

Interview with MURRAY GORDON
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Interviewer: Evelyn Fielden
Transcriber: Jennifer Kerr

Q: HOW ARE YOU, MURRAY?

A: Fine, Thank you.

Q: WOULD YOU TELL ME WHEN AND WHERE YOU WERE BORN?

A: I was born in 1926 April 8th, 1926, in Lithuania, a town called, (Clipida)^{SP}
or (Maimel)^{SP} which was--the Germans called it (Maimel)^{SP} and the Lithuanians called (Clipida)^{SP}.
It's in the Baltic Sea.

Q: AND HOW BIG A FAMILY WERE YOU IN?

A: Mother, father and a brother and myself and uncles and aunts and cousins
and grandparents, so fourth.

Q: SO YOU HAD A VERY LARGE FAMILY?

A: Yes, uh-huh.

Q: AND WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

A: He was kind of a merchandising representative, and he was in several things.
He was taking of my grandfather's business which was a flower mill, and he was also
in chemicals, so he was in a lot of different businesses.

Q: WERE YOU AN ORTHODOX HOUSEHOLD?

A: Well, in Lithuania most of the people are Orthodox. There was some concern^{Religious}
most of us were Orthodox.

Q: AND HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE THERE?

A: Well, I lived there until I was six years old and then we moved to (Countess)^{SP}
which is the capitol of Lithuania at that time.

Q: DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL IN (COUNTLESS)?

A: Yes, I went to school in (Countless)^{SP}. First went to a religious school but
they were too strict and so I was transferred to a regular school and().

Q: IT WAS A JEWISH SCHOOL?

A: Jewish school and see that school had a lot of Lithuanian subjects so a lot of subjects were taught in Lithuanian so--but most of them were Hebrew and a lot of subjects were taught in Hebrew.

Q: DID YOU LEARN ANY OTHER LANGUAGE AT THAT TIME?

A: Well, at home we spoke in a little Russian, little German and Lithuanian, Yiddish and Hebrew.

Q: HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE IN (COUNTISON)?

A: Till the Germans came in 1941, yes here from '32 to 1941.

Q: SO YOU ACTUALLY FINISHED SCHOOL THEN?

A: No, I didn't finish school then because I was fifteen. I was almost finishing high school but then I continued some of the studies in school in the Ghetto. They had some schools and studies privately cause of Germans they didn't allow any studies, but we did privately with some teachers in the evening.

Q: YOU MENTIONED THE GHETTO, CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT IT?

A: First of all let me address you a little bit. The Russians came in in 1940 when they attacked Poland, actually in 1939 and then after the Aggression Pact of Hitler. Then in 1940 they moved into Lithuania and things were pretty good, I mean they were not as good like when ^{or} in Lithuania, but a lot of people had it better. First of all, we knew what was going on in Germany and we thought by the Russians coming in that they're going to save us because Russia was so strong supposedly and especially they're not an Aggression Pact. Hitler is going to stay away from Lithuania, so more or less it was kind of a false security. And then in 1941, June 22nd the Germans attacked Lithuania, attacked the Soviet Union which is Lithuania and they came in and the first two days of the war the Lithuanian partisans were very bad to the Jews. They rounded up all the Jews and took them to the Nineth Fort and shot them before even the Germans appeared on the scene.

The first few days, I remember one day walking on the street, the war was started on Sunday and this was on a Tuesday and I walked down the street and I saw those partisans walking out with their guns and the Lithuanians kind of looked at me. And in June I had my shorts on, I walked and just didn't know what was going on so they called me over and they asked my where I'm going I said, I'm going to a friend's, just visiting somebody.

Now, my Lithuanian was very good because I had a lot of Lithuanian friends and I spoke fluent Lithuanian, so they said be very careful because a lot of Jews are running around with guns and are shooting at the Germans and Lithuanians better go home. Then later I found out that these people were ^R founding up Jews and taking them out and shooting them. So sure enough I would have been one of those.

Q: SO, WERE THEN, THE LITHUANIANS ANTISEMETIC?

A: Well, they were antisemitic but, it even showed before the Russians came in they were. The Russians were quite prominent in commerce and the arts and in industry and the only form of antisemitism was like, "oh, you dirty Jew " and, or the preachers in the churches say, "you killed our God". But there was no violence, I mean before the war.

Also, alot of Jews were fighting with the Soviets when they came in, so it could be that the Lithuanians or the ^{NATIONALIST} Nationalist Lithuanians were respectful for that. In other words it was a true edge sort. First of all they said the Jews were liberals, were communists and then the Jews had all the businesses, you know, you couldn't win whatever you did it was wrong. So that's why they--and it was alot of jealousy and religious differences and supposedly, they thought they wanted to have their independence but they were pretty, pretty bad, the majority should say.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR REASON FOR MOVING TO (COMMIS)?

A: Well, I was six years old I didn't know they didn't ask me.

Q: I SEE, OKAY. WAS YOUR FATHER VERY PROSPEROUS?

A: Well, I'd say he was not very prosperous, we were comfortable. It was during the depression and things, I mean everybody I felt it. We were comfortable we just

didn't have, people, didn't have any cars or anything in those days but we didn't own a home we were renting a house so we were comfortable I should say.

Q: SO MENTIONED THE GHETTO?

A: Yeah.

Q: WHEN WAS THE GHETTO ESTABLISHED?

A: The ghetto was established first of all the Germans came in, they got involved in the Government of Lithuania of (Countness^{SR}) and it was one decree after another. Jews cannot work anymore in (Commerce^{SR}). The first call of weeks of the--

Q: MAY I INTERRUPT YOU, YOU JUST CORRECTED YOURSELF, YOU SAID THE GOVERNMENT OF (COUNTNESS^{SR})?

A: In other words the Military Government, the Military Authorities.

Q: ISN'T THAT LITHUANIA ALSO?

A: Yeah, but I only know what happened in (Countness^{SR}) at that time they were the powers to be who were in with some Lithuanians and the German Military commands, whatever they call themselves, and they started to say the Jews can't work anymore and you couldn't have any Lithuanian servants and things and you couldn't own a business. And gradually they took all of the humans rights away from the Jews. And the Jews had to bring in certain things, I mean like valuables and furs and so ^{forth} fourth. And then in August they said that the Jews have to move to the Ghetto which was across the river, it's call (Slabuka^{SR}) it is a suburban of (Covna^K) in Lithuanian it was (Realiampia^{SR}) which is the name of it. In Yiddish it is (Slabuka^{SR}) they have a very famous (shibit) there, (slubuce shibit) and they took an area they moved the people who lived there which were the Lithuanians and they fenced it off and they put-- this is where the Jews are going to live and they and to just be there by a certain time and all the people couldn't bring all of their belongings and all that they could and actually they left most of the things in their residences in Kovno and then the Ghetto was populated by the Jews and I would say there were about twenty to twenty-eight thousand Jews that entered the Ghetto from Kovno. There were quite a few Jews in Kovno

also, during the first days of the war a lot of people moved to Kovno from the smaller towns because they thought it was maybe safer in Kovno in the smaller towns and from my recollection, quite a few several thousand, maybe five or six thousand were killed before the Ghetto started. Killed by Lithuanians, some by Germans taken to the fort and shot. I know my uncle and aunt and two cousins were missing and which we found out later on where they were and another uncle and aunt and three little children, so they were killed right there on the Ninth Fort. There was the Ninth and the Seventh Fort which in the Napoleon's days protecting the city and that's where they had a prison for political prisoners before the war and that's where they killed them.

