

Interview with Martin Becker
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Q. WOULD YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU WERE BORN, WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

SP- A. I was born in (Carlsery) in Germany, in 1927, and then in
1938 my parents and two brothers, I had one more brother, we
SI went to (Biernestock), Poland.

Q. LET ME JUST ASK YOU, WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

SP- A. I went to (Biernestock) two years. And then in
concentration camp, I didn't go to school. Only I went back
to the United States did went to school.

SI Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU WENT TO (BIERNESTOCK)?

A. I was about 9 years old.

Q. AND THE FIRST NINE YEARS, YOU DID NOT GO TO ANY SCHOOL?

A. I went to school in (Carlsery), in kinderschool.

Q. I'D LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF YOUR FAMILY. WHERE YOU RELIGIOUS? WHERE YOU AN ORTHODOX FAMILY?

A. My mother was orthodox. My mother was violinist, she played on the violin, and my father was a dentist.

Q. DID YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

A. Yes.

Q. HOW MANY?

A. One brother, in Israel.

Q. I SEE. HE IS OLDER THAN YOU ARE?

A. Older, oh, yes.

Q. SO YOU SPENT NINE YEARS IN (Carlsery)

A. Yes.

Q. AND WHY DID YOU GO TO (Biernestock)?

A. To China, to go away, 1938.

Q. YOU WANTED TO IMMIGRATE?

A. My parents . . .

Q. . . . YOUR PARENTS, OF COURSE, YOUR PARENTS.

A. They wanted to leave Germany.

Q. THE WHOLE FAMILY, THAT IS THERE WAS FOUR OF YOU?

A. Yes.

Q. DID YOU HAVE A LOT OF AUNTS AND UNCLES?

A. Oh yes, very much.

Q. DID YOU HAVE A HAPPY CHILDHOOD, DURING THOSE NINE YEARS?

A. Yes, yes, I had a happy childhood. Everything was normal and the grandfather, grandmother and then Hitler came and we had to leave.

Q. BUT AT NINE YEARS OLD YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF WHAT HITLER WAS?

A. A little bit, I was aware.

Q. SO, YOU WENT TO (BIERNESTOCK) AND WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

A. In (Biernestock), we came in 1938. My parents didn't speak Polish and it was very bad. Then the Russians came in in 1939 and then in '41, the Germans came. My father worked, not as a dentist, but as a laborer because he didn't speak the language.

Q. HOW DID YOU LIVE IN (BIERNESTOCK)?

A. We lived in a Jewish neighborhood. It was a tough life. Bread and potatoes. was the life.

Q. WHAT DID YOUR MOTHER DO?

A. Nothing.

Q. SHE, I SUPPOSE, HAD TROUBLE FINDING FOOD?

A. Oh, yes, but we managed. I mean we didn't have very, very good food. Bread and potatoes.

Q. YOU DID NOT GO HUNGRY?

A. No.

Q. THERE WAS NO SCHOOL FOR YOU?

A. I went to school in (Biernestock). Yes.

Q. WHAT LANGUAGE DID YOU SPEAK?

A. Polish. I learned to speak Polish, Yiddish.

Q. WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL WAS IT?

A. A Jewish Hebrew school.

Q. AND YOUR BROTHER WENT TO THE SAME SCHOOL?

A. Same school.

Q. AND YOUR FATHER WORKED AS A LABORER?

A. A laborer, yes.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT . . .

A. He used to work in the street, clean up. Any job he could get hold.

Q. WHERE YOU AWARE OF ANY ANTI-SEMITISM AT THE TIME?

A. I lived in a Jewish neighborhood and we never went out from the Jewish neighborhood. But there was anti-semitism in Poland. There was.

Q. DID YOUR PARENTS DISCUSS THAT WITH YOU AT ALL? THE POLITICAL SITUATION?

A. No, I was too young.

sp Q. YOU WERE TOO YOUNG. HOW LONG WERE YOU IN (BIERNESTOCK)?

A. Three years.

sp Q. WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU SAY YOU FINISHED, THEN, IN (BIERNESTOCK)?

A. I finished altogether maybe three, four years of school.

sp Q. FROM (BIERNESTOCK), WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

A. Germans came in and we were in ghetto, the ghetto.

Q. THEY MADE A GHETTO?

A. Yeah. And the ghetto was very bad, very bad. Then we all went, my parents went to Treblinka and got killed at Treblinka.

Q. BUT TELL ME A LITTLE BIT MORE. HOW IT WAS LIKE IN THE GHETTO AT THAT TIME?

A. Life in the ghetto was miserable.

Q. TELL US ALITTLE BIT, DAY BY DAY . . .

A. Day by day, there was nothing to eat. It was hunger. You couldn't get out from the ghetto, only to work. Me and my brother used to go to work on the other side, cleaning up from the war.

Q. COULD YOU GET OUT OF THE GHETTO?

A. We couldn't get out, but they took us to work.

Q. THE GERMANS.

A. The Germans.

Q. SCHOOL WAS FOR YOU?

A. School was finished.

Q. AND FOR YOUR BROTHER, TOO?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT DID YOUR MOTHER DO?

A. Nothing, just in the house.

Q. AND YOUR FATHER KEPT ON WORKING AS A LABORER?

A. As a laborer. He used to go outside of the ghetto to work, too. But from the war, they had to clean up the bricks. And then we could buy from the Polish bread, a couple potatoes, carrots.

Q. DID THEY PAY YOU WHEN YOU WORKED?

A. No, never.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET YOUR MONEY?

A. Now that you ask me, I don't even know myself. I forgot the money.

Q. YOU MUST HAVE HAD MONEY TO BUY FOOD OR DID YOU BARTER,
DID YOU TRADE?

Q60 A. No, we trade. We sold my father's pants, my father's
jacket and some other we had. Then we got some
money and we got something to eat.

Q. GOING BACK TO YOUR HOME. WHERE YOUR PARENTS WELL-TO-DO,
MIDDLE-CLASS OR HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PARENTS MONEY-
WISE?

A. Money-wise, they weren't well-to-do.

Q. COULD YOUR MOTHER TAKE SOME JEWELS ALONG WHEN YOU FLED
FROM (BIERNESTOCK)?

Q. A. When we came to (Biernestock)?

Q. WHEN YOU CAME . . .

Q. A. I don't remember very much, I was so young, but I think
she had something from my grandmother and the jewelry my
father bought for her. This keeps us in ghetto going. A
watch she sold.

Q. EXACTLY, THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING. SO, HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE GHETTO?

A. The ghetto, we were two years.

Q. WHERE YOU PHYSICALLY ABUSED AT ALL?

A. By the Germans?

Q. BY THE GERMANS.

A. All the time. Kicked and everything.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE FOR ME A DAY IN THE GHETTO, CAN YOU STILL REMEMBER THAT?

A. The ghetto . . .

Q. HOW YOU LIVED . . .

A. We lived very bad.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE IT?

A. It was cold. There was no wood to make warm. There was a miserable life. Your family was alone, you didn't have no friends. You didn't mix with others because everybody had

lots of problems, how to get food. So it was very bad, very bad.

Q. YOU HAD ONE ROOM FOR ALL OF YOU?

A. One room for four.

Q. WAS THERE A BATHROOM ATTACHED?

sp A. No. There was no bathroom. In (Galvestock), it was all primitive, the life.

Q. THE WINTERS MUST HAVE BEEN VERY HARD.

A. The winters were awful, cold. In the winter you used to go to bed, to cover, about 5 o'clock.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET YOUR FURNITURE?

A. We didn't have no furniture.

Q. BUT YOU MUST HAVE HAD A BED TO SLEEP IN.

A. No, there were couches. It was a bed, if you could call it a bed.

Q. DID YOU STAY HEALTHY?

A. When you're young, 10, 12-years-old, you stay healthy. With me, I was healthy. But my parents were another thing. They were old. They weren't old, but they were old and disappointed in life. There was no life. I don't know how to explain this. Very, very bad.

Q. YOU COULDN'T MAKE ANY FRIENDS IN YOUR AGE GROUP?

A. There wasn't the time to make friends. Everybody was hungry. You couldn't come up to your friends, to somebody's house because they were so tired, they were in one room, living so much people. In a room the size of my kitchen, was be living two, three families. Somebody who lived in a room like it was happy.

