister sent us passage on this boat, ship, to go to the United States. My parent didn't go. But, being a kid at that time, I was a Boy Scout. I watched stamps. I took the stamps from the United States and collected them. The envelope stayed stuck in my mind. The name of the husband of my aunt was Packard. Williams Avenue, Brooklyn. Williams was a connection, William Powell. Not the actor. William Powell Baden, the head that made the Boy Scouts. The former -- the guy that initiated the Boy Scouts.

So I send a letter in French, which my aunt didn't speak French, and I said I was -- I forgot what I said except it took a month and I got an answer. Half English, half Italian, a couple of words in French. Neighbors, Italian neighbors, helped to understand what the letter was. She knew I was alive, and she worked out some papers for me.

Naturally my life in France -- my life in Brooklyn was another episode of where it's kind of odd. I remember getting a suit that looks like -- when you look at the old movies, all these gangsters wore those striped suits. And for $45 they bought me a suit, and there I was. The first person I meet in the street walking is a black man coming towards me. And

he's drunk, and he starts cursing me. I didn't understand a word: I cursed him back in French. We cursed, I went my way, he went his way. That was my first impression of Brooklyn.

But I was in a section where Danny Kay used to -- was born. You know, I forgot the name of that section. But anyway, Newlots was the station. Newlots, "I" or"T" line. But I stayed three months with them because-- three days after I was there, I went to the city. There was a French club, culinary, that was forming in World War I, because a lot of these French guys that came to work as cook or restaurant they had split shift, and in the afternoon a lot of people tried to sell them the Brooklyn Bridge or something. So they formed this club so the guys had a place where they could read a newspaper or magazine from France.

So I went to see them. Somebody in France had told me to go see them. I could have worked two days later. I could have worked in the big hotels, which I did a little later, but little by little this fellow that I met in that place in France recuperating, I got in touch with him in New York. And he had a funny situation with him, where he was tailor by trade, but he was with an orchestra on the ships, cruises,

South America from Poland. And he comes back in '39 on the cruise when the Germans have -- and he's there. So he survived this and lost his whole family. But he had family in New York, and he meets that lady that went to school with him in Poland who's a widow. So he invites me to his wedding, and that's where I met my wife in '47, on June 7, 1947. I'll never forget. And we got married July the third, 1948.

Now, she had no folks anymore but the grandmother and some uncles and aunts and so forth, and we were suited. I didn't speak English, and she didn't speak much French, a little bit. When we met, I took her to a movie, and I knew, that's my life. All my life I was by myself. But you've got to remember, I'm talking about 1947. I was 25, and when you are 17 you think you're grown up. Naturally, 5 years later you think even more, you have to look for a future, some roots. You need roots. You need to build something. So that's how I started. But again, the period of all the things I tell you had to be erased from my mind, and it wasn't easy.

I had -- in the beginning of the marriage, my wife would tell me I would dream and wake up screaming about the camp. But what I told her, it's funny, the only thing I remember dreaming is the Germans with

those helmets with the point in World War I and the bayonets in the trenches, which was World War I. That was in my dreams.

But I'm talking about the first years I was back. But then, as I explained, my wife was a Giant's fan in New York. I became a Giant fan. Leo (~~Diroshа~~ Durocher) was the manager. What more could I ask? So in 1950, '51, when the Giants won the pennant with Bobby Thompson hitting a home run, my son learned papa, mama, and then Bobby Thompson. That's the three words he knew when he was a year old in '51. And I'm a Giant fan ever since. I'm in California more or less because of the Giants.

But you see, I need something to take all the bitterness out of life, so you go with building a future. I was never afraid to work, because I was put into this discipline of work where it becomes not a drudgery, it becomes a pleasure if you do something with the heart that you like. Baking was something liked to do. I worked crazy hours. My wife worked in the store. Now as you see, and I'm talking about what happened to me, I never figured I would lose her.

We worked for 35 years together, and the last place I had was in south San Francisco. I had Mrs. Allison's Cookies. It used to be an old firm by that

name. And I was making granola. I perfected granola for Oro Wheat. The granola bread that they sell, I perfected for them. And the guy that got in touch with me, we were buddies. He would want a contract. I had a $200,000 contract every three months with him. And we sold truckloads of granola. One ounce goes in a loaf of bread, but they buy truckloads to go to all the Oro Wheats.

Okay, so what happened, we decided 1983 we'd try to sell it because we had worked enough. And so I had a buyer, a French guy, and in a period just maybe six months before, she happened to have a problem. In her family, she lost family members from heart attack, high blood pressure, and stuff like this. But you know, we worked for 20 years. I think we went twice to the doctor for checkups, that's it. Because she have a headache, you go to sleep the next morning, it's gone. The mind is the biggest healer. If you say to yourself I can't be sick. I can't be sick, I can't afford it. I've got to work. Funny things happens. You heal. Don't ask me why, how come. It's a strong belief that you have to be strong, that you have an obligation. There are people working, customers, so forth. And my wife was the same.

So on Friday of the last week of November,

just after Thanksgiving, these people are suppose to come to the house. And I had put champagne in the refrigerator, and the people were going to buy my place, French people. The night of Thursday or Friday, she wakes up in the middle of the night, telling me, "I have to go to the bathroom and I can't open my eyes." That's what she says. And she has her eyes closed. So I called my son, called an ambulance, what's that, 911? Sure enough they come, take her to the hospital. And they told me at two in the morning, no way. Can't survive. It went into the brain. She had a hemorrhage. Cerebral hemorrhage. The only thing was, about a year earlier she had had something happen to her. We took her to the doctor, and he said high blood pressure and gave her pills. And over the years I think she didn't take them the way she should have taken them. And that's how it happened.

But you know, what I went through, I thought we are supposed to be invincible. Who's going to do it? The worst that I went through couldn't happen to me any more. I simplify my explanation now, but I couldn't realize that something could have happened to her. It happened so fast that while he was telling me, Thursday, Friday, I had to go back to work. I had orders to go out, truckloads of merchandise to go out.

My son was with me, helped me out, and I sold -- the end of December I sold the business. And I was really in a frame of mind that I want to drop everything. I closed my life insurance. I had a house at San Mateo. I didn't sell it, but I went to France in January. My friend, Paul, from France, came overnight. He flew from France to be with me. He knew her because we had gone to see him in '58. I took my wife to Dijon to meet my friends and everything.

Anyway, so what happened, I go to France and what do I do? I go to the South of France, and I stayed in a place where I had been with her. I couldn't stay one day. And I left, and here I'm in the bus crying on the Riviera, Niece, Monaco, in a bus crying by myself because of the situation. How did this happen to her. And it was not the day before or the day after it happened to her. It was about a month later.

So I said, "Look, it won't help me to stay in France. I have nothing there." So I came back here, and I had a good friend that had a restaurant called French Guy, (lab back oh) restaurant by the Hilton Hotel and he decided to open a bread place, baguettes, French bread, and called Denice de France, and he had it opened just about a year. I met him, and he says,

"I could use your expertise if you want to go with me for a corporation." I said, "Look, I don't think I'm interested." But as it goes on, I said I have to do something. I wasn't able to just hang around and not do anything.

So I went with his son and three bakers, French people, and we opened this business in 1985. And what happened is that over the years that I was in the camp, when I left I never realized -- except before I left in '47 there was rumors, people were telling me there was going to be some reparations from the German people towards the people who were in the camp. I.G. Tanner Industry is where I worked, in the place. So they were going to give me some kind of a compensation.

But you know, I went to work. I had a bakery in 1952. My wife and I, we opened the first bakery in New Jersey, and I always worked hard. We saved our money. I bought some mutual funds in 1952, so I'm in the business of saving and building a nest egg over these years. Fortunately when we went to France one time in December I felt -- because I went in July for summer vacations. Offices are closed, no one can give me information. I go for Christmas. I met a fellow who had come here with his daughter. And he said, "When you come to France, come to see me." And so I

tell him, Look, I got to go to -- that was in Dijon. I got to go to Paris to find out what happened to the possibility of compensation. So he sent me to the Veteran's Organization in Paris, and within 24 hours they take an x-ray of me, and I get 100 percent disability from the French government.

That is 1979, 30 years later. When it first got into effect was in 1949. This is 1979, and okay, they said to me, "where were you all these years?" I said the United States. I was working. Was I going to wait for $100 a month that you were going to give me compensation? Turns out it was a thousand a month. So for 30 years, I couldn't get back pay. So I figure it's $150,000. But okay, I don't need the money. I got my own anyway. But the doctors there, like everything else. French have a way, if you do a favor to someone they pay you back. Some way or another.

So this guy takes me to this doctor, Dr. (Telendo) and he says to me, Look, you got this. And I said I don't have this, I don't have any heart trouble. "You're going to have someday." Angiopathy. "You're not going to have it now. You'll have it later." He marked all these 50 disabilities which didn't exist. Some yes. Chronic bronchitis, that I have since the time I went to work in the bakery and

after the camp.

So here I am, at '79, I go to France. Since '79 I must have gone a dozen times to France, and in France I would live like a king because my pension -- if I'd travel on the train, I need a guide. When you're 100 percent disabled the guide can have two years or 80 years. He's your guide. Two people, 25 percent each pay on the train. If you're going to Paris on to Niece, pay 25 percent for each. Your ticket, a plane from Paris to any French possession you save 50 percent for two. Here, it does not count from here. Here's the United States.

Anyway, so I kept in touch. I'm in the French consult here. And coming to the situation '85, I was getting my pension, like my Social Security, in a bank in France in Paris. The bank that France has, the Bank of the West, was bought by the French bank, Bank National de Paris. That's the bank that has Bank of the West.

And this lady that handles international transactions, she would bring me my money here. She knew my wife. And I went there one time, and I took her out for lunch, and I said, That's the woman I'm going to have for myself. And sure enough, we get married in '86 and she has -- I have a family. She has

a father, her mother in their 80's. They're (Sephardic) Jews from Morocco from Tangere. And she has two sisters, here. One of the husbands was in a camp. His name was (Werler). (Fishteen). No. (Werler) and Esther. And he was in the camp, and he's German. He's got a thick German accent. And she has another sister who lives in Nevada, her husband is also German Jew, Jewish people.

