

-TITLE-HENRY NASH
-I_DATE-MAY 17, 1990
-SOURCE-SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
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1:01:00 As the Łódź Ghetto was closed up, Henry, his wife, and his child were taken to Auschwitz. They gathered up their possessions and were taken to the train cars. The next day they arrived at Auschwitz, never knowing or hearing anything about this place. Dr. Mengele was there. Immediately, there was a selection and women and children were separated from the men.

1:04:03 The Kapos asked for everyone's diamond and gold. They threatened to hang any prisoner that refused to cooperate. Henry could smell the burning corpses. Trade people were sought out, and Henry was an engineer of sorts. He was moved from block 25 to block 12.

1:07:05 Henry was all mixed up and disoriented when a man suddenly grabbed him. It was his cousin who was an assistant to the Kapos. The cousin showed Henry how to bribe the Kapos into not beating the prisoners. He bought special food, cigarettes, meat, etc. so they would give him special treatment.

1:10:01 Henry had too many friends to help. They were all hungry, and they all desperately needed his help. Someone informed him that he could stay alive if he could get to Germany. He did not get tattooed.

1:13:07 Germany was better. He worked as an engineer at a factory that bought Jewish slaves. They searched for sheet metal workers and plumbers and Henry was picked to go there because of his trade. He developed a blood infection on his face that he describes as a "rose." He thought he was going to be shot because he thought he was contagious. 1:16:01 Henry woke up disoriented and in bed. He had a high temperature. For three weeks Henry was in quarantine. He was given pills called septrine.

1:19:00 Henry was next transferred to a factory (where four wheel drive trucks were made) called Bising. There was no medical care. Food consisted of dried beets called Kohlrabi. Henry helped himself by trading Kohlrabi soup for potatoes.

1:22:03 Henry ate mashed potatoes because with his soldering iron and steel stove he was able to cook the potatoes. Henry knew that the Kapos confiscated all sugar and made vodka in the middle of the night. The men were given a "nice" slice of bread every day.

1:25:00 The Kapos were criminals. They wore colors showing what type of crime they committed. Red meant they were murderers. Green depicted that they were political criminals. Henry's work day began at 5 a.m. and was a twelve hour day. He had chances to run away but there was no where to go. He said that the living conditions were not bad. He had a cot (bunk bed) and a blanket. There was no heating in his cement block bunker.

1:28:07 In April of 1945 Henry was taken to the Herman Goering Werker factory 50 KM away. His clothes were steamed and deloused. A whole bread was distributed to each of the workers. Naked and shivering, the workers were told to conserve their bread for, the bread might not come again for a while. Soon they were again on a train for days. Henry knows that they were near Berlin, because he could hear the planes and bombing overhead. He soon arrived at a camp called Oranienburg. There were no crematoria.

1:31:04 Red Cross packages of food were distributed. The packages contained cigarettes, finger biscuits, condensed milk and "all kinds of goodies." At this point, American planes were arriving while the German gendarmes were hiding and running away. Henry was hopeful that the war was "going to hell." Rumors were circulating that Hitler was dead.

1:34:01 Once again, Henry was transferred to another work camp. He buried his cigarettes and within an hour they were put on trains. The trains did not move. The workers heard shooting all night. Henry and the other workers could smell it, not see it. The next morning, they were removed from the train cars and they were free. Henry was unsure about his future. He wondered how free he really was.

1:37:05 Out of the forest came many black men on motorcycles. They gave Henry and his companions information about obtaining leaflets from the MP that will arrive the next day. Henry and his nine friends found an empty building with a basement stocked with all kinds of food. They made themselves at home there. There were guns, hams, and many other canned goods.

1:40:02 Henry was not starved. He had a lot of food. They even obtained milk and fresh eggs. Many of his companions became ill from eating too much. Soon, the American, French, Russian, and English military came. Henry wound up in the American sector. He said that he and his companions were just like animals. Next, he was taken to the Siemens factory.

1:43:00 After Henry missed a bus that would have transported him to a Polish camp, he was approached by American paratroopers. For a week he was given care by a captain in the American Army.

1:46:08 Henry describes the differences between the American and the English Army. The Americans had feasts with oranges and bacon while the English "didn't even have a match to give you."

1:49:01 Now Henry found himself at a Polish labor camp called Liniberg. He was given ration cards and clothes. He said with cigarettes one could get anything. So, he bribed a man with cigarettes to get himself a place on a train to a town called Celle.

1:52:06 This town was near Bergen-Belsen where Henry hoped to find any living relative. His search was nearly fruitless. Finally, Henry found a very distant female cousin who was extremely ill.

1:55:00 Soon, Henry was convinced to seize the opportunity to go to Sweden. He figured since his cousin was extremely sick that he should go by himself.

1:58:01 He jumped a train to L beck harbor and then took a train to Malm . He was shy because when he arrived women were distributing fresh pairs of underwear. He was staying in a big schoolyard, quarantined.

2:01:00 He was given a throat test and then transferred to an art museum that was converted into a detention center. He was in quarantine there for 21 days. He went "mishuga" (Yiddish for crazy, restless). He and his fellow displaced companions were given new clothes, luggage, and they were sent to Stockholm.

2:04:01 Again, everyone was separated by nationality. They were all given tents like Yosemite Park and there was no running water. He did note that there was a steam bath though. At a Red Cross dance, Henry met his future wife, Sarah.

2:07:00 He gave Sarah hard boiled eggs and thought about her often.

2:10:00 Sarah went to Slovakia with a friend and Henry saw it that she return to Sweden.

2:13:00 Henry felt sorry for her. He didn't think of her as a potential wife. He rarely thought about his future. He was ashamed to get married because his wife and child were presumably dead. He thought that there was no reason why he should feel good. Eventually, Sarah and Henry became engaged in camp. He was glad. But first, Henry wanted to make sure that his wife and child were not alive. He waited one year in order to obtain Polish papers for Sarah.

2:16:07 Today, Henry would like to go back to Poland. He knows that his father died of typhus in the ghetto. Henry would like to see the cemetery where his father is buried. Henry doesn't sleep even now, so long after the atrocities of the war.

2:19:03 He describes Sweden as a very humanitarian country. He describes all of the benefits of the factory in which he worked in Stockholm. He says that the system was marvelous. He never thought about going to Israel.

2:22:00 The World Congress sent Henry \$25, and with this money he bought Sarah her first watch.

2:25:01 All through the war, Henry said he never starved. His first wife used to steal coal which was then traded for herring. Morals are different for every situation.

2:28:05 He recounts the time working at Werker factory where he buried bodies face down. This breaks his heart.

2:31:00 Henry says that even animals couldn't commit the crimes and murders that the Nazis committed. "It doesn't go out from your brain."

2:34:00 His daughters know everything about his past. He starts sobbing.

2:37:00 He is 80 now and he looks very good for his age. He starts rambling about George Burns.

2:40:00 Sarah lost her whole family too.

2:43:00 Henry had a profound change in his beliefs after the war. He didn't believe in God after Auschwitz. He belongs to a temple to support it and give it money but he does not believe. He wants peace in the world. He says that Hitler killed enough people. He doesn't know what the world is anymore.

2:49:00 He was tired of life and he doesn't know how he survived. He wants to know why there is no gun control in the U.S. like there is in Sweden. He is sick of big shots with money and he is tired of politics. He thinks that the death penalty should be enforced.

2:51:00 He proclaims that he is not a communist but he doesn't understand why men like Trump exist. Why should one man control billions of dollars? Why should that happen?

2:53:01 Henry's heart bleeds for the homeless. Henry is tearing at the end of the tape.

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