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOUR PARENTS AT THE TIME, DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

A. My mother was born in 1909, I remember that. My father, I don't remember. She must have been 33, 32, 31, something like that.

Q. AFTER THREE YEARS, YOU SAID YOU WERE THREE YEARS YOU STAYED IN THE GHETTO . . .

A. Yes. Two years we stayed in the ghetto . . .

Q. TWO YEARS, THAT BROUGHT YOU UP TO 1940?

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A. In '41, the Russians came in and went out in '41. The Germans kicked out the Russians. It was German and it was Russian. So in '41, the Germans came in and until 1942 we thought we were in ghetto. The Germans made a ghetto when they came in, in '41.

Q. IN '41. THE GERMANS CAME IN. AND YOU STAYED THERE TWO YEARS, SO THAT WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY . . .

A. Until 1942, '42. Something like that.

Q. SO WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

A. Then they took the Jews out to Auschwitz. Most to Treblinka. Most of the Jews went to Treblinka.

Q. DID YOU KNOW ANYTHING AT THAT TIME? I KNOW YOU WERE VERY YOUNG, DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THE CAMPS?

A. No, nothing. We didn't know nothing. When the people would come out of the ghetto and into the train, but the train was cattle cars. It filled up and you couldn't move in the car, in the train. So, the train was going. They took the two of us out, and the last train was young ones, to

work. And I was separated from my parents, me and my brother. They put us in a special train and then when they came to Treblinka, They cart up wagons and the rest went into the camp.

Q. WHEN DID YOU SEE YOUR PARENTS THE LAST TIME?

A. The last time was in 1942 in (Galvestock).

Q. IN THE GHETTO . . .

A. In the ghetto, yes.

Q. WHERE YOU ALL TAKEN TOGETHER ON THE TRAIN?

A. No.

Q. WHO WAS TAKEN FIRST?

A. The old people and the children . . .

Q. THE SMALL CHILDREN . . .

A. The small children.

Q. YOU WERE NOT CONSIDERED A SMALL CHILD?

A. No, I was 11 years old.

Q. AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OUT OF IT, WHERE THESE TRAINS WENT TO . . .

A. Nothing, nothing.

Q. NOBODY EVER TALKED TO YOU . . .

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A. Nothing, nothing. Nobody knew nothing. That's the way (Galvestock) went. It was a good Jewish community there. Before the war in (Galvenstock), there were 60,000 Jews and all of them went to the oven, to the ovens. Very few people, really, from (Galvenstock), were born in (Galvenstock), survived the war. Very few.

SP
Q. YOU HAD NEVER BEEN TO (GALVENSTOCK) BEFORE, YOU CAME THERE THE FIRST TIME?

SP
A. No, no. We came to (Galvestock) to go to China. But the Russians didn't let us through to Moscow. So we got stuck in (Galvestock).

Q. YOU HAD A GERMAN PASSPORT?

A. We had a German passport, and I remember there was a 'J' on it, Juden, on the passport there.

Q. AND YOUR FATHER HAD TO TAKE ANOTHER NAME, RIGHT? ISRAEL?
YOU REMEMBER THAT?

A. I don't remember that.

Q. YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT. I UNDERSTAND THE NAZIS GAVE
EVERYBODY A SECOND NAME. YOU DON'T REMEMBER? OH, YOU WERE
VERY YOUNG AT THE TIME . . .

A. I think the Russians took away our passports.

Q. THEY DID.

A. Yeah.

Q. SO WHEN THE GERMANS CAME TO PICK UP YOUR PARENTS, TO TAKE
YOUR PATENTS AWAY, WERE YOU THERE?

132 A. the big place. They took, they picked, "You,
there, there, there, there," and in that way all the trained
got loaded.

Q. SO ACTUALLY, THEY DID NOT COME TO YOUR HOUSE?

A. No, no. All come to the place, to the big .

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Q. AND YOUR BROTHER STAYED WITH YOU?

A. Yes, all the time.

Q. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A COMFORT TO YOU, IN A WAY. YOU WERE TERRIBLY YOUNG WEREN'T YOU?

A. I was 11, 11 1/2 years old. My borther was 15.

Q. SO AFTER YOUR PARENTS LEFT ON THAT TRAIN, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU RIGHT THEN AND THERE?

A. Then we were in trains and they shipped us to Auschwitz.

Q. THE GERMANS CAME AND TOLD YOU TO GET INTO THOSE TRAINS?

A. Yes. Special trains. Not the old. This was a special train for younger Jews they would use for labor.

Q. WHO COULD WORK?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND DID YOU KNOW WHERE YOU WERE GOING?

A. No.

Q. THEY DIDN'T TELL YOU?

A. No.

Q. SO WHEN YOU WERE IN THE TRAIN . .

A. We were in the train about three days.

Q. THREE DAYS, IN THE CATTLE CAR?

A. Yeah. And then we came to Auschwitz.

Q. AND HOW WAS IT. THE TRAIN RIDE. DESCRIBE IT.

A. Awful. Awful

Q. I'D LIKE YOU TO DESCRIBE IT A LITTLE.

A. No toilets, it was so much people in one train you could hardly move. There was awful, awful even to think about it.

Q. BUT YOU SURVIVED THAT. YOU MANAGED TO GET SOME FOOD.

A. On the train, not. For three days we were hungry. When we came to Auschwitz we got some bread.

Q. WHEN THE TRAIN STOPPED, YOU KNEW YOU WERE IN AUSCHWITZ?

A. Because, yeah. We'd seen the sign, the sign Auschwitz.

Q. AND DID THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

A. It's a labor camp, I knew. I didn't know what was going on there.

Q. YOU DIDN'T.

A. No.

Q. SO WHEN YOU GOT OUT OF THE TRAIN COULD YOU DESCRIBE A LITTLE BIT. WHAT DID . . .

A. The train that took us there, barracks and they put us numbers on our hands and then they assigned us to work.

Q. DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHING? DID YOU HAVE TO TAKE SHOWERS? SHAVE, AT ALL?

A. No, I didn't shave. My brother didn't shave either. We didn't. The people who went to the crematorium, they took showers, supposed to take showers.

Q. RIGHT. RIGHT. YOU DIDN'T CHANGE YOUR CLOTHING?

A. No. Nothing.

Q. SO YOU WERE TAKEN TO WHERE?

A. To the barracks. We were assigned to our barrack and there was a piece of wood to sleep on it. No covers. At the time it was real cold and then every day they used to take people from us to the crematorium.

Q. DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CREMATORIUM?

166 A. Yes. because we seen the crematorium was burning at night.

Q. AND DID YOU KNOW WHAT WAS BURNING?

A. Yes.

Q. WHERE YOU WITH YOUR BROTHER?

A. Yes, all the time.

Q. WHAT KIND OF WORK DID YOU DO THERE?

A. We used to make from a big stone little stones, on the highway there. We used to clean toilets, do anything, shine shoes for the SS. Everything.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET YOUR FOOD?

A. Stealing it.

Q. HOW DID YOU MANAGE THAT?

A. Raw potatoes. We used to eat lots of raw potatoes. Just to keep going. And bread. We used to get a piece of bread every day and a little soup.

Q. DID YOU GET A CONTAINER TO EAT OUT OF?

176 A. Yeah. . We couldn't wash it. Everyday, it was eat, eat in the same container.

Q. BECAUSE YOU COULD NOT EAT YOUR SOUP WITHOUT A CONTAINER, COULD YOU?

A. These containers, we used to carry them in a sack and we couldn't wash it after you were finished eating. Just a little water.

Q. COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SANITARY CONDITIONS?

A. There was no sanitary conditions.

Q. HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT WASHING, OR DOING YOUR DAILY FUNCTIONS?

A. We didn't. We only had one pair of pants and one shirt. So, we didn't have nothing to be washed. The one I came in to Auschwitz the same one I went out with Auschwitz.

Q. HOW WERE THE TOILETS?

A. The toilets were for everybody. Four hundred toilet seats for .

Q. THERE WAS NO RUNNING WATER ANYWHERE?

A. There was running water, there was one faucet not far from the barracks. So you could wash your face sometimes. But you didn't have something to wipe it off.