Q: SO THE GERMANS AND THE LITHUANIANS TOOK AND ROUNDED UP THOSE JEWS?

A: Right, most of the Lithuanians, **because see** the Germans who didn't know who were Jews and who were Lithuanians, but most knew. So they rounded up them up mostly they would catch them from the streets but it was just to get even to have pogroms, at first and they, the Germans kept the Lithuanians drunk and so forth so they cannot--

Q: HOW DID YOU LIVE IN THE GHETTO, CAN YOU DESCRIBE IT?

A: Well, first of all let me get back. When they closed the Ghetto, they had various decrees, I mean that you had to give up the valuables that you took away before, but still some ^{were} left that were hidden. Anybody who would hide something would be caught would be shot and they took people voluntarily and when they searched if anybody was found they would beat the people badly.

Gold and any appliances or typewriters, anything that was valuable and mostly furs they wanted and good shoes and so forth.

The Ghetto, what happened at the beginning was that people were issued rations for food which was very small. And then they established, the Germans wanted to get some workers to work in various places institutions in the cities in Kovno, and they had what was called brigades, work brigades. They used to go each morning, used to assemble by the Ghetto's gates and they were going to work. And it was quite a premium for the

people to belong to one of the brigades because they could trade something for food.

Q: THEY DID NOT PAY YOU?

A: Oh, no, no, for working, no.

Q: HOW DID YOU GET YOUR MONEY?

A: Well, whatever you had they issued so much. There was money in the Ghetto like ghetto marks, which was ghetto money but didn't mean anything but they had ^{had} rations which were for people who worked and they had little stamps and, the people who worked got food, got a little bit more food than the ones who didn't work. Basically that it was it was--

Q: WERE YOU ONE OF THEM?

A: Well, I was only fifteen and at the beginning I worked in a in a place called the airport. It was very very hard work and it was just cement, I mean concrete work and then they opened what was called the Ghetto (Vosstoken) ^S which was the ^S Ghetto repair work, which they were repairing. Alot of fixing for the Germans, like things that came from the front the uniforms, the shoes and also it was a depository for the clothing that was ^{ein} from the forein Jews, the German Jews, the Czech Jews, and the Dutch Jews all the Jews from Europe a lot of this would come in the Ghettos. They were repaired and we used to see the names on the luggage. In Germany, you would have to add the name Israel if it was a man and add the name Sarah if it was a woman. Salum Israel Goldstein, and so forth.

Q: AND THEY KNEW RIGHT AWAY IF IT WAS GERMAN?

A: Yeah, they knew right away if they were Germans and you knew from the last name where they were from and you knew that things were very bad, They were going to be exterminated.

Q: WHAT WERE YOUR PARENTS DOING?

A: Well, my father worked in one of the brigades, and my mother was just at

home and my brother and--

Q: WAS YOUR BROTHER YOUNGER THAN YOU?

A: Three and a half years younger and there was also four younger kids. There was a Jewish, like you call it a (Tola) in Hebrew and religious things and then say that's the beginning. In October they had what they called the (Bugaction), the big selection and they took about nine thousand Jews^{and} separated them. The older ones, the sick ones and children and they sent them to something that was called the small ghetto which was right next to the ghetto and the small ghetto was empty months before that^s because it was--they couldn't fit everybody in the big ghetto so the small ghetto was separated from the large ghetto by a bridge.

Q: HOW DID THEY EMPTY IT?

A: They just disappeared, they were gone to the Nineth Fort and just killed them. And when they had the big selection they took the people to the small ghetto and they told them that they're going to be overnight and they're sending them to resettling and what they did, we found out later, they took them to the Nineth Fort. Also before they liquidated the small ghetto, there was a hospital in the small ghetto and at the time they ^{had} and sixty-six people in there. And what the Germans were going to do when they liquidated the small ghetto, they started digging a big trench outside. They were going to shoot them and bury them there. But then one of the Germans had a bright idea, let's burn the whole thing, let's burn the whole hospital with the sixty-six patients, with the doctors, nurses, everybody, completely destroyed.

Q: DID YOU SEE THAT HAPPEN?

A: No, I was not there I saw the flames, because away you couldn't see the actual building but you could only see the flames.

Q: WAS IT VERY SCARY?

A: Well, it was scary, yes, but you see at that time we didn't know that people were there we found out later on that there were people there and they

said it was kind of a--they said they had to disinfect it, I mean there was--they had to get rid of it because they didn't want to cause any disease, I mean, it was a contagious disease in there, so they said they moved the people out and burned the building. But we found out later that the people were burned inside after the large selection. This was I think October 28th, 1941.

Things were real bad. People were just standing there on the "big scare" all day long just waiting whose going to go because people wanted to stay. But, see we didn't know what was going to happen but when you saw them taking the older people and the children and the sickly away so they had an idea. A lot of the, you know, the older children went with their parents but the Germans separated them back to the ones that were to remain in the ghetto, and after that, you know, ^e it was very bad. People were kind of drained inside and just felt like my God, and this guy said this is it, there will be no more things. But, every so often they had selections taken. Sick people, and then they had--one time they took some children, just completely and they were looking for children. And I ^{remember} (Utranium) ^{so} guards were very helpful to the Germans and they had those sticks with hooks and they used to catch them by the necks because mothers were hiding them under the bed and they would just pull them out and and just dump them in the truck.

Q: WERE ANY OF YOUR FAMILY WITH YOU IN THE GHETTO LIKE YOUR UNCLE AND YOUR AUNT?

A: We had where we lived it was, my mom, my dad, my brother, one uncle and my grandparents, but they were taken away. They were with us but they were taken away October 28th. And then there was an aunt with a child and whose child was taken away. And I had a cousin with a child and they took the child away at the selection, when they took the children--so one was seven years old and the other one was about --

Q: THEY WERE LIVING WITH YOU?

A: Yeah, like three years old one and a half, three years old but see you,

become so traumatized, your desire to survive is too strong. You just overcome some of these feelings that you have. So to continue with my story, and they continued the shooting of the people. They gathered, they would say they were resettling them to Estonia and so forth. And when anything was bad on the German front they used to take it on the Jews. Take another thousand Jews, another five hundred Jews. Gradually by the time it came for the evacuation of the ghetto, in 1944, there were not many Jews left.