They are very religious. More than I ever will be. Not because I've got against-- I have nothing against it. But I don't know. There's something that holds me back. But I think if I really analyze it, it's because the rabbi that I went for my Bar Mitzvah looked at me like I was a second-class citizen, and it was a scar on me. Unfortunately, I'm quite sure, none of these people who were there when the -- in 1940, when the Germans came, survived. The man must have been in his 60's at that time. If the Germans came, none of them survived.

But the reason I'm saying this is because there are some scars that you don't really believe that's the reason. But somehow, my wife was also from people that were cantors in New York, her maiden name was (Robinovits). Which is son of rabbi. (Robenovits). And she had an uncle who was a cantor.

And he passed away. And so when I get married with her in 1948 I more-or-less was looked upon like -- you know, it's not like nowadays. The woman are more free to decide and give the orders, which I don't care. I got a woman what gives the orders, but I do what I want anyway.

Anyway, coming back to the situation of my first wife. I had a bakery. I couldn't say for Passover, I have to close. I couldn't make any breads. There was no Jews around me so I didn't really follow anything. But time goes on, you get your situation where you realize someone has to think, What is life all about? Who are you? And I realize when I talked about my situation, and I say I was in the bakery in 1936, I said, Well, I came with the dinosaurs because 1936, talk to someone about 1936. I was making croissant in France in 1936.

In all these years, my idea of a book of my story would have the title of <u>A Cat Has Nine Lives: A Human Being Has More.</u> Why? Because you don't realize. You try to cross the street. You can get hit by a car. It happens very often. This morning (Hurricane) had an article. This woman didn't see the car. She crossed the street, and she got hit and got a jaywalking ticket for $120. So you see, she didn't get

killed, but it can happen any place, any time. But when I hit 70, things changed in me.

Basically the philosophy at this moment I have is, if I see the year 2,000 I'll be the happiest guy in the world. Anything after that is already -- since 45 is bonus anyway. But the year 2,000 to me is a -- because I know between now and the year 2,000 there'll be so many new things in medicine. Look at the communication we have right now. What happened in Bosnia last night, you see it at home the same night because of the nine hours difference.

There are so many things different from the time of '36. That's why I say, the dinosaur of '36. There was no television. Look what happened to the telephone. I have a cordless telephone. I go from room to room. I go to the bathroom, I take the telephone with me. You know, that shows you how things are different, how much you have to realize that you have that there's people that were over there never got to enjoy. Got to realize all these people -- not me, the little baker that was making eclairs or croissants, but the guys that were well educated.

I'm thinking about that doctor that opened. He was one of the greatest surgeons of Berlin, I was told. I don't know what his name was, but he was in

camp, and he was performing what he knew best. And the German at least didn't finish him off. They knew they needed people to work. So if he saved them to go to work they let him live. What happened to these people I never know, but it just shows you everybody went through a period of life where for good or for bad, what occurs now is the nine lives. I must have two left I guess. Seven have gone through. But they can take -- each one can take another 20 years, I guess. I'll let you ask me another question.

Q LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR Bar Mitzvah. CAN YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING SPECIFIC ABOUT THAT NIGHT?

A No, the only thing I can remember, being on like a podium and they opened the Torah. And I had like a pointy thing, and I read this in Hebrew, which I took maybe six months of training. And there was a time I could remember the first few sentences, but I don't remember. Nothing besides this, except that happened between the age of 13 and 14, so it had to have 1935.

I went to work in August of '36. June, the school closed, and in August I went to work and met -- and (Gastone Racovirkas) was my boss. He never knew anything about my situation except at one time he beat me, and I said I'm not going to stay there because we

had to heat the bakery oven with coke that was in the basement. And I brought up the coke, and at 6:00 o'clock in night we heat the oven, put the dampers at 8:00, and the next morning we could bake.

One morning I had been -- I was working seven days a week, and the 7th day, a half a day, I was going by bus home. And my mother cleaned my clothes. I missed the last, that night, the last bus, and I had to take the next morning. And I should have been at work at 6:00. I got there at 7:00. He was pretty mad, and he send me down to the basement to pick up some debris of the -- you see, the eggs at this time were in the big wooden crate, a thousand eggs at a time, and it was hay in between. So when you picked up eggs, there was hay that would fall around. So he had me pick it up. There was some broken glass, and I had to pick this up for the garbage. He found a couple pieces of coke in there. He slapped me.

So when I had to make a delivery to a (keechbad) that we had, I didn't go back to the place. And I got someone to phone, and I called my parents who had no phone but somebody in the store had a phone, and my father came over and my father -- the guy said to my father, "I'm sorry." So I realized my father was agreeing with him so I figured, Well, what am I going

to do? So I stayed. And things got better because -- I learned a long time ago, too, in the period they was in this country, if you find a bully that's trying to do you something you show him that you're not afraid, and the bully gets smaller. He's not as bad, for a good reason. He realize he has somebody that's not afraid of him.

Because the reason I learned this, too, in 1949, when I was working in New York City, worked in a pastry shop was called Madam Eva. And Madam Eva was dead for a long time, but her husband ran that place. And the head baker was a German that was never married. He was like living in a room and board, and he never would say good morning, nothing. One morning I come in, he's giving me a hard time, and he was all like this. And I took the rolling pin, and I knocked it on the table. And I said, "Look, where I come from, even the pigs go 'oink oink.' You don't even say good morning. But the pigs in that place they 'oink oink,' that's good morning."

The guy started to laugh. He never was mad with me. He became a very good friend. But he wanted to influence the people because he was a big shot, a German, ho, ho, ho. So I just knocked him, the rolling pin, on the table and said, "Look, enough is enough."

And he changed. And he realized that if -- I'm talking about 30 years ago, more. Nowadays, the guy takes a knife out if you give him the lip, you know. It's not the same life. But when I was young, I wasn't afraid. If I survived where I was, why would I be afraid? Nothing could happen to me. Except if it happened, it happens. I'm ready. Whatever happens, I'm ready. Now after the Bar Mitzvah, what is the next question?

Q WHERE WAS IT HELD?

A In (Chovield), the town where I went to school.

Q WHAT FACILITY?

A A synagogue.

Q DID YOU HAVE ANY FAMILY ATTENDING THAT?

A Father and mother. That's it.

Q AND YOUR BROTHERS?

A Nobody else.

I have to explain. My uncle, which is my mother's brother, that was in the prisoner of war with my father, lived about 30 miles away. But you know, families have feuds, and they didn't get along, finally, so they didn't talk to each other. But I met him after the War and he was very proud. He passed away, and he was in his 70's. He lost a son that was taken, my age.

I have a picture here where I am in a mock car. It was in a fair. You have the front of a wooden cardboard. It looks like a car. I'm driving, my sister's next to me, and my two cousins, boy and girl, in the back. I must have been about 10. So that's the remembrance of the closest relation. But it was no big ceremony. You have to remember, we're talking about 1935. We didn't have that much to say, okay, we're going to make a big deal about it. It's not like what you see here, where you invite a couple of hundred people, and everybody brings presents. There was no such thing at that time.

Q WHERE DID YOU GET THE FEELING THAT YOU WERE BEING TREATED AS A SECOND CLASS CITIZEN BY OTHER JEWS? WERE THERE PEOPLE IN SCHOOL OR --

A No, no. It's very difficult to pinpoint it, but it's something that's in the back of my mind. I might be wrong. Maybe it's just an imagination that I had. But you see, you get this feeling -- when my folks, first of all, were from France, and they didn't speak the language too close. I was born there. I went to school. My father and mother spoke Yiddish between them and sometimes Polish, because they're from there.

Now, if I had some friends that came over, Jewish people that were from there -- now remember one

thing what I'm saying right now, don't hold it against me. I can't remember 100 percent what now I say I felt like a second-class citizen. It's because if you read history of people, should it be black or the Irish that came here after the famine in Ireland -- I came from a family that came from Poland. I was born there, but they weren't looked upon like people. They were looked at like second-class citizens. And in the sense because they were from Poland.

There is such a snobbery that exist among Jews, as well as among other people, where, if you're not from there, you're considered not the elite. Those guys that I'm talking about, like the rabbi or the people who were in business in that town were usually people that had wealth. And they were more or less nothing like that.

My wife is -- gets the Jewish bulletin at home. And I look at this, and I see there are loans for no interest for people who come from Russia and all that stuff. That didn't exist in those days. They had themselves prejudices. Again, I cannot say exactly why, how come. That's what stuck in my mind. That's what I felt then, and I still feel now, although I don't have any grudges. That's the way they were. You can't change that.

Now, among all this talking is strictly what I feel. I could be very well wrong in that they didn't feel that way, but that's what they gave me, the feeling that maybe it was my own feeling of second class because we had no money, we weren't wealthy. I could never have had people say -- well, although if you look at some of the pictures, I wasn't bad looking when I was young. I could have gotten married with anybody there, but I could not see that closeness between classes in the years of '30's, in the '30's, see?

And that's why I mentioned that. That does not mean that I hated or something. It's more or less, not a shyness, but a feeling of exclusion, that I was not included in the group. That's how I felt. Because first of all, I went to work, at 14, while maybe the kids that these rich people had he was helping in the store, he would go play games or he wasn't fair. I went to work. I worked seven days a week, and as I said, I didn't know better, but I was lucky that I persevered the three years. Then in the army so, when I came to Germany, it wasn't so hard. I go through hardships before, so I could take it.

First of all I had no wife or children to worry about when I got there. So as I said, you got to

be lucky to survive, but you also have to be like steel, forged to mentally endure all of these things. Which I've done. And I never -- I'm not regretting a minute of what happened to me prior to World War II because I realize thanks to this hard work, it helped me in the future. It helped me build up an ethic of work.