Q. YOU DRANK THE WATER TOO, I SUPPOSE.

A. Yeah, sure.

Q. DID THE GERMANS MISTREAT YOU AT ALL?

A. Mistreat me? Ha! I used to get lots of 25 on my back.

Q. WAS THERE A REASON FOR IT AS FAR AS THEY WERE CONCERNED?

A. There really was no reason, but when you're Jewish and you're in concentration camp you are ready get beaten. Don't make a difference.

Q. DID YOU NOTICE AMONG THE JEWS ANYBODY WHO WENT WITH THE GERMANS OR WHAT THEY CALL KAPOs? DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

A. They didn't really make a difference, kapos, because they told me you should be the leader. They give you a bed, Kapo, but they didn't really have not power.

Q. NOT AT ALL.

A. Not at all. They were the same thing as anybody else. When they sent you to the crematory, they took everybody, everybody. Kapo, no Kapo.

Q. DID YOU TALK WITH THE GERMANS AT ALL? COULD YOU . . .

A. Couldn't even speak to them. I mean you never came in contact with them.

Q. THE PEOPLE WHO WERE WITH YOU, WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

267 A. In Auschwitz, there were people from all . . . I was in the Jewish lauger, Jewish camp. And there was from They were all from Poland. Some Jewish from Germany too, but very few.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE POLISH PEOPLE, THE POLISH JEWS WHO WERE THERE WHO COULDN'T SPEAK GERMAN?

A. The Polish Jews?

Q. YES.

A. They speak Yiddish. Yiddish is similar.

Q. BUT WHEN THE GERMAN ORDERED THEM TO DO CERTAIN THINGS . . .

A. So they did.

Q. THEY COULD UNDERSTAND?

A. Yes.

Q. ALL OF THEM?

A. All of them. Yes. They told the kapo what to do and the kapo told them, the people what to do.

Q. WHAT DID YOUR BROTHER DO?

A. Same thing I do.

Q. YOU WERE WITH HIM ALL THE TIME?

A. All the time. We got liberated together.

Q. DID YOU MANAGE TO PRAY? DID YOU FEEL LIKE PRAYING?

sp A. No, I never learned to pray because I was so young and my father wasn't such a man. I never learned to pray. I went to (Carlsberg) to synagogue a few times. But, no, I was not barmitzvaded, so I didn't know how to pray.

Q. DID YOU STAY HEALTHY?

A. Whether I was healthy or not, it didn't really make a difference. You just wanted to survive.

Q. RIGHT. BUT DID YOU HAVE ANY . . .

A. I had typhus. I had typhus.

Q. YOU HAD TYPHUS.

A. Yes, I had typhus in Auschwitz. This I remember, but I didn't say I had typhus because if you say you are sick you think this is over. I had typhus and I worked and I went to work, and in three or four days I was feeling better. In other words, you wanted to survive. You wanted to come through.

Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE, IN AUSCHWITZ?

A. In Auschwitz I was there 'til 1944. Then the Russians came close to Auschwitz and they shipped us to Dachau.

Q. HOW DID THAT GO ABOUT? CAN YOU DESCRIBE IT?

A. They took everybody. I was in the (kinderlaugen).

Q. AND YOUR BROTHER, TOO?

A. Yes.

Q. SO YOUR BROTHER WAS AT THAT TIME ABOUT 15 YEARS OLD, WASN'T HE?

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A. Yeah, he was about 4 years older than me, 3 1/2 years older. But he was still (kinderlaugen).

Q. SO YOU WERE REALLY FORTUNATE TO BE WITH YOUR BROTHER.

A. Yes.

Q. HE WASN'T TAKEN TO ANOTHER . . .

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A. Yes. Sure. And then one day they took us all to in wagons because evacuated Auschwitz. And they shipped us to a camp near . . . In . . .

Q. GERMANY . . .

A. Near Dachau. The camp belonged to Dachau.

Q. DID YOU KNOW AT THAT TIME AT ALL WHAT WAS GOING ON? DID YOU HAVE ANY . . .

A. Yes, because people spoke of it, the Russian Army and lots of people came from (Lublink) to Auschwitz.

Q. (LUBLINK'S) IN POLAND.

A. It was liberated. The Russians came in '44. So we knew already the war was going bad for the Germans. We used to see American planes flying over Auschwitz . . .

Q. THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO ASK YOU, YOU DID SEE THE PLANES?

A. Yes, American planes flying over Auschwitz. We've seen a lot of it.

Q. SO, YOU WERE SHIPPED TO NEAR DACHAU?

A. Yes.

Q. HOW DID YOU GO THERE?

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sp
A. The same way we left (Galvestock), in cattle trains. For cows, now they put people there. It was a mess. Took us two days, day and night and we came to Dachua. To (Landsberg) but the lauger belonged to Dachau.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

A. We worked there on the highways and the stable . . .

Q. AND THE STONE QUARRY

A. The stone quarry . . .

Q. HOW LONG DID YOU WORK THERE?

A. 'Til the Americans came.

Q. HOW WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE YOU WERE BUNKING WITH, SO TO SPEAK? DID YOU TALK TO THEM?

A. Yes, sure we talked, but there was nothing to talk. Everybody was skinny. Everybody was, "Where can you get a piece of bread?" If you didn't eat your piece of bread quick somebody got all of it.

Q. DID YOU STEAL?

A. Huh?

Q. DID YOU STEAL?

A. I did not. But people did.

Q. YOU WHERE THERE, WHAT, ABOUT A YEAR? NOT QUITE A YEAR?

A. Not quite a year. I think nine months. Then in '45, April, the American Army came.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THAT TO ME? HOW THAT WAS?

A. They took us from this camp. They took us to Dachau. Dachau was the main camp.

Q. YOU MEAN THE GERMANS . . .

268 A. Yes, the Germans. And it was .

Q. HOW FAR ABOUT WAS IT?

269 A. About 60, 70 kilometers. The lauger, the camp and Dachau was then 65 kilometers farther. Everyone walking.

Q. WAS IT WINTER?

A. No, it was in April. It was beginning April. And then the Americans caught us in the road.

Q. ON THE ROAD. DID YOU HAVE SHOES?

A. Huh?

Q. DID YOU HAVE SHOES?

A. Old shoes. I had the same shoes I came.

Q. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN VERY GOOD SHOES THAT THEY LASTED THAT LONG.

A. They didn't last . . .

Q. I MEAN THEY COVERED YOUR FEET. SO THE AMERICANS . . .

A. The Americans liberate us . . .

Q. DESCRIBE THAT, WHEN YOU WERE MARCHING . . .

A. Yeah, we were marching and the SS went away. All of a sudden, they're not there anymore. And then the American Army came. And they gave us food and they gave us the drink and chocolate. Everything. You couldn't eat because you weren't used to this kind of food.

Q. DID YOU GET SICK?

A. I ate slowly. I ate very slowly and I didn't get sick. But my brother got sick. He started eating chocolate and his stomach wasn't used to it, to this kind of food. That's the way it was.

Q. COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FEELING A LITTLE BIT WHEN YOU SAW THE AMERICANS?

A. Ah, when I saw the Americans I figure now I'm going to be alive. The Americans, I see a new life for me. And it was something else, unexplainable. You speak of 45 years after it happened and I told you all in detail but between everything that I told you was lots of misery and lots of. Now that I live in America 43 years, it's something not

speakable. What it really was in those concentration camps. The Germans were really animals.

Q. THE REASON WHY WE DO THESE INTERVIEWS IS THAT WE DO WANT TO HEAR EVERYTHING YOU CAN POSSIBLE REMEMBER AND POSSIBLY SPEAK ABOUT IT. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SPEAK ABOUT IT . . .

A. One time, one time I stole two carrots from a wagon. They used to push the wagon for the SS kitchen. And I got caught. So they gave me 25, 25 . . .

Q. LASHES . . .

A. Lashes on my back. For the two carrots.

Q. WITH A WHIP? WITH A WHIP?

A. With a whip, yeah.

Q. LEATHER WHIP?

A. Leather whip. They used to call the German soldiers, the German SS guards, used to carry whips on their hands all the time.