Now, in '40 to '43, we tried to form some underground and I know there was undergrounds I tried to get in. And there were the ones who were sympathetic to the Russians and the ones who were the Zionist of these undergrounds. So the man who was the head of the Zionist of the undergrounds was a teacher, I had him, he was a gymnastic teacher I had him before the war. And he was an ex-Lithuanian army captain. He was strong and he was the head of the Zionist. And I got in to one of those and actually they were working together because we felt they needed the strength. And they made contact with some of the partisans in the (Runexer)^{SR} Forest near (Vilnerxs)^{SR} which is the capital now. And they made contact with some of the Russian soldiers who were not captured and they stayed there and escaped and they were fighting Germans and I got involved with them. And I remember once we were going in and they used to have a lot of discussions about what to do and how to do it and everybody should try to get out and so forth.

The younger people were to fight the Germans and we were getting in and out and making new contacts.

Q: IN AND HOW?

A: For the ghetto, yes, smuggling out and for instance, in the wagon we would lay in there and hide and people--

Q: I'M JUST GOING TO ASK YOU HOW YOU MANAGED TO GET OUT OF THE GHETTO?

A: There were certain areas underground things, because the ghetto was fenced

all the way around some area which were as well guarded and often a lot of places the guards which were Lithuanians and Germans were bribed and they just took that away and the same thing like you know, if you want to bring something in, sometimes the they went for the bribe, many times they took the bribe and they killed the people and just didn't report them. And also the same thing as getting in and out of the ghetto to undergrounds, sometimes they took the money and they just shot them.

Q: WERE YOU A ZIONIST AT THE TIME?

A: Well, before the Russians came in, I was a Zionist, of course and then when the Russians came in I mean they kind of outlawed Zionist. Oh, and everybody had to join the Pioneers. The young Russians, you see, and they were trying to tell us why the socialism in their system is better than anything else. And fourteen year old child, I mean you can brainwash them very easily and then after a while you start thinking to yourself, as you can see right now it's not working, so in other words--yeah, I was a Zionist.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?

A: Oh, yes, as a matter of fact, I remember in school in before the war, we used to ^{have} a Zionist (shelea) ^{SP} who came from Palestine to try to join the (haleseen) ^{SP} and to go to Isreal to Palestine to live there and I remember I came home one day before the war and I talked to my parents. And they said, "no we don't want you to get involved with this, we want you to stay here we don't want you killed by Arabs" and so forth. But a lot of people in the mid-thirties when things got pretty bad in '36, '37, '38, '39. A lot of young Jews left for Palestine.

Q: HOW DID YOU GET OR DID YOU GET ANY NEWS AT ALL FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD WHILE YOU WERE IN THERE?

A: Well, we used to get news from friendly Germans who also--people used to work in the brigades. You know, there some good Germans in the army and they knew what was going on and they kind of tried to tell people but the majority were

were bitter. But, the ones who told us that's how we got news and I'm sure from the underground and from some friendly underground Lithuanian contacts. We got some news because any time something happened, any time we knew about it happens in (stalingrad) all it--

Q: YOU HEARD ABOUT IT?

A: Yeah, we heard about it and what kept us going was hope, and even now that they weren't going to let us get out of it alive but still there was hope. I was wounded in one of the underground missions. They couldn't stop the bleeding and they got me back into the ghetto to a hospital and to stop the bleeding, and then three months later they were evacuating the ghetto. It was in '44. Germany--because the Russians were getting very close and the Germans thought they would just send us from the ghetto to Germany. And everybody had hiding places. They used to call them (malina) in Jewish, in Lithuania, and most people had it built under a house in a cellar or under a--

Q: IN A BARN?

A: Barn, you had to be very careful not to show any trace that you had something and I know my parents had one and just before they started evacuating, I elected to go with the people from the underground because I thought I had a better chance of surviving with them. All the young people and I were in there for six days. We used to go out at night for air.

Q: WHERE WERE YOU?

A: In the ghetto in one of the hiding places.

Q: I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE YOUR PARTICULAR--

A: Well, it was under one of the houses. It was pretty well covered it was a big area. I remember we had a oxygen tank because it was very well sealed and we were there with twelve or fifteen in this. They were all young people and when we were there we would just sleep during the day, talking, passing the time and going

out at night for some fresh air. And I remember after six days, we heard a knock on the thing and they had found the opening and they got everybody out and we had to just stand with our hands behind us and we thought this is it they're going to shoot us we didn't know what they were doing because we heard shots and explosions while we were in there. And then we found out that later we found out that what they were doing they used to get woman who still had children and say, we will take the child away and you must tell us where a hiding place is and we'll give you your child back. So that's how they found a lot of things in the neighborhood. And people were telling but they did--they told them where it is and still took the child away and shot the mothers and the child.

So what happened was, they gathered us and we were in a big gathering place for about overnight. That is where I saw my mom and dad and brother and uncle and we were together there. And I felt very bad for kind of neglecting them. Because I had thought I had a better chance by myself but ^{there's} nothing I could have done while I was there so and they took us to a place called Stutthof in Germany in ~~(Katteltranz)~~ ^{SP} ~~SP~~. Some people tried to open the boards in the bottom of the train and get out and a couple of people did get out, I don't know what happened to them.

Q: WERE YOUR PARENTS WITH YOU?

A: They were in different trains they were separated. There was no rhyme or-- some people were in one train and some people in others in the cattle wagons. And there was no windows.

Q: BUT YOU KNEW YOUR PARENTS WERE IN THERE?

A: Well, I knew that everybody was going to be sent to Germany. We didn't know if we were going to be shot or cremated, but we thought if they wanted to shoot us why would they take us somewhere and shoot us so we thought they were going to send us to some labor camps.

Q: HAD YOU HEARD ABOUT THE LABOR CAMPS IN GERMANY BEFORE?

A: Oh, yes, yes. Because we used to escape and go to the ghettos, someone from inside would tell us, so we heard rumors. We didn't really have any facts. We also knew when (vilno) was liquidated, we didn't hear about the (warsaw) when it was liquidated. It was after but we heard about ghettos being liquidated because a lot of times they liquidated a smaller ghetto, they brought many workers to the-- Kovno workers--

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS?

A: Okay, now so when we got to Stutthof they separated the men from the women and my brother was with my mom and I was with my dad and they gave us--took our clothes away and gave us (Kasetla) clothing, you know, with stripes, striped pajamas. And then they took us to (Auschwitz).

Q: (AUSCHWITZ)?

A: And then they took us to Dachau with my dad. And from Dachau we went in several camps like a two like a seven, like a ten.

Q: WHERE WERE YOUR MOTHER AND BROTHER?

A: Well, they were in Stutthof. And when I got out of the concentration camp I was ninety-six pounds. And the last days of the war were marching toward the Tyrolian Mountains and it was kind of--it was April and the weather was still not that good. It was cold and I remember I had frozen toes and they were marching for about ten days and we came to a big big canyon, and everybody was down there and we thought--we--this is it! Because you see on top all these German guards had machine guns and we were sitting in the canyon there. We were hungry and tired and nobody cared we just wanted to sleep. Nobody cared what happened and then the next morning, they were gone.

Q: I TRIED TO ASK YOU BEFORE BUT I THINK YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME, WHILE YOU WERE IN THE GHETTO, IN KOVNO, DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY AT THAT TIME?