When I see some people nowadays, especially young people -- I have a son. He's 43, okay? He works. He has graduated from Santa Barbara University, and he was going to be a teacher. Naturally with Viet Nam and all this, he never got this. But he's very intelligent in the sense that he learned the health food business. So he's been working in this for the last 10 years, and his boss had to close the store. He hasn't worked since October. He's not worried about it. I would go crazy. At 43, not to work? He's married with this lady for about 20 years. They have no children, and I saw him last week, and I talked to him on the phone yesterday that I was coming here. And his birthday's April 27, 1950, he was born. So he's going to be 43. So I said to him we're going to go for his birthday. We're going to go out. And he said, "Okay. I think After my birthday, I'll go back to work."

There again that's a mentality that's different. I have nothing against it. If he saved enough money, that's his life. More power to him. But I give you an example of what happened in '35, '36, the depression you had here, we had the Reformation. We had it there too, so you cannot realize some of the feelings I had at that time. And what is now is completely different. You have to have opinions fit to the occasion. In other words, if nowadays things like -- myself, it doesn't bother me. I realize we live a different life. Things are completely different. Therefore, maybe if I would have been born in 1950 my life would have been so much different. Maybe weaker of character. I don't know. Again, this is my thoughts and my belief.

Q THERE YOU WERE, ABOUT THE TIME OF YOUR Bar Mitzvah, WONDERING WHO YOU WERE. WHAT CONCLUSIONS DID YOU COME TO AT THE TIME?

A The conclusion is very simple. Once you go to work and you get involved with something, it's just like a kid that is invited to a studio and there's a guy painting. And the guy says, "Okay, take some paint and create something." My creation was putting egg wash on croissants. That was to me a creation. This I felt, this was something I would never be able to do.

As I went along I made liqueur candies. I made pralines. I made so many things that I created. Unfortunately you eat it, there is nothing lasting.

But I tell you, I'll explain this situation. After the War, the government sent me to this hotel to recuperate. The first thing I did, I went into the kitchen, and I asked the guys, Do you have some eggs and some sugar and flour, and they said yes. There was 80 people. I made eclairs for everybody. So I was a buddy. Everybody liked me. That was in 1945. Nobody had had eclairs. But you know, that was my way of creating something and I felt like everybody was friendly with me.

In 1946 I went to Paris, and I got to work in the bakery. The fellow was Jewish, and he was working during the day making French bagettes. It was behind the opera in Paris, and I use to go at eight o'clock in night till eight o'clock in the morning by myself. And I made 1,000 eclairs during the night all by myself. He used to buy in the black market some sugar, but for bread, baguettes, you need flour, yeast, water, a little salt, and that's it.

So he made fresh bread at ten o'clock and at two o'clock and at eight o'clock at night I would come from -- some Jewish organization sent me to a villa

near -- between Paris and Versailles that had orphans that the parents got killed during the War. And they -- we had ration books, even after the War, and I used to go to Versailles.

I had a bicycle with a little cart in the back. I use to buy bread in the bakery, maybe 20 loaves of bread, and bring it there. I would work from seven in the morning till about two, then I would take a nap, then I would go in to Paris and work the night, three nights a week. I remember getting one franc for each eclair I made. You sold them for 11 francs. But you've got to remember, it's not the same thing. It represents -- 400 francs was one dollar. So I got a thousand eclairs, I got 1,000 francs. So if one dollar was 400, it was two and a half dollars equivalent. But you've got to remember, that was 1946. It was 1946.

So you see, my feeling was, although it was tough, I created something. I learned something. It gave me a philosophy of being creative, to enjoy what you do. That's why I worked at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York in 1949. And General Eisenhower was in Paris, and they sent a plane over to get from the Waldorf sides of beef, and I was in charge of ice cream production. So I made ice cream for General Eisenhower before he was president. And I had to write down each

batch, in care of Captain Shutze, Aide de Camp to General Eisenhower. And it would be packed in dry ice before there was jets. It was 1949, 1950, yeah, 1950.

So you see, I created. It was something that -- first of all, I worked in the bakery, there was around-the-clock people. And I worked with the French guy, and the chef was French. He's the guy that told me, "You're not French. Your German." So you know, he was very bright. That was the only thing to tell me, I was German. I hated it. Because I wasn't German. So what happened, he come to me one day, and he said, "Look, the hotel was sold to the Hilton chain, and they want to manufacture their own ice cream. Do you know how to make ice cream?" I said, "Sure." I learn that France. Three quarts by hand. That's what I learned. This they put in machinery. I made 500 gallons of the ice cream every day, six days a week. We had banquet rooms for five thousand people. And I realized I made $100,000 of profit in one year for the hotel. The first year I did it, I kept book and everything. $100,000 in 1951. So I said I got to go in business for myself. I was making $80 a week, but I had 2 meals and I had 2 bottles of beer that was given to me. Which I didn't drink at the time, so I gave them to the other guys.

But anyway, to give you a story that -- as soon as I came to this country, there's such a thing as a matter from Moses. You change, the little guy that felt second-class citizen that was shy, that couldn't see anything happen to him because he had no means to become somebody. So I was going to enlist in the army like I said in the War. But when I came to this country, I said, "Whose going to stop me?"

If you're willing to work -- my wife at that time -- we got married in '48 -- she worked for a fur company in Madison Avenue in New York. Big guy, he liked my wife so much, I need money, he advanced us $5,000. And he vouched for me whatever loan the bank was going to give me. So I got $3,000 in the bank, and I opened my first business in 1952, New Jersey. Was called Maurice's Pastry Shop.

Once I got in business, I start to learn what business is all about. You've got to make pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving. I never had seen this in my life. And I finished off in San Jose, having the bakery, where I made 1,500 pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving.

Life has levels. If you have any kind of ambition, you go from one level to another one, but gradually. My first bakery I had $8,000 to set up. I stayed there till I had no more debts. Then I

realized, what else? I have no more debts. But I didn't have a house. Back east there wasn't such a thing that you could put down $10,000 or $2,000 and buy a house. So I lived in an apartment, which is okay, and when the -- I just left, and I had no more -- I got -- my wife and I went to France in '58 and when I came back, I said, "You know, if somebody came and said to me, 'I want to buy your place. How much do you want,' I know already." $20,000. $10,000. Would you believe somebody came in January of 1959 and did exactly, asked me how much I wanted for the bakery. And I sold it.

In February '59 we took a brand new station wagon, Plymouth, went cross country. My wife had some cousins in Phoenix. No, an aunt in Phoenix and some cousins in Los Angeles. So we went cross country, and in Los Angeles I could have worked for (Remanoff) in Los Angeles as a pastry chef. But when I got to Los Angeles the smog was so bad. So sure enough the magnet was pulling me towards San Francisco.

So we went up, and we somehow we went to Patterson, which is way in the boondocks into San Jose. We took the 99 to go up and we, Tracy, we turned around. Which is not like now. It used to be minor roads, and now you've got to go up 5 and everything. So we went up in San Jose, and I went from San Jose to

San Francisco where there was a bakery called Blooms. Blooms. Which doesn't exist anymore. But in '59, the guy that was working there says, "Can you decorate?" I said, "Sure." "So okay, decorate that cake. Do this." And I did it. But I was, I used to live in San Jose. To go to San Francisco, I wasn't interested. So I didn't take the job.

But in San Jose I found a place that had bakery goods that looked like a Frenchman, that professional. So I asked some people, "Is there some French guy here?" "Yup. But he's off today. Come back tomorrow. He'll be here." So I see him. And he said to me, "I'm busy right now. Why don't you drop by at six o'clock. Here's the address of where I live." Okay. We found some realty guy, he had converted his garage where he lived and he was renting for $125 a month. Good rent district. All furnished. So we rented this. I went to see him, at six o'clock. He's barbecuing steaks. He never saw me in his life. So he's barbecuing steaks. So I said, "Gee, California's God's country," you know. And we became friends.

Like I said, one things leads to another. You do one nice favor to someone, you get repaid one way or another. Somewhere along the line you get repaid. And this is another philosophy I have. If you

can help, even if some strangers come from Israel to see my wife, I take the car; I take (Lombard) Street; I take the George Washington, not George Washington; I take the bridge, Golden Gate, show them underneath the bridge. I go on the other side, go up on the hill. I take every possible way to show them a good time.

You know, some people in France -- I did this -- he had a son marry here. He lived in Paris in the suburbs. When I went to France last time, he quit two days work to take me around. That just shows you, if you do something for someone nice, you're going to get repaid. The few -- far in between there were guys who are louses. They don't want to know from nothing. But they're not that bad in general, you're always going to find if you act nice -- I have cases of people I don't know, they look at me and smile at me and say hello. I said I don't know them. He doesn't know me. He looks a my face and says I think that's nice, rather than have a stick and try to hit you on the head. You know?

(Blank spot in tape)

Q OKAY. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT A RAFFLE. WHAT'S A RAFFLE?

A In French, raffle. It's a -- let's say the

Germans go out in the middle of the night and pick up people that were on their list to be picked up because they were Jews. And they had to put them together so they don't -- because it's a large amount of people, they put them in the stadium, because that was a place that would hold a lot of people. And it's called the raffle. R-A-F-F-L-E. Which in English is a lottery so to speak. With you a raffle is a -- not get together, but way to pick up a lot of people that you want to bring to one place. Roundup. That's the word. A raffle is a roundup. Like you have -- the cowboys have a roundup of cattle; the Germans had a roundup of people.

And these people, on July 16th -- which is my birth date, 1922 -- that was in 1942. Now in '42 in July, I was in the French army in Leon. I never knew what happened in Paris. But naturally after the War, these people that survived this, get together every year to memorize, not to memorize but to get together and talk about these things. The French had a combination of Jewish people that were taken strictly because they were Jews. There were Jewish people that were patriots, French assimilated patriots. Besides that was communist, anti- nazis that were taken with the Jews. Most of them went to Dachau or Dora. The

Jews was extermination camp in Auschwitz. I would say 99 percent of the people who went to the camp from France went to Auschwitz.

As the War came to an end, they moved people around like Bergen-Belsen, Dachau. The women went to (Ravensbruck.) But Ravensbruck was mainly resistance, women, people who had hidden fugitives, so they didn't shoot them for being the enemies. They put them in the camp. So basically, Ravensbruck was a women's camp.