Q. YOU WERE BLEEDING?

A. It was bad. I couldn't sit on my butt for maybe a month.

Q. BUT YOU WENT TO WORK?

387 A. You had to go to work. Otherwise they take you .

Q. ARE THERE ANY OTHER INCIDENTS YOU CAN THINK OF THAT
HAPPENED IN THE CAMPS?

sp A. Yeah. They used to come in at night at Auschwitz and they
would take right, left, right, left, to the crematorium. To
the crematorium, not to the crematorium. Me and my brother
was kind of lucky. They always, I went to the left, when one
was right. My brother was to the left, so we came out alive.
But lots didn't. Of that transport from (Galvestock), 20,
25 people came out alive.

Q. CAN YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE GERMAN FACES FOR INSTANCE
THAT YOU SAW LATER ON? WERE YOU EVER CONFRONTED WITH THAT?

A. I saw Mengele every morning in Auschwitz.

Q. YOU KNEW IT WAS MENGELE?

A. Every morning. Every morning I would see him.

Q. DID YOU KNOW THE NAMES OF ALL THE GERMANS?

A. There was one Schultz. I did not know the names. I just knew the people was speaking was named Schulz and Mengele.

Q. I JUST WONDERED, SO MANY PEOPLE SAW MENGELE AND I ALWAYS WONDERED IF IT REALLY WAS MENGELE.

A. Yes, it really was Mengele. I used to see him in the morning, when we used to go to work. He used to stay in the, in the ... when we marched out from the gate. But not every day, but maybe three days a week he shows up.

Q. WERE YOU EVER CONFRONTED BY . . .

A. No.

Q. DID YOU KNOW ANYBODY WHO WAS?

A. No. He would usually take people that he picked and make experiments with them. Me and my brother was lucky.

Q. DID YOU KNOW ANY OF YOUR CO-WORKERS IN THE CAMP WHO HAD TO UNDERGO THE EXPERIMENTS?

A. No.

Q. YOU DIDN'T. WERE YOU EVER IN THE HOSPITAL THERE?

A. No. There was no hospital there.

Q. SICK BAY.

A. Nothing. There was nothing like that. Once you went to the sick bay, you went to the oven. You'd be sick, but yet you didn't tell anybody that you were sick. Because if you don't do the work then they catch you in the barracks and then you . . .

Q. YOU HAD TO EXTEND TO GO OUT IN THE MORNING FOR ROLL CALL, DIDN'T YOU?

A. Yes.

Q. HOW LONG DID THAT LAST?

A. About half an hour.

Q. AND YOU WERE TO STAND THERE?

A. Stand there to be counted.

Q. IN THE MORNING AND AT NIGHT?

A. No, in the morning, not at night.

Q. ONLY IN THE MORNING. DID YOU EVERY THINK OF ESCAPING?

A. What? How can you escape?

Q. I JUST WONDERED IF YOU . . .

A. No, I never thought about escaping because I know if you escaped you couldn't go . . . You couldn't escape first off. And if somebody did escape escape and go in around the Polish side so the Polish turned them in. So I .

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF ABOUT THE TREATMENT YOU RECEIVED IN THERE, IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP?

A. I saw the Germans and I told you they're animals. They're not human beings. The way they used to treat people. The way they used to kill people. We were nothing. We were dogs. Police dogs. They used to train the dogs to go out on command, boy, or something, in Auschwitz. To train the dog, bite and all this. And then they call the dog back. "Ah, you good dog." It was something not . . . If you didn't go through it, you couldn't understand what it was. If you was not in Auschwitz or a German concentration camp, it was something you'll never understand what people went through. We survived. Of course the majority didn't survive. Few people survived.

Q. WHAT DO YOU ASCRIBE YOUR SURVIVAL TO? LUCK? CUNNING? GOOD HEALTH? WHAT ELSE?

A. I would say I survived and my brother is because we kepted alittle food. Everything we could in food we ate because you don't know what hunger is. There was nothing to eat you lose you strength. You didn't have will to live. Everything you eat you put in your mouth even if it didn't taste good, but at least it give you alittle strength that you worked. Because they brought you in Auschwitz was to work and if you didn't work they had no use for you.

Q. I UNDERSTAND AT AUSCHWITZ THERE WERE A LOT OF CAMPS AROUND AUSCHWITZ. YOU WERE DIRECTLY . . .

A. I was directly in Auschwitz, yeah.

Q. IN YOUR CAMP, YOU SAID YOU WERE IN THE CHILDREN'S CAMP.

A. I was in the children's camp.

Q. WHERE THERE ONLY BOYS?

A. In the children's barracks. Only boys.

Q. NO GIRLS . . .

A. No, no.

Q. I JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU AGAIN IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT . . .

A. I can tell you with one word -- it was miserable. I think the Germans are a bunch of animals. They are not people at all. And the way they treated the people. It was not only Hitler, people like Mengele. It was every German I ever met was an animal.

Q. DID YOU COME ACROSS ANY UKRANIANS?

A. Yeah, in Auschwitz we had some Ukranian guards, too. They were animals too.

Q. I HEARD THAT BEFORE.

399 A. Yeah, they were also in camps where we were when we left Auschwitz to come to there was a camp, they called it. And then there was the and Estonian guards and they were animals too. Everybody who could beat up a Jew or kill a Jew, it didn't mean nothing.

Q. IN THE CAMP THE SECTOR YOU WERE IN THERE WERE ONLY JEWS?

A. Yeah.

Q. NO GYPSIES . . .

A. Before we came to this barracks, there were Russian prisoners there in the war, but they killed them all out.

Q. THE GERMANS . . .

A. The Germans. All the Russian prisoners came from smaller camps in 1941 and 1942 from near Moscow. They all died. They all didn't survive.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET TO KNOW THAT?

A. Because some of them when we came were still alive and they used to tell us what's happened. They would all eat another one. They had no food. Germans didn't give them and then they took them to the ovens or to the pit they put gasoline on them and threw a flame in and burned them. Lots of Russian prisoners got killed in Auschwitz.

Q. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE ANTISEMITIC TOO?

A. To me it's like that, if someone's anti-semitic it doesn't do nothing to me. It doesn't mean nothing to me. But if somebody does something to you, you know what I mean,

this is what I called anti-semitic. If someone doesn't like me because I'm Jewish that's OK, so don't like me. Big deal.

Q. BECAUSE YOU MADE A REMARK ABOUT THE POLISH, POLISH PERIOD THEY ARE ANTISEMITIC?

A. The Polish they didn't like the Jews, they never liked the Jews. I don't think they'll ever like the Jews. Their crimes are as bad as the Polish. Now, it's a different world over there. There are no more Jews and they bot nobody to pick on, you know. So, what it was during the war, there were lots of Jewish people living around there and they were very anti-semitic. Now there are no more Jewish people over there.

Q. SO DESCRIBE TO ME A LITTLE BIT WHEN THE AMERICANS CAME.

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A. When the Americans came there was really a different world. We had some food. Then I lived in the city of
sp (Landsberg) .

Q. HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE AMERICANS?

A. Some of them spoke German. Some of them spoke Yiddish. There were lot of Jewish soldiers. There was a rabbi there, used to help us a lot. I kept with the Army, the American Army. Rabbi, you know, like chocolates. Food was as much as

we want and everything. It was a different life. The Germans were already different people there.

Q. HOW WERE THE GERMANS DIFFERENT THERE?

A. Well, they didn't have no power. Once the Americans came in, they got no power. They got nothing to say. It was an occupation. They were occupied.

Q. RIGHT. WHEN YOU SAW THE GERMANS, HOW DID YOU FEEL?

A. I would like to kill a few of them. To tell you the truth. For my mother, all my aunts, uncles. But, the Jewish people are not the type, like Germans.