A: We didn't know concentration camps, they were work camps. There was ^{SP} (arbechniefry). Arbeit macht Frei (Work makes you free)

Q: RIGHT, BUT DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE EXTERMINATION CAMPS?

A: No, no.

Q: SO WHEN YOU ARRIVED IN ONE OF THESE CONCENTRATION CAMPS, YOU KNOW NOW?

A: We didn't know that they were extermination camps. No, we thought people worked there, yeah, otherwise people would revolt and rebel. Hey, my fate is sealed anyway, what have I got to loose, I mean this way I still have a chance and that's exactly why the Germans had everybody fooled. And they were so systematic.

Q: WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IN DETAIL WHAT--ABOUT THE FIRST CAMP YOU WENT TO?

A: Okay, the first camp I went to was--there were two, Landsberg and Dachau, which is near Munich, and it was a ^{SP} (laga two). I don't know how many people were there. My dad was there, my uncle was there and some people from Kovno, the ghetto were there. And there were huts, oh, maybe fifty or a hundred feet long and they were like an A frame but they were dug out in the dirt. And they were like an A frame and they put grass in front of it. And inside there was just long like a bench for people to lay on one side and there was an alley in the middle and people lay on the other side. I used to wake up in the morning and two guys would be dead on one side. They used to get dehydrated because of no potassium and that's it.

Okay, now, they used to wake us up at five o'clock in the morning or in ^{SP} (a pel) which means have to be counted.

Q: WHO WOKE YOU UP; THE GERMANS?

A: Well, sometimes the Germans, sometimes the ^{SP} (kopos) they were criminals. A lot of them were criminals, were either Germans or Poles.

Q: UKRANIANS?

A: Ukrainians, I didn't think we had any Ukrainian ^{SP} (Kopos). I mean, there were Ukrainian guards but the ^{SP} (kopos) were mostly Germans. I think generally criminals.

Q: HOW DID YOU KNOW THEY WERE CRIMINALS?

A: Well, you could tell the way they acted they were not fellow prisoners. They were really sadistic and they were--we started, pretty soon you get to know they are criminals by the way they behaved.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THEY ALSO MADE JEWISH PRISONERS (KOPOS)?

A: Yes, some of the Jews, yes. Some of the Jews were also (kopos), there's no question about it. You know you get a little power and they get corrupted, like anything else, even what good intentions they had they got corrupted when they gave them a little bit of power. Extra food, extra privileges, and they exercised their power over Jews, some humans are like that. So we used to wake up five o'clock in the morning to be counted, even in the wintertime. We'd stand there and some people, all they'd have was the little striped pajamas and shoes, without stocking. And we were standing there sometimes for an hour and then they would say the count is right. And if it wasn't right, they had to go look inside the barricade to make sure somebody is not sick or died. So we had to stay there until they got the whole thing tabulated. And then they used to give us some coffee.

Q: DID SOME PEOPLE USED TO DIE FROM THE COLD?

A: Oh, yes, some of them died from pneumonia, I got pneumonia during the concentration. They moved me to another (laga) and if it wasn't for my dad, I would have died. He nursed me back to health.

So they used to stand there and count and give us coffee and bread. And then start marching seventy-eight miles to where you were working and they used to give us some soup during the day and at night used to come back after work and we'd march again. And sometimes they gave us bread and sometimes they gave us soup, and let's see and of course after that you just kind of talk, you kind of get in your own barricade because it was pretty hard to associate with people from other barricades.

Q: BECAUSE IT WAS HARD LANGUAGEWISE OR PHYSICALLY?

A: No, physically. Well, the Germans did not like people to associate with

people from other barricades. But, we used to go ^{through} when we were counted-- you didn't have to--each barricade would have to stand here, one area. Barricade number one stand right here, it was in blocks. So there's no reason why it is-- maybe because they didn't want people to get organized too well, I don't know.

Q: WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR BARRICADE, DID YOU HAVE ANY LITHUANIANS?

A: Well, Lithuanian Jews, yeah, mostly Jews. We also had Hungarian Jews who came and they couldn't survive. They were so weak and I mean they had no stamina, they would die faster than anyone else.

There were a lot of Poles. We didn't have any German Jews, but alot of Hungarians and Poles.

Q: DID ANY OF THOSE PEOPLE NOT KNOW HOW TO SPEAK GERMAN?

A: Yes, some of the Poles didn't speak German. Many of the Hungarians didn't speak German but a lot of Hungarians were more fluent in German than the Poles were. See, people come from the smaller towns and shtetls, they don't know, I mean most of them didn't even speak Polish, they just speak Yiddish, I mean that's all when they come from a small village.

Q: I'M THINKING OF THE ORDERS THE GERMANS GAVE THEM IN GERMAN.

A: You see the words for the orders, I'm sure they learned fast. I mean, they couldn't converse in the language when they would say (monsh^{er}melt) they knew what it means, or (ostagen^{er}).

Q: THE NUMBERS?

A: Yeah. So they learned pretty fast and if they didn't somebody would tell them what it is.

Q: DID YOU HAVE A NUMBER?

A: No, I was not tattooed.

Q: DID YOUR FATHER GET A NUMBER?

A: No, my dad didn't get a number either.

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK THAT?

A: I don't know as a matter of fact most Lithuanian Jews from Kovno who came to Dachau did not have numbers.

Q: INTERESTING.

A: Because after the war I met quite a few and they didn't have any numbers.

Q: HOW COULD THEY KEEP COUNT OF THEM BY NAMES?

A: By the name, oh, yeah, and the (kopos) ^{SP} were reasonable.

Q: I SEE.

A: But they didn't even know my name, just, "you, you" just how many you have.

Q: HOW DID YOUR FATHER FARE?

A: Well, he was much older than me and like I said, he--

Q: YOU WERE HOW OLD, WHAT EIGHTEEN?

A: Well, in 1944 I was eighteen.

So, and it hard work you know. Not enough nurishment and the weather conditions-- I got pneumonia and I got moved to (laga) ^{GA} seven and my dad moved with me and he really helped me. I remember, I had a high temperature. And so there was kind of a sick bay the people, ^{they} thought we would be able to recuperate. So they thought I had a cold and they sent me over there.

Q: DID YOU HAVE A JEWISH DOCTOR THERE?

A: Yes, the Jewish doctors were from Kovno, from Lithuania and some Polish doctors.

Q: ANY GERMAN DOCTORS?

A: Germans, Germans?

Q: GERMANS, GERMANS?

A: No, they wouldn't bother with the camps.

Q: THEY DIDN'T DO ANY EXPERIMENTS IN THERE?

A: No, not in Dachau, no fortunately. In Auschwitz I think they did, but not in--

Q: HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN THERE?

A: Until May actually ^A April of--end of April of 1945, and then we marched to wherever they were going to take us to the Tyrolian Mountains. I didn't know what they were going to do whether they didn't want leave any evidence or they wanted to destroy us. I don't know why they marched us. I don't know or they were going to retrench somewhere make some slave labor and build some trenches for them, I don't know. The last day's of the war--

Q: DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT AMERICANS IN--

A: Yeah, I heard about American, sure we heard the Americans are coming, that's why they marched.