The different things in France, like every place else in Holland or in Belgium, it was systematic. It didn't go overnight. My father was taken in '42. The Germans came in '40. So for two years it looked like nothing was going to happen. But unfortunately they had a plan to make you believe everything is nice, and then they had a roundup of people. And usually like five, six o'clock in the morning. And so because I was in this type of business, I was already at work. Otherwise I would have been taken in '42. What would have happened? Most likely I would have gotten to a work camp, which I did when I was taken in '43. I got there December of '43, the 10th, so I wasn't exactly two years there. Maybe 20 months, I would say about. But it's sufficient.

It was already a miracle when people survived one year, let alone -- like I said, the worst part of it was the last, I think, the last five months of the War, because things got worse for the Germans so it got worse for us. And then any time you move people that are already weak and who don't have food in general, then when you get moved, all these things happened like on that train for one week.

So, if there were 75 on that one compartment, wagon open, then we went through Germany, maybe we got there 40. And 35 died by suffocation, or just had no more strength to survive. My luck was I had always people with me. And when you're against a wall -- I had guys that tried to pull me away from there, because in the middle they knew if they fell, others would fall on them. And I had no hair, so they tried to pull me by my head. And they grabbed my ears, so I used to scream. And the guys, buddies next to me would push the guys away. It was an inferno in the sense people were savage.

I've seen things you wouldn't believe. Guys that had some teeth left with gold. When they died, the guys knocked the gold out of these teeth, from the guy that died. Then they threw him overboard. And you're sitting there, looking at this, just like your

looking at somebody reading a newspaper. You have no emotion. There's no such thing. You're dehumanized about the fact that you're looking at something that would not happen in normal time. So, you have to realize when you go all through this, you have to be very strong not to use this as a crutch to your life. You have to more or less put away, behind you, and go ahead and think of what is the future. What's behind, you cannot change. You become more or less hardened to the point.

I hardly knew my parents, if you want to look at this way. When you leave the house at 14 to go to work, the little remembrance of a family isn't very big. Look at my wife. She's 50. She has parents who are 83. For 50 years of her life she has parents. She knows if she has need of something. I'm not talking about material things, needs a nice kind word, she can go there. I never had that. I never had that, because at 14 you don't know. But it's not so much their fault or my fault, it's the circumstances of life at the time. So you have to realize that I consider myself very lucky, to have gone through all of this and been able to look at it as an experience that is not very nice, but what can I do except look at tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day.

Q WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES OF YOUR MOTHER?

A My earliest --?

Q MEMORY.

A Oh, memory. Well, I would say basically when we had this restaurant. And she always was like a genius in the kitchen. She would fix different things. And I remember to me, I'd never really -- ever since then I've never had the occasion to see the same things. She used to get calves feet and make a jelly out of this. Cook this. And we used to eat this, and it was like Jell-o but with a vinaigrette, on top, vinegar and oil. That was a dish.

Then for Passover, she made what we called a (bubala), which was, now that I know how to bake and cook it, used to be matzo meal, with eggs and sugar. And you made like a pancake mix, and you used to put in the frying pan a little oil, and it would be this big, round like this. And then they would fix this for the family, and they would cut it in squares with powder sugar on top. And you eat a piece of this with the schnapps or some brandy. And it used to be something that stuck in my mind.

When my folks took me to a restaurant for the first time, and I must have been six or seven, and they

ordered an aperitif, which at that time was Malaga. Malaga, which is a sweet wine. Malaga is like Manichevits. It's the closest to it. And you drank this, you know, and it's sweat and strong and that's what I remember. They used to laugh when I took a sip, and I used to go (Mr. Blane squints). That's what I can remember. That's what I remember. Look at my mother, laughing because I took a drink of alcohol.

Otherwise as I said, because of what happened in my life, I tried to -- not that I wanted to forget. I had to look ahead. So when we said the earliest thing I remember, I remember things in 1930 where I had to come home and when I was playing with the kids outside, and my mother send my sister, who was younger, to come home to eat, the food was on the table. And some guys, the buddies that were with me, kids, had a whistle. And when the cars used to pass on that road, it as a main road, the police had no cars. If your car would speed, they had no cars. They had bicycles. So what they did, if you had an infraction, they would blow the whistle and the car would stop. The authority had the whistle.

So some kid had a whistle, started to blow the whistle. When the car stopped, everybody ran away. I didn't run away. A guy came out of the car,

and he looked at me and said, "Did you blow the whistle?" I said, "No." He gave me two boom booms (Mr. Blane indicates striking) and he went back to the car. He was mad. That has nothing to do with my mother, but it just shows you, you get involved with different things as a kid. At home they told me you should have been there. You should have been home. But you know, kids are kids. You play with the buddies, you forget you have to come home to eat or something.

And it was an area where it was a small town, and the main road would go across and there were cars there. The school was on this side, and we lived on that side. So when you had to go home, you had to cross the street. I'll give you an example of something that happened, by talking with you I just remember. I don't think I was maybe seven or eight, and my sister had come home from school crying that this boy called her dirty Jew. So I went out. And when the guy saw me, he ran across the street.

And the last thing I saw was a car running over him, and that's all I saw. I got back home, and we had -- on the top floor there was like a loft. And I went and hid there, I was so scared they were looking for me all over the place. My luck. When the guy with the car came, he went on the brake. The kid fell, and

the front right wheel of the car went on the curve, up, so he was underneath. But the car didn't touch him. He had absolutely nothing. Not even a scratch. But all I saw was the kid under the car, and I was scared like heck.

But that occurred because you have that thing that exists among kids, maybe less now. But at that time -- and in that same period of time, there used to be ice delivered by wagons with horses. So kids, you know, we play, we hang around the back of the thing and try to pick some piece of ice in the summer to eat. One time I wasn't there, some buddies did this. And they ran away from the truck because the guy had a whip. He got killed by a car, because when he got off of this -- so you know, you look at those things now, I don't think I had that in my mind for the last 40 years. Just by talking about that period of time it goes back to my memory of the incident that had to do with the family life prior to the War, how you go with kids in school.

I remember the teacher I had, he was in the reserve in the French army, and how he had ways that, if you didn't do your homework or something, he had you put your fingers like this and hit you with a stick on your fingers. Now that doesn't exist here. That would

be harassment or whatever. But in those days, that was common for the teacher to corporally hurt you if you didn't do your job right or your homework or something. But again, I digress to something else.

Q DID ANYONE EVER CALL YOU A DIRTY JEW?

A No. Not that I can recall. Because you see, if it happened I don't remember. I know where I was among people even in this country back east that talked about the Jews, and they didn't know I was Jewish, which I just kept my mouth shut. There was other people -- you see, my opinion of what happens in this country, it's terrific in the sense everyone can have an opinion, even to this day you have the extreme right, extreme left, the socialist and everything. Politic.

Now, we're talking about politics. And my first opinion was very sad when I got back east, especially once I got in business. My neighbors had businesses. One guy on my side had a deli, he was "Limey". They called him Limey because he was English descent, Limey. The other guy had a hardware, he was Jewish, German Jewish guy. I had my bakery in between, and there used to be a guy coming in there and when he was knocking Roosevelt, to me it was unbelievable. But afterwards I learned, they knocked

Eleanore Roosevelt, they knocked Roosevelt because he put them in the War.

But that is -- even to this day, you have guys like Rush Limbaugh, I don't know if you heard of this guy. I think he's the biggest stupid guy that exists, because he's talking about the right. I first got to listen to him on the radio when I was driving my car before the election. He was saying, Well, Bush can't lose, Bush this, Bush that. I'm sorry. My opinion of the politics in this country has to do with my background. I'm here because the government at the time in the United States did enough for refugees to come here. They helped people, one way or another. They ended the War. If Roosevelt hadn't gone to war, I wouldn't be here. Definitely wouldn't be here. How long do you think I could have survived? I could have worked maybe another 6 months, that's it. So it comes to that. That's my opinion.

Q YOU SAID YOU WERE SPOILED. YOU WERE YOUR MOTHER'S FAVORITE?

A Yes. In the sense -- it's so long ago that I can't specifically say how I got spoiled, but I know by ways of wanting something and by any means getting it. Because kids, if you look at the psychology of kids thinking, the more you cry you want it, the parents

say, "Give it to him" to keep him quiet.

Well, I don't remember this particular way that it occurred with me, but Jewish parents -- always in my case I remember, both were very giving. In other words, my sister and my father, it was the favorite because it was the girl. And come to think of it, I mentioned before, she happened to be saved because the husband got away from the Germans, so I got her here in my wedding in 1948. She had divorced her husband, and she came with her daughter. Lillian was born in '43, which I did not know at that time, what it was a boy or a girl. And in'48 she came just in this time, she came in May and they got married July the 3rd, 1948. So she remarried, had two children, and she passed away in '82 with breast cancer. See? She never was in the camp. So of all my family, she's the only one that hadn't been in the camp.

But in rummaging between the pictures that I had, I found a postcard that she sent for Father's Day, for Valentine's Day. And my sister had put me like on a pedestal because I had been in France, the little guy, and here I became a businessman, and I could -- my life revolved on different ways. I assimilated. Not assimilated, I blended in in life of the United States. Although she did, too, but in a different way,

because she was married to a fellow who was with the telephone company, a big shot and everything. And she had two kids with him, and the daughter, this girl that I never knew what she was when she was born, lives in -- is married in Connecticut. And her daughter is getting married in May, and I'm going to the wedding of her daughter.

And Lillian, when she was born, spoke German, because she was in Germany with the maid that helped her when I was in the army. Then she came to this country, and she was -- 1943 -- five years old. I have a picture of her holding the ring for the wedding. And she would tell my wife's aunt, she couldn't say I'm thirsty, she went like this (Mr. Blane indicates). And now she doesn't speak a word of French, she's strictly American. She has two daughters. One got married two years ago, and one -- she came for my second wedding. She came here. That shows you, this is talking about -- asking me of my impression of my mother spoiling me. As I said, when I left, the things that went through my life personally since 1948, coming here, these are things maybe in a day or two at home I'll say, Gee, I forgot to tell her about this and this and this.