Q. HOW MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY GOT KILLED?

A. All of it.

Q. HOW MANY DO YOU THINK, APPROXIMATELY?

A. Must have been at least about 60.

Q. SIXTY?

A. Yeah.

Q. NOT ONE SURVIVED?

A. I'm the only one.

Q. YOU AND YOUR BROTHER.

A. Yeah. But my brother died in the meantime.

Q. BUT YOUR BROTHER, YOU'LL TELL ME THAT ALITTLE LATER. BUT YOU BOTH SURVIVED THE CAMPS, THAT'S WHAT I MEAN.

A. Yeah. Right. He helped me and I helped him. Then we survived. If he had an extra potato, he cut it in half. If I had a piece of bread, I cut in half. I used to go in Auschwitz to place, I used to clean out the stables where they had the horses and they used to bring to the horses old bread, for the horses, so I always put a few pieces of bread in my pocket and I gave my brother a piece of bread. It was hard bread. It was maybe week, two weeks old . . .

Q. STALE

A. Stale, yeah. To them it was cake.

Q. YOU KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY CAUGHT YOU DOING THAT, RIGHT?

A. Yeah, but when you're hungry you don't pay attention.

Q. YOU SAID YOU LIVED IN (LANDSBERG)?

A. This is in Bavaria.

Q. IN BAVARIA, RIGHT.

A. Bavaria.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

A. Then I was still young . . .

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN?

A. I must have been about 16.

Q. AND YOU REALLY ONLY HAD THREE YEARS OF SCHOOLING, RIGHT?

A. Yeah

Q. BY THAT TIME . . .

A. And then we was figuring how come to America. In 1947, I came to America, but my brother went to Israel.

Q. HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO COME TO AMERICA?

A. I went into the I.S. and I came as a child. Children transport.

Q. BUT YOUR BROTHER WASN'T A CHILD ANYMORE.

A. No. He didn't want to come to America. He wanted to go to Israel. So he was in Cyprus and then it was Palestine. . .

Q. HOW DID HE MANAGE TO GET INTO . . .

A. He went to Israel. I didn't want to go. I wanted to go to America. He wanted to go to Israel. I said, "I go to America."

Q. COULD YOU BEAR TO PART FROM YOUR BROTHER?

A. Well, we had two different ideas. I didn't want to go to Israel. He wanted to go to Israel.

Q. WAS YOUR BROTHER ZIONIST?

A. I was a Zionist, too. My mother was a Zionist.

Q. I SEE.

A. I'm still a Zionist.

Q. YOU DID NOT WANT TO GO TO ISRAEL? IS IT BECAUSE AMERICA
APPEALED TO YOU MORE OR . . .

A. I wanted to live alittle better life and in Israel still
there was struggle. The country was not organized. It was
nothing. I wanted to have over there alittle life, so I came
to America. Then I went to school here in America.

Q. TELL ME HOW YOU GOT TO AMERICA.

579 A. Munich and they arranged to pay for my way.

Q. SO YOU ACTUALLY DID THIS ALL ON YOUR OWN, RIGHT?

A. Yes.

Q. NOBODY TO HELP YOU.

A. No. Once you come out from concentration camp you'll
already a human being. You're already ten years older than
you really are.

Q. YOU REALLY HAD NO CHILDHOOD, DID YOU?

A. No. No childhood, nothing. Seeing Auschwitz, the ovens, they burn everydoy with people. They bring transports, people go to the gas chamber and then they go to the ovens, burn in the ovens. That was really enough education. But for me not having education was not really so important. Just to come out alive.

Q. I'M TALKING NOW ABOUT GENERALLY WHEN YOU CAME. BUT YOU WERE NEVER IN AUSCHWITZ YOU NEVER HAD TO . . .

A. I was in Auschwitz . . .

Q. YES I KNOW, BUT WHEN YOU WERE IN AUSCHWITZ YOU NEVER HAD TO WORK AROUND THE CREMATORIUM . .

A. No.

Q. YOUR YOUTH SAVED YOU, BEING SO YOUNG. I SUPPOSE.

A. Yes, but lots of people worked in the crematorium. I used to know people work in the crematorium . . .

Q. YOU DID . . .

A. I used to see them in camp.

Q. THEY SURVIVED THAT?

51?
52?
A. Some survived. I didn't see nobody that was working the crematorium survive because they got shipped to (Landsberg) to the (Camp Lagen) near Dachau. So the Germans must have shot them when they didn't want no witnesses or something. I don't know. I never seen the people who worked the creamtorium, I never seen them in Dachau.

Q. SO, NOW YOU'RE AT THE I.S. AND THEY PAID YOUR PASSAGE. YOU KNEW NOBODY IN AMERICA . . .

A. Nobody . . .

Q. ANYBODY . . .

A. Nobody. Nobody.

Q. SO ACTUALLY, YOU WERE ALL ALONE IN THIS WORLD. RIGHT?

A. Exactly.

Q. AND YOU WERE WHAT 17 YEARS OLD?

A. Right.

Q. VERY MATURE 17 I SUPPOSE.

A. No, I was not 17, I was about 16.

Q. 16?

55 / A. 16. I was mature because I mature Auschwitz. Going through Auschwitz makes a person mature. Makes you try to .

Q. YOU COULD READ, OF COURSE?

A. Huh?

Q. NO, YOU COULDN'T AT THAT TIME, WHEN YOU WERE 16, YOU COULD READ?

A. No, I couldn't read English. I could read a little German.

Q. COULD YOU WRITE?

A. Write? A little bit. Not so good.

Q. BUT YOU COULD SIGN YOUR NAME, YOU HAD TO . . .

A. Yes. I could sign my name, you know. It comes natural.

Q. HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN BAVARIA?

A. I stayed 'til '47, two years.

Q. AND WHAT DID YOU DO IN THOSE TWO YEARS?

A. Two years? Nothing. I just live in a camp.

Q. IN A D.P. CAMP?

A. A D.P. camp. Yeah.

Q. YOU MAKE FRIENDS THERE?

A. Oh, yeah. People were singing Hebrew songs. There was already a Zionistic feeling, I mean to go to Israel. Most of the people went to Israel.

Q. THERE WAS NO SCHOOL IN CAMP FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU?

A. No there was no school. Camp was already, it was something like temporary. You're there. Everybody was trying to go to Argentina, to Brazil, to Australia, you know.

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Q. AND THAT CAMP WAS IN (LANDSBERG)?

53
A. In (Landsberg). In the city . . .

Q. IN THE CITY . . .

A. Used to be an old used to be German soldiers.
Then it was empty and they D.P. camp there.

Q. THE AMERICANS FED YOU?

A. Yeah, the Americans fed us very good. Food was enough.

Q. DID YOU MAKE FRIENDS AMONG THE AMERICANS.

A. I had some friends, yeah, some, I had some friends. There
were some Jewish soldiers there. I made some friends.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE 1 SIDE B

Q. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT (LANDSBERG). DESCRIBE A LITTLE BIT
YOUR LIFE AS A YOUNG MAN THERE.

A. In (Landsberg) everybody was waiting to make immigration,
to go away. And the two years went away so fast. In 1947, in
July, I got the papers to go the United States and went to
the United States.

Q. HOW DID YOU GO?

A. By ship and the name of the ship was (Marlin Marlina).

Q. GERMAN SHIP?

A. American ship

Q. I THOUGHT MAYBE THE AMERICANS HAD TAKEN A SHIP AND
CONVERTED IT INTO A TRANSPORT . . .

A. No, it was an American ship.

Q. SO, YOU ARRIVED WHERE?

A. I arrived in New York.

Q. AFTER HOW MANY DAYS?

A. I don't remember. Maybe eight days. Then I came to New
York and the United Jewish Appeal took me . . .

Q. WAS IT THE I.S.?

A. Yeah, something like that. They took us to hotel, Hotel
Marsaille. And from there to Wall Street, I think it was.
And from there I was shipped to some family in Indianapolis

and I was there maybe three months and I didn't like it there and I came back to New York myself.

Q. DID YOU MAKE ANY FRIENDS AS YOU WENT ALONG?

A. Oh yeah, lots of friends.

Q. DID YOU SPEAK ENGLISH BY THAT TIME?

A. I spoke a little English. Not very good, but I spoke a little English. And then I came to San Francisco . . .

Q. NOW WAIT A MINUTE, YOU WENT BACK TO NEW YORK. WHAT DID YOU DO IN NEW YORK?

A. In New York, I used to work in a bagel bakery. The guy was a nice guy and he paid me 50 cents an hour and I could eat all the bagels I want. And then I saved up, I had 70 some dollars, 75 dollars, and I took the greyhound bus . . .