Q: YOU KNEW ABOUT THAT?

A: Oh, we knew about the Americans. We heard also about the Normandy invasion. We heard because the Germans were they said, you know, we were mad. The Jews, you know the armies they used to, so we heard about it but you know, it was so--first of all nobody even thought how the transition is going to take place from concentration to freedom. You just--it was so far away but everybody was hoping for a miracle because you just--and it was just how you get out how your going to get out of it, because the time in the concentration camp we knew there's no way but the only thing like I said is hope. Maybe at least five percent of hope, maybe, maybe, maybe. And that's why people there were--^{alot} alot of people committed suicide in the camps.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER AND BROTHER?

A: Okay, after the liberation they were in different camps. And after the liberation several months afterwards my cousin, a cousin who was with my mom, found out he went to where we were in a ^{sp} (depeech) camp and told us that they did not survive. They were in a camp in Poland and they were marching also and see, where they were the Russians came in and they were going to be liberated sooner.

But, see they in the end of marching she died, just two days before the Russian liberations my mother was gased and apparently cremated in one of the camps, because I found out from a young man who was also with my brother who also survived, he said that he's been gased and cremated.

Q: AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT CAMP, YOU NEVER FOUND IT?

A: No, I don't know what camp it was. As a matter of fact, I think my cousin in Isreal knows. I could find out very easily what camp it was but I never found out.

Q: AND YOUR FATHER AND MY FATHER DIED IN '66? YOU WERE LIBERATED TOGETHER?

A: Together, yes. And then we moved from there to a place called (Batilt) in Bavaria. And from (Batilt) I went to a place called (Santatilia). I went to a place called (Santatilia) which was a sanitarium from Nazi officers during the war and the people who where weak like ninety-eight, ninety-six pounds like me were taken there for recupertion. And I got recuperated and my dad visited me there, and I said, "I'm feeling better now, well, let's go back to Lithuania." and he said, "why would you want to go back to Lithuania, and I said, "well, to see the family". He says, "I don't think anybody is there". He said let's go back to the United States. And he had contacted his brother. He has a lot of family in New York.

Q: YOUR FATHER'S BROTHER?

A: Yeah, because they left right after the First World War. So, we made contact, and the Lithuanian quoto was very very small, extremely small because it was like four or five years, so what I thought was, well, if I have to stay here four or five years, I may as well go to school in Germany. So I went to Munich and I inquired about the university and they told me to get a tutor to prepare me for a college entrance examine, and I did and I entered the University of Munich.

Q: YOU WENT TO SCHOOL IN GERMANY?

A: Yes.

Q: COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE LIBERATION A LITTLE BIT MORE FOR US TO THIS DAY OF YOUR COMING?

A: Well, the thing is, it is so overwhelming that people didn't believe it. Most people were undernourished started eating a lot and they died within two or three days. And they just completely died, their system couldn't handle it all of that rich food.

Q: THE AMERICANS DIDN'T REALIZE IT?

A: The first time they saw white bread and chocolate and everything, it's ^{tra}umatic for me I get very choked up when I think of the liberation. It was just the feeling I can't describe. Here from utter destruction and complete enslavement, and death, and life again, you know.

Q: WAS YOUR FATHER PHYSICALLY VERY MUCH RUN DOWN LIKE YOU WERE?

A: No, not as much as I ^{was} were. I was run down because of pneumonia, I didn't get enough weight back and he was, he went to a place called (Feldafane) ^{SR} which was a displaced persons camp and I came there also right after (Santafilia) ^{SR} and on weekends. I stayed with him and it was so new just like you start a new life.

Q: IT WAS LIKE A MIRACLE HAPPENED.

A: Yeah. And after that I tried to forget everything happened, just completely get it out of my mind refresh it and just--I didn't want to think about it. People asked me after I came to the United States what happened, it was so horrible. I didn't really believe it myself and just-- I wanted that part completely to disappear. I suppressed it completely which I realize now was wrong. I didn't talk to my kids.

Q: THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG.

A: No, I think the psychiatrists are finding out now the people who talked about it didn't ^{have} any problems the ones, who didn't talk about it, who

suppressed it in their subconscious had problems and nightmares and any kind of horror things they couldn't watch.. I can't watch things on television to this day. I mean like the more remembrance, everytime I see something I have to walk away, not only that, but any kind of a tragedy, any kind of one human being hurting another human being I can't watch it. I never talked to my kids about it, absolutely not.

Q: NOW THEY WATCH TV?

A: Now, I'm beginning to talk about it and think about it and deal with it so what I'm saying is that these psychiatrists and psychologists are finding out the people who talked about it had no problems. The people who didn't talk about it didn't want to burden the children or make them suffer, those are the ones who sent through all kinds of depression and physical ailments, and so forth. They didn't know though how to handle it, now it's coming out, thirty, forty years later. They have the data but in the beginning they didn't know what to do.

Q: IF IT'S NOT TOO DIFFICULT I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT THE TIME OF THE LIBERATION, IN TERMS OF WHERE PEOPLE WERE, HOW AND WHAT THE RELATION WAS?

A: Well, the first thing was, we woke up in the morning and the guards were gone and we didn't know what had happened. And very shortly the American Red Cross came and told us Germans have gone, we caught some of them and then later on the soldiers from the third army came and they started giving us food and chocolate. They didn't believe how people looked. Some of them had seen them but the majority hadn't and they were just overwhelmed. We starting hugging them and kissing them and just completely overwhelmed. They didn't know what to say or what to do, because it's a feeling that you can't describe. It's just absolutely--you have to relive it in order to experience

it in order to describe it.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THE AMERICANS MADE THE GERMANS CARRY THE CORPS, DID YOU?

A: In the camps, no, I didn't because we were already away from it, we didn't go back to the camps but they made them carry the corps, the ones that they didn't burn would get a chance to burn after.

Q: THEN YOU WENT TO MUNICH, WHAT DID YOU STUDY IN MUNICH?

A: Electronics, called (hovern) in German. I was going to teach math through electronic engineers. I wanted to be a doctor, but I learned it was too long a study. So, I studied electronics and I graduated, I came to the United States. It just so happened the same year I came to the United States in 1949.

Q: WAS IT UNDER A LITHUANIAN QUOTO YOU HAD TO WAIT?

A: I had to wait two years a little bit or four years.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER?

A: Well, he came, two weeks after me he came.

Q: WHAT DID HE DO DURING THE FOUR YEARS?

A: Well, you know, they the (unkra) kind of supported the displaced persons and and here they didn't work, I mean just worked in a displaced person camp. He was there working, helping out and doing voluntary work. It took you know, a lot of the people dealt in the black market. A lot of them to make some money would buy and sell and things came to America and they would buy from the Germans, sell you know just to get back to a life.

Q: WHEN YOU CAME TO AMERICA, WHAT WAS THE DATE?

A: It was June 13th, 1949.

Q: WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

A: Landed in New York. My uncle picked me up and they took me in and my uncle had three children, and I stayed with them for quite a long time.

Q: DID YOU TALK TO YOUR UNCLE ABOUT THOSE THINGS THAT HAPPENED?