Q WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER? WHAT ARE YOUR EARLY

MEMORIES OF YOUR FATHER LIKE?

A My father is basically a tall man, was a tall man. That was, how would I put it? My mother was the big boss. She knew business. She handled the business. She was what they say in Jewish (macca). She always got people to come to the restaurant.

My father was more or less a guy that did his work. He was in the army, eight years in the army. Was drafted in the Russian army before 1914. And he came home, they had the boy in 1911, then he was redrafted because the army. He was in Vladivostok, which is a -- that's when he used to tell me when he was in the army. He was in a place near Japan, way on the other end of Russia. And then he was in Odessa where -- that's in the south, where there's the nice weather -- that's all the places that the army took him.

So therefore, when he got to where he was in Lorraine, where he was a prisoner, this was like -- we call California God's place. You know, to him that was God's place, because there was no army. There was people, working people that maybe he got involved with. Some people were very nice, so he thought it's better to stay there than to go back to Poland. And I remember him talking about pogroms and things like

this, but it didn't mean much to me because, you know, I'm just listening.

And I would say I remember more about my oldest brother because he was like 11 years old or so. When I was 10, he was already 21. And he used to -- because you know, we speak French between the kids, and my father spoke French, but sometimes you say, That's not the way to say it. So you know you criticize your folks because of that. And so the brother was like the boss. He would boss us if we did something wrong, more than the parents. That's why I said we were spoiled by the parents.

But my brother, I remember he took me on his bicycle. And it was one of those bicycle where I was sitting there in front and he went on the brakes and all of a sudden the whole bicycle went like this. We fell on the ground. We didn't get hurt very much, but it's something that you can remember because it's an accident. It happened as an accident.

And when he got married, I was working in the bakery and I remember him being at the cafe outside. And I was delivering pastry to the bakery I was working for, and I said, "Boy that's a good life, the cafe." But he -- see, he was older than me. At the time I was maybe 15, he was married. And we didn't have big

celebrations, per se. Like here, for instance. In Europe we don't send birthday cards for birthdays, don't send for Father's Day or Valentine's. You don't send cards. All this is American style.

You see, the problem is, when you mention my folks and I try to be explicit as much as possible, and my recollection isn't that clear, because it dates into the '30's, which means over 60 years ago. So it's not too clear.

Q WHAT WAS YOUR UNCLE'S NAME?

A My uncle's name was -- Haydenberg was his last name, but I can't remember his first name now. Haydenberg. I don't remember.

Q WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

A Well, when the War broke out, and he was living in Hyange where I was born, he'd also done markets with clothes and everything. And they got evacuated in the center of France. So when I went in the army in '42, and I had a month furlough -- I said there was a refugee newspaper. And I put an add in there: I'm looking for my uncle. Don't know exactly where he is. Turns out his son and his sister, four of them, got to a small village in the center of France, I forgot the name of it. And I got a note they are living there.

So in this furlough I couldn't go home in the zone where the Germans are, and they were in a non-occupied zone so he went there. And sure enough, the fellow that gave them a house -- and they rented a house -- the son was a prisoner in Germany. And that was empty, so they had this. And he worked for some guys on the farm, my uncle. So I went to visit him during that month, and his son was there and his daughter was there.

So of all the people after '42 and when the Germans went down -- because he was a young guy, my age, in the 20's, they grabbed him and put him into Auschwitz, and he never came back. But the father was already -- like I said, in Word War I he was a prisoner with my father. He wasn't taken because remember, in a small village, the Germans couldn't completely turn the whole country and go house to house to find Jews. If you live on the farm like he lived, and he looked like a farmer with a beret on his head, they never went to look for him. Except the son, even if it was non-Jew, a guy his age would have been taken to go to work in Germany. They grabbed him, must have figured out he was a Jew. He went to Auschwitz and never came back.

And they, after the War, went back to Hyange. '58 I went to visit him with my wife, and he

had retired. Let me see. That was '58. I went twice to see him. And his basement he had a push cart, and he showed my wife, which was American. He showed her. He was so proud of his push cart that he had a very good life with that push cart. And he smoked two packs of cigarettes a day and drank black coffee. He died when he was 78, and his wife is dead too. And the daughter was married and lived in Metz with her husband. And they had a child, but I have no contact with these people. None.

The same thing goes with the two daughters of my eldest brother that live in Dijon in France. Because the wife was Catholic, there was no close relation between us. And with the mother yes, because the mother I knew her when she was an young bride. So I saw her when she was about 75 and the one daughter who is married and had a girl. The other daughter I saw two years ago. And when they were about two years old I took them, both of them, down into the shelter when there was air raids. And they are in their 50's now. One was born in '40, so she's 53. But I was not close.

When my brother was killed and I came back from Germany, I found that out, I was kind of, not too happy, because I went to the cemetery to see him in '58

and the tomb was not taken care of at all. It was covered with -- you see, in France you have to understand, the families are not close in the sense, especially if it's mixed marriage. Her family was anti-Jewish, number one. So when he was killed they said -- they did everything to make her feel bad. And I found that out through the daughter. So she never remarried, and the whole family blamed her because she married a Jew. So I don't know her family at all. I never met them.

But her daughter talked to me, and I found out the two girls were brought up by the mother without a father-image at all. And when they became young ladies in 16, 17, the one went out with a boy, and she never knew what it meant to be pregnant, she got pregnant. She never knew who the husband was. It's odd, but that's what happened. So she had a son, and the son came to visit me last year for New Years. His name was Blankenberg, and he's Catholic with a cross and everything.

So what happened, he found out I'm looking to change my name. In France if you want to change your name, it has to go in the official government paper. If anybody is against this, they should speak up and let them know. So he found out the name. Some buddy

of his said, "Look. There's a guy with this name whose trying to change his name to Blane." He told me when I was there two years ago he saw it in the paper. But he got married last year. His name was Blankenberg, but there's nothing Jewish in his people. So you see, there's an intermarriage. There's a situation for good or for bad. It branches into different things, you know.

And you look at your ancestry, and I don't know exactly what's happened. Because if you look at my name of birth, Blankenberg, in Belgium near (Ausend) there's a town by the name of Blankenberg. It's a resort. Now, it had nothing do with me, but you never know, four or five generations before, what happened. You can't tell. Because it's not a name like Jim or Paul or you know, Lincoln for instance. Lincoln, Nebraska, and then the guys named Lincoln. But Blankenberg, you have a town by that name, it has to come -- you know I'd be curious to go there and find out where they got that name, you know. I digress again to something else.

Q THAT WASN'T YOUR FATHER'S NAME IN POLAND?

A Sure. Oh sure. That's our family name. That's XYZ. That's the name.

Q WHAT KIND OF STUDENT WERE YOU IN SCHOOL?

A In school? Very -- the word in French is (a soucion). Devil-may-care. I really didn't care too much. I wouldn't say I was very studious, but there was some subjects I was good, some didn't mean anything. I was always very good in algebra, calculus history.

Oh, history was my favorite. I go back to Charlemagne in the year 700. And Louis XIV, Louis XV, that was my favorite. And naturally, calculating was good. Science was nothing for me. I guess anything that you don't know too well, you don't -- or your not more or less interested in -- you're not going to be as good. When you're interested in something, you improve, because the interest is there. And when it comes to calculating and history, I always -- you know, I play almost every night Jeopardy on the TV and I have fun like heck. Because a lot of times they have things that have to do with France or with sports.

For instance, last night the question had to do with 1985 they transplanted three organs in a human being. And the question was, what was these three organs. And I marked heart, lungs, and now I forgot the third. And none of them got it. I had it because anything you do, repetition, repetition, you get good at it. And my situation with figures, I am pretty much

good at it because I like it, you see.

As far as school is concerned, I can't recall. It's a funny thing. I think my education started after school.

Q WHAT ABOUT LANGUAGES? WHAT LANGUAGES?

A Basically in school we had 2 hours a week of German because we're so close to the German border, and it was mandatory. You could have learned English, but at that time it wasn't mandatory, and I never thought one iota I'd be using English. When was I going to go either England or United States. When you're young, your life is in France, and French people in general in school at that time weren't in languages. They would learn the language of as close by which was Italian, Spanish, which resembles French, Latin, or German. The Swiss speak French; therefore, French was more or less what English is now in the world. It was, the international language was French. So I took some German, which I fast forgot after the War.

And when I got to this country, naturally I learned English. And my education started by going to night school for adults for about a month. And then I realized people are going there was to pass their citizenship exams and to learn. And I thought I had learned through newspapers, through the movies. And I

got to speak -- the funniest part is, I know French people as well as German people have a thick accent from the country of their birth. I don't know. I think to me, the ear at times it shows. But mostly I lost my accent of where I was born and therefore that's about all.

Now, my wife being from Tangere, her family speaks Spanish, French from school, because Tangere is a town that's school is French, and Spanish has to do with the Spanish Morocco. Tangere was an international town, but they spoke both languages so they both speak. So I learned a little bit of Spanish to her family. Between them they speak a lot of Spanish, see. When the ear gets used to it, I understand most of the Spanish they talk.

Q AS A YOUNG BOY, THINKING OF THE FUTURE, WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOING TO DO WHEN YOU GREW OLDER?

A Well, once I got into the trade of bakery, I figured I'll eventually be my own boss in the bakery.

Q BEFORE THAT TIME, DID YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS?

A No. Before I went to work, no. Not the slightest idea. I think the thing that I enjoyed was a little airport very close by. I wanted to learn to fly, you know, like kids here say I want to be a

fireman. I wanted to fly, be a pilot, something like this. That's the only thing I can remember. The only way would have been to continue to go to school like college and then go to a military school and stuff like this. That's what I had in mind prior to go to work, as a kid, you know. I thought it was glamorous to be a pilot, something I would have liked. I don't know if I would have succeeded, but the War ended all of these dreams, you know.

Q DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR AUNT HAD SENT STEAM SHIP TICKETS OR WHATEVER TO YOUR PARENT AT THAT TIME?