Q. WAIT A MINUTE, HOW DID YOU LIVE IN NEW YORK?

A. I lived in a bakery.

Q. YOU LIVED IN THE BAKERY? WERE THEY AMERICAN PEOPLE?

A. With Jewish people . . .

Q. YES, AMERICAN JEWS . . .

A. Yeah, yeah. American Jews. And the guy liked me and I slept in the bakery. There was a bed there and I cleaned out the bakery and I used to eat bagels and I used to buy butter and bottle of milk. I survived good. I was working there maybe three months, and then I saved up the money and I went to San Francisco and I stayed in San Francisco.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET TO SAN FRANCISCO?

A. Greyhound bus. And I stayed in San Francisco . . .

Q. HOW MANY YEARS, WHAT YEAR DID YOU COME TO SAN FRANCISCO?

A. I came to San Francisco in 1948. And I've been in San Francisco since.

Q. WHAT MADE YOU COME TO SAN FRANCISCO?

A. I wanted to see California. I mean, California was something out of this world . . .

Q. GO WEST YOUNG MAN . . . (laughing)

A. Go west, yeah. I came west. I came to San Francisco. It's a good city and I make a good living here.

Q. WHEN YOU CAME HERE, WHAT DID YOU DO?

A. When I came here I used to go to school in the evenings and in the day I worked. In San Francisco, I worked.

Q. WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GO TO?

A. I went to Lincoln, Lincoln High School and they took me in the evening classes, not during the day because during the day I had to work.

Q. YOU REALLY HAD NOBODY HERE, NOBODY.

A. Nobody. Friends were made, but nobody, no family.

Q. SINCE YOU'RE EARLY 20'S YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.

A. Exactly. I'm a survivor.

Q. YOU ARE. IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD. YOU ARE. SO, WHEN YOU GOT TO SAN FRANCISCO, WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST STEP? WHAT DID YOU DO?

A. Working. Make some money.

Q. WHAT DID YOU DO?

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A. I worked in a bakery, a bagel bakery. It was a bakery. It used to be the bakery. He gave me a job. I used to work . . .

Q. WHAT PART OF SAN FRANCISCO WAS IT?

A. The part that don't exist no more. McAllister Street. And I rented a room, \$30 or \$40 a month, I don't remember any more. I used to work in the bakery and I saved alittle money. I was working for almost three years. And then I was drafted in the Army.

Q. WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL?

A. How to write and read. It's night school.

Q. NIGHT SCHOOL. DID YOU MAKE YOUR CERTIFICATE AT ALL? OR DIDN'T YOU FEEL LIKE DOING THAT?

A. No, no I didn't get a high school certificate. I'm not a high school graduate. But I'm self-education person. I speak lots of languages . . .

Q. WHAT DID YOU, WHAT DO YOU SPEAK?

A. I speak Russian. I speak Polish. I speak German. I speak Hebrew. I speak English.

Q. THAT'S ENOUGH. (laughs)

A. Yes.

Q. SO, WHEN WERE YOU DRAFTED?

A. I was in the end of '48.

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN?

A. I was 19 years old.

Q. NINETEEN. JUST 19. TERRIBLY YOUNG. SO . . .

A. I was in the army three years. I was in Japan, the Philippines . . .

Q. WHEN DID YOU ACTUALLY BECOME A CITIZEN?

A. When I came out from the Army. I became a citizen. Now I'm an American. I got a beautiful daughter . . .

Q. TELL ME WHEN YOU MARRIED.

A. Huh?

Q. WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A. I got married in 1962.

Q. AND YOUR WIFE, IS SHE, I DON'T KNOW . . .

A. My ex-wife. I've been divorced. She's from Germany, too. She had two kids from before and then she had one kid with me . . .

Q. YOUR DAUGHTER . . .

A. My daughter, yeah. We didn't get along so we thought better to divorce and I'm taking care of my daughter. She helps, too. She's a nice lady, very nice lady.

Q. YOUR DAUGHTER LIVES WITH YOU HERE?

A. My daughter lived with me until she was nine. From two to nine, seven years she lived with me. And then the rest she lived with her mother. She finished high school with her mother. Her mother lived in Los Angeles. So she went to live with her mother. I mean, my daughter was free. She could live with her or with me. We were two partners.

Q. TELL ME WHEN YOU WENT BACK, YOU WENT BACK TO EUROPE, DIDN'T YOU?

A. I went to Europe lots of times.

Q. TELL ME THE FIRST TIME YOU WENT BACK.

A. The first time I went to Europe I went to (Galvestock) to see. I was very much in love with (Galvestock) because it was a Jewish life. Maybe there's somebody alive there in (Galvestock) that I used to know.

Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THAT, DO YOU KNOW?

A. I think the first time I went to (Galvestock) was '57, '58, something like that. And there was nobody there. There was no Jews in (Galvestock) no more. In the city, only Polish.

Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU GET THERE?

A. I didn't feel good, because I used to remember (Galvestock) different circumstances. It was also a big Jewish city and there were lots of Jewish people and Jewish youth and everything. But when I came to (Galvestock) it was

a dead city. And I've been to (Galvestock) since, a couple more times.

Q. FROM (GALVESTOCK), WHERE DID YOU GO?

A. To Warsaw. From Warsaw to Hamburg, and from Hamburg to went to San Francisco. Just as a tourist.

Q. YOU DID GO TO GERMANY, THEN.

A. Yes, I went to Hamburg.

Q. WHAT DID YOU FEEL? HOW DID YOU FEEL, I MEAN?

A. My feeling to the Germans is that they're animals. I've got a very bad feeling for the Germans because for my five years being in a German concentration camp and ghetto together, I never seen a German person to be good, to be anything good to say. To ever come up and give you a piece of bread, come up and give you a good word or anything. To them, to the German people, myself, my own opinion, are animals. I don't think there is any nation in the world could compare to the barbarians. The Germans are really a barbaric people.

Q. SO WHEN YOU WERE IN HAMBURG, HOW DID YOU FEEL MEETING, YOU HAD TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE GERMANS?

A. I didn't have much contact with German people except the people in the hotel, I spoke to them and that was all. That was the first time. But I've been there since, a couple times.

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PRESENT GENERATION OF GERMANS?
THE YOUNG PEOPLE?

A. If you give them a chance. The German people are a unique people. They are barbarians. They're not a people like Italians or French, English. I mean they lost the war, they cannot take it that they lost the war. They're not a people who can take it that they lose. To them they'll go fight tomorrow to take everything back that belong to them. They're a barbaric nation. My opinion what I went through with the German people, being born in Germany, being with the Germans in concentration camps, they are, my own opinion for the German people are they are barbarians. They're not human beings.

Q. DID YOU EVER GO BACK TO THE PLACE OF YOUR BIRTH?

A. Yes, I even took my daughter one time there.

Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL BEING THERE?

A. There's nothing there. Nothing.

Q. DID YOU TELL YOUR DAUGHTER ABOUT YOUR TIME THERE?

A. No, I didn't tell my daughter about that time. I don't speak about it at all. I didn't even want to be interviewed with you, but my daughter insisted. She said, "Daddy, you've got to do it. I want it for my kids someday to listen to your story."

Q. HOW OLD IS YOUR DAUGHTER?

A. My daughter is 24, 25, 24.

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT NOW, TALKING TO ME?

A. I'm talking to a nice lady.

Q. (laughs) ARE YOU GLAD YOU TALKED TO ME?

A. Yeah. Now I'm glad that I talked about it and I made my daughter happy, too. Let her kids sometime listen to the conversation what their grandfather went through.

Q. I'M GLAD YOU THINK THAT WAY. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT. BUT YOUR DAUGHTER, DOES SHE ASK YOU QUESTIONS?

A. She asks me questions sometimes, but I don't give her an answer because I wanted to forget all about it. It's not a pleasant memory, something you can say, "We went there and there and we had such a good time and everything." I lost my family, I went through concentration camp and there was so unhuman the German soldiers, SS, treated you as if you were a piece of nothing. I never spoke to anybody about this, what I went through because I wanted to forget it. To the past. But now, to satisfy my daughter's wishes, I'm giving you my side of the story.