A: They didn't ask me questions, they heard it was very bad and they didn't want to traumatize me again. They were very careful, they didn't want to upset me. And like I said they asked--things were so bad I didn't believe what I went through myself. Maybe I told him some small incidences, but I didn't go into great detail, like I am telling you now.

Q: WOULD YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY IF THEY HAD EXPRESSED MORE DESIRE TO KNOW WHAT YOU AT THIS POINT HAVE FELT LIKE TALKING WITH YOU AT ALL?

A: No, because I just want to forget so much so badly I changed my name from (Murshare) to Murray, like that thing did not exist. I didn't want to be different, because things were so differnt I didn't even want to associate with that.

Q: YOU WANTED TO BLEND IN?

A: Blend in like a normal American life, be like everybody else.

Q: YOU STAYED IN NEW YORK?

A: I stayed in New York for one year. I worked for CBC Columbia, as an engineer, and then my vacation time came and I came out to California because I had a cousin that moved to California and so I came out to visit and I liked California, better than New York so I never went back.

Q: WHEN YOU CAME TO AMERICA, DID YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?

A: In school, we took English but in all, you take two years of English. The way I learned English was by watching television day and night just sitting and watching Hopel and Cassidy, in those days. I took some course at the Brooklyn College, some course in economics and literature but, I couldn't converse in English, I mean, I was broken English, so--

Q: YOU CAME TO CALIFORNIA--

A: Came to Claifornia and never went back. The Korean war started and CBC Columbia called me because they were doing some work for the Navy, and they needed

me and they said you would be exempt from the draft but I took my chances, and didn't go back.

Q: YOU DIDN'T GO IN THE ARMY?

A: No.

Q: WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A: 1951.

Q: IS YOUR WIFE FROM HERE?

A: No, my wife is American, born and raised in Oakland and--

Q: DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

A: Three daughters, old man now, six grandchildren, and again the daughters right now I'm beginning to talk to them about it because, I in the past I was trying to protect them and they were trying to protect me and this is probably a very syndrome of Holocaust children survivors.

Q: ABSOLUTELY.

A: Because when your traumatized so badly, you don't want to bring it up again.

Q: SO, THEY KNEW BUT THEY DIDN'T--

A: Oh, they knew, but they never asked me they knew what was going on, they heard about it from other places but not directly from me. Dad, what did you do, tell me what you experienced during the war, what happened, never asked me.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR WIFE?

A: She never asked me, maybe bits and peices^{ie} I mean, incidences but never until about like I said maybe ~~two~~^{two} months ago the first time by an urging of my therapist. He said, why don't you talk to her and tell her it took about an hour, and I just told her about the liberation, that's when I broke down. Now, my middle daughter wants to talk about it but she doesn't want to hear the bad things she can't handle it. She's a lawyer, she's very compassionate. She feels for people and she couldn't handle the bad things, just tell me your experiences,

your feelings but not the killings of the babies and shootings and burning of the live people, so forth.

Q: DID YOU GET ANY RESTITUTION FOR--

A: I think in the fifties, they had a restitution not ^{that} that much, maybe a couple thousand dollars.

Q: FROM THE GERMANS?

A: From the Germans, yeah, that's about all. My dad got some but I know that a lot of people who could claim with properties. And Germany, they got quite a bit but I didn't want to get involved.

Q: DID IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, DID IT MEAN ANYTHING?

A: Well, no amount of money could justify or compensate what you went through. It was more from them they're gesture of washing their hands clean. But, that really was as far as I know they gave a lot to Isreal, West Germany businesses, ^{have} as in a lot of money and so forth.

Q: DID THEY CONTACT YOU OR DID YOU CONTACT THEM?

A: I think there was an attorney in New York who handled things for a lot of survivors, I think my dad told me about it and I wrote to them and I think he handled it. He took--his fee was quite small, I don't even remember how much it was, in the early fifties, mid-fifty.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO--

A: Yes, I was in Germany about fifteen years ago. I went to Munich and where I used to live and went to the school.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FEELING THEN?

A: Well, like I said, during this whole time I had no--it was just like visiting another city. It wasn't the same Munich because Munich was really known to me after the war not during the war. And still I had quite an animosity with the Germans, because I felt you know, when I was first liberated, I used to

look at every German as if he were involved whether he was or not. And they would say, no, we didn't know anything about it, we didn't know it was going on.

So, when I came to the United States, and I had talked to some Americans with German names, in my mind, I would imagine if they were there would they hide Jews or would they kill Jews. This is what went through my mind in those days.

Q: WHEN YOU WERE IN GERMANY, HOW LONG WERE YOU OVER THERE WHEN YOU WERE VISITING?

A: In Munich?

Q: YEAH.

A: Oh, about three days.

Q: OH, VERY SHORT.

A: Yes.

Q: I JUST WONDERED--

A: My wife was very uncomfortable, and so was I, uncomfortable. We went from there and to South Berlin and was uncomfortable there too.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT. WAS AUSTRIA VERY UNCOMFORTABLE TOO?

A: Yeah, because I remember walking down the street and it was ⁱⁿ the early seventies and some young Austrian boy was walking by Jan, and I and we were speaking in English and he said, "American ()" and he spit on the sidewalk. So, we got out of there and then also last year I went back to the Soviet Union and Lithuania and went back to my hometown and Kovno and I found the house where I lived before the war and the school I went to and of course things have changed. Also, I went to the monument for the Nineth Fort, where they killed all those people. The Seventh Fort doesn't have a monument but the Nineth Fort has a tremendous monument and it says in Russian and Lithuanian, there are eight thousand Soviet citizens that were killed here by the Nazi Soviets but there are eight thousand Jews, everybody was ^{mentioned} said but not the Jews. And I also went to ^{SP} (Riga) where they had in (Salaspils) a memorial. There is Soviet citizens most

all of them were Jews that were killed. There is a place there in ^{SP}(Riga) in ^{SP}(Salispil) in that area a memorial for the children. The Germans killed seven thousand children and took the blood for their soldiers, blood transfers from the children. They drained them that's what the guide told us.

Q: WHAT WAS THE FEELING OF THE LITHUANIANS WHAT IMPRESSIONS DID YOU GET?

A: Well, the ones that we came in contact with were very young girls very sympathetic, very pleasant. Of course in their twenties, late twenties, so they didn't know what happened and everything that ^{we}they felt, so I haven't experienced anything. Of course they knew we were Jewish and took us to some fo the places where the memorials were and we asked them about what happened to the Jews and they told us everything that they knew. But I sensed, I know the Lithuanians, themselves are very nationalistic and hardly any of them were Jews.

Then we ^{had} a hundred and twenty synagogues, only one synagogue was left. Kovno didn't have any synagogues left. Well, the synagogue I belonged to is still ^{here} here but it's opened only once or twice a ^{week} week, and was boarded up.

Q: HOW MANY JEWS DO YOU THINK ARE LEFT IN KOVNO?