A No. I knew, but I never thought of it as -- because you got to realize in the '30's when you get mail from far away, it looks like millions of miles away. You don't -- like nowadays you know it's common practice, you fly direct Paris to San Francisco, Paris to New York. In those years, if you took the ship, it took a week. And to us it was so far away we never thought of a thing to do.

First of all, my parents were so old-fashioned, the furthest we went away was 100 miles and then you didn't even go by car because they had no car. So you took a bus or trolly, that could go some 30 miles in that area, you know. So therefore -- but as I said, that was part of my subconscious, if you

want, because of the stamp.

I remember seeing this envelope in 1946 when I was with these people that were leaving. It dawned on me, Williams Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, and that's how I sent it. No numbers of the street, Packer. Because in France there was a car called a Packard, and I remembered the name was Packard, something like that.

So I wrote it, and I had Williams Avenue, and they got the letter. The biggest surprise, when I got an answer, just like on a lark. I nerve figured I was going to get an answer. I knew she couldn't speak French, and the only way I could write the letter was in French. But once we got in contact -- I have a postcard with me that I sent from Paris in English. I remember one sentence I wrote, tomorrow I was at the embassy. Tomorrow I was at the embassy. The embassy was where I was going to get advice to come to the United States. So I looked at the dictionary, I guess. And I wanted to say yesterday, but I put tomorrow.

And my handwriting even changed from my life over there. Maurice, my M is pointy. Here it's rounded. How I changed, don't ask me. It became a natural transition. The human being is the same. But a lot of things have changed to the sense that, as I

said, to remember even what I said about my parents is a miracle, because believe me, I can't tell you about what happened since '45 much clearer, because not only is it closer to now but more memorable to me. You see, I have another thing that I usually do. A lot of good things happened to me and a lot of bad things. And the bad thing I try as much as possible to say that they didn't exist. No. Only good things happened to me.

Therefore, if you talk about good things, I can remember. And when it comes to -- even if I did, let's say, get involved here in investments and lost money, I don't remember that. But when I made money on stock, for instance, that I remember. That gives you an idea of what I'm trying to say, that you do remember. And it's so far away, my past, that it's going to be a while for me more or less to go back. And you know what I think? If I work at home and look at pictures, something would come back, you know?

You asked me about languages. It was not one thing that I was looking for. I was -- you know, it's just a question of what environment you're in. I was in an environment where French was the language. And you don't -- you know, nowadays it's more international because we're so close. You go to Germany, you got to go to France, a lot of people speak English. It became

more natural to learn a foreign language than it was at that time, although some people go to school to learn Russian, Japanese, Chinese, whatever, because that's what they like. That's what they want to do.

In my case, I was in the food business. And all I needed to do was know how to make a recipe of something come out with something as edible, successful, you know.

Q WERE YOU CONSULTED ABOUT BEING AN APPRENTICE TO A BAKER? DID YOUR PARENTS ASK YOU WHETHER YOU WANTED IT, OR DID THEY TELL YOU THIS IS IT?

A No, no. Basically my father said to me, "You know, for your future it would be a good idea that you learned a trade." The question was a trade verses intellectual college. Because a trade -- at that time it meant you'll always earn a living with food. So being my mother had a butcher shop when she was younger in Poland, they were trying to get me to be a butcher. That wasn't for me. I really didn't care. So I said, "Well, I'd rather be a baker." So I went as an apprentice to a place in the same town we lived. I lasted a week.

Like I said, I was not used to work at 14. I came home at night, I was covered with all kind of goop on me. And it was not the place to be because,

although it was a bakery, it wasn't in the sense something you can build a future on. And then in August, when I went to Metz, the main town, this guy was a good baker. And we signed a contract for three years, that I would be working for him. And on those years that's what they did. That doesn't exist anymore now. But I had room and board, so I slept there and got fed. I got experiences there that were very funny.

You've got to realize, bakery is also a business that is very busy on holidays, and in the summer, people go on vacation. And it's warm, people eat less sweets even in those days. So because you have room and board, you have to do something. So the boss would buy almonds in the skin, 100 kilo in a sack, which is about 220 pounds. And we would use a copper kettle, boil the water, put these almonds in there, and then we had a marble table. We were three apprentices, and we had -- when it cooled off, take some almonds on the table and squeeze the almonds on that table, and they would come out of the skin blanched but wet. And the skin we would discard, and we had these blanched almonds.

For, during the season, we used to make sliced almond with chocolate. Or we would make a

pastry where you mix 50 percent sugar and have two marble rollers that would grind this. But not until the oil came out of the almond, but just a powder. Then you sift 50 percent sugar, 50 percent of that, and you whip egg whites and blend this all together, and you made cakes out of it. In other words, you made on the sheet like a snail about this big and then you put butter creme in between, you had a cake this size. And that's what almonds were for.

During the summer we did this. We made jam. We bought fresh apricots on the market. We made our own jam for the home. Jam is to -- I call the lipstick of the bakery. Because if you, let's say, make an apple cake or peach cake coming out the oven it looks kind of wrinkled and odd colored. You put some apricot jam, lipstick, and that thing shines, you see.

Okay, coming back to this almonds so we're here, getting bored, one hours, and a guy says to me, "Look, can you do what I do?" Throws it up in the air and catches it in the mouth. He says, "Lets make a little bet who can catch the most of them." That's fun.

The boss was in the office like over there. All of a sudden he looks around. "What are you doing there?" He saw what we were doing. He says, "Okay,

you continue to work. But as of now I want you to whistle all the time. If you stop whistling, I'm going to come back." So we're whistle, whistle, whistle.

But this is a commentary on how you get bored with something. And the boss, naturally he didn't want you to put them in your mouth. But you know, as kids, what are you going to do? I was 15, 16 at the time. This is different things that happened in the bakery where the boss showed authority.

I had Easter 1937, '38. We had a doctor that ordered miniature pastries, which means eclairs no bigger than the half finger, Napoleons no bigger than the finger. And he ordered two trays. I had to deliver on Sunday morning of Easter 1937 or '38. Now, I go on the bicycle, and I have these in my hand and drive. I come to the place -- Dr. Lurich was his name. I remember his name.

Entrance of delivery people was on the side. I come up. I rang. The maid comes out. And I want to go in to take this tray that was in the metal box, one tray on the bottom, suspended in between the second tray on top, okay? She doesn't want me to go in. She said, "I'll take care of it." She takes out one tray. She doesn't take the tray from underneath. It's so light, I never felt there was something in there.

I put the bicycle handle, I put the box, and here I come running home with my cheeks all red from the cold. I get in. The boss goes bang, bang, gives me two on my face. I said what did I do? "The doctor called. He ordered two trays. You only delivered one. What happened to the other?" I said the maid didn't let me go in.

So you know, these things stay in your mind, how it could have been avoided and how the boss for his patrons he was very -- he wanted not to lose his customer. So that's what happened. You get corporally hit, you know. Again, I just give you a commentary of different things that happened to me while I was an apprentice in this bakery. And I don't keep a grudge on this guy, because what he did to me is change me from a lose guy who didn't know what tomorrow he's going to do or his future is going to be. He put me in a direction to enjoy any work and be hardened for the army.

I went in the army and the laughed when the guys crabbed about what they had to do. I felt was not so bad because the hard life I had the three years I was there. We slept in the room where there was no windows. We had no heat. In the winter we were freezing. And how did we go to work? The boss lived

underneath, and he rang a bell. To wake us up. And where the bell was in the room was like in the corner. And there was a cage around the bell because previously, the guys that slept there, for him to stop ringing, they had to bang on the floor with a shoe to tell him they were up. And they got so mad they used to knock the bell out. So he put a cage, wire cage. That wire cage would be making more noise because, like an echo.

Now see, this is the thing that happens which in this country you wouldn't see. Or maybe 100 years ago. And you go through this apprenticeship. And the reason I bring it up is to give you a background I had. And little by little things changed to a point where it got bad, but not as bad because you started off in a bad set up.

Then when I came to this country, everything really didn't matter anymore because it's a different country.

Q DURING THIS TIME IN THE MIDDLE OF LATE THE LATE 1930'S, DO YOU KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH GERMANY?

A No. Not at all. Not so much about the camp, that I didn't know. But I knew in '33 we had a radio at home, and I could hear sometimes by turning the dial

you would hit a German station, and you'd hear Hitler making speeches, and they would scream. But being it was Germany, my idea was that it's an inner-German problem that had nothing to do with us.

We lived in a different country, although we're very close to the border. That's about the only thing I remember. In '33 it was -- when Hitler took power in '33, and I guess I heard a radio, the noise you can hear sometimes when they show an old film, when the Germans would get together and they would holler when he made speeches, you know. That's what I recall.

Q YOU KNEW ABOUT THE ANTI-SEMITISM IN GERMANY AND THE LAWS THERE?

A (Mr. Blane shakes head).

Q AND THE LAWS THERE?

A (Mr. Blane shakes head).

Q YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY FEARS THERE?

A Not at all. Basically because when you're that young, you don't emphasize on these things because you put your mind on other things than either politics or things that have to do with anti-Semitism. Because it never entered my mind. Not at that time at all.

Q WERE YOUR PARENTS POLITICALLY ACTIVE?

A No, no.

Q WHAT WAS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE IN METZ WHEN YOU WERE AN APPRENTICE?

A In Metz when I was an apprentice?

Q YES.

A Well, it has nothing to do with my parents.

Q NO.

A Okay. The typical day, I got up at six in the morning when he rank that bell, and we worked in the bakery. Usually you had to prepare for a particular order we had, a daily order for the military, of croissant. And the order was 1,000 croissants every morning.

So what we had to do was, the day before we prepared the dough, let it rise overnight, then we had a sheeter. Instead of rolling out one by one, we had automatic rollers that would cut them out, and then we would shape them on the tray. And my very first day at work, my boss said to me, "You know, you're going to be a painter before you become a baker." When I looked at him, he handed me a container that had eggs beaten up and a brush, and I had to brush the egg on every croissant. Then they would go in the oven and be baked. So I was a painter of the croissants. That was my first job.