Q. I'M REALLY GLAD YOU DO BECAUSE NOT ONLY FOR YOUR DAUGHTER, IT'S SO IMPORTANT. ESPECIALLY THERE ARE PEOPLE NOW WHO DISPUTE THAT SOMETHING LIKE THE HOLOCAUST HAS BEEN. YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THAT.

A. Everybody knows. Ask the Polish people. There were 3 1/2 million Jews in Poland. Warsaw had a population of over half a million Jews, in Warsaw. (Galvestock), 70-80,000 Jews, where are these people? Where are these people? The people that say there was not a Holocaust this are the people who know it was but just they're anti-semitic and they want to say it was not. This is not our opinion. It's just the way it feels to us, the Jews. But everybody knows. The soldiers. The American soldiers that liberated Dachau, everything, they saw everything that happened.

Q. BUT THAT IS ALREADY ANOTHER GENERATION. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THIS GENERATION NOW.

A. This generation if they read and they are intelligent people and they're knowledgeable and then they know there was a Holocaust and they know Auschwitz, Treblinka . . .

Q. BUT IF THEY'RE NOT INTELLIGENT PEOPLE AND THEY DON'T READ AND THEY DON'T BELIEVE IT. THIS IS WHY WE ARE DOING THIS.

A. It's not that they don't believe it, they just don't want to believe it. They don't want to believe it. They don't care what's happened to 6 million Jews. They don't care. They're family's intact. That's their opinion.

Q. WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO POLAND, HOW DID YOU FEEL? SEEING THE POLES, TALKING TO THE POLES?

A. Well, I spoke to the Polish people. It's like you say. It's a different generation. But it's still the feeling that Polish people never liked the Jewish people. For no reason at all. I guess because the Jewish people are more knowledgeable people than the Polish. The Polish people are different people. They are more a religious people. They are very Catholics. They're very people who like the land. So they work on the land. But to them it was a Jew it was bad.

But they never killed a Jews. But they helped. They helped in kill the Jews.

Q. THAT'S WHAT I MEAN. THEY WERE QUITE ACTIVE IN KILLING.

A. They helped and the Jewish people they used to run away they take them to the Germans. They were more interested in getting rid of the Jews than the Germans were to kill.

Q. WHO DO YOU HATE MORE, THER GERMANS OR THE POLES?

A. I hate the Germans because the Polish people never did anything . . . I don't like the Polish as a people because they're a stupid people. To them, the Jews were something awful

But they never killed the Jews. Sometimes if you were blond and blue eyes, you could shie away. But the Polack, he knew who was a Jew. He'd tell the German, "This is a Jew here. This is a Jew." The Polish people could have saved lots of Jews. But they weren't interested. That's the way it was. That's my story.

Q. YOU WENT BACK THREE TIMES, DID YOU SAY?

A. Three times to Poland.

Q. WHY? WHY THREE TIMES?

A. I wanted to see Auschwitz again. I went to Auschwitz. I went to Treblinka. That's where my parents got burned.

Q. DESCRIBE ME YOUR FEELINGS WHEN YOU GOT THERE?

A. It was a bad feeling, but you know, you went through Auschwitz and you wanted to see the way it looks like today.

Q. DID YOU TAKE YOUR DAUGHTER?

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A. No. My daughter I didn't take. I'll take my daughter maybe next year. I want to take her to Auschwitz, to Treblinka, where my parents went. Take to (Galvestock), show her where I used to live three years there. There's no more Jews in (Galvestock). Not a single Jewish person. In all Poland today, about 4,000 Jews. From 3 1/2 million. So nobody wants to believe that there was a Holocaust. Let them find the numbers. The Polish people know that there was a Holocaust. The American young people don't know this. The Polish people, the Hungarian, the Czechs, they know what happened.

Q. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU TRAVELED THROUGH POLAND, BUT DID YOU EVER SEE ANY MONUMENTS FOR THE JEWS?

A. In Warsaw, I see on in Warsaw.

Q. IN WARSAW . . .

A. Where the ghetto was. That's all

Q. I DON'T THINK THERE ARE TOO MANY. ARE THERE?

A. There's only one, in Warsaw. The Polish people never been friendly to the Jewish people. Never.

Q. WHERE IN GERMANY DID YOU GO? WHEN YOU WENT OVER THERE AGAIN?

A. I went to Hamburg . . .

Q. JUST TO HAMBURG? NO OTHER PLACE?

773 A. But no other place.

Q. WHEN YOU WENT . . .

4? A. It's a different city. The house we used to live was bombed. It's a different city than I remember (Carlsberg). The city was all destroyed during the war.

5? Q. HOW LONG DID YOU SPEND IN (CARLSBERG)?

A. One day.

Q. ONE DAY?

A. There's nobody to speak to there.

Q. DO YOU STILL BELIEVE IN GOD?

778 A. Yes.

Q. ARE YOU RELIGIOUS?

A. No, I'm not.

Q. DO YOU THINK IF YOU'D GROWN UP AT HOME UNDER OTHER
CIRCUMSTANCES YOU WOULD BE?

A. Might well have been, yes. But that's the way, life brought me to these circumstances, so I didn't practice religion. I believe in God, the Yon Kippur. I go to synagogue.

Q. YOU DO GO . . .

A. Oh yeah. But I'm not so religious.

Q. WHAT ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER?

A. My daughter, I don't know. She's a big girl.

Q. HOW DID YOU BRING HER UP?

A. I don't think she is too religious.

Q. DID YOU BRING HER UP IN THE JEWISH FAITH?

A. No, I brought her up, I took her to Israel. She knows she's Jewish. She knows very much she's Jewish. She knows I've been in a concentration camp . . .

Q. YOU KEPT YOUR NUMBER?

A. I kept my number.

Q. DO YOU CARE TO TELL ME YOUR NUMBER?

A. Yes, my number is 2067, B2067. In Auschwitz, everybody had a number, so you didn't have no name. To kill people, the Germans are specialists.

Q. DID YOU EVER LOOK FOR A RECORD FOR YOUR PARENTS AT ALL? SOMETIMES THE GERMANS KEPT RECORDS OF WHOM THEY KILLED AND HOW THEY KILLED THEM.

A. My parents died in Treblinka. There was nothing left there.

Q. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

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A. went to Treblinka, too. Our train.
And then they release the two brothers to work, young men to work . . .

Q. AND THE OTHER CAR . . .

A. Straight into Treblinka.

Q. YOU'VE HEARD, OF COURSE, ABOUT THIS CONVENT IN AUSCHWITZ.

A. Yeah.

Q. WHERE YOU THERE? DID YOU SEE IT?

A. No. I was in Auschwitz, you mean as a tourist?

Q. YES.

A. 15 years ago, 14 years ago.

Q. DID THEY HAVE ANY COMMEMORATION, ANY MEMORIAL AT THAT TIME?

A. No. I didn't see nothing.

Q. AT TREBLINKA NOT EITHER?

A. No.

Q. HOW DO YOU GET INTO TREBLINKA NOW? HOW WAS IT?

810 A. I rented a car. I rented a car in Hamburg and I went to Poland and I went into Treblinka.

Q. DID YOU KNOW YOUR WAY?

A. It's signs.

Q. THERE ARE SIGNS?

A. Yeah. It's a tourist attraction now. Lots of people come from all over the world to see Treblinka.

Q. DID YOU HAVE TO ASK A POLE, YOU KNOW, WHICH DIRECTION?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. AND THEY WILLINGLY GAVE YOU THE DIRECTION?

A. Oh yeah. They gave me the direction, sure. There was no problem. The Polish didn't know I was Jewish. Maybe . . . No, it really didn't make a difference. Today in Poland is different. Before the war there were lots of Jews and the feeling for the Jews was different. Now, my accent, when I speak Polish, I also have the Jewish accent. I speak Polish. So it really don't make a difference. You ask them how do you go this and they tell you.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE TO ME HOW IT LOOKS THERE? I CAN'T IMAGINE.