A: Well, about maybe twenty-five thousand Jews, maybe fifteen thousand in ^{SP}(Vilés) and about ten thousand in Kovno. But, see a lot of them are not Lithuanian Jews, they are Russian Jews, who came from Russia who were resettling. Also a lot of Russians were resettling into Lithuania and Russia and Estonia, and they were resettling from the--so of course also the Jews were resettled. There are very few Lithuanian Jews left. When we were in ^{SP}(Vilés) one the men, who was in the synagogue going there told us the whole story. I recorded this, I put it on tape.

Q: COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT IT?

A: Well, he told us what has happened in the various communities in

Lithuania, how the Germans killed most of the people. What has happened, but see, I knew that already because I had the book in Yiddish, which was written in West Germany after the war by some Lithuanian, one a rabbi, and one is just an author. The description of Kovno and also the destruction of Lithuania, of the Jewish Lithuania, it goes by the various towns by towns, how it was destroyed. I'm sure the Holocaust victims must have a book on that, yeah, I have had this book for maybe, twenty-five, thirty years. I got it through the museum and I used glance at it and I couldn't read it, and I would just put it away. Finally, about a month ago, I forced myself to read it. And I cried and read it and cried and it refreshed all those things, such as various incidences which I didn't want to go through. I'm sure the various things that happened like in the Ninth Fort, where they were killing the people and putting them in big holes, trenches and then they decided that they didn't want to leave any kind of trace of it so they got Jews to burn them and we used to smell the trenches in the ghetto because this was maybe five or six miles away from the ghetto. We didn't know who they were burning and we knew they were humans. And in the evening, we would see the smoke going up in the evening and then these people escaped. The Jews who were burning them decided on Christmas night they were going to escape, and they took sheets to disguise themselves in the white snow. And it was snowing and they escaped and a lot of them were caught and shot, and a lot of them disappeared into the undergrounds. And we knew from there where they were going. We thought that the Jews that were taken from the ghettos were liquidated. There was no resettling. There was a lot of incidents where the Germans used to go on a spree and grab people at random from the streets, from the houses, take them in vans and just take them to the Fort and shoot them. Just if they had had a bad day on the front they used to take it out on Jews.

Q: DID THE GERMANS HAVE DOGS?

A: Oh, yeah, used to sniff out and look for the people hiding or under the

attics, dogs would sniff them out.

Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW HAVING TALKED ABOUT THIS?

A: Well, I feel better but still you can't get rid of this repressed feeling by telling it once or twice. Like I say it's so deep, forty-five years you know, your traumatized, like anything else. If a woman gets raped she will remember it for the rest of her life, she doesn't want to think about it so it's something that's in you. I don't have any nightmares anymore. I used to get them quite often, oh, maybe ten years ago, the Germans were chasing me or something like that. But, that's, you know, I started thinking about this mostly when my last daughter got married. In other words, by association, I lost my family during the war here I started raising a family all of the sudden their gone so, you ^{start} start thinking, and also the same time my first grandchild was born. And when he was born I started associating it with what happened to babies and children during the war. And I started getting depressed and think about it and I didn't know why this was bothering me. Any trigger would set me off something and for weeks at a time I would just feel real down and I didn't know what it was.

Q: THAT HADN'T HAPPENED TO YOU WITH YOUR OWN GIRLS?

A: No, it didn't happen with my own girls, and the reason I think why it didn't happen because, you're starting to raise a family and a new family created something new and also you start making a living and building something, you didn't have time to think about those things, especially this was a time when I wanted to forget all those things. The desire not to think about it was so strong it didn't dent my mind, not with my own girls, but with the grandchildren--I can remember the picture of two of my grandchildren ^{they} it must have been three years old, two and a half years old, sitting there with their nice blue coats just smiling, and right when I first saw the picture I thought about how the children were being resettled. You know their going to the ghetto and didn't know it in their nice

little suits, because the Germans said get your best clothes^{es} and this^{is} the first thing that entered into my mind, what happened to the Jewish children during the war.

Q: DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

A: Yes, well, I believe in a supreme being, maybe not the God in the bible^B.

Q: WELL, I JUST WONDERED IF YOU HAD LOST YOUR FAITH AT ONE TIME?

A: Well, I feel that the way I believe that God has nothing to do with it. Man has done it. I believe in the supreme intelligence that created the world. I don't think he's responsible for every atrocity or good thing or bad thing that happens to mankind.

Q: HAVE YOU EVER MET ANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE WITH YOU IN CAMP, DID YOU MAKE FRIENDS THERE?

A: No, I didn't associate^{de} with them, I didn't want to be reminded. We went to Israel in the mid-seventies, I looked up a friend I went to school with, he had a bakery, the family had a bakery in Kovno. And they all--he had the bakery in (Jerusalem^{sp}). Now it's called (Kapostee^{sp}) and then of course in while I was in Germany, I associated with some people when I was in camp and when I was in the ghetto. And then I came here, and lost contact. I was in New York, there was still a few but then when I came to California I just completely lost contact^{co} with any of the-- oh, I have some friends, I had some friends who were survivors but not that many. And I didn't know from before just--I met here through the Temple, through social gatherings.

Q: SO, YOU CONTINUE TO PRACTICE JEWISH?

A: Oh, yes, we go to the Temple, (Sinai^{sp}), which is a reform group. We belonged to a conservative (Beth Abraham) we went to (Sinai^{sp}) and I go to the Temple on holidays, and I say (Yortish^{sp}) with my father, and at this Temple right here because I live so close by, it's a, I mean, like I said I haven't lost faith in God, because I feel

it's--even some people say why do we ask God for forgiveness in (Yon Kipper) for your sin? Why doesn't God ask for forgiveness for his sins? --Good question.

Q: MURRAY, DO YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGE FOR US?

A: Message to who to everybody?

Q: TO EVERYBODY.

A: Well, first of all I think this think should continue, you've done a wonderful job by keeping this thing alive, so the world doesn't forget this is happening, because there's a lot of atrocity that's happened in the history of mankind. The Crusades, there was the ^W war of ^T the ^R roses, religious war, then we had Stalin killed by two or three million of the Russians on (^{SP} Peans) of course the Turks killed Ameneans, the Holocaust, six million Jews then (Amid ^{SP}) and Ghandi killed about a hundred thousand in (Ghanda ^{SP}), and it still is going on, Etheopia, there killing.

Q: IN CAMBODIA.

A: In Cambodia, yes. In Nicaragua, El Salvador, it's going on and most of the atrocities are for religious purposes or economic purposes. But to kill six million Jews, I think was the worst atrocity that ever happened. I think it's our duty and everybody's duty to let people know so this doesn't happen again, because, it could very easily happen again. I mean very easily, it could even happen in this country.

Q: TO JEWS OR TO ANYONE?

A: Look at the ^{SP} (neonazis) up in Oregon.

Q: IT'S A TIMELY QUESTION, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT GERMAN UNIFICATION?