That was in December when I learned how to

work with liqueur candies where again, because of the labor situation that he had no money to disperse for us, he had us prepare these candies in the shape of, the candy had to be molded into starch. The starch was a box this high and about this long and this wide full of starch. And then you had a piece of wood this long, and that was like teeth the shape of a candy on that board. Then I pressed into the starch this board, and it made a hole the size of the candy, one after the other till you had about 20 rows.

You cooked in a copper kettle sugar, at a certainly degree, then you added either rum or kirsch or whatever liqueur you wanted to make, and it went through -- it looked like a strainer, but it had a little hole like this in the bottom. And it you had a stick that you closed the hole, poured that liquid in there and over each hole that in the starch, you filled it with that liquid.

Then when it stays a little while, the crust, the sugar that was cooked at a certain degree gets a crust. And you leave it overnight in a steam room which is kind of little better than room temperature. You dry out, the liqueur is like antifreeze. It stays liquid inside, the exterior is that crust of sugar and then you take one by one with a shaving brush.

In those days we shaved with a brush. That brush you wipe off every bit of that starch and you put them on the tray and the boss in a special cone room have melted chocolate, dip it with a two-prong folk into the chocolate, take it out on the tray and that's it.

When they were ready, it was sold in a Limoges type of tray, not tin, not cardboard, but it was Limoges. That cost more than the candy. But I remember taking one home one time for my folks for the holidays and that's how you learned in '36 to make candy. Liqueur candy. And they don't make it here because first of all it's against the law, you can't make liqueur candy. But in Europe they do.

And I learned how to make eclairs basically yeast doughs all in the first year. I'd say after 18 months working in this place, you could have gone out and got a job.

I'll give you another example. When I finished in the third year to give me my diploma, degree of baker, I had to go one day to another bakery in the Association of Bakers, and I had to pick out a name. We had to go to the, not the Chamber of Commerce but the Chamber of Trades. And they had all the bakeries with a name, and you pick a name, and you had

to go and work for the guy for the day. And whatever he asked you to do, you do. And he grades you, and it goes to the Chamber of Trade.

And at the fair, at the same time by the end of your third year to get your diploma there has to be special cake that you have to bake, like your signature cake. Now, I had at that time a book that was called (la cry moderne). Which means the modern culinary art. In there was a picture of a cake. Listen to this.

I had never the idea of coming to the United States. There was a cake made with marzipan. Half was the American flag, half was the French flag, blue, white, and red. That was a French flag. It was like an emblem, in French it's called "ecusson". It's shaped like this. It was a cake covered with marzipan, and on top it said Lafayette. It was that year some kind a birthday or it was an anniversary of Lafayette coming to this country. That's what I presented at the fair, my signature cake. That was in 1939. Never any idea of being in the United States.

And I did this -- naturally during the War, I lost that book. My friend Paul that I've been friendly from 1939, over 50 years, got me the book in the early '60's when I was in this country, and he sent it to

me. So I got that book at home and that a picture of that cake is in book.

So you see how odd life can be. And not the slightest idea -- you see, the thing you've got to understand, the right thing to do was make a, what's called a "piece montee". It's a tiered cake. And they -- some guy made a cake with nougat. It's made with nuts and brown -- it's like candy, and it has all kinds of things, but if it's humid outside the thing starts to melt. He got to the fair with a cake and it fell apart.

And I remember that thing, that this guy made a much nicer cake than I did but it's not practical to transport to anyplace, except if you made them on a -- you know, in San Francisco there's a guy on Union Street. He's a very good French pastry man. He's an artist. He makes that type of stuff in the chocolates and also in the pastry. He opened about 10 years ago. And I went to see him, and I said to him when I saw the bakery, I asked the girl could I speak to the boss. Sure. So he's French so I said to him, "To me you're the Rembrandt of the pastry." Boy, was he happy when I said this, because that's the way I felt. He made such a beautiful stuff. And we are friends ever since, and he does business with my wife.

My wife is in the bank that does a lot of work with people from overseas. Because either they -- Americans go to Europe and buy homes. And they have an account here and in France and the transfer of money and all of that stuff. So she has a -- even people from Greece.

Two weeks ago was a Greek national holiday. She got an invitation to go to the party. So you meet people you know. And so, Greek, from this guy in camp that was underneath me, I learned the word (alothacanis). And automatically the Greek answer (cala), which (alothacanis) means how are you and (calo) means thank you. And so when I see Greek people that's what you say. And they say, Oh, you speak Greek. And I say no, that's all I know. It's very funny.

Q GETTING BACK TO THAT PARTICULAR TIME, WHAT RECIPE FOR BABA DID YOU RECITE WHEN YOU WERE TELLING THE RECIPE TO MAKE BABA IN THE CAMP, CAN YOU RECALL?

A Oh yes. I know that the fellow from Russia was looking at me. He didn't understand a word. He waited for the other one to translate it from French to Spanish, to him in Spanish. Then he would speak Spanish to him, and he would speak to me in French.

And that had to be something that you can't

explain, because there you got people from all over. And we were three guys, in these beds here. And time, there's nothing you can do except pass the time of talking of what you think interests you. Being hungry, I was thinking of all the bakery goods I knew how to make. So I explained to him, first you take a bowl, and you put so much flour. You put some yeast in there with water, and you mix that together. And when it starts to rise, you put eggs and butter. Then you whip it up until it gets very elastic. Then you mold it in a mold that you prepare. In other words, I give him the whole recipe, and it took a couple of hours, because we weren't going any place. We were stuck there, you know.

And the one thing I recall very easily, that the Russian had a round peasant's face, you know. He must have come from a farm, and his eyes were drooling. And like he says to me, "After the War, I'll be in Paris. I want to work for you."

Well, the guy from Salonika was a fellow that to me looked very sad. I wondered if he didn't have his family that was out in the camp. And he was an educated man because to speak the language. And he told me was a professor at the university, and naturally he was a skinny guy. He was very, very

skinny, and his nose was like he had -- not varicose veins, but it had some marks on the nose. And that's how I remember the face, being sad and no smile on his face.

And the Prussian, you know, was pleasant. He's the one that made me feel good about talking. I can't tell you what I looked like because I can't remember. But I do know one thing. I wanted so much to come back because the life that you have set up for you when it's like this, the hope of someone waiting for you which was that girl, that had come to the commissary at the police station to see me off, I knew her.

And I have in my position -- because, as I tried to explain to you, my ears are open at all times. I can hear things. I react to what i hear. I react by what I see. I went to work in that camp in a factory. Inside, after we work, what do I hear? Two guys speaking French. As soon as I hear this, I talked to them. And they were civilians. My first thought was, "Listen, I'm from Dijon. Where are you from?" "From Lille". "Listen, here's a name and address of my girlfriend. She lives in Dijon. Please let her know I'm alive." Which they did. Never ever did they say to me, "We got a letter from her, we got some

answers." After the War, I get back to Dijon. Unfortunately, the girl that I wanted so much on my return got married. She never figured I'm going to come back. She was gone.

But her mother, who was at the police station with her, I went to see her. And she says to me they got a postcard from some people from Auschwitz, because the town was called Auschwitz. They weren't the in the camp; they were civilian workers. All in French: Dear Anne, Maurice is well, but he's hungry and needs food. She sent three packages. I have the name of the guy.

I have the letters, with -- no, it's postcards, remember the censors -- with that Adolph Hitler's face on the stamp. And they stopped sending when they asked for money and a watch. They knew damn well I wouldn't ask for this. But they sent shoes. They sent underwear. They never ever said a word to me. But it was a father and his son. I got it all here. What happened is, you know, over the years this postcard gets a little -- so at the consulate I knew somebody, they made copies of that so it's going to last.

But when I came after the War, I was so happy to be alive I didn't go look to find out what happened to these guys. They got a pair of shoes and some

food. But who knows if they made it. You know. So I didn't look further. But that's another episode of what has occurred in the camp while I was there.

Q YOU TALKED ABOUT THREE BUDDIES OF YOURS.

A In the camp?

Q IN THE CAMP.

A Okay, among the three, one was from Holland, and the other one was from France. And I couldn't recall exactly where he was from. But the guy from Holland happened to have had the misfortune or fortune in one way, I don't know exactly, he was in Auschwitz where they put the bodies in the ovens. And he said, I have seen is so many things, you know. A lot of people had hidden stuff, and at the last minute they wanted me to have it. And I couldn't take it because the Germans would have taken it from me.

So when we get evacuated, the three of us were for a week on that train. He was telling me of things that the guys that had to put these people in the ovens -- every so often, maybe every month or three months, I don't know exactly, automatically killed them so there was no witnesses. He was in the last group. And he got saved because the Germans didn't care anymore. They left. And he's the one that was always the strongest because he always was able to get

something extra because of the work he was doing.

Now, the other fellow I can't recall except what happened is, it's usually people close to you either at work or in the barracks, and I don't recall anymore who he was.

I had one buddy, but he didn't survived. I didn't see him at the end. He was from (RAZ). I have his name in the book here. And he had such a gentle face that I felt something akin with him. You could talk about different things like music or something that I liked to talk about. And you couldn't talk to the Greek about this, because his type of life was different.

But when you talked to someone that lived in France -- and I liked sports even there. There was the Tour de France, the bicycle races. I used to talk to the guys. You know, soccer was very big in France in '38. They had the world cups of soccer in France, and he liked it, so I talked with him about those things.

Otherwise, there was in the very beginning, when I got there, there was a fellow that was very influential on our life too. He was a pilot, a captain of the French Air Force, Jewish. And he tried to keep us mentally physically alert not to -- because of his background in the army. So we had the guide, sort of

speak. And our behavior we really were like subhuman. Unfortunately, life is a funny thing. He happened to meet in the camp, because there was barbed wire in camp where we slept.

Every morning we would go out of the out of the camp into the factory. In that factory was the civilians, the Frenchman that I talked to. There was some English soldiers that had Red Cross packages. While he was there, he saw them eat, and he was hungry. He spoke English. This guy fed him. He got some stuff from the soldier. Now, this was in December, January. By March he had died of pneumonia. Now he was mentally a strong man, that had given us the will to go over this easily, possibly to fall into a situation of no return, not giving a damn what happens to us. So that helped us.