A. Treblinka, the camp is there, as a tourist. And where the railroad used to come is cement blocks where the railroad goes on top of it still stands. But the Germans have moved everything.

Q. THEY DEMOLISHED EVERYTHING BEFORE THEY LEFT? YEAH?

A. But the place is there where the crematorium was. It tells you right there.

Q. DID YOU OBSERVE THE PEOPLE? I REMEMBER I WENT TO DACHAU AND I OBSERVED THE PEOPLE WHO WENT THERE. DID YOU DO THE SAME THING? TO CHECK THE REACTIONS FROM THE TOURISTS WHO GO THERE?

A. I never went to Dachau . .

Q. NO, I DON'T WANT TO COMPARE. WHEN YOU WENT TO AUSCHWITZ,
TREBLINKA . . .

A. Auschwitz, Treblinka, I kept to myself.

Q. DID YOU TAKE PHOTOS?

A. No I didn't. No photos.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOS OF YOUR FAMILY?

A. Yeah, I've got a picture of my mother and father. Because I have an aunt in Argentina and she sent me. My mother's sister lives in Argentina and she sent me a picture of my father and mother.

Q. IS SHE ALIVE?

A. No, she died five years ago.

Q. HOW DID SHE GET TO ARGENTINA?

A. She went to Argentina a long time ago. Before the war. I think she left in 1922, '23, '24, something like that.

Q. SO ACTUALLY, YOU HAVE AN AUNT?

A. I had an aunt.

Q. YEAH, YOU HAD AN AUNT I KNOW.

A. She went as a girl there.

Q. DID YOU EVER SEE HER AGAIN?

A. No. I never seen her period.

Q. OH, OF COURSE NOT. AND YOU FATHER DID HE HAVE ANY
RELATIVES ABROAD?

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A. My father had a brother in (Studgart) and his family
comes from (Studgart). My family comes from and my
father used to live in (Carlsery). Right out of (Carslery).
Because he was a field hand, he was selling cows.

Q. DO YOU STILL REMEMBER ANYTHING TOGETHER WITH YOUR FAMILY?

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A. Oh, yeah. I was a kid I used to go to my grandmother and
eat some soup because it was not too far. The street car
used to go to (Carlsery). So I would take it as a kid to go
over there, 7, 8 years old, go over there and get some soup.
It was different circumstances.

Q. SO IN A WAY YOU HAVE SOME MEMORIES . . .

A. Ah yes.

Q. THAT ARE A LITTLE BIT PLEASANTER . . .

A. Ah yes.

Q. AS A SMALL CHILD . . .

A. As you get bigger you don't ever think of the memories of when you were smaller.

Q. IS THERE ANY MESSAGE YOU HAVE FOR PEOPLE WHO LISTEN TO THAT TAPE? ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY?

A. I want to say that as a kid I went through hell in my life. As a young boy, the German people were really murderous. I have never seen a German to have any good heart, to offer you some help or anything. All of the Germans, to win the war, to destroy the war, especially to destroy the Jewish people.

Q. HAVE YOU BEEN TO ISRAEL?

A. I have been to Israel lots of times. I even took my daughter once. I like Israel. I'm a Zionist. I like to see Israel survive. I wouldn't like to see Israel give up territory because they are on the same way like the Germans. They could step into Israel, they would massacre all the Jewish people there. And that's my opinion. And that's true, that's true.

Q. WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN ISRAEL NOW?

A. I wouldn't mind. Once I retire, I think. I have a few more years before I retire. I might go to Israel. My brother's kids live there, in Israel. I've got some friends there. We were there together in the concentration camp, because 80 percent of the people in Israel are from concentration camps.

Q. I MEANT TO ASK YOU IF THE PEOPLE YOU WERE WITH IN AUSCHWITZ . . .

A. They're now in Israel . . .

Q. ALL IN ISRAEL. DID YOU HAVE A REUNION THERE?

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A. No, we didn't go there for a reunion, because from (Carlsey) not too many people left before the war.

983 It was a small community. I know some people from ,
29 from (Grodnow), and all that, from Poland, who were in
Auschwitz together. They all live in Israel. And I got some
friends in Israel. Maybe I'll go live in Israel.

Q. I FORGOT, YOU TOLD ME, BUT I FORGOT AGAIN. WHAT DO YOU DO
NOW?

A. Now, I'm in the canned food business. I make a good
living.

Q. YOU HAVE YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

A. My own business. I make a good living. You see I live in
a nice house. Make a good living. Pay for my daughter to
finish college. God bless America, like they say. It's a
good country.

Q. EXACTLY. THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHERE YOU CAN DO
ALL THAT.

A. Sure. The American Army liberated me. If the American
Army would have come two days later you wouldn't be able to
speak to me today.

Q. YOU HAVE BEEN LUCKY. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH AN AWFUL LOT, BUT YOU HAVE BEEN LUCKY. IT'S FATE? RIGHT? IT'S NOTHING YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM.

A. Right.

Q. ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHILE I STILL HAVE ALITTLE BIT OF TIME LEFT FOR YOU? YOU CAN THINK OF?

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A. I wanted for the future, for the people, to listen to my part of the story. Nobody, no Jewish person should have to live through what we had to live through. And I'd like to see a strong Israel. I love the Jewish people. They're nice people. And Jewish people help me to come to America. And the Jewish soldiers in the American Army help me out a lot when I came out from concentration camp. There was Jewish chaplain, I cannot think of what his name. Goldman. Chaplain Goldman was his name. He was from Brooklyn. He helped me a lot. What else can I say?

Q. ANYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF?

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A. I can't think of anything. I'm Israel .

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Q.

A. The Jewish people to live . . .

Q. ARE YOU QUITE HEALTHY NOW?

A. Yeah, very healthy.

Q. YOU HAVE NEVER HAD ANY REPERCUSSIONS . . .

A. No. I'm very healthy because I keep myself healthy. I eat healthy food.

Q. YOU LOOK VERY GOOD . . .

A. Yeah. And I feel good. I must have come from a healthy stock.

Q. YEAH, YOU MUST.

A. Never been sick. Never been to the hospital. Knock on wood. I feel good. I feel like a kid.

Q. HOW ABOUT YOUR BROTHER? WHEN HE FIRST ARRIVED IN ISRAEL?

A. My brother was in the Army in Israel and he got killed in 1967 war. He was a regular Army then. He wanted to go to Israel. He wanted to build a strong Israel . . .

Q. SO HE GAVE HIS LIFE . . .

A. Left three kids. I think the two girls got married and the boys are in the Army. My daughter met his daughter. Her name is (Bachya), after my mother.

Q. HAVE THEY EVERY BEEN OVER HERE, THE KIDS?

A. No. Nothing to visit to come. They wanted to live in Israel.

Q. WHERE ARE THEY NOW? THEY WERE BORN OVER THERE . . .

A. Born over there. (Sabras.)

Q. BUT THEY SPEAK ENGLISH?

A. (Bachya) speaks a little English. The rest two don't. I speak to them in Hebrew when I go.

Q. WHERE DID YOU LEARN HEBREW?

A. I learned to speak Hebrew just be going to Israel. I picked it up. I don't know how to write or read so good. But I speak a little bit.

Q. YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD EAR FOR LANGUAGES.

A. Yeah. I have a good ear for languages.

Q. I THINK YOU REALLY BEEN VERY LUCKY NOW, LIVING IN AMERICA. YOU MADE A WONDERFUL LIFE FOR YOURSELF. I WANT TO CONGRATULATE YOU.

A. A good country. God bless America, like you say. I was in the war in Korea. I am a Korean veteran. I paid America everything back that they liberate me. I was in the war and I'm 100 percent for America and for Israel.

Q. NOW YOU MAKE UP FOR ALL THESE YEARS OF MISERY AND WHAT YOU'VE MISSED, YOU ARE LIVING YOUR LIFE.

A. I've had a good life. I'm a happy person.

Q. I'M VERY HAPPY FOR YOU, MARTIN, AND I'M HAPPY TO TALK TO YOU. IT WAS A PLEASURE.

A. It was nice to talk to you.

Q. THANK YOU VERY MUCH SHARING ALL THIS WITH ME.

A. Thank you.

End of Tape 1, Side B