A: I'm against unification. I feel ^{that} the wall is a symbol of what the Germans have done I was even against taking the wall away. Sure, let them cross but I don't think Germany should be united, because right now West Germany is its strongest economic power in Europe and especially by getting reunited with East

Germany. Their national pride is going to be paramount again and their going to do the same thing or at least in danger of doing the same thing as they did before. Listen to the First World War, The Second World War, it's like that they feel that they are better than anyone else even though this generation is different and you can't blame the children for the sins of their fathers' but still it's in them, right, I feel it's a--

Q: DID YOU FEEL THAT WAY WHEN YOU WENT BACK, WHEN YOU WERE VISITING?

A: Well, when I went back, they weren't as strong as they were now, I know I feel more so right now because this thing with the relaxing the tension in Eastern Europe or at least changing it's a--tremendous, it's good like for people to have freedom like Czechoslovakia and Poland and Romania and things are more relaxed. The Soviet Union, the Jews will be able to leave but I think(Gorbachav) has done an excellent job, he's the first Russian leader who is truly sincere and interested in the people. He isn't into keeping the few elite, you know, in power and just have the person privileges. So I think ^{that} he is great, I mean, I believe in him I think this country should give him all of the support that we can and maybe he should even get the noble peace prize because he's a humanitarian.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THAT YOU CAN THINK OF? ANYMORE QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT?

WELL, I THINK IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO TALK ABOUT FEELINGS YOU HAD, YOU KNOW, WHAT PEOPLE FELT WHEN THE GERMANS CAME IN WHAT THEY FELT WHEN YOU HEARD, YOU KNOW, ALL THE THINGS THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, THAT THEY'RE GOING TO LOOSE THEIR JOBS AND PUT THEM IN A PRISON CAMP.

A: But, it's kind of hard to say what you felt 45 years ago.

Q: YOU WERE TOO YOUNG?

A: I was fifteen when the war broke out, the first thing that I thought of was, gee, because we heard what was happening in Germany, was, gee, I can always go

fishing, and bringing food, that's the first think that entered my mind.

Q: FOOD?

A: Yeah, food because you need food for survival that's the only thing I can think of.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER, YOUR DAD, DID YOU TALK TO HIM AT ALL WHEN YOU SAW HIM AGAIN LATER ON IN AMERICA? YOU SAID HE DIED IN AMERICA?

A: He died in here in California, he died in '66.

Q: DID YOU TWO EVER TALK?

A: We talked about you know, we didn't really discuss the whole thing about how we felt, the only thing I remember was when right after the war, we were talking and my cousin came and said that my mom didn't survive and I was sitting in the room and he was coming and I seen the way he was crying that she didn't survive because after, then we were hoping and then we talked and we both got a cry and later on I found out my brother didn't survive either but you know, you were so hardened and traumatized that you didn't, I mean, tears were so hard to come by--just really you were--it's hard to describe, I mean you didn't break down completely like right now you'd break down and really mourn for a long time. You ^{just} feel a, let's go on with our life, I mean you have to give it enough time to mourn properly. There are lots of people like me just like me who go on with their life and ^{who} doesn't think about it and eventually it catches up with you and you have to bring it out.

Q: DID YOU HAVE A FEELING OF GUILT FOR HAVING SURVIVED?

A: Well, I talked to my therapist, he said I didn't feel guilt I didn't have any guilt and he says it's a common survivor's syndrome. People feel guilt because they ^{have} survived and their loved ones have not survived and then I say, to myself ^f it I wouldn't have survived I wouldn't have helped them so in other words, I survived so I can tell the story and continue the line or something to my children.

So, he says everybody has guilty feelings and the only guilty feelings I have which I think I have is before the evacuation ^{of} the ghetto. Instead of staying with my parents, I elected to stay with the people from the underground and to justify it in my mind I'm saying what could I have done? Here I was with young people, I had a chance to survive my mom and little brother, and uncle, I mean what good would it have done if I died with them at that time I thought, if I rationalized it.

Q: THEY WERE NOT HIDING?

A: Well, they were hiding but still ^{stead} inside of hiding, ~~with~~ them, I elected to hide with them. I elected to hide with the underground. You know, when I say them, I felt guilty I had a guilty conscious that's when I felt guilty and this was the only guilt.

Q: HOW DID THEY REACT TO SEEING YOU AGAIN?

A: Well, they were glad to see me but I'm sure they would have been happier if I would have stayed there and ^{not} been discovered and you know, parents want the best for their children but that's about the only guilt that I feel I have and up to this day, I still feel guilty for not being with them even though it wouldn't have made any differece but it's something which is in me.

Q: I HAVE A FEELING YOU, PRETTY MUCH KNOW YOURSELF NOW?

A: Yeah, I know myself I mean sometimes there's feelings that come^s up ^{and} that I analyze it and I think about it and you know, you've got to think about it and you've got to think why am I feeling this way. I'm beginning to read about the Holocaust and the way the past completely ignored it. I got some literature about experiences from psychiatrists and psychologists for dealing with the Holocaust survivors. The ones who dealt with the operations. They had to interview them. They have the documentations by German psychiatrists and German psychologists by interviewing these people. The guilty feelings, and the physical symptoms and the emotional symptoms.

Q: YOU NO WHAT INTERESTS ME IS AT THE AGE YOU WERE, AT SUCH A CRUCIAL AGE

A FIFTEEN YEAR OLD BOY HAS JUST COME INTO A SENSE OF POWER AND WHAT YOU MENTIONED ABOUT LIKE HOW WELL, WE WILL EAT OFF OF FISH. I'M JUST SORT OF WONDERING OTHER WAYS THAT YOU--IT IMPACTED YOU AS AN ADOLESCENT BOY AND HOW IT MAY HAVE, YOU KNOW, WHAT THE FAMILY'S INTERACTIONS WERE, YOU KNOW WERE LIKE UNDER ALL THAT?

A: You mean during the Germans, well, I tried to get some work that you could help out in the family because you know, the ghetto there wasn't that much to eat but still I used to trade here and there. Finally you got something but well, it still was a feeling of survival, it was very strong. It paramounted and Jews have always hoped you know because they weren't sure, a lot of the time. It was real bad in pogroms in Eastern Europe and they helped them. So, to answer your question, the feelings that I had was, sure I want to protect my family but then I felt that if I'm with them and if the old parish what good is it going to do so, protect them as much as I can and be with them and beyond that there's nothing I can do and that's why I justify. Maybe, in my mind that I maybe had a better chance of surviving by being with the people from the underground. So, it just turned out that one of the people that was with me was the leader of the whole underground movement in our area. Which I found out by reading the book that I have. They were against Americans apparently, and he survived. But he was also in Dachau with us and after the liberation he went back to Lithuania and I don't know if he is still alive or what. So it's--

Q: I THINK WER'RE VERY GREATFUL FOR HAVING YOU SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US.

A: Well, I hope it will help somebody.

Q: A GREAT CONTRIBUTION .

A: I hope so.

Q: WE THANK YOU.

A: Well, the main thing is now to learn how to deal with it and that

it could help others to learn to deal with it because you know, it's traumatic. Some can deal with it some cannot. I think it would be very rewarding to me to know that I could help somebody.

Q: ABSOLUTELY, ABSOLUTELY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH, IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE TALKING TO YOU.

A: Okay.