We were about a dozen guys from that convoy that kept pretty close. Some guy was an attorney in Paris, another guy, this guy from (Ras) was in business. The guy that came with me from the Dijon prison in Paris, when we got in the subway in Paris, we had no shackles. He said we could run away, but where are we going to go? You couldn't go any place. He says you see that one station? He says my business was just about as big as that station. And he has nothing

to do. They left us in (Grancy), which is about 40, 50 miles north of Paris and that's where, up to this day, they still have a memorial there because all the Jews that left for France left from that place. Not all of them, there was other places, but it was a major place, that the Jews left.

But again, you got to remember, when you ask me that question, the three buddies, who they were, it's kind of very vague in my mind. Basically like I said before, my life changed radically when I came here. I learned the language, learned everything of this country that I -- not so much that I wanted to, but I was -- my wife told me, "You're better off. Forget the past, forget the past." Which I did.

And remember, the things about the Holocaust, I think the first 15 years it wasn't talked about until Wiesenthal in Germany started to go after these War criminals. Then the world got aware of what the Holocaust was about. Most of the people had no idea. All right, after the War, my bone of contention is I'm shocked to realize what the Americans did, saving these nazis because they knew something about the Soviets. Most of these nazis came here. Even Bobby, the guy that was in Leon that killed all these people, was in this country.

Now, again I digress on something. This is why I realize what good it is for me to look into the past and dwell on something that was bad. I set my life on thinking about being married, having a kid, going to a ball game, going on vacation to Florida and Miami and driving. I've been driving since '49. I went from Montreal to Miami, from New York to California in the car. Went to Texas. I seen a lot of things which have to do with my philosophy. Try to get a life as pleasant at possible. Don't try to harm anyone, but look at yourself, where you come from and look in the future of what you have done.

Therefore when I -- and you've got to say to yourself, you can understand now why it took until now for me to come here. Because I wanted to forget. I didn't want to dwell on it. Even my son told me yesterday, when I told him, he said, "Look, I know you. You're always telling me, 'I don't want to talk about. I don't want to talk about.' If it doesn't please you, tell them and you leave." That's what he told me. But I feel okay. I think the questions you asked me bother me because I answer some of the question you asked me.

Like these buddies. At that time it was my -- I couldn't have been closer to somebody. But

unfortunately, 50 years later, you're not the same person. You have looked upon your family, your future, you lost some dear ones in between. How can you remember, really, what their name was, or look like Lee J. Cobb I couldn't remember. See just to show you. I guess that answers you about those three buddies.

Q IT DOES. DOES THE WORLD KEEP TRYING TO MAKE YOU REMEMBER, THOUGH, BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO --

A No. You know, you know what I do sometimes? When you have a situation where I'm with some people new that I don't know and I try to figure out are they Jewish or aren't they Jewish, I have a good way. I say do you know what this is? They look and say, "No, what is it?" I don't tell them it's from a camp. I say, "When I was in the army, I had a number tattooed on." Because I realize they don't know what it is. And I want to know, a Jewish guy knows what it is. There's not a Jew in the world that doesn't know what that is. See, otherwise I don't -- if it was Jewish people, and they talk to me.

I've met some guys, they were Jewish and I knew they were Jewish. And I never met them in other circumstances. So I said, "You know this?" "You were there?" That's the answer. And that's a way for me to find out is he or isn't he. And if he doesn't know, I

said I was tattooed while I was in the army. I just had a tattoo. Which is a good way for me to realize if the guy knows about it or doesn't know about it.

But I tell you, for many years, the years 1952 to '59, back east, I don't think I much talked about it, or thought about it, because we were in these years where, after the War people were getting back on their feet, and the Holocaust was not in the paper. It wasn't on TV. It wasn't a thing of discussion with your neighbors. And so, that's another reason why a lot of these things got more or less dwindled in my mind, in a sense.

Q SO YOU HAVE NO CONTACT WITH PEOPLE WHO YOU WERE IN THE CAMPS WITH AT ALL?

A No. Because basically, realize, the ones I was in the camp was in Europe. I came here, and there's none except this fellow that was in a place where I made these eclairs for everybody. And he was coming to New York, Mandy Black. See, his name I remember. He was a very friendly guy. He had curly white hair. And I was at his wedding. He married -- you know, in his case I don't know if it was Treblinka or where it was. They started to shoot a bunch of people, and he was among these people. He felt down, a body fell on top of him, and he was never even touched

with a bullet. But he was underneath, so they presumed he was dead.

Now again, he told me that, and he told me his situation. And it was much worse than me because he's talking about '40, '41 in Poland where they exterminated whole towns, you know, the ghetto in Warsaw and everything. So I considered it my luck that when I got to Germany it was already '43, close to end although it took almost two years to get us freed. Therefore, the ones that survived like him, I tip my hat to him because, again, I think it had a lot to do with luck, destiny. How a guy fell and the body fell on top of him. So I was akin to his situation.

So we were friendly when we first got to New York. I was at his wedding, he was at my wedding in '48. But then he was in a center of the tailoring, (schmatas), and I was in the bakery working at the Waldorf. We lived in New Jersey, he lived in New York. It's just like on my street there are people. I see them once a year, on my street. Because that's the way you live. Either you see each other often or you don't each other. Although there's very good rapport.

Q YOU REFERRED EARLIER TO A SCAR ON THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD.

A Yeah. Now, the funniest part of this is when

I went for my pension in France, they asked me all different questions like you did. Where were you? I had to fill out papers. So they said, Well, for that we're going to take care of you. For this, this, this. So I told them about my scar, and they said, "Well, we can't do anything about this. What proof? We could have had this after here. We have no proof." But really, what happened when we were evacuated from Auschwitz and we took that train for a week and we got to another camp and we got evacuated from there, I had a cap on my head. Just, you know, the cap from the people in the camp. With the stripes. And before we were going to leave, I knew where there was some depots with food.

So, when you're hungry, you scavenger like an animal. You're looking for something. I get to a barrack. Now, I can see it like as if I was there now. That barrack had a window, window was open. And inside was like a warehouse with food. Cheese and everything. And there was a soldier in there. There was two guys in there. Now, I tried to (Mr. Blane indicates). I was making sounds. I couldn't speak, was too far. He'd never hear me.

So I see he's coming with salami or cheese towards me, and all of a sudden the other guys

disappeared. And I see around the building he's coming towards me with a leg of a stool, you know, the cows stool where you milk the cow. He had a leg with him, and this guy's coming. I was wondering, should I wait until this comes or get hit. And the guy gives me -- you know what this guy did? He didn't give me anything. He closed the window and caught my sleeve, and I was stuck in the window. This guy hits me on the head. He give me one on the head, and I was able to rip myself away. And I had this little cap. The first thing you know it was bleeding. I didn't realize it was bleeding. I didn't even feel any pain. Gee it's like ants crawling on my head. And I looked, it was bleeding. He just opened the skin, it wasn't a big wound.

But among all the other things, that was part of life. I didn't make it into much deal. And to tell you the truth, when I asked, "Can I get some compensation for this," they said no. I have 15 different things that are wrong with my health. Even for that I get a 10 percent pension for the tattoo. But for this I don't get nothing, and that's how this happened. Hunger was so great that I wouldn't care if the guy hit me, as long as I get the food. I got neither. I got hit, yes, but I didn't get the food. I

was all by myself there.

Then I ran up a hill, and I got back to my buddies. And they said, "What happened to you?" "Well, I almost got some food. I almost got some food." That's the way it went. That's the way it went. But after that, it was downhill for the Germans.

I started to see those words, the tanks, and it had like a star. I thought as American. It was a Russian tank.

The Russian guy comes off the tank. He sees us, and he hands us a Russian cigarette and a filter that long. And he must have been a Mongol, because he looked Chinese. And we looked at this, and what he did, he took a piece of newspaper, and he found some tobacco. And he rolled it in the newspaper, and he smoked it. And he gave us cigarettes, which we couldn't smoke.

But anyway, at that particular time they caught some Germans, officers mainly, and they stripped them and let them loose in the woods. They were running in the woods completely naked. And those Russians, they didn't shoot them, they just stripped them and let them loose. And we laughed because we realized, Here's our time to be free, and they're going to get the business, although we don't know exactly

what business went on.

I forgot to mention another thing. Remember the fellow that gave me the potatoes? He talked to me a couple of times up there. He says, "Don't let anybody see you or hear you, because it's going to be very dangerous for me." Then once in a while he said, "I like the French. They are very nice. The farmers were very nice to me. But you know, like in World War II, eventually the Russians are going to fight with the Americans, and we're going to come ahead on the whole deal."

Now, this one was a real Prussian. You know, he was from Prussia. He was a German. In a sense, the reason he was there, he was shell-shocked in some battle, and his eye was puffed. In other words, he was discharged from that army, but he could work with the metal that -- there was a pipe on top of this factory, we used to go up there, and we would see all this pipe, either hot or cold. I forget what it was. And then we would put glass wool in there, that white stuff like cotton. That's what I did with him, and that was something that helped me too. I was indoors. I had nothing to do outside.

Everything in that period of time that got better for me helped me. Although like I said, that

was only the beginning. The worst part came after we had to leave that camp. That whole week in the train without eating and seeing the bodies shot, this put in the ravine, and the Germans were right there. The nurses, the Red Cross, German Red Cross and the soldiers, they fed them, and they ignored us like we weren't even there. It was a shocker in the sense that another human being -- but basically now I say, what could they have done. Nothing. See, my French comes in between.

You know, I speak French with my wife all the time. My basic language at home is French now. In 1958 I went back to France. I had forgotten most of my French due to the fact that I wanted so much to learn English, I didn't use it for about 10 years. And so since I remarried and she speaks French, we speak French. And she uses her French and Spanish at work because of the work she does. I'm very blessed. I'm very happy. I had 35 years of unbelievable life, and now I'm married for five, six years. Six years. January was six years. And it's just as well.

And you know, they -- people don't have a happy life in one life, and I have two lives. And I'm not through. I've got a lot of things in mind yet.

(No sound on the remainder of the video

tape.)